

# TABOO

*TABOO*

THE JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Spring 2013

Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2013

## Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education

Volume 13, Number 1, Spring 2013

**Senior Editors:** Jon Austin & Renee Baynes, *University of Southern Queensland*.

**Honorary Editorial Board:** Lilia Bartolomé, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*; Russell Bishop, *University of Waikato, Aotearoa, NZ*; Ramón Flecha, *Universitat de Barcelona*; Nita Freire, *São Paulo, Brasil*; Ivor Goodson, *University of Brighton, United Kingdom*; Henry Giroux, *McMaster University*; Aaron Gresson, *Pennsylvania State University*; Douglas Kellner, *University of California, Los Angeles*; Donaldo Macedo, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*; William Reynolds, *Georgia Southern University*; Pat Sykes, *University of Sheffield*; John Smyth, *University of Ballarat*; William Watkins, *University of Illinois, Chicago*; John Williams-Mozley, *Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges, USQ, Australia*; John Willinsky, *Stanford University*; Tom Wilson, *Chapman University*.

**Editorial Board:** Kathy Berry, *University of New Brunswick*; Rochelle Brock, *Indiana University Northwest*; Barry Down, *Murdoch University, Western Australia*; Julia Ellis, *University of Alberta*; Christopher Emdin, *Columbia University*; Marta Soler Gallart, *Universitat de Barcelona*; Rhonda Hammer, *University of California, Los Angeles*; Winthrop Holder, *Brooklyn Corporate Academy*; Pepi Leistyna, *University of Massachusetts, Boston*; Rob Linné, *Adelphi University*; Ann Milne, *Kia Aroha College, Auckland, Aotearoa, NZ*; Mark Pruyne, *Victoria University, Melbourne*; Lidia Puigvert, *Universitat de Barcelona*; Christine Quail, *McMaster University*; Birgit Richard, *Goethe University, Frankfurt*; Kris Tilley-Lubbs, *Virginia Tech University*; Mark Vicars, *Victoria University, Melbourne*; Leila Villaverde, *University of North Carolina at Greensboro*.

**Founding & Consulting Editor:** Shirley R. Steinberg, *University of Calgary*.

**Web and IT Manager:** Kenya Evans, *Kenya.Evans@IGT.com*

**Managing Editor:** Glen Parkes, *University of Southern Queensland*.

### **Institutional Affiliations:**

*The Freire Project* ([freireproject.org](http://freireproject.org))

*The International Institute of Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Leadership*

*The Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges*

*The Werklund Foundation Centre for Youth Leadership Education*

(<http://www.educ.ucalgary.ca/werklund/>)

**Much-loved Founding Editor:** Joe L. Kincheloe (December 14, 1950-December 19, 2008).

**Beloved Former Editorial Board Members** (deceased): Brenda Jenkins, New York and Jesús "Pato" Gómez, Barcelona/Bilbao.

**Publisher:** Alan H. Jones, Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118, USA. Telephone 415/666-3012 [info@caddogap.com](mailto:info@caddogap.com)

ISSN 1080-5400 Copyright 2013 by Caddo Gap Press

## Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education

*Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* is an academic forum for the study of teaching and pedagogy that focuses on the relationship between education and its socio-cultural context. Drawing upon a variety of contextualizing disciplines including cultural studies, curriculum theorizing, feminist studies, the social foundations of education, critical pedagogy, multi/interculturalism, queer theory, and symbolic interactionism, *Taboo* is grounded on the notion of “radical contextualization.” The journal encourages papers from a wide range of contributors who work within these general areas. As its title suggests, *Taboo* seeks compelling and contro-versial submissions.

*Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* is published electronically and periodically in paper by Caddo Gap Press. The annual subscription rate for individuals is \$50 US and for institutions is \$100 US; for addresses outside the United States add \$30 per year. Single issues are available for \$30 each. Subscriptions orders should be addressed and payable to Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118, USA.

Copyright 2013 by Caddo Gap Press. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from Caddo Gap Press.

Articles, contributions, and editorial correspondence should be sent electronically to Senior Editors Jon Austin & Renee Baynes at

Jon.Austin@usq.edu.au & Renee.Baynes@usq.edu.au

Contributors are asked to send manuscripts electronically. For questions of style, refer to either *The Chicago Manual of Style* (for essay or descriptive articles) or the APA (for research articles). We suggest that contributors retain one copy of the manuscript as submissions will not be returned.

Upon acceptance of an article by the journal the author(s) will be asked to transfer copyright of the article to *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*. The transfer will ensure the widest possible dissemination of information.

Publisher: Alan H. Jones, Caddo Gap Press  
3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, California 94118, U.S.A.  
Telephone 415/666-3012, Fax 415/666-3552,  
E-mail alanhjones@caddogap.com & Website www.caddogap.com

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction:</b>	
From <i>Taboo</i> to New <i>Taboo</i> .....	3
<i>Shirley Steinberg</i>	
<b>Youth, Space, Cities:</b>	
Toward the Concrete .....	5
<i>Robert J. Helfenbein &amp; Gabriel Huddleston</i>	
<b>Students' Bodily Carvings in School Spaces</b>	
of the Post-Apartheid City .....	11
<i>Adam Fataar</i>	
<b>Sonic Cartography:</b>	
Mapping Space, Place, Race, and Identity	
in a Urban Middle School .....	21
<i>Walter S. Gershon</i>	
<b>Structured Spaces of Play in a Southwestern U.S.</b>	
<b>Elementary Classroom:</b>	
Dialectics of Community and Academic Rigor .....	46
<i>G. Sue Kasun</i>	
<b>Dreaming and Surviving in Heterotopia:</b>	
First-Generation Immigrant Girls' Pursuit	
of the American Dream in New York City.....	63
<i>Kaoru Miyazawa</i>	

<b>RicanStruction Sites:</b>	
<b>Race, Space, and Place in the Education of DiaspoRican Youth</b> .....	77
<i>Jason G. Irizarry &amp; René Antrop-González</i>	
<b>“Can We Just Get Rid of the Classroom?”</b>	
<b>Thinking Space, Relationally</b> .....	97
<i>Sophia Rodriguez</i>	
<b>Thinking Spatially and Moving towards the Material:</b>	
<b>An Essay on <i>Seeking Spatial Justice</i> by Edward Soja</b> .....	112
<i>Gabriel Huddleston</i>	
Editors and Editorial Board .....	inside front cover
Editorial Guidelines .....	inside back cover
Subscription Form for <i>Taboo</i> .....	118

## Introduction: From *Taboo* to New *Taboo*

Shirley R. Steinberg

1995, the first issue of *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* debuted at the American Educational Research Association. Handing out mouse pads and black mugs, Peter Lang Publishing stormed the scene with a cutting edge new journal. The product of collaboration with Joe Kincheloe, Michael Flamini (Lang) and me, we wanted to fracture expectations of refereed journals in education. Michael insists to this day he named it *Taboo*; I disagree, I did. Paper journals are hard to manage, even harder to pay for, and after three years, with great response, we still were in the red. So the journal was on hiatus until we could find a new home. Alan Jones from Caddo Gap purchased the rights to the journal, and we had some great years publishing with Alan, but in 2006, we had to cease paper production, it just wasn't feasible. When Joe and I opened the Freire Project, we merged *Taboo* onto the freireproject.org website, where it remains. After Joe's death, it was hard to manage so many projects, and *Taboo* suffered.

2013, and we have new editors for the first time. Jon Austin and Renee Baynes, from the University of Southern Queensland in incredible Toowoomba are the new editors. Jon is a long-time friend of mine and Joe Kincheloe's and a trusted and respected colleague. Renee is a beloved new friend, and as committed as Jon to liberatory, critical work. Both are on the Academic staff of the Centre for Australian Indigenous Knowledges and have the critical props to step in and make *Taboo* their own....of course, along with the critical cultural and pedagogical community.

Social media has allowed us to move on from only 400 readers an issue to a possibility of thousands. Our work will be global, and the referees for each issue are rigorous. Make no mistake, a journal on line is equal (or better) quality and just as well-refereed as a paper journal. And the hits will keep on coming.

So, here it is, the first new issue of *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education*. I thank all of you, from 1995 to the present, who have supported and sweat

over this great publication. From Michael Flamini (I suggested the name), Chris Myers at Lang, and to our longest supporter, Alan Jones, a gentleman, a colleague, and a hell of a publisher. Alan continues to design, layout, typeset, and create web-based files for *Taboo*, without remuneration. Thanks to Jon and Renee, they are there for our *Taboo* community, and knowing them, we will continue to walk, talk, and write on the edge.

Along with the new *Taboo*, the *freireproject.org* is being revamped and changed to become The Freire Project: Critical Cultural, Community, and Media Activism (*freireproject.org*), and *Taboo* will also be a partner to The International Institute for Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Leadership.

Radical love and *mazel tov* to us all...start sending in the articles.

—Shirley R. Steinberg  
Founding Editor

*Shirley R. Steinberg is chair and director of The Werklund Foundation Centre for Youth Leadership Education and professor of youth studies at The University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, and the founding editor of Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education.*

## Youth, Space, Cities: Toward the Concrete

*Robert J. Helfenbein & Gabriel Huddleston*

The expression “urban society” meets a theoretical need. It is more than simply a literary or pedagogical device, or even the expression of some form of acquired knowledge; it is an elaboration, a search, a conceptual formulation. A movement of thought toward a certain *concrete*, and perhaps toward the concrete, assumes shape and detail. This movement, if it proves to be true, will lead to a practice, *urban practice*, that is finally or newly comprehended. (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 5, authors emphasis)

A theory of articulation is both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects. (Hall, 1996, pp. 141-142)

The articles for this special issue on “youth, space, cities” represent a collection of scholarship that works the intersection of cultural studies, critical geography, and critical approaches to educational theorizing. In thinking of these articles together, as a collection of work while not necessarily in parallel but sharing a trajectory, one quickly sees an undergirding notion: Stuart Hall’s concept of articulation. Hall (1996) notes that articulation presents a valuable term for cultural studies work because of its double meaning within the British context. To articulate does mean

to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate. It carries that sense of language-ing, of expressing, etc. But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. (p. 141)

Those within critical geography (Harvey, 2001; Massey, 2005; Soja, 1996) and those who have sought to apply it to educational and curriculum theorizing (Allen, 1999; Helfenbein, 2010; Taylor & Helfenbein, 2009) have identified space as a frame that can be articulated with other elements in a way that offers illumination



within inquiry in/around educative contexts. Indeed, such an articulation moves this theoretical work toward the material because working the links between the ideological, social, cultural, and the lived experience forces the scholar to discuss what is materially happening to students and teachers within schools, classrooms, and other spaces.

The marriage between cultural studies of education and critical geography seems to be a natural fit due to the insistence of both to problematize the world's taken-for-grantedness allowing for deeper examination beyond the usual, tired solutions that are often presented. This is even more apparent in the discussion of neoliberal education reforms that present solutions, which mask themselves as common sense thereby making the likelihood of success seemingly inevitable. The only effective way to take on such reforms is to question the very framework upon which they rest. One such way is through articulation because it:

Asks how an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it; it enables us to think how an ideology empowers people enabling them to begin to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation, without reducing those forms of intelligibility to their socio-economic or class location or social position. (Hall, 1996, p. 142)

The addition of Critical Geography to this type of cultural studies analysis provides a rebalanced ontological and epistemological triad via what Soja (2010) suggests as the historical, the social, and spatial frame for the examination of ideological elements. The effectiveness of academic work within a neoliberal society that encompasses the social, the political and the economic to the extent that education is left utterly transformed in its wake, depends on its ability to not only identify the ideological elements themselves, but how they are or are not articulated within that neoliberal discourse. The identification of such elements is a prelude to the more difficult task of articulation as it must pay attention to the material examples of how such ideological elements work in a myriad of ways.

To take up the task of presenting a collection of scholarship that revolves around the intersection of youth, space, and cities requires some foundational work on the ways in which our own terms are articulated and understood across the work. Certainly, each of the three might be seen as fluid, perhaps even as floating signifiers of complex social forces that involve the nexus of power/knowledge and identity. Even as meaning isn't fixed for these concepts, we might attempt to delineate what we mean, or, in the very least, present the different ways in which we inscribe these terms for the task at hand. That task notwithstanding, the effort of fusing Critical Geography with educational theorizing involves an intentionality that focuses our attention on what Pinar (2007) refers to, building on Ted Aoki as "the lived experience, this place where we hear the call of teaching" (p. 42), or, said another way, points us toward the concrete.

## Youth

The learning spaces and pedagogical possibilities often were where the teachers were not. (Roy, 2003, p. 5)

Youth, as a category, is more than a little problematic. We know that to think of youth as outside of the social and historical forces at work in its representation is insufficient. From both sides—child or adult perspective—youth is most likely reducible to “not-adult” in its usage. But certainly, the field of education implies an interaction with youth in some form in the majority of its work; when we say education we typically mean the education of youth. However, to dig deeper into issues of power and identity, the subject position of youth itself needs to be seen as one of negotiation, of struggle. It is important for us to remember,

There is no universal child...Child identity is always plural and there are a multiplicity of ways to know childhood. Although childhoods are variable they are also intentional, predicated upon social, political, historical, geographical and moral contexts. (Aitken, 2001, p. 57)

Geographies of youth, greatly influenced by feminist and poststructural thought, focus attention on the simultaneous process by which young people are embedded and embodied within spaces and in the ways in which they embark in place-making both as strategies of resilience and resistance. A critical geography of youth turns our eye to “the ways young people are placed, at what scale they operate and in which ways their identities are fixed” (Aitken, 2001, p.19). In moving toward the concrete of youth experience we are cautioned to remember that spaces are not experienced in the same way, place is not made in the same ways for youth and adult alike.

## Space

Place is place only if accompanied by a history. (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 8)

In the introduction to *Curriculum as Social Psychoanalysis: The Significance of Place*, Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) argue for a curriculum theory that takes place seriously. As part of the project to continue thinking about the lived experience of curriculum they argue that “the relationship between place and feeling is central to curriculum theory’s study of place...indeed, place particularizes and conveys embedded social forces” (p. 4). In this way it seems essential to consider place’s significance when the autobiographical and the unconscious aspects of understanding curriculum are in process. Using “social psychoanalysis” as a marker of their approach, they note that this work “attempts to subvert the given facts by interrogating them historically. They remind us that Herbert Marcuse argued that the tendency to make existing social arrangements appear rational and natural (i.e. the process of reification) is “the project of forgetting” (p. 3). Kincheloe and Pinar, the other authors of their 1991 collection, and the scholars presented here argue against this

ahistorical, uncritical look at youth and cities in/of spaces and the relational ways in which it both is and comes to be. But important too in this project is to not only look backward but to turn our attention to the future, to what may be emergent or imminent. Ellsworth (2005) points to “places of learning [that] struggle to remain, themselves, things in the making” (p. 10) and, following Massumi seeks out the possibilities in spaces that “scatter thoughts and images into difference linkages or new alignments without destroying them” (Massumi in Ellsworth, p. 13). This willingness to be open to uncertainty roots this approach in a language of possibility. As argued elsewhere, one could think of this desire as a geography of getting lost (Helfenbein, 2004), one open to new subjectivities, new forms of meaning-making, new forms of resistance.

### The City: Toward the Concrete

Curriculum theory, likewise, must possess a particularistic social theory, a grounded view of the world in which education takes place. Without such a perspective, curriculum theory operates in isolation, serving to trivialize knowledge, fragmenting it into bits and pieces of memorizable waste, while obscuring the political effects of such a process. (Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991, p. 5)

Although not a curriculum theory collection per se, this special issue takes the call from Kincheloe and Pinar (1991) seriously and notes, in particular, the work of critical geographers as useful to scholars in education who seek to take “a grounded view of the world,” to move toward the concrete. Soja (1985) points to a critical social theory in which “being, consciousness, and action...[exist] not simply ‘in’ space but ‘of’ space as well. To be alive intrinsically and inescapably involves participation in the social production of space, shaping and being shaped by a constantly evolving spatiality” (Soja, 1985, p. 177). Here may be an opportunity to think about place and subjectivity, curriculum as lived experience, and theory in education as looking to foster spaces of possibility.

Nowhere are the processes of shaping and constantly being shaped by the spatial more evident than in the city. As the epigraph of this introduction notes, “urban” as a term refers to more than category or conceptual organization, it is “an elaboration, a search...a practice, *urban practice*” (Lefebvre, 1970/2003, p. 5). The implications are not only theoretical but also methodological for scholars as we consider an educative project within the changing formations of the global city. While not suggesting that this terrain is new, the collection of work here represents a more explicit staking of that claim. However, just because the spatial component of social relations seems to be apparent does not mean that it is connected at all times to everything. We cannot say space is everything or worse, the *only* thing, but at the same time one should be extremely careful as to where and when we say it matters—we must work the articulation and be precise with the ideological elements that come into play. This is to say that we have to work the link, not just focusing on the ideological elements.

The interactions, or the friction between those elements, are as important, if not more so, than the examination of the elements themselves. The danger lies in getting hung up on the elements at the detriment of not examining how they are linked, keeping in mind these linkages are not fixed or permanent; there are no guarantees. The point of working the link is not to fix in place, but to explore how and why those linkages come together in the first place.

Articulation's strength as an analytic resides in the ability to describe but, at the same time, not foreclose description upon understanding. While a scholar can use articulation as a means to describe her area of study, it also forces that scholar to return again and again to the concrete. In other words, using articulation does not cap scholarly inquiry with a label of understanding, but instead insists on a continued examination of how ideological forces evolve within an ever-changing context. Articulation is not the only example of such a process. In a recent example of critical ethnography, Tsing (2005) uses the term friction as both a metaphor to describe and a call to examine the concrete of social relations with a spatial context. Indeed, Tsing's work embraces the nuance and ambivalence to such a degree that it questions notions of both a romanticized local versus the all-powerful evil (and/or unquestioned good) forces of so-called development and globalization. Tsing's insistence on describing the complexity of both the local and the global exposes complete understanding as a mirage that contains a pool of ideology disguised as "common-sense." This described complexity allows a multidirectional plane in which to explore commonalty and, eventually, solutions. We believe the articles within this issue offer their own examples in the spirit of articulation and friction all within a trajectory of spatial analysis. Jason G. Irizarry and René Antrop-Gonzalez articulate place, space, youth, and culture to highlight the experiences of Puerto Rican youth in urban school contexts and, by doing so, privilege race and identity in seeking out school spaces that provide for student agency and ways of knowing. G. Sue Kasun examines how one teacher's practices within the classroom create a unique place that runs counter to the effects of accountability and standardization. While her work seeks to describe the classroom itself, it also brings to bear the complicated way it runs counter to policies that are detrimental to the underserved students within that classroom. Aslam Fataar's use of the word 'carving' to describe students' movements and effect on the post-apartheid city in which they live is an attempt to describe by continuously returning to the lives of the young people at the center of his work. Additionally, Kaoru Miyazawa presents the lives of first-generation immigrants as in constant flux between dreams and survival in the discourse of the American Dream. Sophia Rodriguez calls into question traditional notions of space and place by positing alternative spaces instead of the traditional classroom. Thinking about the sensual in the curriculum and spaces where the identity work of youth take place, Walter S. Gershon uses sound as a way of mapping that brings into focus the challenges of educational research and the complexity of meaning-making within the interplay of self and world.

All of these authors not only take space seriously but also represent a type of scholarship that focuses on the materiality of social forces in the lives of people, youth and adult. Throughout the work presented here, the intersections of space, place, power, and identity provide the frame they which their work is taken up and provide yet another way of thinking through a cultural studies of education—a project we would suggest has always had at its center, a move toward the concrete.

### References

- Aitken, S. C. (2001). *Geographies of young people: The morally contested spaces of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Allen, R. L. (1999). The socio-spatial making and marking of 'us': Toward a critical post-modern spatial theory of difference and community. *Social Identities*, 5(3), 249-277.
- Ellsworth, E. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Hall, S. (1996). On postmodernism and articulation: An interview with Stuart Hall. In D. Morley & K. Chen (Eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 131-150). New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (2001). *Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography*. New York: Routledge.
- Helfenbein, R. (2004). A radical geography: Curriculum theory, performance, and landscape. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 20(3), 67-76.
- Helfenbein, R. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical Geography and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304-317). New York: Routledge.
- Helfenbein, R., & Taylor, L. H. (Eds.). (2009). Critical geographies in/of education. [Special Issue] *Educational Studies*, 45(3).
- Kincheloe, J., & Pinar, W. (Eds.) (1991). *Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1970/2003). *The urban revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. London, UK: Sage.
- Pinar, W. (2007). *Intellectual advancement through disciplinarity: Verticality and horizontality in curriculum studies*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Roy, K. (2003). *Teachers in nomadic spaces: Deleuze and curriculum*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Soja, E. (1985). Regions in context: Spatiality, periodicity, and the historical geography of the regional question. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 3(2), 175-190.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Taylor, L. H., & Helfenbein, R. (2009). Mapping everyday: Gender, blackness, and discourse in urban contexts. *Educational Studies*, 45(3), 319-329.
- Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

*Robert J. Helfenbein is an associate professor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and Gabriel Huddleston is a Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University, Bloomington. Their e-mail addresses are rhelfenb@iupui.edu and gshuddle@indiana.edu*

## Students' Bodily Carvings in School Spaces of the Post-Apartheid City

*Aslam Fataar*

The (post)-colonized person is a living, talking, conscious, active individual whose identity arises from a three-pronged movement of violation, erasure and self-writing. (Mbembe, 2006, p. 3)

This article is an account of the school-going subject who moves across the post-apartheid city in search of viable educational circumstances. It presents one way of apprehending the dynamic interaction between the rapidly reconfiguring city and young people's exercise of school choice in it. Poor Black children are the focus of this account; specifically their ability to navigate rewired urban space and, in the process, transacting feasible lives in the light of desperate urban living. It is the main argument of this article that they do so largely in parallel to the normative school choice discourses—unrecognised and undervalued by their urban schools. The notion 'bodies in space' is apposite to capture the complex ways in which these children go about accessing the city and its schools. However, in spite of these precarious bodily carvings, the extant formal discourses of the city are oblivious to the ontological presence of the Black Other, in the form of these school-going children. Their mobile subject making in the city remain an invisible presence, with consequences for what the city is able to recognize and the schools (in)ability to offer genuinely inclusive institutional cultures. I suggest that these children carve out aspirant bodily dispositions while actively engaging their city's social and educational infrastructures. The view of the 'body as infrastructure' (see Simone, 2008) is given prominence in exploring their urban bodily adaptations.

This article contributes to a nascent body of work that attempts to bring the submerged worlds of the Black urban under-classes in the South African city to academic consciousness. Nuttall and Mbembe's (2008) edited collection on the city of Johannesburg, which they conceptualise as an 'elusive metropolis,' does much to recuperate a form of scholarship that punctures functionalist readings of cities. Their work sets out an interrogation of Africa as a sign of modern social formation,

based on a gesture of defamiliarization, and a commitment to providing a sense of the worldliness of contemporary African life forms. Life forms in the 'Afropolitan' city, they suggest, involve connections among various forms of circulation—people, capital, finance, images—and overlapping spaces and times. Writing about the worldliness of the contemporary African city requires a profound interrogation of Africa in general and as a sign in modern formulations of knowledge.

The elusive metropolis is juxtaposed with the global city paradigm's (see Sassen, 2001) emphasis on economic and technological global integration. The global city paradigm could be viewed as a highly functionalist reading of the city, as well as ignoring the specificity of cities of the global south. An analytically richer notion of the global city would account for what Appadurai (1996) describes as urban life that are now constituted by "complex, overlapping, disjunctive, order of multiple centres, peripheries, and scapes of various scales, moving at various speeds" (p.32). Mbembe and Nuttall (2008, p. 3) point out that the major cities of the global South share many of the characteristics of northern cities but that ways of seeing and reading African cities, for example, are still dominated by the metanarratives of urbanization, modernization, and crisis. They call for an analytical frame that captures the "fracturing, colliding and splintered orders of urban life" (p. 5), in other words, views that move beyond the misery associated with urban poverty, to richer, more nuanced accounts of the uncertain, spectral and informal quality of life, understood as elusive yet momentarily 'mappable.' Beyond the fact of urban poverty, this type of analysis is interested in the complex ways the 'terms of recognition'—the ability and capacity of the poor to exercise their voice is pursued and substantiated (see Appadurai, 2004). The elusive African metropolis exists beyond its architecture where,

Simple material infrastructures and technologies, as well as their dysfunction and breakdown, thus create, define, and transform new sites of transportation, new configurations of entangled spatialities, new public spaces of work and relaxation, new itinerancies and clusters of relations. The main infrastructural unit or building block is the human body. (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2008, p. 71)

Similarly, the position I develop here is contrasted with predominant accounts of a sociology of education and knowledge that is inscribed with functionalist epistemologies. The analytical task is to present a view of the socialities associated with schools in the post-apartheid city, founded on a complex reading of urban subject making. My focus is on what Appadurai refers to as a 'cultural economy' (1996, p. 37) associated with unfolding urban spaces and the formative role of schooling processes in them.

Mine is an attempt to bring those urban post-apartheid citizens into view who live below the city's normative lines, planned pathways and built architectures. They live in the city's shadows, as old and newer urban residents in sprawling urban townships and shacklands, and some as refugees in squalid infrastructures in



run-down parts of the inner city. They are mostly out of sight of the city's planning intent and normative consciousness. The children of the black working classes and unemployed poor go to great lengths to access what they perceive as better schools across the city, where they end up receiving a modernist curriculum that strips them of their access to their cultural knowledge and social survival epistemologies, on the assumption that modern middle-class education is what will emancipate them from their parochial cultural identifications. The assumption of cultural assimilation is hard at work in the urban post-apartheid school, albeit with multicultural genuflection to the newer incoming kids' backgrounds. Assimilationist curriculum practices are alive in the city's classrooms, which ostensibly provide the vehicle for their induction into modern life.

My focus is on the subjective processes of kids and families who make their school choices in the light of their physical extensions across the city: How do they live their choices? How are their subjectivities formed? How do they work with their extant knowledges as they access the formal codes of the school? And how do they work with their inclusions and co-optations into the formal registers of their schools?

Schools deny them any recognition of their physical and ontological worlds and their epistemic forms, instead inducting them into a one-dimensional modern racial-colonial canon. I favor an intermediate epistemological position that works beyond the binary of the formal vertical line, the narrow formal coda, or the one-dimensional modernist knowledge code currently informing schooling in the post-apartheid city. While the school knowledge code is not entirely driven by the trope of social difference (see Soudien, 2011), I would suggest that this code in South African curriculum debates is wrapped up in: (1) discursive framings of hegemonic school curriculum debates and policy reforms; (2) the myopia of what in this country is described as the "school fix-it agenda" in response to the dismal learning achievement of the majority of Black kids in South Africa—an agenda that narrowly concentrates on improving school quality without providing a basis for troubling the discursive productions that the implied school processes entrench; and (3) the historiography of educational academic work that circulates around a narrow functionalist posture that focuses primarily on what's wrong with the learning of poor Black kids and on the teaching pedagogies of their teachers. These tropes collectively translate into unproblematized pedagogical approaches that conceptualize student learning as a problem in isolation, understood apart from the reconfiguring social forms that swirl around it. The socio-cultural forms of the Black working and urban poor, coupled with the everyday deployment of their cultural knowledges, what I call the counter-normative epistemic forms of the urban underside, are not given curricular currency.

Such a deficit approach to curriculum and knowledge embeds a modernist colonial and racial teleology. It embellishes the city's colonial, racial modernist form, while simultaneously hiding its productive capacity, making race continue to live an



unseemly life, invisible to the eye, but operating beneath the surface. Commenting on the pervasiveness of race as productive social articulator, Goldberg (2009) suggests that, "Much like a shroud in its ghostly appearance, race still exercises a magnetism, modes of referentiality and divisive effects, if now informalized and sublimated into the body politic, just as it is shrugged off" (p. 311). Goldberg argues that with the secularization of race, the language of racial order disappears even if its outlines and impressions, its structural imprint and threats continue to have social force.

The structural informalities of society continue to embed its racial legacy. I would suggest that the changing schooling landscape in the post-apartheid city provides a key articulating platform for the ways in which these continuing informalities, in 'post-racial' context, play out. My key argument is the suggestion that these informalities work way beyond what a racial or modernist trope can recognize or make visible. It is in the interstices of the cracks, fissures, and leaks of urban textualities that newer referential modes are productive, made up of urban self-writing governmental processes, which I will later suggest are brought about by young people who put their bodies on the line as they access the city's schools.

### The 'Visibly Invisible' Mobile School Subject

Making visible the mobile school-going subject that moves below the city's radar is meant as a challenge to the one-dimensional understandings of schooling and its subjective entailments. The dominant version of the educational subject in the city and its attendant knowledge form is not seen in the light of a radically altered social form, whose grasping requires one to see the link between the social unfolding and the curricular and knowledge forms. Two tropes reflect this dominant view: those that advocate fixing schools as transmitters of formal knowledge codes and those that advocate for an equity-informed schooling policy reform platform. Both leave the hegemonic knowledge and curriculum code untroubled. Induction into formal school knowledge is presented as a kind of moral commitment to providing kids access to middle-class knowledge and upward mobility. For both of these tropes the radically transforming social (and epistemological) form of schooling and education more generally are swept off the table. Both suffer from a kind of historical evisceration, in support of a forward-looking teleological commitment to functional educational and social improvement.

As Archer (2004) suggests, such a view embeds an entirely modernist view of the world. As a social realist and pragmatist philosopher, Archer (2004) suggests, "courses of (human) action are produced through the *reflexive deliberations* [italics added] of subjects who *subjectively* [italics added] determine their practical projects in relation to their *objective* [italics added] circumstances" (p. 17). It is the relationship between the subjective and objective that is important for my argument here. Archer's work opens out the possibility of viewing the imbrications of the educational, curricular and epistemological terrain of subject formation,

in my case in a post-racial urban context. Archer provides for an understanding of the emergence of an architectonic map of those for whom access to the city's commercial and educational landscape remains formally closed, and for whom the city's schools represent a chimera, where, in their exercise of school choice, they put body and soul on the line to access its empty and emptying promises, on an empty promissory note, based on the 'politics of aspiration.' This happens in urban spaces that are being worked over by a neoliberal reconfiguration, where state withdrawal from social welfare provision and from acting as a buffer, has pitted the bodies of people in the direct firing line of an exclusionary school choice market, which is an example of 'individual responsabilization' in contingent neoliberal city space (Gulson & Fataar, 2011). Gulson (2011) explains, "Aspirations and responsibilities circulate as part of education markets in inner city areas; and the racialization of desires and concerns can be diluted to, for example, discourses of responsible, rational parenting" (p. 99). In other words, the responsibility for social and welfare related services, including education, are transferred onto the individual, families and communities. Young people have to figure out their aspirational maps based on what neoliberal discourses make available what is knowable and possible, allowing "desiring neoliberal subjects to gloss over race and racism, by recourse to the realm of personal preference" (p. 99).

The focus is on those city kids who cultivate their aspirations in the thickness of social life that is variously described as 'bare' (Comaroff, p. 12), and 'miserable urban life' or 'intensifying immiseration' (Simone, 2008, p. 89), where cities no longer offer poor people the prospect of improving their livelihoods or modern ways of life. The growing distance that emerges between how urban Africans actually live, on the one hand, and the normative trajectories of urbanization and public life, on the other, can constitute new fields of economic action (p. 89). This distancing can lead to the disarticulation of coherent urban space, where people have to make what they can out of bare life. Simone describes this as a situation where people throw "their intensifying particularisms—of identity, location, destination and livelihood—into the fray, (and) urban residents generate a sense of unaccountable movement that might remain geographically circumscribed or travel great distances (Simone, 2008, p. 89).

In other words, what is crucial to understand is the performance of subjectivity on the move, as I argue, on the basis of navigational maps that are constructed 'as you go,' based on formal destinations somewhat in sight, only somewhat, but with end destinies largely unknown, even unknowable. Clarity of end goals is not the key to subjective construction. It is not the clarity about where one ends up that motivates school aspirants, but the reaching out for a destination whose route remains unclear and tenuous. Investing in the 'destination,' however tenuous, serves as a motivation for remaining en route and it is the remaining en route that matters. Herein resides the 'banality' and utter hopefulness of the investment. The hope invested in becoming a recognized urban citizen—children are 'on the move,'

across borders, bridges, and highways, under subways, on trains, taxis, and buses—provide the motive force for investments in these children's urban making.

This brings the theorization of space, or 'lived space' (see Lefebvre, 1991), into view. People's subjectivities are shaped in dynamic interaction with the reconfiguring physical landscape. This can be understood analytically as the outcome of a spatial dialectic: the imbrications of physical or material space, representational space, and spatial representation (or lived space). 'Lived space' (or social space, relational space, or spatiality) refers to how people live in particular sites, how they are wired into their geography, and how they transcend this geography. Lived space focuses on what people become when engaging their geographies, appropriating space and inventing new practices. In their book, *Mapping the Subject*, Pile and Thrift (1995) explain that mappings of subjectivity or 'subject becoming' need to be drawn in ways that are capable of elucidating the fixity and fluidity, the ambivalence and ambiguity, the transparency and opacity, and the surface and the depth of the mapped subject. It is out of a complex, fluid, open, and layered lived experience that these school-going kids encounter their subjection and subject becoming. People's educational choices, for example, are invested with readings that draw on notions of the rapidly changing city and the spatial provenance they expect their choices to provide. What one wants to capture is the splintering quality of the metropolitan experience itself. Schooling subjectivities, constructed in motion, involve complex readings and navigations of the city's environs, often by children who have to travel long distances in precarious transport arrangements.

With regard to the structural outlines of the subjective formations associated with school life in the post-apartheid city, I argue that lived space has been the key articulator or organiser of these newer school subjectivities in the city. The rigid, racialised apartheid city grid has been fundamentally rearranged by families and increasingly mostly children, who make decisions on their own over their schools of choice. While school kids by and large still live in racialised pockets in the city, their school choices have increasingly been transacted across the city. Students have either burst out of racialised township spaces to attend remoter schools in adjacent townships, suburbs or the inner city, or they have moved to schools on the other side of the township. They have been developing a sense of citizenship rooted in the space of the city on the move, while becoming affectively distanced from their place of living to which they return every day.

Students have moved across the apartheid-generated city grid to access schools elsewhere, away from their homes. They do this on the basis of careful readings of the social-spatial attributions of the schools close by. The empirical evidence suggests that close to 50% of school children in cities choose to go to schools in remoter locations (see Lemon & Battersby-Lennard, 2010). They have come to understand that the school close by has to be avoided, trapped as it is in place and devoid of aspirational capital.

Facilitated by a decentralised state governance model, schools have developed

methods to preserve and induct their students into their hegemonic identities. Examples of such exclusionary school practices are: (1) the non-racism by stealth at the former coloured middle-class schools, involving, for example, discriminatory social practices among different black groups; (2) the linguistic apartheid at working-class schools in coloured townships; (3) the assimilation of incoming children into the hegemonic cultures of suburban schools; and (4) the exclusion practices that confront the recalcitrant children at the functional black township schools (see Fataar, 2009). What is apparent is that the city's schools, their different identification articulations notwithstanding, have evolved cultures of inclusion and exclusion, buttressed by their specific hegemonic ways of being.

Given this structurally rearranged city school landscape, what is important to consider is how these aspirational students construct their subjectivities as they move across the city to access their schooling. How do they come into subjective consciousness? How do they comport themselves as they burst out of their immediate surrounds and move into an unknown metropolitan order, with far-off hopes and dreams? How do they embody the routes, routines, repertoires and performances of their becoming as they access their education? How do they become city subjects as they emerge from their informalized, anti-aspirational, traumatized spatialities? And what can we learn about the way the city and its schools now work to include these newer 'bodies on the move and on the make,' while simultaneously blocking off the ontologies of these subjective flows from emerging out of the shadows and co-constructing the post-apartheid city's metropolitan imagination?

### Spatialized Youth Bodily Carvings

Articulated in space, youth bodies are carved out of complex processes that involve their physical mobility as they move across the city in search of functioning modern schooling, the embodiments they take on in their uneven spatial terrains, and their classification struggles (working with their uneven knowledge dispositions) as they open a path into their urban becoming. They adopt a type of multi-sited adaptive literacy as they daily navigate various spatialities—surviving in their ephemeral and impoverished domestic spaces, the mobile and unsafe spaces of their travel and transport arrangements, and the dissonant spatiality of their assimilation-orientated schools that fail to recognize their complex subjective dynamics. They use their bodies as a kind of human infrastructure as they establish their presence in the city. Simone (2008) explains that the notion of “people as infrastructure” captures the idea of “incessantly flexible, mobile, and provisional intersections of residents that operate without clearly delineated notions of how the city is to be inhabited and used” (p. 68). These intersections or conjunctions become a kind of infrastructure, a platform for reproducing life in the city out of “complex combinations of objects, spaces, people and practices” (p. 69). Out of these types of social practices emerge a kind of regularity capable of anchoring these mobile students' lives. While radically open,

these practices are transacted in the light of various threats of physical violence, especially for girls (see Lancaster, 2011). These children nonetheless succeed in opening a viable path into their schooling careers.

Their spatial consciousness is based on acute readings of what type of behavior is expected of them in each space. They adapt to these expectations, sometimes with great difficulty, on an understanding of the type of bodily comportment required. They take on a type of dual identity based on the desire to fit into their shifting environments. In their township spaces they try to live below the radar by fitting in with peer-group activity, which works against their appearing too strange, thereby avoiding verbal or physical recrimination. In the taxi, train and/or bus on the way to school they adopt an appropriate body language that aids their safe travel, and they work hard to fit into the culture of assimilation of their schools.

Bodily discipline and appropriate comporting seem to characterize their successful navigation across these different worlds. Based on interviews and observing them in these spaces, I deduced that they have an acute understanding of the dominant discourses of each space. They figure out the appropriate behavior that would enable them to survive in these spaces. For example, feigning obliviousness to the exclusionary discourses at their school is adopted as a bodily tactic deployed to access the school's formal educational goods. Similarly, smoking or flirting on a taxi or adopting a specific bodily style over the weekend in the township is used as a means of fitting into the expectations of those spaces. Strategic readings, street-smart literacies and tactical deployment of appropriate behavior constitute the lineaments of their subject making, in effect securing them access to the city. This notion of tactics operating at the interstices of strategic constraints is a recurring theme in the work of Michael de Certeau (1984, pp. 29-44). His work allows one to understand how these children's subject making arises from everyday practices and tactics based on improvisation and opportunism that combine disparate resources and material to gain momentary advantage. It is the daily accumulation and repetition of such practices that secure them viable school going experiences in the post-apartheid city.

### Conclusion

The children's active bodily adaptations are thus central to their urban subject making. They carve out complex bodily orientations to navigate materially deprived urban spaces, by adopting a range of tactics, including resistance, strategic compliance, acting tough, and dressing and behaving with calculated sensibility. They establish their everyday bodily practices on the move across the city, developing acute readings of the expectations of each space that they enter and exit daily, including their schools. They acquire highly sophisticated street literacies that inform their readings of these spaces, enabling them to survive, adapt, and access the requisite cultural capital to get on.

It is important to note that these flexible and disciplining configurations are pursued not in some essential contrast to more formal priorities and routines in the city, although they perceptibly are, but as specific routes to a kind of stability and regularity that poor urbanites have always attempted to realise (see Simone, 2008). This brings me back to the link between the cityscape and the dominant discourses of the school. There seems to be a widely unacknowledged formative relationship between different urban discourses: the planned and the providential, the informal routes of the urban poor and the formal accessibilities of the middle classes, the exclusions of the discourses of the urban underside and the predominance of middle-class 'ways of knowing.' These operate in parallel. The extant formal discourses of the city are oblivious to the ontological presence of the Black Other. The latter's precarious subjections in the city remain an invisible presence. Schooling in the city plays a largely reproductive role in circulating this parallel message—that is, it circulates an exclusive focus on the narrow epistemological code that prevents the ontologies and knowledges of the city's poor and Black majority from entering the formal public domain. Despite the complex subject-making processes at play, a narrow epistemological orientation remains the hegemonic trope in the post-apartheid city and its schools.

### References

- Archer, M. (2007). *Structure, agency and the internal conversation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition. In V Rao & M Walton (eds), *Culture and public action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Comaroff, J. (2007). Beyond bare life: AIDS, (bio)Politics, and the neoliberal order. *Public Culture*, 19(1), 197-219.
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fataar, A. (2009). Schooling across the post-apartheid city. *African Education Review*, 6(1), 1-18.
- Goldberg, D. (2009). *The threat of race: Reflections on racial neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Gulson, K. (2011). *Education policy, space and the city*. New York: Routledge.
- Gulson, K., & Fataar, A. (2011). Neoliberal governmentality, schooling, and the city: Conceptual and empirical notes on and from the Global South. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(2), 269-283.
- Lancaster, I. (2011). Modalities of mobility: Johannesburg learners' daily negotiations of the uneven terrain of the city. *Southern African Review of Education*, 17(1), 49-64.
- Lefebvre, H. (1971/1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Lemon, A., & Battersby-Lennard, J. (2010). Studying together, living apart: Emerging geographies of school attendance in post-apartheid Cape Town. *African Affairs*, 110(438), 97-120.

- Mbembe, A. (2006). *What is postcolonial thinking?* Retrieved on 30 March, 2011, from <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2008-01-09-mbembe-en.html>
- Nuttall, S., & Mbembe, A. (2008). *Johannesburg the elusive metropolis*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.
- Pile, S., & Thrift, N. (1995). *Mapping the subject: Geographies of cultural transformation*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Sassen, S. (2001) *The global city*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Simone, A. (2008). People as infrastructure. In S, Nuttall & A, Mbembe (eds), *Johannesburg the elusive metropolis*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press.
- Soudien, C. (2011). What to teach the natives: A historiography of the curriculum dilemma in South Africa. In W, Pinar (ed), *Curriculum studies in South Africa: Intellectual histories & present circumstances*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

*Aslam Fataar is a professor and head of the Department of Educational Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa. His e-mail address is afataar@sun.ac.za*



## Sonic Cartography: Mapping Space, Place, Race, and Identity in an Urban Middle School

*Walter S. Gershon*

This article began as an exploration of the ways in which sounds can be utilized to understand urban educational contexts. My interest in this intersection has manifested in a longitudinal interpretive study that examines how writing songs about academic content about science might help mitigate race and gender gaps in science for urban students in Northeast Ohio. This study was conceived in light of contradictions between national concerns about a general lack of science knowledge in the United States in schools (e.g., Dye, 2004; Holland, 2009) and far less frequent discussions of continuing racial gaps as well as still under-reported gender gaps in science knowledge in P-12 education and science professions (e.g., Huang & Fraser, 2009; Prime & Miranda, 2006). I wondered if processes of music-making might serve as a curricular tool (on cultural tools and toolkits, see Swidler, 2001) to help students better understand and be more interested in science content. I was similarly interested in whether or not this curricular tool could serve as a lens for the meanings about science their songs contained and what might be learned about middle grades classrooms through its use (see Cockburn, 2000; Hudak, 1999). While this article focuses on the case of Ricky, a student in one of four classrooms, approximately 70 students from across these four contexts participated in this study over the course of the 2009-2010 academic year.

Although it is not possible to disentangle the content of one's talk from the way in which one speaks and/or again from the movements that accompany one's talk (for a particularly elegant discussion of this entanglement, see Erickson, 2004), I focus here on how sounds form local and less local geographies (cf. Brandt, Duffy & MacKinnon, 2009; Feld, 1996; Iseli, 2004; Leitner, 1998; Sterne, 2005). In the same ways that music in a car creates sound spaces that supersede the physical boundaries of the vehicle's interior (Bull, 2001) or headphones alter a person's migration through physical geographies (Thibaud, 2003), the distance voices carry enunciate the boundaries of learning places that can be within or beyond physical boundaries of classroom walls (Gershon, 2011a).



Sounds serve as a sociocultural means for the empirical and theoretical understanding of places, histories, and peoples (e.g., Bull & Back, 2004; Erlmann, 2004, 2010; Kim-Cohen, 2009; M. M. Smith, 2004; Sterne, 2003). Similarly, sounds can be the means, focus, and locus of qualitative research (Bauer, 2000; Drobnick, 2003; Erlmann, 2004; Feld & Brennis, 2004; Makagon & Neumann, 2009; Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa, & Porcello, 2010). The viability of such sonic understandings and possibilities in studies of educational contexts has also been established (e.g., Aoki, 1991; Dimitriadis, 2009; Gershon, 2011b; McCarthy, Hudak, Miklaucic, & Saukko, 1999; Powell, in press; Stovall, 2006). In all cases, these are critical discussions of how sounds constitute spaces, places, and identities, a discussion that necessarily attends to questions of norms and normalizing, of sociocultural ideas and ideals.

Of equal importance are the ways in which the mapping of these sound fields<sup>1</sup> is a form of narrative cartography. As Dennis Wood (2010) presents and Katharine Harmon (2004, 2009) and Lex Bhagat and Lize Mogel (2008) document, maps do not necessarily have to be, nor from the point of critical geography are they ever (e.g., Harvey, 2002; Soja, 1989), objective sets of factual information—maps tell stories. Here, following in the footsteps of sensory ethnography (Pink, 2009), sound studies (Pinch & Bijsterveld, 2011; Sterne, 2012), and sonic ethnography (Gershon, 2012), these narratives are presented sonically, a possibility I am calling sonic cartography. While it is certainly possible to envision future versions in which sound maps are not accompanied by contextualizing text, my choice to do so here lies at the intersection of ethics and methodology because the textual information provides both transparency into process and contexts, important factors in allowing the reader/listener to more clearly delineate between local actors' lives and my interpretations of those lives.

Specifically, this article focuses on Ricky<sup>2</sup>, a student I met working with Ms. Whaley's eighth grade science class during the 2009-2010 academic year. While listening over and over again to the larger data set, I kept returning to my conversations and work with Ricky. What was it about Ricky that caught my ear? Why did it continue to resonate (Erlmann, 2010; Gershon, in press b)? Perhaps most importantly, how could listening to Ricky help me better understand the relationship between curriculum, classrooms, and urban students?

As I listened to Ricky, other social actors talking about Ricky, and to the sounds of the classroom, what emerged were the fluid, porous, and nuanced boundaries of his identity. Reenunciating Bakhtin's borrowing of musicality to theorize language, these sounds, both talk and non-talk, were iterations of polyphonic heteroglossia in which they simultaneously enunciated both the place in which that talk occurred (the room where Ms. Whaley teaches) and as the school and home spaces that contextualized his classroom talk. Closely listening to both what Ricky said and the ways in which he talked, revealed how Ricky conceived of himself as well as the sonic variables and markers that scored his performance of self (e.g., Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Erickson, 2003, 2004; Goffman, 1959). It was hearing these differences in his speech patterns

that led me to consider the spaces in which Ricky lived and the places within those spaces, the contexts that informed his sonic identity (see also Helfenbein, 2009; Low, 2011; Nesper, 1997; Soja, 1989). This sonic cartography therefore not only maps narratives of Ricky's identity but also charts a curriculum of race that permeated the permeable membranes between community and school, school and classroom, and classroom and students—between spaces, places, and identities.

Thus, this piece can be understood as triply sounded. It is (1) a case drawn from an ethnography focused on sounds that (2) uses sounds methodologically in order to (3) critically attend to nested layers of a students' sonic identity. As such, this article lies at the intersection of sonic ethnography (Gershon, in press a; Gershon & The Listening to the Sounds of Science Project, 2012), curriculum studies (e.g., Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995; Malewski, 2009), and critical geography in education (Helfenbein, 2004, 2009).

This article is therefore significant in at least the following three ways. First, it demonstrates the possibilities for sonic mapping of educational spaces, places, and identities. Second, it illustrates the potential at the intersection of the sensual and the critical, the aesthetic and the political, between sound and race. Finally, it is a mapping of urban students and race that tends to be overlooked, the in-between identity of an Anglo kid in a primarily African-American middle school that locates him firmly in the racial tensions of the ecologies of his daily life.

In light of scholarship at the intersection of educational contexts, sound, and the sensual (e.g., Erickson, 1982, 2003; Gershon, 2006, 2011b; Powell, 2006, 2012), this article takes for granted the following assumptions about sound: (a) sounds can be utilized to examine educational contexts; (b) sounds can form educational systems of meaning; (c) sounds can denote and connote spaces, places, and identities; and (d) that such scholarship focused on sounds can be understood as part of a now longstanding tradition of interpretive research in and out of education (cf. Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa & Porcello, 2010; Sterne, 2012).

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. I first outline the differences between curriculum mapping and mapping curriculum, a section that also outlines the relationships between curriculum studies, interpretive studies of education, and critical geography. This section is followed by a section that provides both the methodology used in this study and contextual information about the spaces and places that inform Ricky's identity. The third section below provides both the sound contexts for the piece of sonic cartography as well as the sound map itself. In the fourth section, I analyze the sound map from the perspectives of curriculum studies, interpretive studies of education, and critical geography. A final brief concluding section presents possible implications and next steps.

### From Curriculum Mapping to Mapping Curriculum: Cartographies of Curriculum Studies, Critical Geography, and Interpretive Studies of Education

As its name suggests, curriculum mapping is the terminology used to describe the processes through which teachers, administrators, and districts plot the formal curriculum over the course of an academic year (e.g., Glass, 2007). The formal curriculum is the texts, assessments, homework, and other such components that comprise daily classroom lessons, lessons that are in turn organized into increasing units of intentionally organized knowledge.

This article, however, offers a mapping of curriculum as it conceptualized in the field of curriculum studies (e.g., Baker, 2010; Malewski, 2009; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). Therefore, rather than turning to the sequentially predetermined process of curriculum mapping, this sonic mapping is derived from recent arguments for the possibilities of critical geography within the field of curriculum studies.

Scholars such as Casemore (2007), Ellsworth (2005), Kincheloe and Pinar (1991), Ng-A-Fook (2007), Wang (2004), and Whitlock (2007), speak eloquently and critically about the intersections of space, place, and identity. While there is indeed much overlap between these discussions and the ideas presented in this article, my understandings of these terms lies at the intersection of critical geography (Helfenbein, 2004, 2006, 2009; Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009), interpretive research in education (Anderson, 2009; Nesper, 1997; Sobel, 1998), and curriculum studies (Baker, 2010; Malewski, 2009; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

Curriculum studies can be conceptualized as the study of ways of knowing and being, education as it occurs both in and out of formal, institutional contexts such as schools and classrooms (Kridel, 2010). What critical geography and interpretive studies of education share is their orientation towards the study of (a) the various intersections between the contexts that surround social actors and (b) the ways in which social actors work in conjunction, from micro to macro-interactions, to construct the sociocultural norms and values according which they conduct their daily lives. Critical geographies and interpretive studies of educational contexts can therefore be understood to be examinations of the enacted curriculum—the ways in which local actors in educational contexts negotiate meaning, the local understandings that emerge through such interactions, and the sociocultural contexts are revealed through local actors' face-to-face interactions (Page, 1991; Spindler & Hammond, 2006).

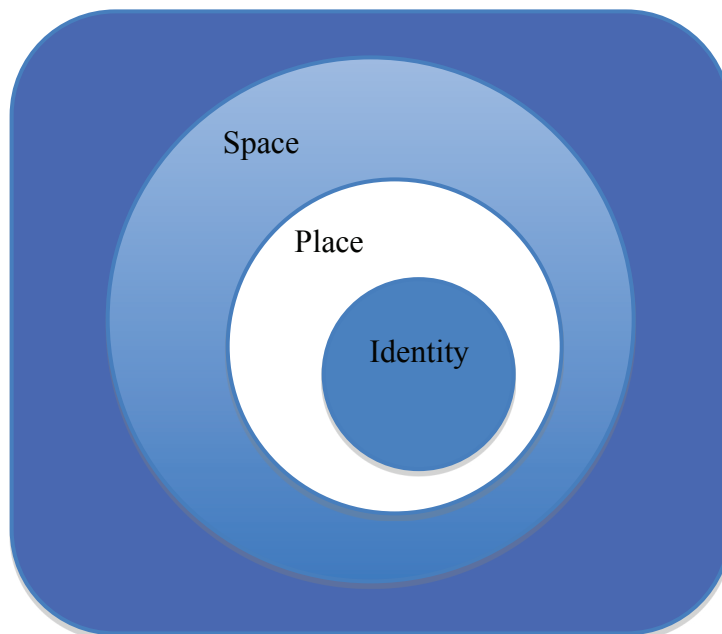
What for critical geographers tend to be questions of scale (Helfenbein, 2004, 2009) are most often questions of culture for interpretive researchers in education (Erickson, 1986, 2004; Levinson, Foley, & Holland, 1996; Varenne & McDermott, 1998). These two fields share the following understandings. First is an understanding that relationships between micro and macro interactions can be conceptualized as concentric circles from the local to the global and back again. These layers and meanings are nested and emergent (Agar, 2004; Gershon, 2008) and their boundaries

are both fluid and porous. These layers can be understood as, “(1) spaces that speak; (2) spaces that leak; and (3) spaces of possibility” (Helfenbein, 2009, p. 305).

Second are the ways in which emergent meanings at each layer are constantly in flux. What occurs on one layer of context does not necessarily influence another layer and both contextualizing and contextualized ecologies can and do inform one another (for an excellent non-educational illustration of such phenomenon, see Tsing, 1993, 2005). Last but not least is a focus on questions about the relationships between social actors and power. Different social actors have both varying degrees of ability to negotiate the contexts that inform their local interactions as well as an equally broad range of degrees to which social actors are constrained. Long-standing discussions of difference as deficit in educational contexts are but one example of this phenomenon (e.g., Rist, 1970; Valencia, 1997; Valenzuela, 2005).

Therefore, with an understanding that each layer of the following map is fluid and that the boundaries between them are porous, I offer the following conceptual maps. The first is a cartography—space, place, and identity derived from discussions of critical geography (see Figure 1). With a reminder that each might be found in the other, space is the broader category that delineates this from that place is a location within a particular space, and an identity is comprised of and constituted by places and spaces (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:**  
*Critical Geography: Space, Place, & Identity*



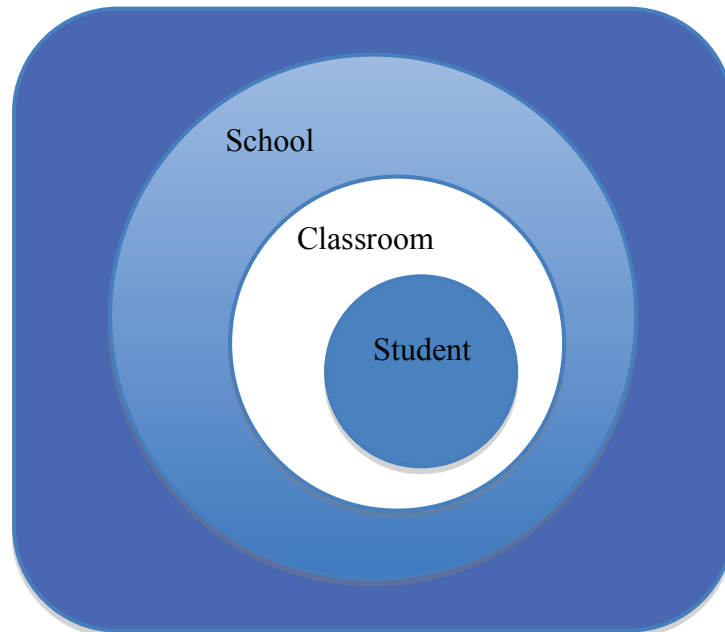
Furthermore, although there is certainly room for multiple definitions for identity in future iterations of sonic cartography, my use of the term identity in this paper is closest to McDermott's reminder that identity is relational (McDermott, 2004; Varenne & McDermott, 1998; McDermott & Varenne, 2006). Therefore, the question here is not whether or not a single social actor embodies either plural identities or that multiple relations and facets combine into a singular identity. Rather, I focus on questions of whom Ricky identifies with. From this perspective, the identity of social actors is located in the ways in which they negotiate meaning with others, whether another person is present or not, and regardless of the degree to which that relationship is explicit or implicit in a social actor's interactions with others.

Although discussions of space, place, and context are again rising to the fore of discussions in anthropology (cf. Coleman & Collins, 2006; Low, 2011), talk about authority, agency, place, and identity have deep roots in interpretive studies of education (e.g., Heath, 1983; Metz, 1978; Spindler, 1982). In light of this alignment, the relationship between students and schools can be mapped in the following manner (see Figure 2). As the shade of each layer suggests, this conceptualization of nested layers of school, classroom, student can also be understood as nested layers of space, place, and identity.

However, given the complexities of scale, that each level or layer impacts

---

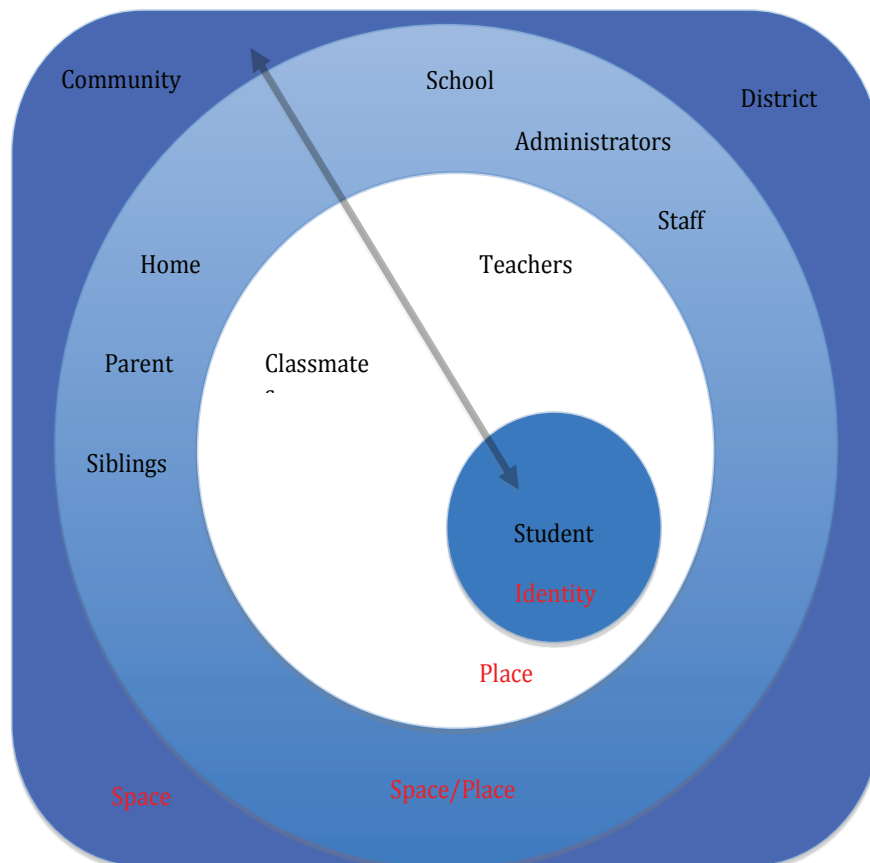
**Figure 2:**  
*The Spatial/Contextual Relationship between School and Student*



yet is independent from another, and in light of discussions of the complexities of contexts in interpretive studies of education, this third iteration is closer to the kinds of nuanced, complicated cartography that these two fields suggest (see Figure 3). Here the duo-directional arrow represents sociocultural norms and values that simultaneously inform each layer yet are as mutable and independent as much as they are influential and constant. To illustrate the complicated ways in which contexts/space/place/identity mutually constitute one another and the difficulty of naming fluid spaces, the home/school layer is labeled in as space/place—home and school are specific places within the communities and district in which they reside yet are also the spaces in which classrooms are placed.

As but two examples, although neither scholar specifically maps their work in this fashion, both Nesper's (1997) mapping of the relationships between students

**Figure 3:**  
*Complex Map of Space, Place & Identity*



and the communities in which they live and Varenne and McDermott's (1998) braided rope of contexts that impact students' daily lives in many ways resonate with the cartography of Figure 3. Again, it is of utmost importance to note that the purpose here is not simply the mapping of terrain but an effort to make sense through the sonic of what such spaces, places, and identities can mean to the local actors whose lives constitute those ecologies.

The sound map below is a critical cartography in that it necessarily attends to questions of power and its impact on social actors and is a narrative mapping of stories, places, and identities. From my perspective, it is also a sensual cartography, seeking to better conceptualize how people make sense of their world, an understanding that is predicated on and often realized through the sensorium. To be clear, this is a critical aesthetics, an understanding that the aesthetic must necessarily examine the political. It is an understanding that the aesthetic is inseparable from either questions of power and their impact on individuals' perceptions or from the sociocultural norms and values that create the spaces where such perceptions make sense (see Gershon, 2011a; Panagia, 2009; Roleofs, 2009; Young & Braziel, 2007).

### Sound Spaces, Methodology, and Context

Helpfenbein's (2009) chapter "Thinking Through Scale: Critical Geography and Curriculum Spaces" and Pinar's (2009) response to this chapter are firmly located in sound. Their conversation parallels discussions in sound studies that argue that sounds can and do delineate space, place, identity, and power, such as social and financial capital (e.g., Back, 2007; Erlmann, 2004, 2010; Feld, 1982, 1996, 2000; LaBelle, 2010; Weheliye, 2005). Along similar lines, it has also been suggested that thinking otologically (Erlmann, 2010) can help interrupt ocular metaphors that often lie at the heart of Western conceptualizations of knowledge (Aoki, 1991; Gershon, 2011b; Kim-Cohen, 2009), a helpful tool when trying to find the strange in familiar places like classrooms. My task here is to take such suggestions of the possibilities for the sonic in understanding educational contexts in a somewhat literalist practical manner—to map a student in relation to the spaces and places that inform his identity.

#### *Methodology and Context*

Sonic ethnography is the answer I have proposed in response to increasing calls for what Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa and Porcello (2010) call "a sounded anthropology." As its name implies, this methodology follows the tenets of contemporary ethnography (e.g., Agar, 1996; Atkinson et al., 2007; Faubian & Marcus, 2009) with an attention to the sensual (e.g., Howes, 2003; Stoller, 1997) in general and to sound in specific (e.g., Feld, 1982, 1996; Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa, & Porcello, 2010). For example, rather than represent findings in a purely textual manner, the sonic data collected over the past academic year (2010-2011) has been turned into a sound installation that will be exhibited in the spring of 2012 at the Akron

Art Museum. Here, I use both shorter pieces of sonic data and curricular map of sound—a sonic representation of Ricky’s identity and the spaces and places that inform his location (see Figure 4).

In this case, I have spent the past three years with seventh and eighth grade students and their teacher Ms. Whaley at an urban middle school in northeast Ohio. A mid-sized school for the district (~1000 students), the student population is majority African American (~85%) who are most often from poor to working class families. Most students live in the community surrounding the school, a building that, while it remains in generally good shape, is one of the older buildings in the district.

This article focuses on the case of Ricky, his eighth grade classmates, and their teacher Ms. Whaley, over the course of the 2009-2010 academic year. Although Ricky was an eighth grader, he had already turned 15 years old, an age when many students are freshman and sophomores in high school. Although I never received a complete understanding of the reasons for his age difference due in no small part to questions of confidentiality, the picture I received from Ms. Whaley and Ricky was a combination of starting school a bit later than his peers and being held back a year in elementary school. Ricky is Anglo, from all his interactions and discussions (inasmuch as such public displays can be read as they appear in issues of sexuality people of any age) is straight, and Christian. He was one of three non-African-American or bi-racial students and one of two Anglos in his class of 23 students. According to Mrs. Whaley and supported through data collection and analysis in this study, race was not a factor in Ricky’s friendships, a point to which I will return shortly. As will be made similarly clear below, Ricky’s academic career was in something of a backslide after his seventh grade year.

In the fall of 2009, Ms. Whaley had taught science for 18 years, the first half of her career in high school and the latter at the middle school where she currently teaches. She is bi-racial, grew up in the city in which she still resides and teaches, and sees herself as providing the space for students to “just be kids” while “getting encouragement to do better,” or, as she informed me one afternoon, “I want to give these kids a place where they can be successful without all that pressure and yelling that I so often see.”

Although her room can be chaotic at times, students tend to respect Ms. Whaley and, in my experience in her room over the course of this study, her tolerance for students acting out does indeed provide them with a space to release tension and focus on their work, like an escape valve with an eye on science content. Similarly, when students go beyond acceptable levels of interaction, she is quickly on the phone not to the office but to their homes, talking and working with parents in helping students, something that parents I met who came to the room to observe their children shared that they and other parents deeply appreciated—a true home-school connection. Similarly, it was not unusual to see Ms. Whaley pull a student aside as they walk down the hall to offer a quick word of encouragement or a reminder about an important event.



Ms. Whaley became involved in this study at her own request after she participated in a workshop on the possibilities of writing songs as a curricular tool for science that I gave at the request of the district's curriculum specialist in science. While I was most interested in the possibilities for songwriting to encourage students of color and girl's interest in science content, this project has grown to become what participating teachers and I have come to think of as listening to the sounds of science, the academic and social content of teaching and studenting in their respective rooms.

In this project, teachers were not directed in how they wanted to use songwriting in their classes nor was my role one of academic advisor about science content; I was more observer than participant on both counts. Similarly, the purpose of this study was the possibility of the integration of songwriting into teacher's daily lessons, an opportunity for students to consider the science content they were learning through sound and song. Other than this addition to her classroom, Ms. Whaley's seventh and eighth grade science classrooms functioned in rather typical fashion. Students learned primarily through a combination of texts and worksheets, coupled with experiments as they fit the district's pacing plan. Ms. Whaley similarly used a combination of lectures and small group work to deliver the mandated curriculum to her students. Additionally, although Ms. Whaley had a strong social agenda in terms of race in her classrooms, as can be heard in the sonic cartography below (see Figure 4), this was enacted in the ways in which she taught and the social lines in classroom management—questions of equity and access formed a foundation for her teaching but were not often explicitly tied to the science content she taught.

As noted in the introduction, this was a rather collaborative research project in which I asked students not only to write songs about the science content they were using but also to record audio reflections of their processes. Although this was the process I had in mind, unlike students in the other three participating classrooms (grades 1, 5 and another 8th grade room), Ricky and his classmates rarely added lyrics to the "beats" they made and audio reflections were even less frequent. While not the focus of my discussion here, I include this information as context for understanding Ricky and his relationship to both me and the songs about science he worked on. Unlike his peers and how he approached his work in other classes, something about writing songs about science interested Ricky enough to not only have him return to class during lunch and on other occasions, but also enough to serve as a bridge for Ricky to open up to me about his life in and out of school over the course of the academic year.

In addition to this collaborative portion of this study, I also conducted research in a rather typically interpretive manner. For example, over the course of the academic year, I regularly attended Ms. Whaley's classroom (approximately once every two to three weeks), took fieldnotes while I was in the room, collected documents such as class assignments and assessments, and audio (and occasionally video) recorded both students working on their songs, interviews (Spradley, 1979),

and classroom interactions in general. I also served as a kind of technical advisor for the software students utilized when they took the time to create their beats, a role that diminished as students quickly grasped the program and began to help one another. This combination of audio recordings of students working, occasional audio reflections, recorded interviews, and students' beats created a wealth of audio data both in Ms. Whaley's room and throughout all contexts in this project.

Finally, before continuing it is important to note that the ability to hear an audio recording of a context does not in and of itself constitute a deeper level of verisimilitude (see Gershon, 2011b). While it can be understood to remove yet another layer of translation from the sonic to the ocular/textual, sound is easily manipulated and any recording should not be confused with the live event. Recordings are particular not only to the equipment used to create the audio record but also to the perspective of the person doing the recording. In keeping with the still burgeoning tenets of sonic ethnography and aligned with contemporary ethnographic practices, I have endeavored to be as transparent as possible with both the sounds utilized and in contextualizing those sounds.

### Sound Contexts

The conversation began not unlike many other instances of recorded talk in this project. Once in the classroom, I moved to the back of the room where the computers were situated and turned on the audio recorder. It was a movie day, the day before spring break in April of 2010.

#### *Ms. Whaley & Tapping*

The loud wooden knocking is exactly what it sounds like, Marcus<sup>3</sup> was using his knuckles to tap out a rhythm as students often did when the mood hit, sometimes absentmindedly and other times more intentionally. My sitting in the rear of the classroom where Ricky worked transitioned into a conversation with him about how his songwriting was progressing and his thoughts about the work he was doing. Here is how Ricky described his process in working with Adam and the challenges that they were currently facing in trying to fit the lyrics to the music they had created.

#### *Ricky Talks about Lyrics*

This was followed by moments of me offering advice on how Ricky might better adjust their track to fit the lyrics and in turn lead to a discussion of how often he and Adam worked on their songs (they were coming in during and lunch to work on their songs), and other such talk about their music making. At this time, Ricky was trying to fit lyrics he and Adam wrote about plate tectonics.

In order to provide a better sense of my relationship with Ricky and the ways in which Ricky both understood and sought to manipulate school rules and procedures, I offer the following two excerpted pieces of sonic data from my conversations

with Ricky. In the first Ricky explains how he was able to continue working in Ms. Whaley's classroom rather than attend his regularly scheduled English class. The latter is from an interview after a member check of the piece of sound art/sonic ethnography below in which I pressed Ricky about his most recent retelling of a particular set of events.

*Ricky's "Suspension"*

*Ricky on the Truthfulness of His Talk*

As can be heard in these sound files, Ricky is not only clear about school rules, he is also equally clear about how to negotiate them in order to suit his needs and whims. It is similarly evident that Ricky is a person who is in trouble enough that the idea that he received an in-school suspension was not greeted with suspicion from either Ms. Whaley or me. Additionally, as can be heard below, Ricky has also enjoyed manipulating or resisting working with me in my capacities as researcher and technical assistant for the music software in the room.

However, it was the following moment that struck me, both when I heard it the first time and in listening back to the conversation later. In the course of a conversation about his home life, Ricky said:

*Alternate the Weekends*

I remember thinking to myself, "alternate the weekends?" It seemed as though Ricky was changing his linguistic footing, the way conversations are framed and the modes of conversations as determined by both conversants and sociocultural norms and values (Goffman, 1974). It also appeared that if he was not fully switching dialects from a version of African American Vernacular (AAV) towards a more "standard" form of English, changes in prosody and word choice were markedly different enough that Ricky was code switching<sup>4</sup> (Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Gal, 1988; Nilep, 2006). However, code switching generally entails either both conversational partners moving to a different language, dialect, or manner of speaking (from Spanish to English) or when one conversant switches conversational partners (a student talking to a peer then a teacher). In this instance, Ricky neither switched conversational partners nor did I alter the way in which I was talking. What, I wondered, was Ricky signaling through this change in talk?

It was this rich point (Agar, 1996) that served as the starting point for the sonic mapping of Ricky's identity. In the process of mapping Ricky's identity, another map emerged, superimposed on Ricky's—the racialized ecologies that were his community, district, home, school, and science classroom. Additionally, this sonic cartography is an understanding of space and identity that is grounded in a specific place. Because all recordings are of the classroom in which Ms. Whaley teaches, these sounds and this accompanying text is as much an iteration of the place that is this classroom over the course of an academic year as it is about the nested layers of

community, school, district, and identity that emerge in conversations that occurred in this room. Had these recordings occurred elsewhere, the resulting map, although perhaps similar in its layers, would have been different in its specific contours. In this way, this piece demonstrates the ways in which spaces and identities can exist in specific places, places can reveal particular spaces, and both spaces and places strongly inform particular identities.

### Sonic Cartography: Ricky, Classroom Places, School, and Home Spaces

This is a sonic cartography of Ricky's identity, how he sees himself in relation to others and how others see Ricky. These follow Ricky's construction of his identity in relation to his life at home and school. In the center are Ricky's discussions of home, school, and differences between home and school. To the school side is Ricky's talk about being suspended and the song he was working on. To the home side are comments about how he alternates the weekend at his cousin's house and a snippet of talk from the classroom in which Ricky talks about how he would fight for his cousin.

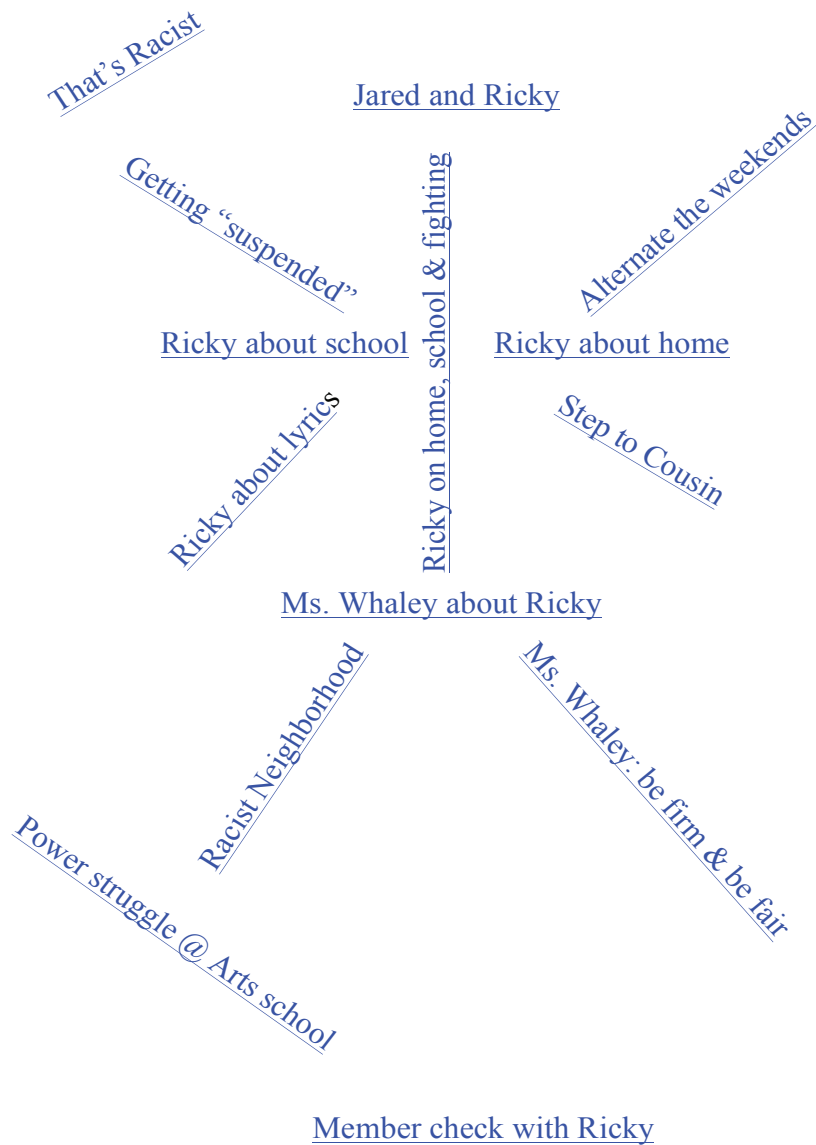
Contextualizing Ricky's talk about himself are the sounds of how others spoke of and with Ricky. Above Ricky's talk about himself is Jared's talk about Ricky, Ricky's interjections into Jared's talk, and Jared's talk about home. Below is Ms. Whaley's talk about Ricky, talk that is further contextualized by Ms. Whaley's comments about her teaching and the neighborhood in which Ricky lives.

In order to illustrate that Ms. Whaley is not alone in her thoughts about the raced, if not racist, nature of the community spaces and school places she inhabits, I have included excerpts from a longer interview I had with a non-arts teacher at the district's middle grades arts magnet about her experiences at the school's founding. This appears in the sound map (see Figure 4) as the sonic data titled, "Power struggle @ arts school." While there is much to discuss in this narrative of the school's founding in terms of race, that popular culture is black culture and black culture is not valued is but represents one of many examples, the point I seek to clarify here is that Ms. Whaley's talk about schools and communities as race are commonly held understandings throughout the district. Similarly, it is not only teachers of color like Ms. Whaley who are aware of such tensions in the district. As her talk documents, Anglo teachers such as the teacher at the arts magnet also experience these community tensions in local educational spaces and places, their schools and classrooms. Students also feel these tensions as can be heard in the piece of sonic data (That's Racist) in which a student of color in Ms. Whaley's room tells another student not to be racist. I offer this piece in order to further demonstrate the ways in which race and racial tensions were an everyday part of classrooms in Ricky's school, even classrooms like Ms. Whaley's where the teacher actively sought to allay and address such issues.

Finally, the outermost layer is comprised of Ricky's talk about his work with

**Figure 4:**  
*Sonic Cartography: Mapping Identity, Place, and Space*

Ricky on truthfulness with Gershon



me as both a reminder of the interpretive nature of this map and the complex nature of our relationship. What Ricky heard in the member check provided at the bottom of the map was not this map but a more linear version of these sounds assembled for a sound installation for a one-day gallery event on my campus. Only the teacher from the art school's talk was not included in the sound installation Ricky heard. Although meanings do indeed change according to their physical organization, a point that critical geography makes quite clear, my intention in including this piece of sonic data is to indicate that Ricky had an opportunity to disagree with or retract any of the sonic data included in the map below. That he elected not to do so speaks to his continued agreement with his recorded talk and with Ms. Whaley and Jared's ideas about Ricky's home and school lives.

A key question remains: how might this map be interpreted? Is it a map of Ricky's identity in relation to others or of Ms. Whaley's classroom? Is it a map of curriculum or of the sociocultural norms and values that combine to inform Ricky's relational identity? The answer I propose to these questions is "yes," an answer that I detail in the following section of analysis.

### Analysis: Listening to Ricky's Map

This section considers the emergent sonic cartography from the three perspectives that undergird this article, curriculum studies, interpretive studies of education, and critical geography. Although there are certainly other ways to hear this map and to arrange these pieces of sonic data, they are in some ways still tethered to the ocular. As noted above, future iterations of this process could well have sound files that are not hyperlinked, a choice I made here largely due to the relative newness of this approach.

#### *Listening to Curriculum*

One of the difficulties in curriculum studies is the ability to make the hidden curriculum explicit, to make apparent the often-implicit and unintended ideas and ideals that students acquire through schooling. Mapping the sounds of Ricky and other's talk in a way that also allows the classroom space to speak provides an opportunity for the listener to be more experientially immersed in the sounds of the classroom. In this case, the reverberations of race echo throughout Ricky's life. For example, racial tensions in his home and school communities are something Ricky feels strongly enough to state that they are one of the central causes for his fighting. Similarly, Ricky's daily life is racialized to a point where he does not object to or otherwise reject Ms. Whaley's characterizations of his life at home as "a regular ol' white boy" or her reasoning that his parents displeasure at finding that Ricky has many black friends as a reason why he chooses to keep his home and school lives separate.

Consider Jared and Ricky's relationship for example. Although Ricky and Jared were quite close the year before, I never heard either boy speak about the

time spent at each other's houses—it was always each youth telling stories about home to the other. Similarly, Ricky and Jared's friendship grew apart not because they had a falling out but because they had less time together at school. While the ebb and flow of school friendships often follows a pattern of the classes students attend, students I have taught and other students I worked with at Ricky's school maintained their friendships over multiple years and summers by hanging out after school. However, middle school students don't drive, so parents are often be involved in their friendships outside of school in ways that they are not involved in the lives of older high school students—another indicator of how Ricky kept his home and school lives separate and the ways in which race played a factor in his life.

Additionally, there is Ricky's conversation with Jared about how Jared helped Ricky stay out of trouble. Part of the difference can be attributed to the ways in which each of their fathers parent and expectations for grades at home, as can be heard in Ricky's "wow" after Jared explains that he gets in trouble for getting a B. Yet, it would seem that another part of Ricky's difficulties might lie in his in-between status, an Anglo boy who interacts quite differently at home than the distinctly socioculturally Anglo life he leads at home. In his comments to Jared and Jared's comments in return, it sounds quite a lot like Ricky cannot readily tell the difference between a peer giving him a hard time in a fairly typical African-American manner and someone disrespecting him. For example, where Ricky states that anyone "talking smack is gonna get hit," Jared says that "if they talking junk, they just talkin...but I'm not gonna let anyone disrespect me." It therefore may well be the case that part of the way in which Jared kept Ricky out of trouble was by delineating talking junk from disrespect. When placed along side the rest of the sounds in this sonic map, it is clear that Ricky's relationship to race is a central aspect of his identity, both as an Anglo kid who readily goes against the norm and hangs out with African American peers and in his relationship to home and school.

A curriculum of violence also pervades Ricky's life. His fighting reveals not only racial tensions in classroom, school, and home communities but also an acceptance of violence by the youth in those communities. Ms. Whaley, Jared, Ricky, and all the other kids at their school thought fighting should be avoided but was nonetheless inevitable. Not simply a boys-will-be-boys kind of attitude, but more a resignation to the fact that kids will fight, often and hard. Ricky's suspensions for fighting were a source of pride for him and gained him respect in his school, so much so that he was eventually suspended for the end of the school year for fighting. What makes this story slightly different is that it inverts a general narrative about race, violence and schools in which African-American students are marginalized and get into fights due at least in part to their racial identities. Here it is Ricky, an Anglo boy in a school that has a majority African-American population, who is othered and violent due at least in part to race.

Along similar lines, Ricky does not object to the idea that Ms. Whaley thinks that at home he "catches hell" and often talked about how strict the men in his

family were. This can also be seen in his talk about his uncle, of how Ricky would rather get in trouble with his uncle because the worst thing he's [uncle] going to do is yell at you a bit. In this way, the violence in Ricky's life is a curriculum, a way of knowing and being that connects his home and school life. It is a constant in both contexts and, perhaps, even one of the ways in which he negotiates the tensions to each of these central places in his life.

Finally, there is the constant presence of the formal curriculum, of science content. While it is not always explicit in Ricky and other's talk, the sounds that form the backdrop for their conversations are the sonic ebb and flow of Ms. Whaley's science classroom. Additionally, as I address below, Ricky claims that science is his favorite subject, content that he not only finds interesting but also ideas that he connects to learning with his father. In short, just as this is sonic cartography of the place that is the classroom where Ms. Whaley teaches, it is also a sound mapping of science curriculum, formal, hidden, and otherwise.

#### *Interpreting Educational Sounds*

Although there are many possible avenues for considering this piece of sonic cartography through the lens of interpretive research in education, I focus here on Ricky's identity in relation to home and school. To begin, the case of Ricky complicates commonly held understandings about the nature of differences as deficits, particularly as it relates to questions of differences between home and school communities. When differences between home and school are cast as deficits, it is most often then the case that the student is a non-mainstream person (person of color, queer, speaks a language other than English in her home/community) whose differences in her life at home are recast as deficits in her role as student, etc., at school (e.g., Heath, 1983; Valenzuela, 2005). While this is the case for Ricky, the contexts are reversed. Here, an Anglo male student's differences at home are a deficit in his majority African American school, both socially and academically.

Socially, as noted in the previous section, Ricky is located between Anglo and African American students. Yet he does not fit in with either group completely. As an Anglo kid with African American friends, he is occasionally ostracized as in the case of Ms. Whaley's story about a girl he was interested in at the beginning of the year—a teasing, often from Anglo girls, I also witnessed in my time with Ricky. Similarly, he does not seem to fully understand the differences between playful jawing and disrespect on one hand and occasionally has to fight to prove his toughness to African American boys on the other.

Academically, Ricky's studenting is much closer to his African American than his Anglo peers. Even in Ms. Whaley's class—a place where a bi-racial teacher who tends to think of herself as black is explicitly aware of how differences can become deficits and works hard to help ensure that such practices are not enacted in her classroom—Ms. Whaley talks about Ricky “peacocking around” like his African-American peers “when he wants something.”



Ricky's discussion of how he is often in trouble for things he did not do and of his teachers' (not Ms. Whaley's) often strong reactions to minor infractions are in many ways parallel to discussions of how non-mainstream students are treated in school (cf. Foley, 2010). To be clear, Ricky's behavior would be interrupting regardless of his race and it is not unusual for African-American students to be in trouble at a school that has a majority African-American student population. However, it was not unusual for me to hear other teachers in the halls, Anglo and African American alike, talk about the "trouble teaching these kids, from this neighborhood." In this way, interacting in class in ways that were more similar to his more outspoken African-American peers, rather than his Black friends like Jared, also negatively impacted his academic role as student.

Next, this piece demonstrates the complicated nature of the relationship between the ways in which social actors' lives are simultaneously constrained yet not determined by their contexts (Alonso, Anderson, Su, & Theoharis, 2009; MacLoed, 1995; Page, 1991). Ricky could be understood as another generation of fighters like his uncle and father before him or as a person who makes poor social choices in school. Yet, as he says, Ricky is a person who is trying to make good on his family name, wants to do well in science, and wants to be taken seriously as a person who thinks rather than a person who should be told the same idea day in and day out. He wants to but ultimately does not.

In a very visceral fashion, I witnessed Ricky almost be given a safe space, to return to work with Ms. Whaley and me for the 2010-2011 academic year, only to have Ricky lose that opportunity in being suspended the last ten days of school for fighting. Not unlike Willis' (1977) lads, Ricky's decision to fight created a context where he is more likely to repeat his father and uncle's patterns in school, smart but seen as a delinquent due to his choices to fight frequently.

Finally, similar to comments about sound curriculum above, mapping sounds helps render these complex and often difficult to examine concepts more readily available. Listening to ideas and ideals from the actors provides an embodied means for conceptualizing their lives that is often missed in text. As the sounds enter the listener's body the listener can hear for those ideas for herself, the subtlety of phrasing and tone, the ebb and flow of classroom sounds.

#### *A Critical Geography of Ricky*

This map, as Helfenbein (2009) notes, is a question of scale and leaky, speaking spaces. It is at once a cartography of Ricky's identity according to Ricky and others who know him, a resonance of a specific place, the classroom in which Ms. Whaley teaches science, and a map of racial tensions in the school and home spaces that inform that classroom place. It can indeed be heard as the sound field that is Ms. Whaley's classroom, as all the sounds were recorded in her room. This sonic map also brings to the fore the complicated nature of scale, that although one layer can and does inform the next, these successive layers are neither determinate nor

determining—social actors interact in accordance with and against the norms and values of contextualizing layers of meaning.

Similarly, this sonic cartography points to the porous nature of spaces, places, and identities. Ricky's talk about home is in relation to his talk about school and his talk about science and school is related to his thoughts about his father and home. Yet he strives to keep his home and school separate so that his family cannot see the person he is at school, academically and socially. Space in places, places in spaces, and identity in relation to both space and place.

Furthermore, this map also points to the complexly interwoven nature of scholarship in the spaces that are curriculum studies, interpretive research in education, and critical geography as applied to educational contexts. It is a messy narrative cartography in which each has their own history, tenets, and perspectives, the spaces between them overlap in such a way that there can be curriculum places in interpretive spaces and critical cartographies of interpreted places.

### Conclusion

As I have documented, sounds help us understand ourselves and our relations to others as well as our relationships to local and less local ecologies. Mapping sound fields, the sounds of specific places and spaces, can not only make often-implicit ideas and ideals explicit but can also create a means through which relationships between various layers of space, place, and identity can be critically examined. This is also a move from curriculum mapping to mapping curriculum. As such it can be understood as a movement from prescribing what students and teachers in educational contexts will consider and the ways in which those possibilities will be approached to the cartography of the explicit and implicit meanings that emerge through local actors' sounds, in this case through their talk.

Additionally, this sonic cartography is an example of the practical possibilities of a critical aesthetics, an understanding that lines of power and sociocultural precepts are inseparable from questions of perception and the sensual (cf. DuBois, 1926; Gershon, 2011c; Panagia, 2009; Roelofs, 2009; Young & Braziel, 2007). It is a reminder that identity is indeed relational, based on a combination of personal predilections, available choices, and the sociocultural contexts that inform social actors' daily interactions.

However, this sonic cartography is also limited in its focus on talk. Although it does open the door for the broader sonic mapping of sound ecologies—what would a sound map conducted by students parallel to the kinds of maps that Nespor (1997) utilizes look like and reveal for example—it also is missing its focus on how educational sounds shape local interactions. For example, what is the role and impact of the movie that plays in the background during part of my talk with Ricky? Can such sounds be rendered sonically and analyzed? If so, how might such an analysis look and function beyond previous transcriptions of educational contexts (Erickson, 1982, 2003; Gershon, 2006)?

Additionally, in part due to the nature of the ways in which scholarly focus falsely parses one set of possibilities from another and in part due to the available space provided here, there are important aspects of Ricky's identity that were not presented. For example, relationships between gender and violence, or sexuality and performance of self were largely overlooked. What might a sonic cartography of a first generation Latina sound like in a particular context? How might it sound different if she was a member of the LGBTQ community?

Nonetheless, sonic cartography also raises questions for other sensual mapping. What would a cartography of smell look like and how would it function? Building on Springgay's (2008) haptic curricular foundation, how might touch be mapped and what might be gained through such a cartography? What could such cartographies bring to discussions of interpretive research in education and how might they expand or otherwise impact conceptualizations of critical geography both in and out of education?

In the end, this map articulates the complicated, complex, and necessarily incomplete nature of how a person conceives of himself and the contexts that inform those understandings of self in relation to others. Along the way, it provides an opportunity to consider the relationships between Ricky and his life at home and school, the racial tensions in his community that contextualize his daily interactions, and the ways in which Ricky uses his available resources to negotiate his identity within these spaces and places. It is in this way that sounds perhaps enunciate that which text and image cannot, the ephemeral flux of daily interactions and the nested meanings that simultaneously frame and emerge in the process.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Here I use the term sound field rather than Schafer (1978) and others' (see Samuels, Meintjes, Ochoa, & Porcello) use of the term soundscape for it tends to miss the social actors for the sound environment. Similarly, while Feld's (1990, 1996, 2000) term acoustemology, acoustic epistemology, is much closer to the idea I have in mind in its connections to the political and between person and environment, his term most often applies to musical events and ideas. Sound field, the term I am using here to indicate the sounds of a particular place, is closer to what I have in mind. I take it to mean literally all the sounds in a particular acoustic ecology, regardless of their origin or perceived musicality.

<sup>2</sup> My human subjects approval for this project grants me permission to use students' and teachers' names with the proper parental consent and student assent (for students) and the teacher's consent. In this case, Ricky stated he preferred that I use his real name. Because he, Jared, and other students' use Ms. Whaley's name in the sound files, and she similarly granted consent to use her real name, I have elected to use their names but not the name of either their school or their district in this article.

<sup>3</sup> Other than Ricky, Jared, Adam, and Ms. Whaley, all other names are pseudonyms.

<sup>4</sup> Prosody is the musical aspects of talk such as rhythm, pitch, and tone (see Erickson, 2003). I use the term here in both sociolinguistic and colloquial terms, as a linguistic indicator and to mean "noticeably different."

## References

- Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography* (2nd ed.). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Alonso, G., Anderson, N., Su, C., & Theoharis, J. (2009). *Our schools suck: Students talk back to a segregated nation on the failures of urban education*. New York: New York University Press.
- Anderson, K. S. (2009). *War or common cause? A critical ethnography of language education policy, race, and cultural citizenship*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Aoki, T. T. (1991). *Sonare and vidare: Questioning the primacy of the eye in curriculum talk*. In G. Willis & W. H. Schubert (Eds.), *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry: Understanding curriculum and teaching through the arts*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Atkinson, P. A., Delamont, S., Coffey, A. J., Lofland, J., & Loffland, L. H. (Eds.). (2007). *The handbook of ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Back, L. (2007). *The art of listening*. Oxford, UK: Berg Press.
- Baker, B. (Ed.). (2010). *New curriculum history*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishing.
- Bauer, M. W. (2000). Analysing noise and music as social data. In M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image, and sound* (pp. 263–281). London, UK: Sage.
- Bhagat, L., & Mogel, L. (Eds.). (2008). *An atlas of radical cartography*. Los Angeles: The Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press.
- Blom, J., & Gumperz, J. (1972). Social meaning in linguistic structure: Code switching in Norway. In J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, & Winston.
- Brandt, R., Duffy, M., & MacKinnon, D. (Eds.). (2009). *Hearing places: Sound, place, time and culture*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.
- Bull, M. (2001). Soundscapes of the car: A critical study of automobile habitation. In D. Miller (Ed.), *Car cultures* (pp. 185–202). Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Bull, M., & Back, L. (2003a). *The auditory culture reader*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Casemore, B. (2007). *The autobiographical demand of place: Curriculum inquiry in the American south*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Chow-Morris, S. (2009). *In the blink of an ear: Towards a non-cochlear sound art*. New York: Continuum.
- Cockburn, V. (1991). The uses of folk music and songwriting in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61(1), 71–80.
- Dimitriadis, G. (2009). *Performing identity/performing culture: Hip hop as text, pedagogy, and lived practice* (Revised ed.). New York: Peter Lang.
- Drobnick, J. (Ed.). (2004). *Aural cultures*. Toronto, Ontario: YYZ Books.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1926). *Criteria of negro art*. Retrieved September 29, 2011 from: <http://www.webdubois.org/db/CriteriaNArt.html>
- Dye, L. (2004). *U.S. falling behind in science*. Retrieved September 29, 2011 from: <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/DyeHard/Story?id=276464&page=1>
- Ellsworth, E. A. (2005). *Places of learning: Media, architecture, pedagogy*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Erickson, F. (1982). Classroom discourse as improvisation: Relationships between academic

- task structure and social participation structure in lessons. In L. C. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Communicating in the classroom* (pp. 153-181). New York: Academic Press.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd ed.) (pp. 119-161). New York: Macmillan.
- Erickson, F. (2003). Some notes on musicality and speech. In D. Tannen & J. E. Atalis (Eds.), *Linguistics, language and the real world: Discourse and beyond* (Georgetown University: Round table on languages and linguistics). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Erickson, F. (2004). *Talk and social theory: Ecologies of speaking and learning in everyday life*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Erlmann, V. (Ed.). (2004). *Hearing cultures: Essays on sound, listening and modernity*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Erlmann, V. (2010). *Reason and resonance: A history of modern aurality*. Cambridge, MA: Zone Books.
- Faubian, J. D., & Marcus, G. E. (2009). *Fieldwork is not what it used to be: Learning anthropology's method in a time of transition*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Feld, S. (1982). *Sound and sentiment: Birds, weeping, poetics, and song in Kaluli expression*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Feld, S. (1991). Sound as a symbolic system: The Kaluli drum. In D. Howes (Ed.), *The varieties of sensory experience. A sourcebook in the anthropology of the senses*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.
- Feld, S. (1996). Waterfalls of song: An acoustemology of place resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea. In S. Feld & K. H. Basso (Eds.), *Senses of place* (pp. 91-135). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Feld, S. (2000). Sound worlds. In P. Kruth & H. Stobart (Eds.), *Sound* (The Darwin College Lectures). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Feld, S. (2005). Places sensed, senses placed: Toward a sensuous epistemology of environments. In D. Howes (Ed.), *Empire of the senses: The sensual culture reader* (pp. 179-191). Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Feld, S., & Basso, K. H. (Eds.). (1996). *Senses of place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Feld, S., & Brennis, D. (2004). Doing ethnography in sound. *American Ethnologist*, 31(4), 461-474.
- Foley, D. (2010). *Learning capitalist culture: Deep in the heart of Tejas* (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Gal, S. (1988). The political economy of code choice. In M. Heller (Ed.), *Codeswitching: Anthropological and sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 243-261). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Gershon, W. S. (2006). Collective Improvisation: A theoretical lens for classroom observation. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, 3(1), 104-136.
- Gershon, W. S. (2008). Intent and expression: Complexity, ethnography, and lines of power in classrooms. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 6(1), 45-72.
- Gershon, W. S. (2010). Entertaining ideas and embodied knowledge: Musicians as public intellectuals. In J. A. Sandlin, B. D. Schultz, Burdick, & J. Burdick (Eds.), *The handbook of public pedagogy* (pp. 628-638). New York: Routledge.
- Gershon, W. S. (2011a). Embodied knowledge: Sounds as educational systems. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 27(2), 66-81.
- Gershon, W. S. (2011b). Sound curriculum: Recognizing the field. In R. Navqi & H. Schmidt

- (Eds.), *Thinking about and enacting curriculum in "frames of war"* (pp. 89-120) Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Gershon, W. S. (2011c). Introduction: Towards a sensual curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 27(2), 1-16.
- Gershon, W. S. (2012). Sonic ethnography in practice: Students, sounds, and making sense of science. *Anthropology News*, 53(5), 5, 12..
- Gershon, W. S., & The Listening to the Sounds of Science Project. (2012). *Listening to the sounds of science: A collaborative sonic ethnography of sense-making in urban classrooms* [Sound Installation]. Akron Art Museum, March 17-June 24, 2012.
- Gershon, W. S. (in press a). Vibrational affect: Sound in theory and practice in qualitative research. *Cultural Studies* & *Critical Methodologies*.
- Gershon, W. S. (in press b). Resonance, affect, and ways of being: Implications of sensual curriculum for educational theory and urban first graders' literacy practices. *The Journal of School and Society* (Inaugural issue, new journal of The John Dewey Society).
- Glass, K. T. (2007). *Curriculum mapping: A step-by-step guide for creating curriculum year overviews*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor.
- Gutierrez, K., Larson, J., & Rymes, B. (1995). Script, counterscript, and underlife in the classroom: James Brown versus Brown v. Board of Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 65(3), 445-471.
- Harmon, K. A. (Ed.). (2004). *You are here: Personal geographies and other maps of the imagination*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Harmon, K. A. (Ed.). (2009). *The map as art: Contemporary artists explore cartography* (essays by G. Clemans). New York: Princeton Architectural Press.
- Harvey, D. (2002). *Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography*. New York: Routledge.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge, UK: The University of Cambridge Press.
- Helfenbein, R. J. (2004). A radical geography: Curriculum theory, performance, and landscape. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 20(3), 67-76.
- Helfenbein, R. J. (2006). Space, place, and identity in the teaching of history: Using critical geography to teach teachers in the American South. In A. Segall, E. Heilman, & C. Cheryomes, (Eds.), *Social studies—The next generation: Re-searching in the postmodern* (pp. 111-124). New York: Peter Lang.
- Helfenbein, R. J. (2009). Thinking through scale: Critical geography and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304-317). New York: Routledge.
- Helfenbein, R. J., & Taylor, L. H. (2009). Critical Geographies in/of Education. *Educational Studies*, 45, Special edition.
- Holland, S. (2009). *U.S. students behind in math, science, analysis says*. Retrieved September 29, 2011 from <http://www.cnn.com/2009/US/08/25/students.science.math/index.html>
- Howes, D. (2003). *Sensual relations: Engaging the senses in culture & social theory*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Huang, S-y, L., & Fraser, B. J. (2009). Science teachers' perceptions of school environment: Gender differences. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 46(4), 404-420.
- Hudak, G. M. (1999). The "sound" identity: Music-making and schooling (pp. 447-474). In C. McCarthy, G. Hudak, S. Miklaucic, & P. Saukko (Eds.), *Sound identities: Popular music and the cultural politics of education*. New York: Peter Lang.



- Iseli, C. (2004). Your own private Iceland: The spaces music creates, and the spaces where it is created. *Link: A Critical Journal on the Arts (Musæ)*, 9, 98-108.
- Kim-Cohen, S. (2009). *In the blink of an ear: Towards a non-cochlear sonic arts*. New York: Continuum.
- Kincheloe, J., & Pinar, W. (Eds.). *Curriculum as social psychoanalysis: The significance of place*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- LaBelle, B. (2010). *Acoustic territories: Sound culture and everyday life*. New York: Continuum.
- Leitner, B. (1998). *Sound: Space*. Ostfildern, DE: Cantz.
- Levinson, B. A., Foley, D. E., & Holland, D. C. (Eds.). (1996). *The cultural production of the educated person*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Low, S. M. (2011). Claiming space for an engaged anthropology: Spatial inequality and social exclusion. *American Anthropologist*, 103(3), 389-407.
- Makagon, D. G., & Neumann, M. (2009). *Recording culture: Audio documentary and the ethnographic experience*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Malewski, E. (Ed). (2009). *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment*. New York: Routledge.
- McCarthy, C. Hudak, G., Miklaucic, S., & Saukko, P. (Eds.). (1999). *Sound identities: Popular music and the cultural politics of education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Nespor, J. (1997). *Tangled up in school: Politics, space, bodies and signs in the educational process*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ng-A-Fook, N. (2007). *An indigenous curriculum of place: The United Houma Nation's continuous relationship with Louisiana's educational institutions*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Nilep, C. (2006). "Code switching" in sociocultural linguistics. *Colorado Research in Linguistics*, 19, 1-22.
- Page, R. N. (1991). *Lower-track classrooms: A curricular and cultural perspective*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Panagia, D. (2009). *The political life of sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Pinar, W. F., Reynolds, R., Slattery, P., & Taubman, P. (Eds.). (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Pinch, T., & Bijsterveld, K. (2011). *The Oxford handbook of sound studies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Prime, G. M. & Miranda, R. J (2006). Urban public high school teachers' beliefs about science learner characteristics Implications for curriculum. *Urban Education*, 41(5), 506-532.
- Powell, K. (2006). Inside-out and outside-in: Participant observation in taiko drumming (pp. 33-64). In G. D. Spinder & L. A. Hammond (Eds.), *Innovations in educational ethnography: Theory, methods, and results*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Powell, K. (2012). Composing sound identity in taiko drumming. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 43(1), 101-119.
- Qi, J., Gage, S. H., Joo, W., Napoletano, B., & Biswas S. (2008). Soundscape characteristics of an environment: A new ecological indicator of ecosystem health. In W. Ji (Ed), *Wetland and water resource modeling and assessment: A watershed perspective* (pp. 201-211). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Rist, R. C. (1970). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 40(1), 411-451.
- Roelofs, M. (Ed). (2009). Aesthetics and Race: New philosophical perspectives. *Contemporary*

- Aesthetics*, Special Volume 2. Retrieved September 29, 2011 from <http://contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/journal.php?volume=41>
- Samuels, D. W., Meintjes, L., Ochoa, A. M., & Porcello, T. (2010). Soundscapes: Toward a sounded anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 39, 329-345.
- Schafer, R. M. (1977). *The tuning of the world*. New York: Knopf.
- Smith, M. M. (Ed.). (2004). *Hearing history: A reader*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Sobel, D. (1998). *Mapmaking with children: Sense of place education for the elementary years*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. New York: Verso.
- Spindler, G. (Ed.). (1982). *Doing the ethnography of schooling: Educational anthropology in action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Spindler, G., & Hammond, L. (2006). *Innovations in educational ethnography: Theory, methods and results*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Sterne, J. (2003). *The audible past: Cultural origins of sound reproduction*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sterne, J. (2005). Urban media and the politics of sound space. *Open/Sound*, 9, 6-14.
- Sterne, J. (2012). *The sound studies reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Stovall, D. (2006). We can relate: Hip-hop culture, critical pedagogy, and the secondary classroom. *Urban Education*, 41(6), 585-602.
- Stoller, P. (1997). *Sensuous scholarship*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Swidler, A. (2001). *Talk of love: How culture matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tsing, A. L. (1993). *In the realm of the diamond queen*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Valencia, R. (Ed.) (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. London, UK: Falmer.
- Varenne, H., & McDermott, R. (1998). *Successful failure: The school America builds*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Wang, H. (2004). *The call from the stranger on a journey home: Curriculum in a third space*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Weheliye, A. G. (2005). *Phonographies: Grooves in sonic Afro-modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Whitlock, R. U. (2007). *This corner of Canaan*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wood, D. (2010). *Everything sings: Maps for a narrative atlas*. Los Angeles: Siglio.
- Young, J. A., & Braziel, J. E. (2007). *Erasing public memory: Race, aesthetics and cultural amnesia in the Americas*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.

*Walter S. Gershon is an assistant professor in the School of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Studies at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. His e-mail address is [wgershon@kent.edu](mailto:wgershon@kent.edu)*



## Structured Spaces of Play in a Southwestern U.S. Urban Elementary Classroom: Dialectics of Community and Academic Rigor

G. Sue Kasun

*Sixteen bodies attentively listened from a six foot square blue carpet, facing a small white board covered mostly in instructional posters, hand-made by their teacher, Ms. Chamorro.<sup>1</sup> Ms. Chamorro has just asked her 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at her Title I elementary school where they can get information for research. Nearly all students' hands flew up in eager anticipation of being called upon, and most did not contain themselves as they called out answers.*

*"The computer! The Internet!" students called out.*

*"We can get it from people we know," explained Monique, the one African-American student in the class of otherwise Latino students.*

*"You can gather information from the TV," Joey, one of the usually quieter boys said.*

*"Uh huh, right!" the teacher encouraged the students. Other responses ranged from video games to buildings to libraries, highlighting a breadth and depth of knowledge encouraged by the high academic expectations and the instructional structuring their teacher had for them. She eventually focused on the responses which would help lead into an introduction about a large project students would complete on biographies.*

*"Books," another boy called out, "You can get information books about animals."*

*Ms. Chamorro asked, "Is that fiction or nonfiction?"*

*The boy responded, "It's expository text."*

*Ms. Chamorro smiled broadly at the boy's use of a higher academic register and exclaimed, "Wow!" She launched into a larger discussion of biography writing the students would begin.*

The vignette above demonstrates one of several structures one teacher used regularly in her instruction—connecting what students knew and had studied to the work they were about to start. Ms. Chamorro taught the structuring of responses (structuring not often found in many U.S. K-12 classrooms), including the use of academic language and complete sentences. The teacher also facilitated the students'

engagement in multiple curricular spaces, ranging from students' social networks to the school building to various media, including television and Internet. The vignette also shows the spontaneous and unpredictable responses students offer—moments I explain as anti-structure moments, or places of creativity for students to grow in their education. In this article, I theorize how structure and anti-structure work in a dialectical manner, based on ethnographic observations of a public schoolteacher and her students during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Current debates surrounding the field of education focus heavily on school accountability, including state-mandated, standardized testing (Au, 2009). The mandated testing means that teachers work to get students to pass tests, and in schools where students have performed poorly, there is a heavy reliance on the curriculum which correlates with the test items. The accountability movement stems from purported efforts to improve the education for all students, particularly students from groups who have historically been under-served, including African American, Latino, and lower socio-economic status students (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Educational researchers have demonstrated that this accountability trend has been damaging for students in terms of the quality of instruction they receive, including the kind of curriculum to which they are exposed (Au, 2009; De Lissoyoy & McLaren, 2003; Nichols & Berliner, 2007; Valenzuela, 2004). Similarly, the accountability movement, with its focus on standards and test scores, has failed to “recognize the mediating role that schools play in the production of space (or social context) through the education of place makers (or citizens)” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 620). It follows that schools where historically underserved youth are receiving increasingly proscribed and prescribed curricula become places of increasingly limited possibilities. In this article, I refer to space as a geographic location while place becomes a contextually imbued location shared by social actors.

Undoubtedly, children deserve better than the kinds of education that have been critiqued during this current era of accountability. In this article, I explore how educational and anthropological theory can be applied to understand how one teacher's educational practices among historically under-served students can be understood as a deviation from the nefarious classroom practices which have been persuasively critiqued (Booher-Jennings, 2005; Noddings, 2007; Sloan, 2007). I investigate how this Latina teacher and students in an under-served population create structures of learning. These structures work differently to create places of learning that transgress both common educational practices and the expectations of what can ordinarily happen in the physical spaces of urban schools. I do this in an effort to “take space seriously” in educational research from a critical lens, which often overlooks any analysis of space or place (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009). Following, I briefly discuss theories of learning and situate my approach in those theories.

Since the field of education became an academic discipline in the U.S., theories of learning have shifted among behaviorism, constructivism, and socio-cultural theory (Palincsar, 1998). Most recently, the latter two have been increasingly theorized

and offered as means by which teachers may work most effectively with students. Constructivists tend to emphasize the internal processes of meaning making which are activated for learners; socio-cultural theorists focus more on notion that all learning is “inherently social” and not located solely within the learner (Palincsar, 1998). Both constructivists and socio-cultural theorists rely heavily on the revolutionary work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) and his demonstration of how meaning was made both in the learner’s social context and in the learner’s mind. Scaffolding has been suggested as a key instructional approach within constructivism; by facilitating what students can already do, teachers can help students shift toward new understandings through incremental and subsequent building upon students’ prior knowledge (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). While these theories and understandings regarding learning are helpful, I offer a reframing about the way educators perceive learning.

This article highlights the way one Latina teacher and her students create structures for understanding inside and outside the classroom. I argue those structures help shape learning, and, consequently, learning occurs from outside and alongside those structures in learning communities or consensually constructed places of learning. While the space of her classroom was one physical location of this learning, this class was able to take its learning into multiple places. These places are “Thirdspaces” of learning, or a “constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, and meanings” (Soja, 1996, p. 2). Both the teacher and the students are transgressing boundaries which ordinarily contain the students like the ones in this study, in terms of the way they are measured by state and federal accountability standards, including low-income, Hispanic, and English language learners. I see the *structures* implemented by this teacher as pedagogical tools and the expansive places created by them in which unstructured thinking and learning may occur as *anti-structure*. I also look at the construction of structures of the classroom community itself and how the structures may shift in multiple contexts in the learning environment. I focus on a classroom of historically under-served students—in this case, primarily Latino students—the very students who are most likely to be the recipients of mandated-testing oriented curriculum.

This work draws upon anthropologist Victor Turner’s (1969, 1975, 1982) research regarding structure and anti-structure; Turner argues that these occur dialectically and that consensually understood structure is a necessary condition for anti-structure to be able to occur. He demonstrates there are liminal moments in which community is created—in anti-structure moments. Turner describes, for example, how rituals and festivals can create these liminal moments of being “betwixt and between,” where the margins of acceptable social experience are expanded and at times unpredictable. For Turner, community—or *communitas*, as he prefers to call it—is the state of meaningful, intimate, and full presence among others. According to Turner, *communitas* is also the ultimate value of being to which we should attempt to lead our lives. Turner (1982) argues that these moments are spontaneous and

full of “intersubjective illumination” (p. 48). Moments of structure, on the other hand, include largely predictable behaviors, which are clear to the participants in a shared community space. In this study, structures can be mediated through students’ play (Vygotsky, 1978), or the ways they use the structures to create new meanings in the classroom community. By recognizing shared meanings of objects and ideas, students co-construct understandings (Mead, 1925). Additionally, part of the facilitation in this process is the dialectic between the structures that exist for learning and their play in the anti-structures.

For instance, in Huber, Murphy, and Clandinin’s (2003) study of two elementary urban education classrooms, the students and teachers engaged in liminal moments to work through conflicts. They developed the structure of gathering around a lit candle covered by a glass globe to allow students a place and space to discuss conflicts as they emerged in school. They found that students sometimes talked through conflicts, taking slow turns. Other times, students remained quiet. And still other times, the teacher also spoke up in efforts to be part of a place where they created community. The class had created structures where they could gather together in a way where all participants understood the process they had constructed in order to enter the liminal, undetermined moments of what might be said at the peace candle. Huber et al. (2003) do not define these structures, though they clearly fit the Turnerian framework they invoke in their research.

My aim is to demonstrate a broader set of structures and how they work in one ethnographic context in a Title I elementary school in a central Texas urban school district. I examine pedagogic practices of structuring. I show how the practices of instruction—all the while mediated by student participation—demonstrate the dialectic of structure and anti-structure (Turner, 1969, 1977) and its creation of new places of learning. I found creative play in this dialectic process in writing instruction as well as in class discussions. My research shows several examples of this structuring and how it creates places of learning which lend themselves to this dynamic dialectic.

### Method and Context

In this classroom micro-ethnography, I attempted to understand how one Latina teacher and her students in a Southwestern city created the structures of daily activity and how they transgressed those structures as well. Ethnography (Bernard, 2006) is a highly appropriate qualitative approach to find the everyday ways that structures operate in classrooms. My work uses a critical ethnography approach (Foley, 2002; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; Lassiter, 2005). This study highlights contributions made in a space which is often demonstrated as deficit (in this case, what is often referred to as an “urban” classroom). I show the classroom participation of a Latina teacher and her students—who are often constructed as “deficient”—was academically rigorous and culturally responsive. As a White researcher, I took extra effort

to understand my findings through member checking (Merriam, 1998) with Ms. Chamorro and also to support the rigor in her classroom. I wrote reflectively about my role as a White person visiting an entirely nonWhite classroom and channeled my energy toward supporting the teacher and the students in the development of their academic community. As a participant observer (Spradley, 1980), I facilitated student work and volunteered for the classroom teacher, Ms. Chamorro, occasionally retrieving her students from other classrooms, helping students in group work, or cutting out curricular materials, deferential to the teacher's authority. I wanted to signal to the students that I respected her work with them. Only by careful recording of daily events did patterns of the structures and their ruptures emerge.

I came to know Ms. Chamorro in the fall semester of 2009 when I worked as the facilitator for an urban education cohort of student teachers, conducting observations of an apprentice teacher who worked directly under the guidance of Ms. Chamorro. I am a White, bilingual (Spanish and English), former English to Speakers of Other Languages teacher, and I had a heightened awareness of the how urban students historically have been under-served (Ladson-Billings, 1995). I was invested in my apprentice teachers' developing a critical consciousness surrounding their work in urban education and the academic rigor necessary to launch their students' success. I realized the apprentice teacher was receiving superior mentorship from Ms. Chamorro and wanted to discover more about what made her classroom so effective. Ms. Chamorro and her principal agreed I could observe Ms. Chamorro's independent instruction throughout the entire spring semester of 2010. I conducted observations two to four times a week, accompanying students to various locations in the school building, including the cafeteria, the gymnasium, and the art and music rooms, as well as field trips. As a participant observer, I was available to fill various voluntary roles as Ms. Chamorro requested—from conducting writing conferences with students to cutting out figures to supervising a field trip. I held informal, unstructured interviews as casual, spontaneous questions with individual and small groups of students. I also interviewed Ms. Chamorro on several occasions, as well as two of the students' parents.

I reviewed documents, such as completed assignments, handouts, and journals, for analysis. I also took photographs of classroom displays (e.g., reproductions on the walls, quotations or other text posted in the classroom, or art historical timelines) for data analysis. Using thick description (Geertz, 1973), I wrote notes during and after each classroom visit. I checked for emerging themes among the data. Using the methods suggested by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995), I did both open coding and focused coding of field notes and interview data. Ultimately I clustered data into a few important themes, which I elaborate upon below.

Haze Elementary School was located in an urban, Central Texas school district. It was one of the city's oldest elementary schools and was rebuilt in 1992. The terra-cotta roofed exterior and interior walls incorporated hundreds of student-made tiles, had an attractive and well-maintained vegetable garden, and was

surrounded by a chain-link fence, typical of elementary schools in the eastern side of this school district, where most of the historically under-served residents live. There were 544 students, 95% of whom were Latino; an equal proportion were “economically disadvantaged” according to state-collected data. About 3.5% were African America, and the others were categorized as White. Fifty-five percent were considered “Limited English Proficient.” The school was “academically acceptable” according to state and local district rankings, which means it was not, like many of its counterpart schools in this part of the city, under threat of closure for not meeting state-mandated testing scores.

Colorful student work was posted throughout the hallways of Haze Elementary and was changed throughout the year. Many classrooms’ exterior hallway walls showed multihued, student-crafted portraits in construction papers of various flesh tones, and their works were changed underneath their depictions throughout the year. Student work ranged from Spanish-written pieces such as, “If I won a hundred dollars” writing prompts (as part of their bilingual education program), to fractions represented as students’ unique pizza slice representations, to sensory imagery poems written about animals, to three-dimensional replicas of animals using various media and accompanying reports about the animals. Bulletin boards celebrating what students were learning, often from community connections resembling a funds of knowledge perspective (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005), were also changed regularly. They covered topics from why they felt they are part of the community in their particular city, ranging from reports about Martin Luther King, Jr. to Monarch butterfly migration patterns (which migrate from Mexico, where most of the children had family heritage connections, through the city in which they currently reside). Around the *Día de Muertos*, or, Day of the Dead (a colorful, religiously syncretic, multi-generational way of remembering loved ones who have died), most classrooms had altars set up outside their classes, and there was a main altar outside the main office doors.

Ms. Chamorro’s exterior hallway also had the student-portraits and rotating projects beneath each student’s portrait. A larger-than-life Dr. Seuss poster of the Cat-in-the-Hat greeted those who entered the room, as did color photos of each of her students. A sign by her door listed students’ possible locations, and a student was in charge of moving the clip to indicate what part of the building students are in at any given time (this includes the cafeteria, the gym, and the classroom, among others). Entering her room could feel overwhelming at first. It was as if a book of best instructional practices came to two-dimensional life along her walls. Each of her four walls was devoted to particular curricular areas. The math wall had the numbers from 1 to 20 spelled out and written in numeric form. A number line up to 100 ran across that top wall. A large calendar was used, with movable numbers and month names as well as posters with U.S. coins, less than and equal signs, and numerical representations of fish, insects, and birds.

Her science wall included a chart of insects, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles

and birds with pictures accompanying these groups. “Processes of science inquiry” was another chart she has created on her wall; several women are performing the scientific inquiry steps on the chart. Shelves were full of math toolboxes, math books, student materials, and there were at least 40 boxes of well-organized pleasure reading books for her students to check out in her room. Her reading wall is changed with an author-of-the-week along with reading strategies, particularly the “COW” (which I describe later). There were charts along another wall for writing process activities as well. Six incandescent lamps were usually lit throughout the room, and the fluorescent school lights were almost never turned on.

Ms. Chamorro, a 30 year-old Latina of Mexican origin who hailed from the city where she taught, was the school’s lead teacher and relied upon heavily by her principal for multiple teacher leader positions, including organizing a large Cinco de Mayo annual presentation. Like the recommendations made by educational researchers for social justice (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Michie, 2005), she and her husband lived in the community, within two blocks of Haze Elementary. She had been teaching at Haze since her student teaching assignment from the state university placed her there when she was an undergraduate. Her assigning professor at the time told her he thought it would be a good placement. He was never explicit that there was a connection between her ethnicity and that of her students, but she understood that to be his intention. Initially she wasn’t sure she appreciated that, but now she says she is delighted to be working where she is.

Ms. Chamorro’s classroom was comprised of 16 students. All but one were Latino; the non-Latino was Monique, an African-American student who transferred into the class during the middle of the year. Three students were considered “English Language Learners,” and their parents had opted them out of bilingual education (though Ms. Chamorro believed these students would be far better-served there because of their language needs). She had recommended five of her students to receive special education services based on their several years of academic struggles.

## Findings

In order to demonstrate the dialectical play between structures and places of anti-structure in Ms. Chamorro’s class, I describe some thematic examples of structures and how they worked with representative examples from her class in italics. I have selected a few of the more important structures Ms. Chamorro implemented. She explained that she worked throughout the year to maintain each of the following structures, first by introducing and modeling them, and then by discussing and revisiting them throughout the year. None of the following structures was accidental; through her years of practice at her school, she found these to be helpful for the students to learn. Nonetheless, she was open to implementing new structures and shifted and adapted some of them as years passed.



*Community and the Rose Ceremony*

Underpinning Ms. Chamorro's classroom climate was a sense of community, echoing the ultimate goal anthropologist Victor Turner advocated in his research on structure and anti-structure (Turner, 1969). The creation of a caring community is also among recommendations of scholars who have studied historically marginalized populations (Gay, 2000; Valenzuela, 1999). When asked about the sense of community in her classroom, she explained that she achieved that by having the students (and herself) follow three rules. When we were talking in her classroom one day, she had some difficulty recalling precisely what they were, and she briefly interrupted a student, Mariah, to name them. Without hesitating she ticked them off (and subsequently went back to work):

1. Follow directions.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Be friendly.

"I tell them 'I'm not your friend.' I make it very clear to them... but that I'm an adult they can trust and that anything they can possibly need I will provide for them," she said. These ideas of setting clear boundaries and expectations align in many ways with caring yet firm classrooms demonstrated by Foster and Ladson-Billings to be an effective part of instruction (Foster, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1995). She explained that her philosophy was in contradiction with teachers (including her former mentor with whom she maintains professional dialog and approaches for advice) who tended to refer to their students regularly as "Friends" in their common discourse with students. Instead, she regularly told her students, "We're a family, but like in real families, we all have roles." She also stressed that she was like the mom, and they were the children. She said they talked regularly about how to listen, how to be friendly, and how to be a family. It is also worth noting that she explicitly did not utilize currently common practices of "behavior management strategies" such as the placement of clips next to student names based on their observable behavior in the classroom. "I tell the students, the principal doesn't come in here and put a clip on my name. That's not real life, so I'm not going to do that to them."

One of the family-oriented activities which Ms. Chamorro implemented was her version of what is often referred to as "circle time," or the activity in which students check-in every morning about how they are feeling and any important ideas or issues they want to share with their classroom community (Mosley, 2005). The routine was highly ritualized and referred to as the "rose ceremony." One student would start, holding the long, felt yellow rose reserved for this activity and share what she or he was thinking. The student would then pass the rose around the circle, which met on the plush blue carpet in her room. The student who started picked a sentence stem for the students to use to describe what they were experiencing, feeling, and thinking about. Following is an example of part of one rose ceremony on one Friday morning. Throughout the discussion, one student, Christopher, made



sure the rose was passed from student to student, especially when any student chose to opt out of saying anything by “passing.”

*Luis looked down and said quietly, “Today I am feeling kind of sad because I didn’t bring my project.” Other students maintained the quiet, and he passed the rose to Justin.*

*Justin continued, “Today I’m feeling very good because today my cousin and I are gonna go eat Cici’s Pizza. He never tried Cici’s Pizza I let him tasted [sic] my pizza pocket and he said we’re gonna go play outside today and tonight.” The other students agreed the pizza was good at Cici’s.*

*Ms. Chamorro smiled as she took the rose from Justin: “Today I’m feeling fantastic. We’re going to be going on a field trip real soon. And tonight my husband doesn’t have to work and the rest of the week I’m not going to see him because he has a lot of music stuff to do [as a musician] because [the music festival] is from like 10 am in the morning all day.*

*Monique added, “You should go with him.”*

*Christopher asked, “What about your cat?”*

*She answered, “He’s at home,” and passed the rose to Marissa.*

*Marissa continued, “Today I’m feeling excited because I get to watch Alice in Wonderland in 3D this weekend with my grandmother.”*

*Lucia echoed Marissa’s excited, “Today I’m feeling happy because in the weekend I’m going to get to spend time with my family.” She passed the rose back to the day’s leader, who asked if anyone else wanted to speak. They waited several seconds, and no one answered.*

*He looked up and indicated they should close, and they said together, “This concludes our rose ceremony.”*

Other conversations had a heavier feeling to them, as occasionally students shared problems from home or worries or concerns they have. This conversation demonstrates, however, the unscripted nature of students’ expressions within the confines of an expected structure for discussion. Students were free to share what they were thinking about as relevant to the rose ceremony question, and nearly all did so. Student responses included verifications of facial expressions and sometimes-audible exclamations. Students did not try to derail the discussions or make comments that didn’t fit the structures of the rose ceremony. In this conversation, most students shared events they were looking forward to. One student was able to express her sense of being upset about not completing her homework, which most likely would help the teacher understand why the student felt glum that day. The classroom space, in these moments, was converted to a place of emotional sharing by the teacher and the students. Because of the successful transgression of the space of classroom and the strictly academic expectations which usually surround it (bolstered in an age of accountability), the circle time, like many other moments in Ms. Chamorro’s class, became moments where the students’ unstructured responses created a Thirdspace of participation (Soja, 1996), where students could explore new thoughts and feelings.

### *Holy COW*

Along the reading wall of Ms. Chamorro's classroom, a small poster listed the acronym "COW," and the words "connection, observation, and wondering" after each letter. These words are among highly-effective cognitive reading strategies (Beers, 2002) which she and her students used in her instruction every day, throughout the day. In fact, many of her strategies used patterned structures for learning, ranging from kinesthetic memory-activators (such as using hands and arms in a circular motion to review the writing process step, "revising" by saying, "Revising, revising, changing the words around") to other acronyms such as "CUPS" for students' daily oral language activities (CUPS stands for capitalization, understanding, punctuation, and spelling). The strategies were regularly used and reinforced as ways to push students' thinking and classroom performance.

When using COW, students spontaneously raised their hands and began what they wanted to say with comments such as, "I have a connection," or "I have an observation." Students made such comments in all manner of classroom activities, from math center work to language arts to circle time. Typically, Ms. Chamorro would either call on or gesture to students to allow them to make their comments and give them the space to share their ideas. She or other students would follow up on their comments and then usually return to the overall conversation. Equally as common, she invited students to make a COW to material she was sharing with them. Students sometimes shared first with a partner and then reported back their partner's comments; or, they thought silently and then raised their hands, forming the letter of which aspect of COW they wanted to make. Following are two examples of how COWs have worked:

*After a few of Ms. Chamorro's students admired some student projects with pictures and descriptions of tornados displayed outside a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom, Ms. Chamorro invited four of the students to share their work as models with her students.*

*The first student began to read her work after sharing captions and art.*

*One of Ms. Chamorro's students raised his hand after she had read about why people should not try to out-run tornados. Ms. Chamorro called on him. "Why do we not want to race?"*

*Ms. Chamorro responded, "We made a connection yesterday. Who remembers why we can't race a tornado?"*

*Mariah responded, "It's really fast!" And other students commented it was as fast as 300 miles per hour. Ms. Chamorro reminded them that conventional cars could only go up to half as fast. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade student continued reading about how flying debris could hurt people, and Ms. Chamorro's student, Guisseppi, raised his hand with a C.*

*Ms Chamorro asked, "Why did you put up a C?"*

*"Because yesterday we read that it could be dangerous."*

In another instance, the class was discussing the differences and similarities between George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in an article they were reading.

*Ms. Chamorro directed the students, "Let's talk quickly about what you noticed in the text. Give me a COW, and show me what you're going to give me." After a few seconds, she gestured toward Marissa for her answer.*

*"My brother said that when he gets older he wants to be a president just like George Washington."*

*Ms. Chamorro encouraged Marissa by saying, "Great!" and then directed her attention toward Marco, "You have a wondering?"*

*"I wonder if George Washington and Abe Lincoln ever met."*

*She then redirected them to the text section called, "Did you know?" which explained that they lived over 100 years apart and then asked the students, "Why were they not BFFs?"*

*Katrina answered, "They were not BFFs..." and her voice grew soft.*

*Mariah spoke up, "Katrina said that George Washington and Abe Lincoln could not be BFFs because they did not live at the same time."*

These examples show how children made spontaneous connections to what they learned and what they were engaging in the moment. In the first example, students both looped into their memory of former connections they made as well as offering a new, improvised idea. The effective COW structure has provided a ready way for students and teachers to use their minds to loop into prior knowledge. In the second example, one student was able to express what may be considered aspirational capital (Bourdieu, 2008; Yosso, 2005), or the achievement hopes for someone in Marissa's family. These kinds of personal connections were also readily accepted and provide a place for the students to connect the school curriculum to their real lives, an example where the spaces of community and the classroom connect in a meaningful and instructive way, sensitive to the context of students' lives (Gruenewald, 2003). Additionally, Ms. Chamorro was able to loop their spontaneous utterances into engaging the students further into the structure of the text, and students related a cause-and-effect hypothesis about why Lincoln and Washington were not friends, helping build a sense of historical time for the students as well.

### ***Glowing and Growing***

Ms. Chamorro heavily emphasized celebration and constructive feedback toward student achievement in her classroom as regular, routine structures of practice. As in the COW activity, she instituted structures of academic language, which students use to verbalize their feedback. "I try to get them to use that language," she explained, "so that they will also write with it. They need the words to write, and I've heard that after second grade students can shut down if they didn't get good writing instruction." When the class completed the publishing process of a writing assignment (such as when they completed a large memoir booklet), they both visited other, older student classrooms to share their work and also enjoyed a small feast of sweet treats in the classroom. This practice aligns with the recommendations of writing process theorists' suggestions to make sure students have an authentic audience and moments of celebration to reflect on the process of writing (Calkins, 1994; Murray, 1998). In

another instance, her students did most of the performing at the school's Black History Month assembly, including performing Langston Hughes's poem, "My People," and their recitation of the Negro National Anthem. They discussed what went well about their performances and how they could improve for the next time. The students transgressed spaces where they were not supposed to be experts but became them, under the structuring Ms. Chamorro provided. Furthermore, they reflected on their skillfulness to engage those places of learning.

Much more frequently, the students and Ms. Chamorro provided each other what she called "GLOWs" and "GROWs" (posted in the room in all capitals, complete with sentence stems to help students get started) to students after their weekly individual poetry recitations and daily writing activities. A GLOW was given for work well done, always with specific feedback for the student or students to understand why they were being complimented. A GROW was, as she described it to the class, "constructive criticism" with very specific information for students to improve their work. I consistently saw positive feedback, even in the critiques from the students. The comments were offered in analytic tones; I never heard them delivered in ways that I interpreted as mean-spirited. Some examples of when GLOWs and GROWs were given were when 7<sup>th</sup> graders from a nearby middle school shared children's books they had written with them, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students acknowledged that Ms. Chamorro's 2<sup>nd</sup> graders actually gave better feedback than they gave each other in their writing processes.

*Marissa shared what she would take to a deserted island as her piece of writing. She read: "A tent so I can live in it and don't [sic] get wet. I will take a blanket. It is pink and brown monkeys on it and will keep me warm. I will bring a lighter so I can see in the tent and so I can see if a dangerous animal and I can make a campfire." The students clapped, and Ms. Chamorro asked, "Can anyone give her a grow?"*

*Luis commented, "I didn't really hear the hook. The only reason I knew was because we've been working on it in." Ms. Chamorro agreed with him.*

*Monique added, "Like how did she get her stuff?"*

*Marissa's hand was up, and Ms. Chamorro called on her. "I think you should add more about your tent."*

*Monique said, "Like describe it, if it's green or yellow."*

*Ms. Chamorro shifted the type of feedback by asking, "I think we have time for one more. Can someone give her a compliment? Let's end with a compliment."*

*Paul's hand was up, and he was called on. "You did a great job because I mean, I like the way you, um, described it like your blanket, but the um you kinda went on towards I mean I like the way you described your blanket and um." He paused.*

*Ms. Chamorro tried to redirect him, "What did you like about the way she described it?"*

*"I liked the way you described it, your blanket and the color," he finished, smiling.*

*Ms. Chamorro concluded by asking the group, "Could we give her a round of applause," and the class clapped with polite enthusiasm.*

*The following day, students were still working on the same assignment. Ana Paula read hers, saying she would take a skirt without providing any further details about the skirt. Ms. Chamorro asked the class, "What else could you use the skirt for besides wearing it?"*

*Answers ranged from: as a trap, to use as a fishing net, curtains, and to sit on. When one student offered, "as a book," Ms. Chamorro giggled and said, "Could you use a skirt as a book?" and the students laughed and said, "No!" Ana Paula was then offered GROWs from the group, including, "I like how you projected your voice," and "We could get a picture in our head," from the other details. Ms. Chamorro then asked the students, "Can you put your thumbs up if this is helping you to think about each other's writing to become better writers?" All thumbs went quickly into the air.*

Both examples of the GLOWs and GROWs demonstrate the structured environment in which students learned how to offer unscripted, creative and constructive feedback to help the students become better writers. In the first instance, Ms. Chamorro solicited helpful feedback as well as ending positively for the student. When Paul struggled to define what he liked, she skillfully helped coax a helpful response from him. In the second instance, students offered creative and even fun ideas the student author could incorporate in her next revision. In classrooms where students might feel less community or where fewer structures were implemented for such feedback (such as the visiting 7<sup>th</sup> graders), the constructive criticism would have likely been far less helpful or interesting. Finally, the structuring of the GLOWs and GROWs helps the students become more analytical thinkers about their creative processes.

### ***It Takes a Village***

A final structure I highlight was Ms. Chamorro's effort to integrate the community with the students. She took students on multiple field trips to the Mexican American Culture Center as well as the neighborhood library for puppet shows and artistic presentations. She drew regularly upon knowledges the students brought with them, mentioning local grocery stores the kids' families shopped at to the foods they ate, including *nopales*, Texas chili, and tortillas. She arranged an annual trip to one of the U.S.'s largest cities to a natural science museum, financed partly by a family-friendly after-school carnival held on campus. She said she attempted to give students every possible opportunity she could in order to help expose them to the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2008) for them to succeed in school. Throughout the year she told students not only about the current community in which they lived but also the community of the university and what is regularly expected there, repeating regularly that she expected them to go there one day. During my observations, several community volunteers participated in Ms. Navarro's classroom. These ranged from a neighborhood woman who lived nearby to a student from four years ago (the son of the school's parent support specialist) to a businessman who read to students. I was invited, also, to read to students, and I shared Subcomandante Marcos's *The Story of Colors* (1999). After I read about how a character wanted to protect all the

colors in the world, I asked them how they would protect the colors. A few of their responses, reflecting the anti-structured, creative play of their thought, included: put them in my mouth, cover them up so the rain wouldn't ruin them, put them in my room, put them in my pants, and sleep with them.

The regular mixing of students and multiple community members in multiple spaces can never be predicted. Students became extremely accustomed to interacting with new people, to the point that new observers hardly surprised them. They also appeared to be comfortable in non-school environments, interacting with new people in different spaces with ease. The structuring of these non-typical schooling experiences helped integrate the students with the community and to appropriate certain spaces as their own. Such educational experiences would certainly help students understand these spaces as part of their habitus (Bourdieu, 2008), which pertained to them.

### Implications

Children have been at play as long as they have been learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and will continue to find spaces of play, or anti-structure, often a kind of play that works against the teacher's intended agenda of successfully covering curricular material (Foley, 1994). In this article I highlighted how structures were built effectively in one Title I elementary classroom. Students were challenged to use play in ways that challenged their thinking skills as well as their creativity in a dialectical, dialogic process which created a place that translated inside and outside school walls as a rigorous and caring learning community, a border area which became a Thirdspace of student participation (Soja, 1996). I argue that because of the structures and playful spaces of anti-structure, Ms. Chamorro's students performed well both socially and academically. I believe these structures were so effective because of Ms. Chamorro's commitment to the community in which she lived as well as her reflective practice and implementation of structures which were meaningful and academically challenging. As a result, her students were not merely offering simple, mechanical responses, but thoughtful and engaged responses and new ideas in construction throughout the year. Her students had internalized the structures she taught and produced new thinking and ideas as a result. They became more accustomed to inhabiting places she introduced them to, including cultural centers and a world-class museum.

Testing data show that Ms. Chamorro's students outperformed the three other second grade classrooms in her school and that all students' work improved at least one grade level, usually more. Interviews from parents and the principal demonstrate families wanted their children in Ms. Chamorro's rich learning environment year after year. Ultimately, focusing on the structures a successful teacher implemented show one case, which may be an example for considering how structures and anti-structure work in other classrooms as well.

Despite the increasing demands of the accountability movement in education, teachers and students can maintain places of agency and play in meaningful ways that create both community and rigorous learning, when the administration is supportive of such work. Ms. Chamorro followed her district's prescribed instructional guide; along with her other grade level teacher peers. She would possibly enjoy more flexibility without a mandated curriculum, yet she managed to succeed in making her 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom highly interactive, engaging, and academically rigorous. There are many other structures I have not been able to highlight due to space constraints, but these are representative of some of the structures which go beyond the basic classroom routines suggested in popular teacher education literature (Wong & Wong, 2004).

Despite the increasing demands of the accountability movement, the teacher and students in this study maintained places of agency and play in meaningful ways that created both community and rigorous learning. These are representative of some of the structures which challenged and even subverted the basic classroom routines suggested in popular teacher education literature (Wong & Wong, 2004). In-service teachers can benefit from considering the structures they use, and how and *if* they are relevant for the students they teach. A reframing surrounding the reflective practices of teachers could help teachers consider how structures are or are not supporting instructional goals and spaces of anti-structure as part of learning. This is not to say that using deep structures is the only way to teach; it is one way that can be effective. For future research, it is important to consider if other teachers who appear to be successful and have fewer structures in fact have more covert structures informing their teaching. Additionally, it would be beneficial to study more classrooms among various student populations—multiple contexts—to see how structures and places of learning play out.

### Note

<sup>1</sup> Participant names have been changed to pseudonyms.

### References

- Au, W. (2009). *Unequal by design: High stakes testing and the standardization of inequality*. New York: Routledge.
- Beers, K. (2002). *When kids can't read: What teachers can do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (4th Ed. ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Booher-Jennings, J. (2005). Below the bubble: "Educational triage" and the Texas accountability system. *American Educational Research Journal*, 42(2), 231-268.
- Bourdieu, P. (2008). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Calkins, L. M. (1994). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



- De Lissovoy, N., & McLaren, P. (2003). Educational "accountability" and the violence of capital: a Marxian reading. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 18(2), 289-304.
- Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Snow, L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic field notes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foley, D. (1994). *Learning capitalist culture: Deep in the heart of Tejas*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Foley, D. (2002). Critical ethnography: The reflexive turn. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 15(5), 469-490.
- Foley, D., & Valenzuela, A. (2005). Critical ethnography: The politics of collaboration. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 217-234). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Foster, M. (1993). Educating for competence in community and culture. *Urban Education*, 27(4), 370-394.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research & practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- González, N., Moll, L. C., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2003). Foundations of place: A multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 40(3), 619-654.
- Helfenbein, R. J., & Taylor, L. H. (2009). Critical geographies in/of education: Introduction. *Educational Studies*, 45(3), 236-239.
- Huber, J., Murphy, M. S., & Clandinin, D. J. (2003). Creating communities of cultural imagination: Negotiating a curriculum of diversity. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 33(4), 343-362.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465-491.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teaching of African-American children* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lassiter, L. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marcos, S. (1999). *The story of colors/La historia de los colores*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.
- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Mead, G. H. (1925). The genesis of the self and social control. *International Journal of Ethics*, 35(3), 251-277.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Michie, G. (2005). *See you when we get there: Teaching for change in urban schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Mosley, J. (2005). *Circle time for young children*. New York: Routledge.
- Murray, D. (1998). *Write to learn*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Nichols, S. L., & Berliner, D. C. (2007). *How high-stakes testing corrupts America's schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Noddings, N. (2007). *When school reform goes wrong*. New York: Teachers College Press.



- Palincsar, A. S. (1998). Social constructivist perspectives on teaching and learning. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 345-375.
- Sloan, K. (2007). High-stakes accountability, minority youth, and ethnography: Assessing the multiple effects. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 38(1), 24-41.
- Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Turner, V. W. (1969). *The ritual process*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Turner, V. W. (1975). *Revelation and divination in Ndembu ritual*. London, UK: Cornell University Press.
- Turner, V. W. (1977). Variations on a theme of liminality. In S. F. Moore & B. G. Myeroff (Eds.), *Secular ritual* (pp. 36-52). Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum.
- Turner, V. W. (1982). Liminal to liminoid, in play, flow, and ritual: An essay in comparative symbology *From ritual to theatre: The human seriousness of play* (pp. 20-60). New York: PAJ Publications.
- United States Department of Education (2009, 01/16/2009). What is adequate yearly progress (AYP)? Retrieved May 2, 2009, 2009, from [http://answers.ed.gov/cgi-bin/education.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=6&p\\_sid=SnNkJYwj&p\\_lva=4](http://answers.ed.gov/cgi-bin/education.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=6&p_sid=SnNkJYwj&p_lva=4)
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Valenzuela, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Leaving children behind: How "Texas-style" accountability fails Latino youth*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wong, H. K., & Wong, R. T. (2004). *The first days of school: How to be a highly effective teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

*G. Sue Kasun is an assistant professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership of the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University, Logan, Utah. Her e-mail address is gskasun@gmail.com*

## Dreaming and Surviving in Heterotopia: First-Generation Immigrant Girls' Pursuit of the American Dream in New York City

*Kaoru Miyazawa*

The construction of identities is spatial (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, Harvey 1989; Rasmussen, 2004). The meaning of who we are is shaped by meanings of spaces that we occupy in our lives. As we enter and exit various spaces in our lives, we construct multiple senses of ourselves and negotiate the meanings of those selves. When it comes to new immigrants, we need to examine not only “real” physical spaces (e.g., host countries) and self, but also their imaginary space and self. This is because images of America and successful future-self they hold are central to immigrants' experience in a new land (Ogbu, 1987); those images of America they hold have a great impact on the meanings they assign to their current-spaces and current-selves in the U.S. Such meanings further determine their present actions. In this article, I will examine what meanings first-generation immigrant girls assign to their current spaces and current-selves, and how they imagine their future spaces and future-selves. Additionally, I will look at how the dialogues between their current-self and future-self influence their actions at school. Based on the post-structuralist belief that power plays a significant role in construction of space and self (Ong et al, 1996), in my analysis, I will pay particular attention to how power operates in their dialogues.

### Immigrants' Hopes and Upward Mobility

Beliefs of meritocracy in America, which are juxtaposed with new immigrants' perception of limited economic opportunities in their home countries (Alba & Nee, 2005; Gibson, 1987; Ogbu 1987), continue to attract immigrants from various parts of the world. Today immigrants come to the United States from multiple nations—resulting in a foreign-born population that makes up 12.5 percent of the total U.S population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Immigrants' firm beliefs in American meritocracy are also combined with their views of American education. Many im-

migrants believe in the good quality of American education and view education as a promising investment for their financial success (Ogbu, 1987). In fact opportunity to receive quality education is one of the major reasons why immigrants enter this country (Suárez–Orozco et al, 2008).

Such positive images of American society and American education are sustained among new immigrants even though their new lives in the U.S. are filled with challenges such as temporal economic and social downward mobility, linguistic cultural barriers, and racism (Alba & Nee, 2005; Gibson, 1988; Matute-Bianch, 1986; Waters, 1999). Today, the formation of these beliefs is not immune to the influence of neoliberalism, which is the dominant economic and political system in the US. (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism assumes that free market principles (i.e., individuals' free choice and attendant responsibility for their choices) promise a financial prosperity for individuals and society as a whole. To propagate this belief success stories of individuals, who are from humble beginnings and made their way up through their own effort, are circulated in the public discourse (Ong et al, 1996).

Among many celebratory representations of “successful” persons, stories of immigrant girls from working-class backgrounds are highlighted in the media (Harris, 2004). The representation of these girls overlaps with the common findings of recent immigrant assimilation studies: first-generation immigrant girls have higher educational and occupational aspirations and achieve higher academic goals than boys and subsequent generations of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Qin, 2003; Zhou & Bankston, 2001). While boys tend to demonstrate oppositional behavioral patterns in reaction to racism and limited opportunities for upward mobility in the U.S. (Matute Bianch, 1986; Valenzuela, 1999; Waters, 1999), girls tend to remain hopeful about their future in the U.S. (Lopez, 2003). Their optimism further promotes them to develop positive relationship with their American peers and teachers and to engage in academic activities persistently (Lopez, 2003; Qin, 2003; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008).

In other words, immigrant girls tend to focus on their future success and appropriate their current behaviors to become the ideal self in the future. This indicates that dialogue between future-self and current-self about the meaning of who they are and where they are is critical in understanding immigrant girls' success in school. Based on this belief, this study will explore answers to the following research questions: (a) What meanings do first-generation immigrant girls assign to current/future self and space? (b) How does the meaning of current/future self and space shape their current actions at school?

### Spaces in Immigrant Girls' Lives

#### *Utopia, Heterotopia, and In-Between Space (Mirror)*

The exploration of dialogues between self in the present space and self in the future space requires conceptual frameworks that encompass both real and imagined

spaces. Thus, Foucault's notion of utopia, heterotopia, and space in-between (i.e., mirror) are appropriate frameworks for this study. Utopia, according to Foucault (1986), is a site with no real place (p. 24). Utopia does not have physical existence in our society. It is, however, connected to the real world (space) indirectly so that we can physically see spaces that are comparable to utopia or spaces that are opposite of utopia in our real world (i.e., heterotopia). America, in the minds of those who desire to immigrate there, is viewed as a land of opportunity. The successful future lives in America they develop prior to immigration is an imaginary spatial representation (utopia). In reality, this utopic image of America contradicts with the current American society characterized by expanding economic inequity and decreasing job security (Weis & Dimitriadis, 2008). However, new immigrants continue to view America as their utopia after immigration and dream of getting there through rigorous assimilation (Ogbu, 1987).

Heterotopias, in contrast to utopias, are real spaces that have actual physical manifestation (Foucault, 1986). There are different types of heterotopia, but all heterotopias satisfy at least one of the six principles.<sup>1</sup> Foucault (1986) states that various heterotopias are simultaneously represented and contested with each other in our lives. America is a type of heterotopia as it embraces a multitude of heterotopic sites which satisfy one of the six principles of heterotopia such as hospitals (i.e., space for crisis, *principle one*), corrective institutions (i.e., space of deviance *principle two*), and museums (i.e., space of multiple temporalities, *principle four*).

In addition to utopia and heterotopia, there is a space in-between these two spaces, which Foucault (1986) called a mirror. A mirror is a utopia and heterotopia at the same time as it is located in the real space (heterotopia) but it shows images of a future-self and a future-space (utopia). This in-between space plays a significant role in promoting individuals' internal dialogues between self in heterotopia (real space one is in now) and utopia (imagined future space). Especially, the gaze from the future-self in the mirror that is cast on the current-self in the heterotopia is important as the gaze changes one's view of current-self and space (Foucault, 1986).

In examining the dialogue between future-self in the mirror and current-self that is looking at the mirror, it is crucial to be aware that images seen are not always a perfect reflection of real objects or persons. As the imperfect surface of a mirror provides disguised images of what it reflects, the type of mirror we use molds what we see on the mirror. Therefore, we need to acknowledge the nature of the mirror that we are using to see ourselves clearly. In this article, I view neoliberalism as a mirror, a type of in-between space that is located in between utopia (imagined perfect America) and heterotopia (real American society immigrants live in). Furthermore, I assume this neoliberal mirror reflects an image of self that is shaped by neoliberal principles so that the images of future-self that immigrant girls see on the mirror embody neoliberal traits.

### Neoliberalism: A Mirror in Immigrant Girls' Lives

Neoliberalism is an economic and political system that is based on market principles (Davies & Bansel, 2007; Harvey, 2005). Thus, neoliberal States function as free markets under the authorization of State government (Giroux, 2008; Apple, 2004). In the U.S., starting from the Reagan administration in the 1980s, the government has implemented various interventions in the effort to sustain a “free market” such as tax cuts among the wealthy population, deconstruction of trade unions, cuts in welfare programs and government investment in public sectors (e.g., education, criminal justice, and medicine), and privatization of those sectors (Apple, 2004; Davies et al., 2007; Grossberg, 2005; Harris, 2004; Hursh, 2005).

Under this condition where government has less responsibility over its citizens, individuals are expected to make free choices and be responsible for those choices (Harris, 2004; Hursh, 2005; Petersson, Olsson, & Popkewitz, 2007). And this expectation applies to all citizens including women. Thus, images of ideal female citizens seen on the neoliberal mirror are different from traditional images of women in patriarchal society. Neoliberal women are independent and actively participate in the labor market, traditionally been dominated by men, and earn competitive wages, equally with their male counterparts (Harris, 2004; McRobbie, 2007). The ideal neoliberal women are also financially wealthy individuals who exercise their consumption power; the model of successful women today are millionaires, who lead luxurious lives filled with commodities (Davies et al., 2007; McRobbie, 2007).

#### *Dialogue with Ideal Neoliberal Self-Reflected on the Mirror*

Individuals' responsibility and effort are crucial for financial success in neoliberal society (Ong et al., 1996). Ideal women in neoliberal society are the ones who continue to recreate themselves in order to survive in the uncertain society that operates on market principles (Petersson et al., 2007). The emphasis on being “responsible” is especially strong among minority young women from working-class neighborhoods today. Reflecting historically persistent stereotypes against working-class colored women as welfare dependents (Luker, 1997; Pillow, 2004), they are targeted as an “at risk” population. This population within the neoliberal regime is expected to transform themselves into independent and responsible women (Fine & McClelland, 2006; Harris, 2004). For example, teenage pregnancy prevention programs, such as AOUM (Abstinence Only Until Marriage) has been promoted together with the cuts in welfare. The program attempts to teach working-class minority young women the value of becoming financially responsible and productive individuals through self-regulations and careful life planning (Kantor & Bacon, 2002).

The creation of self-regulated individuals, who willingly conform to the interests of the neoliberal State, is indispensable for the expansion of neoliberalism (Foucault, 2003; Davies & Bansel, 2007). Furthermore, I argue that the dialogue between future-self reflected on the neoliberal mirror and current-self in the real world is the key for active and continuous self-regulation. When the ideal self in

utopia—a neoliberal woman who is professional, competitive, and financially independent, leading a luxurious life style—gazes back at the self in the heterotopia, the current-self thinks that she is not good enough (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Furthermore, it creates a desire within individual women to transform themselves into the ideal women that they see on the neoliberal mirror. This desire to be in utopia and to be the ideal self leads one to modify her current behavior actively within heterotopic space even though doing so does not directly benefit her in the present. Ironically, this self-driven transformation, which is promoted by the neoliberal State, is even experienced as an exercise of freedom to choose by individuals (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

***Study of First Generation Immigrant Girls in a Newcomer School in New York City***

In order to explore (a) how first-generation immigrant girls construct the meanings of heterotopia and utopia as well as meanings of current and future self through internal dialogues, and (b) how the meanings they construct shape their current actions, I interviewed three first-generation immigrant girls, who attended a newcomer school located in a working-class community within one of the New York City boroughs. New York City has been an initial entry point and home for new immigrants from all around the world (Kasintz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2006). The newcomer school attracted students from immigrant communities that were located within the borough. The school had a population of approximately 320 students ranging from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The national origins of these students were various but the majority of students were Latino/as and West Africans. The data collection took place between 2005 and 2008. At the initial stage of the study, I observed my participants at their school and spent time talking to them in the cafeteria and library. The data for this article are drawn from a total of 12 focus group interviews and 15 individual interviews. The interviews were conducted in the library at their school during the lunchtime or in the library of my university on the weekend. In nine of these interviews, a photo-elicitation method was used. In six of those photo-elicitation interviews, I asked the participants to bring their favorite magazines and music videos; we then discussed images of women in those texts. In three other interviews, I asked participants to bring the pictures they took on the theme of “this is my life now and in the future” and we discuss their future aspirations referring to their photos (Pink, 2001). While these interviews, which involved photographs, focused on the topic of their future aspirations, other interviews focused on their current lives at home and at school, particularly their relationship with their teachers, parents, and peers.

***Participants: Zero, Shy'm, and Bianca***

The participants of this study were three first-generation immigrant girls: Zero, a Tibetan; Shy'm, a Guinean; and Bianca, a Jamaican.<sup>2</sup> They were all in 9<sup>th</sup> grade when they agreed to participate in this study. I first met Zero in the hallway after school. Through Zero, I met Shy'm and Bianca. The girls equally believed in the

quality of American education and meritocratic nature of American society. Based on this belief, the girls aspired to go to college and become professional women in the future. In addition, they were determined to achieve their goals through their own effort as their families lacked financial capacity or cultural capital to support their education.

Shy'm, a Fulani Muslim girl from Guinea, came to the U.S. during the political turmoil in her country. She was hoping to return to Guinea in the future when the war ends. She was one of the high achieving students in the newcomer school. With her strong commitment to proceed to college and become a doctor in the future, Shy'm mastered the English language in a short period of time and passed all the New York State Regents exams by the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She was determined to have a profession that gave her financial independence thereby freeing her from the patriarchal family structure in the Fulani community.

Zero, a Tibetan Buddhist girl who grew up in a refugee community in India, was in the average academic track. Zero and her mother were first hesitant about immigrating to the U.S. where Zero's father had lived for eight years. However, Zero changed her mind as people kept telling her, "in America you could get really good education." Zero told her mother one day, "I want to educate myself so that I could become a really important person". Shortly after this, the family immigrated to the U.S. Zero aspired to go to college and become a computer engineer to build a large house for her parents in the future.

Bianca, from Jamaica, strongly believed in American education. She expressed her positive view of American education by saying "Here, I am getting a good education that I didn't get in Jamaica." Bianca admitted that she struggled in most of her classes as she lacked basic academic skills. Her academic problem was due to her truancy in Jamaica. Bianca's mother sent Bianca to New York to live with her biological father, who she had never met. Her mother's hope was to put Bianca on the right path by removing her away from her friends who had negative influence on her. Her mother's plan worked: Bianca started to attend school regularly after she moved to the U.S. She even attended a college preparation program on weekends with her determination to get college education and to build homes for her mother and relatives in Florida and Jamaica.

#### *A Newcomer School: A Heterotopia, a Space of Deviance*

The newcomer school my participants attended was a type of heterotopia, a space of deviance, and a space where those who are viewed as "abnormal" are put into for the purpose of rehabilitation. What we need to be clear about in understanding a space of deviance is that people in this type of space are not essentially deviant. It is the action of "putting them into this space" that makes them become deviant. In other words, deviant subjectivities are constructed through the spatial practice. For example, the newcomer school's entry requirement, having to score at 20-percentile rank or below in the New York State's English language proficiency



tests (School website, 2008), was the first step for the students' to become deviant subjects. This requirement indicated that students were abnormal compared to the norm (i.e. native speakers of English) (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Placing these deviant bodies (non-English speaking bodies) within this space away from normal bodies (English speaking bodies) created their deviant subjectivities. Students themselves further reinforced such subjectivities as they were in constant conflict with American students. American students, who attended small schools located on the upper floors of the same building, often reminded the newcomer school students of their deviant status. American students would shout at the newcomer school students "immigrants" from the stairs during the break. This triggered male students at the newcomer school to go up to the upper floors to fight back with the American students. These daily struggles accelerated the tension and boundaries between American students and immigrant students and reinforced immigrant students' non-American identity.

In addition to the territorial conflict among students, characteristics of the school's curriculum implied that the school was a deviant space. The purpose of the newcomer school was to correct these students' minds and bodies through education, to transform them into "worthwhile" citizens who fit in the economic and political system of the State (Forman, 2005). In that sense, the function of this deviant space overlapped with the function of modern disciplinary space that produces active docile bodies—bodies that actively conform to the authority (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). Teachers in the newcomer school had a high expectation for their students to conform to them. For example, school had a wide variety of regulations ranging from what students could wear and what they could bring to school to how they should speak to their teachers in class. To ensure students' obedience of the rules, teachers and security officers rigorously censored the students' attire and properties everyday at the entrance of the school building, in classrooms, cafeterias, and in hallways.

Among the many regulations, the regulation of time was the major concern for the teachers. It appeared that adults were obsessed with placing students' bodies in a particular space at a particular time to have them engage in assigned activities; an equivalent of the micro "penalty of time," a common practice in modern disciplinary space (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). A few minutes between classes in which students had to move from one classroom to another were the most chaotic moment in the entire school day. The vice-principal and principal would stand at the center of the hallway as soon as students were released from the class. They would yell at the students, who were busy chatting with their peers in the hallway and chased students out from the library and bathrooms.

Students were trained to be in a designated space at the designated time to actively engage in assigned activities in order to be considered a "good" student. The repetitive participation in these practices made them become dependent subjects. However, neither teachers nor students seemed to have realized the crafted nature of the students' dependence. Even though my participants complained that



teachers' control was "annoying" and made them feel somewhat depressed, the girls voluntarily came to school and engaged in daily rituals of the school actively.

*College: A Utopia, a Space of Independence*

At a glance it does not make sense that the girls agreed to conform to the orders that made them feel unpleasant. However, examination of their interaction between their future-self and their current-self provides a reasonable account for their conformity. The girls' active conformity was based on their belief that conformity would eventually take them to college, which they viewed as a utopia, a place where they could eventually gain freedom and independence (McRobbie, 2007). In developing such an image of future-self, which was molded by neoliberal values, the role the newcomer school played was significant. The school administrators and teachers presented college as the utopia. The school actively encouraged its students to proceed to college and become professionals (School Website, 2008). Teachers also facilitated students' college going by having them attend weekend college preparation programs in a university and taking students to college fairs. Exposure to the college environment expanded students' desire to attend college further. For example, after coming back from a college fair one day, Zero excitedly shared her experience:

Wednesday, we went to learn about different colleges. It was so much fun. We got to know about colleges instead of just reading about it. I found out about five colleges I want to go. I was happy. Some of them are in Canada. Some of them are really far away.

Direct contact with the admission staffs from various colleges made college real and increased Zero's desire to attend college. In addition to these special events, teachers at the newcomer school also repetitively talked about importance of college during classes. The following comment shows that Bianca interpreted that college was the first step to her successful and independent life:

Teachers always say college will make you successful. Once you go to college you get what you want. You don't have to wait for nobody. It is like taking in charge of your own life. You don't have to wait for your teachers telling you what to do. College is a great way to stand on your own and become a person you want to be in the future. I am going to go to college because I don't want to depend on someone for anything: I want to depend on myself.

College, a utopia in Bianca's imagination, contained all the characteristics that were opposite of the newcomer school (heterotopia). College, in her mind, was a place where students didn't have to wait for anybody and had to be told what to do. Bianca's teachers' presentation of college as a symbol of success and association of college with independence also attracted Bianca. This association of college with independence reflects a neoliberal value. In a neoliberal society in which State is withdrawing itself from the provision of social services and welfare, individuals are

expected to be self-sustainable and responsible for their own financial, social, and emotional wellbeing (Duggan, 2003, Davies & Bansel, 2007). College education, due to our world's shift to knowledge-based economy, has become an essential factor for gaining financial independence today (Duncan, 2011). Well-paid positions require highly technical knowledge and skills, which one can gain through college and/or post-graduate education. Thus, obtaining college degree has become a new obligation for competent citizens. Bianca's teacher led Bianca to imagine the utopia (college) and future-self in the utopia by guiding Bianca to look at herself through the mirror of neoliberalism. Bianca's comment about college and her determination not to depend on someone but to depend on herself shows that her teacher was successful in enticing Bianca with the neoliberal image of future-self (i.e., independent woman) and instilling within her a desire to transform herself to become an independent woman (Harris, 2004).

This desire for self-transformation paralleled with Bianca's acceptance of her current-self as a dependent subject, someone who lacked ability, and thus needed to be placed under the control of authority. In the next section, I will explain further how the girls came to accept such a negative meaning of current-self by focusing on the dialogue between their current-self and future-self.

#### *Dialogue Between Self in Heterotopia and Utopia*

Even though obedience served to suppress one's basic needs, the girls' belief that obedience was a necessary condition to escape from the current-space (the newcomer school) and get to utopia (college) drove them to actively conform to the orders of school. The following example of Shy'm shows that how she chose to suppress her needs and reappropriated her behavior to conform to the micromanagement of time and space in the newcomer school. The example shows that the dialogue between future-self and current-self was the key for reappropriation:

*Shy'm:* Last Wednesday, I had a headache, a big headache. My head was hurting and I felt dizzy, but they [teachers] didn't let me go.

*Author:* Why they didn't let you go?

*Shy'm:* They didn't think that I was going to go home. I don't know. I was like "this is so unfair." I went back to Capoeira (an elective course which she didn't choose) and the teacher was like "You have to do Capoeira." I was like "No, I am sick." He started say something. I said "Oh my god." He said he would only give F or A + to the entire class. I was like I have to get something [other than F]. If I go home, then I am going to fail. So, I stayed.

The teacher's attitude toward Shy'm shows that engagement in assigned activities during the assigned time in the assigned space is equated with a responsible action within the space of deviance. Additionally, only through the continuous demonstration of responsible actions can one successfully exit from this heterotopia and become an independent subject in the utopia.

Shy'm seems to have internalized this view of the authority. When Shy'm's future-self (i.e. an imaginary independent self in college) reflected on the neoliberal mirror gazed at Shy'm's current-self in the heterotopia (a newcomer school, a space of deviance) in the present, Shy'm knew that she had no choice but to stay in the Capoeira class if she was to escape from the heterotopia and get to the utopia (college). During the research, Shy'm consistently expressed her dream of going to college, becoming a doctor in Guinea, and living in a beautiful house in a city. She planned her life linearly to achieve these goals. Getting an A in that class to keep a high GPA to proceed to college was crucial for Shy'm to proceed the path of success she envisioned. Thus, regardless of the physical pain and her belief that the teacher's treatment was unfair, Shy'm "chose" to stay in class and performed a good dependent student.

As this example shows, in the space of deviance girls dreamed of being in the utopia (i.e., college) and actively engaged in transforming themselves. The irony was that regardless of teachers' talks on the importance for these students to be "independent," the actual transformation from dependent subjects to independent subjects never took place. In fact, as Shy'm's incident shows, participation in everyday practice of school for the sake of becoming independent women in the future, led them to become dependent subjects and accept their dependent status. In other words, Shy'm actively became docile subjects to become independent in the future. Such automatic and active reappropriation of one's behavior that is aligned with the interest of the authority shows that governmentality (Foucault, 2003) was operating in the newcomer school.

### Discussion: Another In-Between Space to Get to Other Spaces

Zero, Shy'm, and Bianca placed importance in their future space and assigned negative meanings to their current space. They viewed their current space a constraining space from which they were destined to escape. When it came to current-self, they accepted deficit meanings (e.g., lacking competence and independence) assigned to them by the authority and invested in transforming themselves. Their focus on their future further diverted their attention from the present and hindered them from critically examining the nature of everyday rituals at the newcomer school, which placed them in unequal relationships with their teachers and even deprived them of rights to satisfy their basic needs.

Neither were girls aware of the chances of not reaching to the utopia (college) and becoming the ideal future-self (financially successful woman) through attainment of education and profession. Contrary to girls' beliefs, American society operating under neoliberal free-market principles presents fewer opportunities for individuals' financial success. Neoliberalism has expanded the economic inequity among the privileged and underprivileged with the level of inequality at its highest since the 1940s (Collins, Leonard, & Williams, 2008). The income gap is apparent in that

70% of the wealth in the U.S. is shared only by 10% of the population (Bulman, 2005). In addition, education no longer guarantees self-sustainability in American society. For example 10% of college graduates works at minimum wage and 70% of welfare recipients have a high school degree (Anyon & Green, 2007). In other words, the common immigrant utopic image of America, or the future space they hope to move toward, does not reflect the reality of America. Furthermore, the fact that the graduation rate of the newcomer school my participants attended was only 60% in the academic year of 2008 (School Website, 2008) indicates a limited chance for the girls to proceed to college. However, my participants continued to hold on to the classic American dream. They believed in their future success through investment in education. Their desire to become self-motivated active individuals, who reinvent themselves to achieve individualistic financial goals and be responsible for their own choices and actions, overlap with the expectations neoliberal America has over its citizens (Davis & Bansel, 2007; Harris, 2004; Petersson et al, 2007).

Governmentality, active self-regulation through the dialogue between current-self and future-self, was the key for the girls' conformity to neoliberal values. Thus, disruption of the neoliberal hegemony lies in changing the nature of dialogue between current-self and future-self. The dialogues girls had through the neoliberal mirror were monotonous; they led girls to get to one fixed ideal place, the "free" market and to be one fixed ideal subject—a financially sufficient independent self. The dialogue was also individualistic—it did not allow other individuals to be involved in the achievement of their educational and career goals. Each girl had their own vision of neoliberal future and they individually pursued those personal dreams.

The key for changing the nature of the dialogue lies in changing the in-between space that connects real space (heterotopia) and imagined space (utopia). Specifically, in changing the neoliberal hegemony, we need to replace this neoliberal mirror (a type of in-between space) with another in-between space so that we can change the nature of the dialogue from an individual one to a communal one. I imagine a boat, another space Foucault (1986) argued as important, can replace the neoliberal mirror.<sup>3</sup> A boat is a sort of in-between space with its own physical entities and moves physically from one place to another constantly. It is also located in-between utopia (imagined space one tries to get to) and real space; it embraces utopias as places we have never been to and desire to get there. These imaginary spaces that members on the boat envision are important, as it is our desires to get those places that guide our journey on the boat. In order for a boat to determine its destinations, the members on the boat must have dialogues about multiple utopias and develop common views of utopias so that we can sail toward those destinations together.

We can imagine curriculum as boat, an in-between space, a space of possibility (Helfenbein, 2011) that recognizes multiple subjects and their imaginations. Unlike in the space of deviance where teachers provided students with one perfect image of the future, using the neoliberal mirror, the teachers' role on the boat will be to draw students' multiple imaginations about utopias, whether those images "present

[the current] society itself in a perfected form or else society turned upside down” (Foucault, 1986, p. 26). The dialogues on the boat would be fundamentally different from the ones the girls had in their lives. While students on the boat may continue to have internal dialogue between their current-self and future-self, other students and teachers on the same boat will also mediate their dialogues. Such dialogues on the boat (about utopias as imagined future spaces) have the possibility of taking us to multiple other spaces, outside of the space of deviance and beyond the “free” market.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> At the same time heterotopia embraces common characteristics, any one of the following six principles. Heterotopia (1) takes individuals who are at the time of crisis), (2) withholds deviant population in the society (e.g., prison), (3) embrace several sites that are incompatible with each other, (4) embrace different temporalities (library museum festival), (5) contain a system of opening and closing, and (6) serve as real spaces that are based on illusion (puritan society) or serve as illusory space that contain all the characteristics of real world (e.g., brothel) (Foucault, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> These are the pseudonyms that were chosen by the participants.

<sup>3</sup> Although Foucault discussed boat as a type of heterotopia, I am using this metaphor as an example of in-between space in this article, as boat is a placeless place and it connects heterotopia and utopia (Foucault).

### References

- Alba, R., & Nee, V. (2005). Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration. In M. Suarez-Orozco, C. Suarez-Orozco, & D. B. Qin (Eds.), *The new immigration: An interdisciplinary reader* (pp. 35-66). New York: Routledge.
- Anyon, J., & Greene, K. (2007). No Child Left Behind as an anti-poverty measure. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 34(2), 157-162.
- Apple, M. (2004). Creating difference: Neo-liberalism, Neo-conservatism and the politics of educational reform *Educational Policy*, 18(1), 12-44.
- Bulman, R. C. (2005). *Hollywood goes to high school: Cinema, schools, and American culture*. New York: Worth.
- Collins, J. L., Di Leonardo, M., & Williams, B. (2008). *New landscapes of inequality: Neoliberalism and the erosion of democracy in America* (1st ed.). Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Davies, B., & Bansel, P. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 20(3), 247-259.
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Rabinow, P. (1983). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeticism* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Duggan, L. (2003). *The twilight of equality? Neoliberalism, cultural politics, and the attack on democracy* Boston: Beacon.
- Duncan, A. (2010, January 12). *Secretary Arne Duncan's remarks at OECD's release of the program for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009 results*. Accessed from <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-oecd-release-pro>

- gram-international-student-assessment-
- Fine, M., & McClelland, S. I. (2006). Sexuality education and desire: Still missing after all these years. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(3), 297-338.
- Forman, M. (2005). Straight outta Mogadishu: Prescribed identities and performative practices among Somali Youth in North American high schools In S. M. E. Soep (Ed.), *Youthscapes: The popular, the national, the global* (pp. 3-22). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Foucault, M. (1986). Of other spaces. *Diacritics*, 16(1), 22-27.
- Foucault, M. (2003). Governmentality. In P. Rabinow & N. Rose (Eds.), *The essential Foucault: Selections from essential works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (pp. 229-245). New York: The New Press.
- Foucault, M., & Rabinow, P. (1984). *The Foucault reader* (1st ed.). New York: Pantheon.
- Gibson, M. (1987). The School performance of immigrant minorities: A comparative view. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 18(4), 262-275.
- Gibson, M. A. (1988). *Accommodation without assimilation: Sikh immigrants in an American high school* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Giroux, H. (2008). *Against the terror of neoliberalism: Politics beyond the age of greed*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Grossberg, L. (2005). *Caught in the crossfire: Kids, politics, and America's future*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Harris, A. (2004). *Future girl: Young women in the twenty-first century*. New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An equity into the origins of cultural change*. Cambridge, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Helfenbein, R. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical Geography and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304-317). New York: Routledge.
- Hursh, D. (2005). Neo-liberalism, markets and accountability: Transforming education and undermining democracy in the United States and England. *Policy Futures in Education*, 3(1), 3-14.
- Kasintz, P., Mollenkopf, J., & Waters, M. (2006). *Becoming American/becoming New Yorkers: the second generation in a majority minority city*. Accessed from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?id=440>
- Kantor, L. M., & Bacon, W. F. (2002). Abstinence-only programs implemented under welfare reform are incompatible with research on effective sexuality education. *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 57, 38-40.
- Lopez, N. (2003). Hopeful girls, troubled boys: Race and gender disparity in urban education. In *Urban high schools: the reality of unequal schooling* (pp. 39-65). New York: Routledge.
- Luker, K. (1997). *Dubious conceptions: The politics of teenage pregnancy* (1st Harvard University Press paperback ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Matute-Bianchi, M. G. (1986). Ethnic identities and patterns of school success and failure among Mexican-descent and Japanese-American students in a California high school. *American Journal of Education* 95, 235-255.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1987). Variability in minority school performance: A problem in search of an explanation. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 18, 312-334.

- McRobbie, A. (2007). Top Girls? Young women and the post-feminist sexual contract. *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*, 21(4-5), 718-737.
- Ong, A., Dominguez, V. R., Friedman, J., Glick Schiller, N., Stolcke, V., Wu, D. Y. H. (1996). Cultural citizenship as subject-making: Immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology*, 37(5), 737-762.
- Petersson, K., Olsson, U., & Popkewitz, T. S. (2007). Nostalgia, the future, and the past as pedagogical technologies. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 28(1), 49-67.
- Pillow, W. S. (2004). *Unfit subjects: Educational policy and the teen mother*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Pink, S. (2001). *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research*. London, UK: Sage.
- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The story of the second generation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Qin, D. B. (2003). Gendered expectations and gendered experiences: Immigrant students' adaptation in schools. *New Direction for Youth Development*, 100, 91-109.
- Rasmussen, M. L. (2004). Safety and subversion: The production of sexualities and genders in school spaces. In M. L. Rasmussen, E. Rofes, & S. Talburt (Eds.), *Youth and sexualities: pleasure, subversion, and insubordination in and out of schools* (pp. 1313-1152). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M., & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society*.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). Accessed from <http://www.census.gov/>
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Weis, L., & Dimitriadis, G. (2008). Dueling banjos: Shifting economic and cultural contexts in the lives of youth. *Teachers College Record*, 110(10), 2290-2316.
- Zhou, M., & Bankston, C. L. (2001). Family pressure and the educational experience of the daughters of Vietnamese refugees. *International Migration Review*, 39(4), 133-151.

*Kaoru Miyazawa is an assistant professor in the Education Department at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Her e-mail address is [kmiyazawa@gettysburg.edu](mailto:kmiyazawa@gettysburg.edu)*



## RicanStruction Sites: Race, Space, and Place in the Education of DiaspoRican Youth

*Jason G. Irizarry & René Antrop-González*

Significant increases in the population of Latina/os in the United States, coupled with persistently problematic academic outcomes for this group, have resulted in increased attention given to the education of Latina/o youth. One-fifth of all students enrolled in school are Latina/o, and if demographic predictions are accurate, by 2030 Latina/os will represent the numeric majority in schools. Recent data reveal that approximately half of all Latina/os over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma, and fewer than 13% of all Latinos have a college degree, compared to 33% of Whites (U.S. Census, 2011). Because they represent more than 60% of all Latinos, much of the scholarship addressing the educational experiences and outcomes for Latino youth has focused on Mexican and Mexican American youth. Considerably less is known about the experiences of Puerto Rican youth attending schools in United States, heretofore referred to as DiaspoRicans, the second largest group of Latina/os in the country.

Acquired by the United States as a spoil of war in 1898, Puerto Rico is the oldest colony on the face of the earth (Fernández, 1996; Trías Monge, 1997). Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth, although they are denied rights integral to full citizenship, such as the right to vote in federal elections, and as such can travel to and from the United States without restriction. Puerto Ricans have had a long-standing presence in the United States, with sizeable Puerto Rican (im)migrant<sup>1</sup> communities dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whether motivated to leave the Island<sup>2</sup> and settle in the Diaspora by federal policies and recruitment efforts or through their own accord, segments of the Puerto Rican population have been dispersed, and DiaspoRicans have established *colonias*—communities with large concentrations of Puerto Ricans—in cities across the country (Acosta-Belén & Santiago, 2006; Vargas-Ramos, 2006). Now numbering more than 4.2 million, there are more Puerto Ricans in the United States than on the Island, which has a population of approximately 3.8 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Citizenship

status, exposure to U.S. culture, and a lengthy history in the United States notwithstanding, DiaspoRican youth have not experienced widespread school success.

Drawing from Critical Race Theories and the field of Critical Geography, this study uses data collected as part of ethnographic studies at two high schools serving large percentages of DiaspoRican youth, one a comprehensive high school in a small city in the Northeast, the other an alternative high school in a large urban community in the Midwest. Using Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Race Theory as analytical frameworks, this study compares and contrasts the experiences of students in each setting, with a special emphasis on how they experienced race, racialization, and racism in particular spaces. Our study was organized around the following research questions: (1) What are the experiences of DiaspoRican youth navigating schools? (2) What types of interactions occur between students and teachers in these two distinct spaces? and (3) How might the educational experiences and outcomes of DiaspoRican youth be transformed by approaches to teaching and learning that center their cultural identities and frames of reference?

### Puerto Rican Schooling and the Struggle for Educational Opportunities

The schooling of Puerto Rican students residing on the Island and in the United States Diaspora has been marked with frequent struggles and sporadic triumphs. When the United States military invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 during the Spanish-American War, it had much more in mind than simply adding more colonial land to its already immense empire. In fact, much historical research (Algren de Guitierrez, 1987; Alvarez, 1986; Barreto, 1998; Canino, 1981; Cebollero, 1945; Fox, 1924; Gorman, 1973; Méndez-Bernal, 1997; Muntaner, 1990; Navarro, 1995; Negrón de Montilla, 1998; Osuna, 1949; Ryan, 1981; Spring, 2001) suggests that high ranking military and civilian officials consciously embarked on a much more psychologically insidious mission that consisted of cultural and linguistic genocide.

Fox (1924) powerfully described the hidden curriculum of Americanization when he stated,

There have been many understandings between the Porto Ricans [note the Anglicized spelling] and its continentals. When the Americans first went to the Island they were offended by the nakedness of the children and insisted that parents should clothe their offspring. At Christmas time they celebrated the Three Wise Men instead of Santa Claus and the Americans tried to do away with the old tradition. Also the seal of Isabella and Ferdinand had become an Island token of the days of discovery, but the blundering Americans felt that its presence showed a lack of sincere allegiance to the United States. Then too the Americans thought all vestige of Porto Rican individuality and Latin culture should be assimilated into American costume—even to wiping out the Spanish language. (p. 55)

Hence, the United States government would continue to appoint North American

men to direct the Puerto Rico Department of Public Instruction and use the Island's schools as their main battlefield in their campaign to exterminate Puerto Rican ways of knowing the world in addition to destroying the Spanish language. Consequently, the hiring and placement of North American teachers to teach English (Pousada, 1996; Resnick, 1993; Solís-Jordán, 1994) and inculcate the value system of the White, middle class became a popular practice in the Island's schools. Moreover, Puerto Rican teachers were also expected to teach English to their students and carry out other acts of cultural and linguistic hegemony. Currently, English as a second language is still taught in Puerto Rico and required of students enrolled in public and private schools in all grades with the purpose of exalting the culture and language of power of the United States.

Not surprisingly, the subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999) of Puerto Ricans follows those families who are forced to move to the United States from the Island. As a result, the 2000 United States Census Bureau revealed that there are now more Puerto Ricans residing in the United States than in Puerto Rico (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Long before Puerto Ricans residing in the Diaspora outnumbered their compatriots on the Island, students from this ethnic group were having immense struggles with accessing educational opportunities. As Nieto (1995) asserts, "Puerto Ricans have achieved the dubious distinction of being one of the most undereducated ethnic groups in the United States" (p. 388).

Recent educational research has documented the large extent to which Puerto Rican students are marginalized in United States schools, especially in urban centers (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006; Antrop-González, Garrett, & Vélez, 2005; Flores-González, 2002; Irizarry, 2011; Nieto, 2000; Sokolowski, Antrop-González, & Maldonado, 2010; Tucker-Raymond, Rosario-Ramos & Rosario, 2011). This marginalization is characterized by hostile conditions, such as culturally irrelevant curricula and pedagogical practices, English-only attitudes perpetuated by teachers and administrators, and deficit ways of thinking about Puerto Rican children, youth, and their families by school agents that purport to serve them.

As a result of these devastating practices, many Puerto Rican students begin to internalize intense feelings of low self-concept and unworthiness, whereby they begin to actually believe they are not capable of being smart and/or worthy of intellectual pursuits (Irizarry, 2011). Hence, they fulfill the stereotype threat and reify what their teachers and administrators already think regarding their supposed low potential to be high achievers (Steele, 2010). Fanon (1967) also referred to the *psychology of the oppressed* when he described colonialism and its devastating impact on the psyche of the subaltern through its accompanying feelings of internalized racism and intense feelings of self-doubt. Furthermore, colonized peoples often experience much psychological and physical pain (Darder, 2011).

While the aforementioned scholarship is important in its attempts to explain the high push out rates that many Puerto Rican youth in the United States experience, there is recent educational research (Antrop-González, Garrett, and Vélez, 2005) that

describes the factors that high achieving Puerto Rican students in an urban school credited with their academic success. The first factor was the advocacy and support of mothers provided their youth. These mothers held their youth to high academic expectations even when teachers did not do the same. Moreover, they worked hard to seek out and obtain important information on the college going process for their youth when schools could not fulfill this role. Second, these Puerto Rican youth credited their church membership with having a significant role to play in their academic development. More specifically, they established meaningful relationships with adults of color in their churches who had a college experience and could offer guidance concerning the college going process. In this case, the church served as a “space of possibility” where individuals could develop more positive identities than those offered to them at school. Third, the participants described how their high academic achievement enabled them to affirm their ethnic identity. In fact, they mentioned how many of their teachers and school peers held them to low expectations and expressed their belief that Puerto Rican students were not capable of being smart. Thus, the very act of being marginalized by their teachers and peers actually worked to motivate these youth to excel in their intellectual pursuits. The final factor that student participants described was the potential for caring teachers to impact their love for learning. While these students defined caring teachers as individuals who were willing to hold their students to high expectations, they also reported that they did not view the majority of their teachers as caring.

The aforementioned scholarship works to challenge and dismantle deficit notions that often describe Puerto Rican youth and their families as being intellectually inferior and their communities as lacking in resources. However, this work frames the accomplishments of these youth as individual actors rather than as accomplishments earned as a result of collective agency. Thus, the purpose of this article is to describe how Puerto Rican youth collectively work to RicanStruct their schooling experiences and sense of identity through their theorizing of race, place, and space. The RicanStruction of schooling is described within the context of two distinct school sites, one hegemonic and the second counterhegemonic.

### Critical Race Theory and Latina/o Critical Race Theory

Because the role of race and racism in the educational experiences of DiaspoRican youth has been understudied, we sought a framework that explicitly highlights race/ethnicity and pays special attention to the role of power within racialized systems such as schools. First developed and applied within legal studies, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latina/o Critical Race (LatCrit) theory have increasingly gained traction within educational research as scholars have sought to better understand the role of race, racism, and racialization in the educational experiences and outcomes for communities of color (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Irizarry, 2011; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, 1999; Milner, 2008; Solórzano, 1998). CRT

challenges hegemonic epistemologies and ideologies such as notions of meritocracy, objectivity, and neutrality and seeks to expose the ways in which racialized power relations shape the experiences of people of color (Chapman, 2007). It also emphasizes the importance of counternarratives, stories that challenge stereotypical, negative depictions of people of color, and represents another point where the meaning-making of race, place, and space are negotiated, interrogated, and resisted. While both theoretical frameworks center race in examinations of power, LatCrit aims to explore the intersections between race and other variables, including but not limited to class, gender, language, ethnicity, and immigration status (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Yosso, 2006). LatCrit also challenges the Black/White binary that often limits considerations of race and racism to two groups, thereby creating discursive space for Latina/os who can be of any race, and individuals who may be multiracial. Such an expansion is integral to understanding the multifaceted and nuanced ways that racism impacts the education of DiaspoRican youth and the diverse array of factors that influence their educational trajectories.

Extending CRT to more adequately address the experiences of Latina/os, Daniel Solórzano and Dolores Delgado Bernal (2001) forwarded five themes that undergird a LatCrit framework in education: the centrality of race and racism and intersectionality with other forms of subordination; the challenge to dominant ideology; the commitment to social justice; the centrality of experiential knowledge; and the interdisciplinary perspective. Forwarding the emic perspectives of DiaspoRican youth and highlighting their experiential knowledge allows for the inclusion of heretofore subaltern voices to inform the debates on school reform and has the potential to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for a group of students that has been traditionally underserved by schools.

## Methods

Data for this article derive from two separate yet interrelated inquiries regarding the experiences of DiaspoRican youth in U.S. schools. Each study sheds light on the challenges facing students, framing their voices as powerful counternarratives that challenge deficit explanations for the underachievement of DiaspoRicans that exclusively blame students' cultures and communities for the lack of educational success.

### *Data Collection*

**Project FUERTE: DiaspoRican youth engaged in YPAR.** The first study examined the experiences of Latino/a high school students enrolled in an action research course at Rana High School<sup>3</sup> taught by Irizarry who simultaneously conducted a multi-year ethnographic study of those students. The course was embedded in a larger, multigenerational research collaborative referred to as Project FUERTE (Future Urban Educators Conducting Research to Transform Teacher Education). The high school student researchers<sup>4</sup> in the project worked with Irizarry to critically

examine the educational experiences and outcomes for Latina/o students and develop empirically based recommendations to improve the preparation of teachers to work with Latina/o youth. Participants consisted of seven students from RHS, a high school serving approximately 1,000 students in the northeast. Five of the students were DiaspoRican, and this article draws from data focusing on their experiences.

Similar to many U.S. schools, RHS was experiencing a surge in Latina/o population, and the majority of teachers, administrators, and professional staff were unprepared to meet these students' needs. In one of the state's lowest performing and most economically depressed districts, the school was under increased pressure to improve student performance and graduation rates. The official annual dropout rate of the school for the year the study began was 4.1%, but a closer look at the data reveals that less than half of all Latina/o students who enter in the school as ninth graders are enrolled in the twelfth grade four years later.

Irizarry met with the students twice a week for two consecutive academic years, during class, after school, and during school vacations. In all, he spent more than 400 hours with the participants, working with and observing them across an array of contexts in and out of school. He constructed field notes after class periods and out-of-school meetings. Student presentations were video recorded and each student was formally interviewed six times over the two-year period using a standard format for phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 2006). Each interview was transcribed and along with field notes and student work products constitute the data set for this study.

**School as Sanctuary: The Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Alternative High School (PACHS).** The second study examined the experiences of students at PACHS. Antrop-González collected and analyzed school-related historical and curricular documents. These documents included brochures, archived newspaper reports, and a copy of the formal curriculum. These documents enabled him to learn more about the high school's history and operations, such as why it was founded, how it was funded and accredited, how the school was operated administratively, and how its curriculum was structured.

Second, semistructured one-on-one interviews were conducted with 10 DiaspoRican student participants. Students interviewed for this study had to meet several criteria that Antrop-González established before participant recruitment. For example, they had to be enrolled at the school for at least two years, because Antrop-González felt this amount of time would ensure the richness of the students' experiences at the school.<sup>5</sup> These students were interviewed after school hours, so that they would not lose valuable class time. While Antrop-González was only able to interview a limited number of participants over a short period of time, these criteria enabled the participants to elicit rich descriptions pertaining to their experiences at the high school. Although the small number of participants limits the degree to which one can make generalizations, the findings nevertheless reveal

how the PACHS served as a DiaspoRicancentric space marked by racial/ethnic and linguistic affirmation, high academic expectations, and the presence of meaningful, interpersonal student-teacher relationships.

Finally, observations and access at the school were also facilitated in several ways by Antrop-González position as an active participant. Antrop-González participated in school and community-related events, such as marches and rallies, clean-up detail after community events, and tutoring at the school. He also assisted in cleaning the school, because there was no money to pay a janitor's salary at the time of the study. Additionally, he assisted staff members in serving students their daily lunches, helped in the production of the school's 2000 yearbook, and participated in the 2000 senior class retreat. Antrop-González felt compelled to assume these roles, because he felt that they would help him "blend in" and become a more familiar sight at the school. He also believed that his work at the high school would help contribute to its pedagogical mission and enable him to give back to the school in return for the experiences he was provided.

#### *Data Analysis*

Bringing our two data sets together, we identified salient themes within and across each data emerging from each setting. Employing cross-case analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), we looked across the two cases for similar and distinct themes regarding DiaspoRicans' journeys through secondary school. Cross case analysis is particularly appropriate for this unique data set in that it allows the researchers to reconcile "an individual case's uniqueness with the need for more general understanding of generic processes that occur across cases" (p. 173). The two cases we compare emanate from two distinct settings but each reflects some similar tensions, themes, and processes. To facilitate this process, we constructed categorical matrices representing key findings. We then looked across cases to identify key themes, which we then developed in analytic memos. This process of constructing matrices and then writing memos allowed us to use the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2007) to identify and test for the robustness of various themes across the cases. Finally, we conducted member checks with our student participants and audit trails with supportive colleagues in order to ensure that we did not misrepresent their experiences. Moreover, these particular data analysis techniques also enabled us to triangulate our data sources to ensure that there were no notable inconsistencies and/or contradictions in our interpretation of students' experiences. We also employed these data analysis techniques, so we could pay particular attention to similarities and/or differences across gender.

We should also note that our identities shaped many aspects of this work, from conceptualizing and implementing the research projects that are described here through the analysis of the data and development of this manuscript. As DiaspoRican scholars, former teachers of DiaspoRican students and current faculty members in Schools of Education at large public universities, we are both com-



mitted to promoting the success of DiaspoRican youth and other communities that have been historically underserved by schools. While our experiences working with DiaspoRican youth and communities, and specifically the resiliency and thirst for knowledge we have witnessed in these settings, gives us hope for a brighter future, we remain concerned about the fate of our schools and implications for DiaspoRican students and others who are embedded in learning environments that ignore or, worse, pathologize their cultural identities.

### Findings

The data suggest that students in the two sites experienced racism and racialization, albeit in unique ways, and were ever conscious of the impact of these forces on shaping the educational opportunities available for them. The notion of space, which for the purposes of this analysis is confined to the schools that students navigated, also loomed large. Students at RHS were embedded in a space that was forced to confront shifting demographics due to recent increases in the Latina/o population in the community, and students at PACHS attended school in a context that was created as an alternative to the traditional public school system specifically to accommodate them and address their needs in ways that were more culturally responsive. Finally, the education of DiaspoRican youth doesn't take place in a vacuum but rather is profoundly shaped by larger forces outside the control of schools. Categorized as race, space, and place, we explore these three themes in the education of DiaspoRican youth across context in what follows.

#### *Race in the Education of DiaspoRican Youth*

The dialogue regarding issues of race is typically limited to the Black-White binary, often rendering silent the racialized experiences of Latina/os, who can be of any race and often identify as multiracial. Moreover, there is a general reluctance to systematically and critically discuss issues of race within educational settings (Pollock, 2008; Sleeter, 2001). Despite educators' aversion to discussing how race can and often does dictate the types of educational opportunities offered to youth, the DiaspoRican students in our two studies consistently underscored the prevalence of race and racialization in their schooling experiences.

DiaspoRican youth from RHS highlighted two distinct, yet equally problematic ways that race and racism manifested themselves in their schooling experiences. The first, which we broadly describe as rendering *puertorriqueñidad* invisible, reflects the more subtle, institutionalized ways that racism motivated policies that were intended to suppress the educational aspirations and outcomes for DiaspoRican youth. In an interview conducted a year and a half into Project FUERTE and a month prior to her graduation, Carmen articulated the processes through which DiaspoRican students are targets of racial oppression and marginalization through institutional processes largely outside of the control of youth and their families.

After looking closely at the curriculum, at the books teachers use, the fact that there are no Latinos [teaching] core subjects, and the fact that like 50% of the school is Latino, Puerto Ricans mostly, you see how they like treat us like we aren't even here... as if we don't exist. Everything here, from the morning announcements [which are] always in English-only, the posters on the walls, for real, like everything tells us that you have to be White and I'm not White, we are not White.

Carmen's appraisal of her educational experiences is echoed in an interview with Taína, who similarly underscores how within this context Puerto Rican identities are suppressed while whiteness is elevated, suggesting to students that they have to conform to the more dominant forces in the system for any chance at school success.

Boricua's rep[resent] hard. They represent. You know what I'm saying. We love being Puerto Rican. We got the flag; we got our music and all that stuff. When we come here, you can't show that love, that pride. It's like you gotta hide it. That sounds funny cause everybody knows I'm Puerto Rican, but you know... I gotta not be me. I gotta be like *los blancos*, and like I'm always sayin' we ain't *los blancos*.

While students acknowledge a general animosity against the burgeoning Latina/o population at the school, the climate for DiaspoRican youth was especially hostile. As part of the their data collection for the YPAR project, the students administered a survey to the teachers, administrators, and professional staff at their school. Although not directly addressed on the instrument, several teachers, without provocation, chose to share their perceptions regarding the differences in work ethic they perceived among various groups of Latina/o students attending the school, with one teacher going as far as to say, "Mexican and Central Americans are clearly more motivated than Puerto Rican students" (Irizarry, 2011). The anti-Puerto Rican sentiment expressed by teachers and clearly felt by students made RHS a hostile space for DiaspoRican students to navigate.

The second way that race and racism permeated the lives of DiaspoRican youth at RHS was through the more overt targeting of students and the intentional suppression of their cultural identities. Jasmine explains how language policies implemented by many teachers at the school target Puerto Rican Spanish-speakers yet exalt the use of other world languages.

The teachers flip on you if you use Spanish. They like send you out of class, to the office constantly. Even if you are just chillin' with your friends they tell you to speak English (raising her voice). We had some exchange students from Germany or somewhere over there. The teachers were sweatin them. They were like, "Oh, how would you say this in German?" or whatever. They don't care about Spanish, but they care about the other languages. That shows you what they think about us right there.

The racialized undertones of the suppression of Spanish and the support for other languages was not lost on the RHS students and contributed to their sense of isolation from school. Because language is inextricably linked with identity, the

students felt like their cultural identities were consistently maligned and suppressed. In contrast, expressions of *puertorriqueñidad* were embraced and practices at PACHS reflected what we term as the ethnic/political symbol framework of racial/ethnic affirmation. For Melissa, race was manifested through open, frequent classroom conversations regarding colonialism and its implications for race.

At PACHS we always talk in our classes about Puerto Rico as a colony and how racism affects our lives. We learn that racism affects everything like the foods we cannot get easily. We also talk about our neighborhood being a food desert and that race plays a part in not getting healthy food. We also learn about how important it is to struggle with other people of color like African Americans and other Latinos.

In additional conversations Antrop-González had with Melissa, she indicated that her heightened nationalist political consciousness was a result of the history classes she had taken at the PACHS. Damien also expressed the importance of Puerto Rican affirmation at the high school. He described his previous high school education as a “brainwashing,” because it did not expose him to discussions centering on Puerto Rican history.

In my other schools in Hartford and Chicago I was brainwashed. In those other schools, we never talked about Puerto Rican history and our political heroes. At the PACHS, we always be talkin’ about colonialism in Puerto Rico and how it hurts us in the US. I have learned a lot here about my history and culture and Spanish is spoken at the school all the time. Our people are respected at this school.

The experiences of the PACHS students interviewed revealed the ways in which the high school was important to them. Interestingly, the students emphasized the importance of the high school in terms of its willingness to build and sustain a culture of DiaspoRicancentric attributes. These rich, culturally specific attributes included the manifestation of caring relations between students and their teachers, the importance of a familial-like school environment, the importance of having a safe school, and allowing students a space in which they are encouraged to affirm their racial/ethnic pride. That is, in contrast RHS where students felt a bifurcated sense of identity, having to shed their cultural identities for a chance at school success, PACHS served as a “space of possibility” where students could reconcile and assert their racial/ethnic and academic identities. Although these DiaspoRicancentrically rich attributes had been missing in their previous schools, they were now an integral part of their everyday experiences at the PACHS.

The approach to educating DiaspoRican youth at RHS can most aptly be described as reactionary and motivated largely out of racialized fear and ignorance to the emergence of DiaspoRican youth as a numeric plurality in the school system. Students bore the brunt of teachers’ deficit orientations, assimilations practices and “subtractive schooling” (Valenzuela, 1999), presenting significant implications for their feelings about school, academic achievement, and aspirations for life after high school. In contrast, PACHS was created proactively to meet the needs of Puerto Rican

and other students who were not being well served in the traditional public school system. This intentionality resulted in the centering of students' racial/ethnic identities and the creation of an atmosphere that supported personal and intellectual growth.

All of the participants consistently spoke to the prevalence of racism in their schooling and the impact of race-based structural oppression on their educational attainment. From a Latina/o Critical Theory perspective, DiaspoRican youth were silenced in one setting while allowed to assert their voices in the other. Most notably, the responses of school personnel to students' expressions of their cultural identities, through language practices, symbols, and the like, had a significant impact on students' perceptions of their school.

Identity development is a central feature of adolescence. Because of the time that they spend there and the significant influence schools play in shaping the experiences of youth, as DiaspoRican youth engage in this process, they are often immersed in contexts that do not value their cultural identities, thus alienating students from school. RHS and PACHS students, before enrolling in an alternative school, feel forced to choose between developing and asserting a healthy sense of self that includes a positive appraisal of their racial/ethnic identities or feeling pressured to strip themselves of their home identities and language. Unfortunately, most DiaspoRican students are highly pressured to internalize the latter rather than the former.

Consequently, many students react to these toxic schools by leaving school or by internalizing intense feelings of shame and guilt for being DiaspoRican. Hence, the psychology of the colonized is reproduced through dominant forms of schooling (Bulhan, 2004; Memmi, 1991). While PACHS offers an incredibly viable anticolonial, humanizing alternative to colonial schools, it is unfortunately the exception to the world of schooling rather than the norm.

### *Space in the Education of DiaspoRican Youth*

Moving from participants' individual perceptions of race in their educational experiences to the institutions they are trying to navigate to secure quality educational opportunities, this section expands the focus to include how DiaspoRican youth were influenced by the larger Diasporic communities of which they were members. Space, in this context, describes the extent to which relationships among people produce power in territorial contexts (Forman, 2001). For DiaspoRican youth, being physically removed from the Island and living and learning in the context of the United States problematizes their notions of belonging. Students' sense of identity development and engagement with school are further complicated by the types of Diasporic communities in which they reside. That is, the history of Puerto Ricans in particular regions of the country, the political power they may have (or have not) amassed, and their participation in shaping policy and practice within local schools all factor the quantity and quality of services offered to DiaspoRican youth. RHS students, in community with relatively no Puerto Rican representation in the political sphere,

are caught in a community characterized by a predominantly Latina/o school-aged population and a predominantly older White voting populace.

The cultural and demographic disconnect played out in the struggle to get a school budget approved by the town, the impact of which was felt by DiaspoRican students.

*Jasmine:* Living in this town is hard. The White people act like we are invading their land or something like that. The things with the budget, where it didn't pass for like four tries, 'til after school already started tells you that the whites in [this town] don't want us here, they don't want us to get educated the way we need to.

These voting patterns support the findings from a 2007 study conducted by the Population Reference Bureau, which found that states in which the majority of voters were white and whose public schools served a majority of students of color often spend less on education than states in which the racial/ethnic texture of the voting population was more congruent with that of the students (Cohn, 2007). These trends highlight the power of a large, predominantly older white electorate to shape public policy that will undoubtedly affect the opportunity structure for an increasingly brown school-aged population. Students like Jasmine were acutely aware of the general sense of antipathy toward DiaspoRican youth in Rana City, manifested in voting patterns as well as the dominant discourse in the town and school harkened back to the "good ol' days" when things were "different."

DiaspoRican youth in Rana City spoke to the Latinization of their community (Irizarry, 2011) in a myriad of ways, offering their appraisal of the shifting cultural landscape expressing their hurt regarding the negative responses from non-Latina/o community members to the changing demographics of the town and its schools. In an original poem describing the changes she has observed in her community, Carmen wrote:

What was once referred to as Cloth City is now Cocaine Town.  
 No more mills spinning the weaver's web, just drug dealers trying to manipulate  
 teenage heads.  
 ...People are thinking this is all their life.  
 But what do you see now on Main Street?  
 Busy Latin restaurants like El Pilon and Señor Taco.

As DiaspoRican youth strive for quality educational opportunities that give them options in life, their efforts unfold within a larger sociopolitical context that is often hostile to these efforts. The experiences of RHS students are similar to other newer diasporic communities where the cultural collisions between an older Anglo population and a more youthful Latina/o populace are relatively new and therefore more abrupt and jarring. The effects of living and learning in the Puerto Rican Diaspora are also felt by DiaspoRican youth living in communities with a long-standing Puerto Rican presence.

PACHS students also discussed the implications of living in the Diaspora. A recurring theme dealt with the institutional racism they often felt at the hands of

adults in positions of power and/or authority. When asked to describe their lives in Chicago, students often remarked how just getting to school in the morning and returning home from school in the late afternoons was often a challenge. Many of the students were either harassed by police officers and/or gang members. Alex remarked:

Man, just getting to school is hard. The cops are always messing me and many of my friends up. Just because we're Puerto Rican, cops be comin' up to us and telling us to hit the ground and spread. They always thinking we got weapons or drugs on us. When they do this to us, we always be getting to school late and missing work. We get jacked up just for being Boricua. When it's not the fucking cops, it's the gangs tryin' to recruit you. Life is hard here, man! Once I'm at the school, though, I feel safe. But once I leave the school, the rough shit starts all over again!

Alex clearly describes the extent to which he consistently faces institutional racism as a young DiaspoRican in Chicago. These experiences have undoubtedly shaped his views of the world in which he lives. Hence, he describes his life as being difficult. Nonetheless, he acknowledges PACHS as a space that he regards as being a refuge from these daily challenges.

Like Alex, Cathy also described her daily conditions as a young DiaspoRican woman living in Chicago. She also discussed the extent to which she faced physical objectification and disrespect of her status as a young woman of color.

On the bus, I'm constantly havin' to be lookin' out for people staring at my body and making rude ass comments. They're not looking at my mind or my talents but at my body. I hate that shit, yo! You askin' me how life is as a young woman here—it's okay at times and hard others. I know though, that once I get to the school, I'm not treated that way—I'm respected.

Again, the notion of facing difficult challenges as young DiaspoRican adults was a common one. However, students were also quick to point out that PACHS represented a respectful space in which they found a healthy escape from life on the streets. Hence, the intersections between race/ethnicity and space were an important one in the lives of PACHS youth.

### *Place in the Education of DiaspoRican Youth*

Whereas the previous section focused on how DiaspoRican students experienced race and racism, this section looks at the institutions in which they were embedded and how students found liberatory spaces within otherwise oppressive educational systems. For the PACHS participants, attending an alternative school that was created with the interests of DiaspoRican students in mind, these spaces were readily available within the walls of their school. For example, PACHS is aesthetically rich in honoring the lives of Puerto Rican freedom fighters and other community activists. Murals and ensuing conversations regarding the tribulations of former and present Puerto Rican political prisoners are part and parcel of the progressively rich dialogues that take place in the school among students and

teachers. Furthermore, geographical representations of Puerto Rico are present at PACHS. Classrooms are named after municipalities in Puerto Rico, such as the *Juana Díaz* and *Ponce* rooms.

Additional examples of Puerto Ricentric images include posters of freedom fighters Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos and Lolita Lebrón, among other revolutionary figures. Above and beyond these important visual images that work to inform and honor the Puerto Rican experience, curricular materials that exalt alternative, anticolonial narratives are woven throughout content areas like English, math, and science. Thus, classroom projects and dialogues are further manifestations of how DiaspoRican students and their teachers name and make sense of their lived experiences. Moreover, PACHS is constantly working to revise their curriculum in order to raise consciousness around what it means to be DiaspoRican in an urban center like Chicago. For the FUERTE participants, their participation in YPAR, critiquing the oppressive institutions in which they were embedded, offered a vehicle for them to create a liberatory space within a schooling environment that students described as hostile and oppressive.

Examining place in the education of DiaspoRican youth is significant in that students' experiences in schools undoubtedly influence their personal and professional trajectories. For many of the Project FUERTE students, schools were viewed as a necessary evil they had to endure, a place to pass time and, as one student put it, "hopefully get a diploma." Because Latina/os were omitted from the curriculum, students made the flawed assumption that Latina/os had contributed little, if anything, to the development of this country. On an individual level, the lack of Latina/o representation in the curriculum served to alienate students from academic content and influenced the development of oppositional identities among students. An excerpt from a class discussion exemplifies students' frustration and their desire to disconnect from academic pursuits:

*Alberto:* We come to school everyday, but what are we learning really? I'm not interested in anything here. Like all of my classes are the worst.

*Taina:* Word. This is all mad boring. Everything doesn't have to be about Latinos but like something... give us something.

*Jasmine:* That's why a lot of the time I don't even bother trying. For what? If we learned things that are like connected to my life, then I would be more interested.

There was a general divestment from school among the Project FUERTE participants, which they attributed, at least in part, to being disconnected from the curriculum. As part of the Action Research and Social Change course, students had the opportunity to learn more about their cultural histories and found practical applicability in the research skills they developed to answer questions they generated. As students began to create liberatory space for themselves through their engagement in YPAR, they questioned the motives of their teachers and contemplated the



implications the whitewashing of the curriculum. In a journal entry as part of a class assignment, Tamara wrote the following:

I look on all the stuff I learned for this project and, even though I am glad to finally learn something about Puerto Ricans, I'm mad that this is the first time I am hearing any of this. Puerto Rico is part of the United States, and we are U.S. citizens. Not to mention the fact that [Puerto Ricans] are like half of the school population. Why wouldn't they want us to know our history? School is boring and has always been boring. Now that I am learning about my culture, I really like coming to this class. If this had started when I was younger, my life would be different.

The students at RHS were largely disconnected from their school and consequently from the learning that can take place there, engaged in a process of self-defeating resistance (Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001). The YPAR project, embedded in a class offered by Irizarry at their school, offered students the opportunity to create a space within the context of a DiaspoRican reality where Puerto Rican could be synonymous with academic achievement. In this environment within the larger school structure, students were able to move toward transformational resistance (Solorzano & Delgado-Bernal, 2001) where they could remake themselves, learn academic skills in context, and interrogate and challenge the oppressive policies and practices that served to marginalize and disconnect them from school.

In the case of PACHS, students were highly encouraged to dialogue about race/ethnicity and its place in Puerto Rican history and in the context of the lived experiences of DiaspoRican youth.

*Melissa:* At my other high school, everything was about the history of White people, and teachers made them seem like they were better than us. I was getting sick of all that talk—it's like we didn't even exist. But here at this school (PACHS), we actually get to talk about our own people and the good things they do for our community. Here, we are made to feel like we're somebody special.

*Antrop-González:* So, does feeling told you're special help you in school?

*Melissa:* Yeah, it makes me feel like I belong here, and then I want to do good things for my Puerto Rican people where I live. I've got friends who study with me here, and they feel the same way, too.

Melissa voices a powerful testimony regarding the power importance of a strong sense of belonging can have on academic engagement. This power enables Melissa to see herself as a young woman worthy of being acknowledged as a human being with voice and agency. Similarly, Damien compared his former Chicago public high schools with PACHS when he remarked:

What makes me want to be here at the school (PACHS) all the time is that the teachers make me feel good to be Puerto Rican. Here, we always talk about what it means to be Puerto Rican and what we can do to make our lives and the lives of our neighbors better. In my other high schools, I was always made to feel bad

about who I am. I was, shit, I got to get out of these schools. I'm glad I found this school (PACHS). I can even speak Spanish here and not get yelled at by the teachers or other students. We also get to read a lot of books about our history and struggles about our lives in the United States.

As Melissa and Damien remarked, the PACHS school space was racially/ethnically and linguistically conducive to respecting students' DiaspoRican identities. They were also aware of the fact that their previous high schools were intent on eradicating their identities in favor of White, dominant ways of seeing themselves, their communities, and their worlds. In contrast to these problematic experiences, they greatly valued the inclusion of race/ethnicity at a DiaspoRican space like PACHS, and they felt they were able to reclaim their humanity as a result.

The notion of place in the lives of DiaspoRican youth in both settings was salient, as the schools served as sites of interactions across lines of difference that were mediated by historic power relations. Place, then, according to theorists in critical geography, references the locus of complex interactions between power and identity (Helfenbein, 2010). PACHS, which was established specifically to address the needs of DiaspoRican youth who were underserved by the traditional public school system, was dominated by relationships of mutual respect that made Puerto Rican youth feel welcome and worthy of investment. Conversely, Rana High School was undergoing a demographic shift, as the predominantly white city was becoming increasingly Latina/o. The cultural collisions that ensued in this place between Latina/o students and their teachers created an environment that DiaspoRican youth experienced as hostile. Again, these interactions were strongly influenced by racism and processes of racialization in this community.

### Discussion and Implications

The two schools we have described are prime examples of RicanStruction sites or spaces where DiaspoRican youth and their teachers labor together build and sustain teaching and learning spaces that honor, respect, and affirm their students' lived experiences across racial/ethnic and linguistic lines. In the case of the two schooling spaces described in this paper, positive transformation for youth of color is manifested in unique ways and offers the promise of RicanStruction in schools that have traditionally served their students poorly.

In the case of Rana High School, *Project FUERTE* applies YPAR philosophy and methods in order to raise DiaspoRican youths' political consciousness around the ways schools are set up to fail them by providing a culturally irrelevant curriculum and sponsoring toxic student-teacher relationships that are characterized by low academic expectations and the lack of authentically caring teachers who understand and honor their students' communities, parents/caregivers, and cultural and linguistic realities. Thus, many Rana teachers do not respect and/or affirm their students' funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992; Quiñones,

Ares, Padela, Hopper, & Webster, 2011) and/or community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). These particular concepts are predicated on teachers intimately knowing and viewing their students' home based ways of knowing the world as assets to be woven through curricular practices. Thus, *Project FUERTE* facilitated the inclusion of YPAR as a way to arm students with the skills to name and work to challenge and transform dehumanizing schooling practices. The project also created a space of possibility, an opportunity for students to take up this resistant place-making and work to transform the oppressive environment in which they were educated. As a result, they were able to reclaim and remake their DiaspoRican identities and demand that their culture and language be respected and used as important anchors in their educative process.

In sharp contrast to Rana High School, PACHS was founded as a direct response to large, comprehensive Chicago high schools that continually disrespected their DiaspoRican youths' lived experiences. As a small, alternative high school, PACHS students declare their school to be a sanctuary, because it is characterized by a culture of critical care (Antrop-González & De Jesús, 2006). Critical care in school spaces is marked by high academic expectations, racial/ethnic and linguistic affirmation in curricular practices, high quality student-teacher relationships, and a culture of psychological and physical safety. While PACHS has served DiaspoRican youth for 40 years and has waiting lists for youth wishing to enroll year after year, the students and teachers are constantly finding new ways to invigorate the school's culture of humanization. Thus, students and teachers together dialogue about curriculum and its implementation in the spirit of constant, positive transformation.

We purposefully use RicanStruction as a cognitive metaphor for more race and culture-conscious approaches to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for DiaspoRican youth. *Project FUERTE* and PACHS are school projects that were conceptualized in order to RicanStruct viable alternatives to the deplorable schooling and material conditions that most DiaspoRican youth face on an everyday basis. We feel it is morally imperative for school agents and students to challenge taken for granted assumptions regarding traditional forms of schooling, such as high stakes testing and culturally irrelevant pedagogy. In other words, we must demand that dehumanizing schooling practices such as these be dismantled and replaced with humanizing, liberating schools that actively labor to honor and build upon their DiaspoRican students' cultural and linguistic ways of knowing and changing the world.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The parentheses in (im)migration are employed to signal the diverse immigration experiences among individuals and communities who journey to the United States, specifically underscoring potential differences in citizenship status. Puerto Ricans born on the island of Puerto Rico, a colonial possession of the United States for over a century, are U.S. citizens by birth. Subsequently, their move from the island to the mainland can be viewed as "migration"

rather than “immigration.” However, Spanish is the dominant language on the island and when Puerto Ricans, who are free to travel throughout the United States without restriction, migrate to the U.S., their experiences share many similarities with those of other immigrants from Latin America, especially in their encounters with xenophobia, racism, and linguisticism. Therefore, the parentheses are employed to call attention to the complexities of immigration across groups that are often overlooked in the dominant immigration narrative.

<sup>2</sup> We have chosen to capitalize “Island,” as we are referring to Puerto Rico specifically and to psycholinguistically decolonize the common thought that Puerto Rico is a small place that needs to be protected and “taken care of” by the United States.

<sup>3</sup> All proper names in this manuscript are pseudonyms.

## References

- Acosta-Belén, E., & Santiago, C. (2006). *Puerto Ricans in the United States: A contemporary portrait*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Algren de Guitierrez, E. (1987). *The movement against teaching English in schools of Puerto Rico*. New York: University Press of America.
- Alvarez, M. (1986). Americanization in Puerto Rico: A critical assessment of the educational process. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach.
- Antrop-González, R., & De Jesús, A. (2006). Toward a theory of *critical care* in urban school reform: Examining structures and pedagogies of caring in two Latino community-based schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(4), 409-433.
- Antrop-González, R., Vélez, W., & Garrett, T. (2005). *¿Dónde están los estudiantes puertorriqueños académicamente exitosos* [Where are the academically successful Puerto Rican students]? Success factors of high achieving Puerto Rican high school students. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 4(2), 74-95.
- Barreto, A. (1998). Colonialism: Political economy, language and ideology in Puerto Rico. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Union Institute, Revere Beach, Ohio.
- Bulhan, H. A. (2004). *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression*. New York: Springer.
- Canino, M. J. (1981). *An historical overview of the English language policy in Puerto Rico's educational system: 1898-1949*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Massachusetts.
- Cebollero, P. A. (1945). *A school language policy for Puerto Rico*. San Juan, PR: Baldrich.
- Chapman, T. K. (2007). Interrogating classroom relationships and events: Using portraiture and critical race theory in education research. *Educational Researcher*, 36(3), 156-162.
- Cohn, D. (2007). *The divergent paths of Baby Boomers and immigrants*. Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. C. (2007). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Darder, A. (2011). *A dissident voice: Essays on culture, pedagogy, and power*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York: New York University Press.
- Dixon, A. D., & Rousseau, C. K. (2006). *Critical race theory in education: All God's children got a song*. New York: Routledge.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press.

- Fernández, R. (1996). *The disenchanting island: Puerto Rico and the United States in the twentieth century*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Flores-González, N. (2002). *School kids/street kids: Identity development in Latino students*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Forman, M. (2001). *The hood comes first: Race, space, and place in rap and hip-hop*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Fox, A.L. (1924). American rule in Puerto Rico. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Chicago.
- Gorman, M. B. (1973). Language policy in Puerto Rican education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The American University, Washington, DC.
- Helfenbein, R. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical geography and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (pp. 304-317). New York: Routledge.
- Irizarry, J. (2011). *The Latinization of U.S. schools: Successful teaching and learning in shifting cultural contexts*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Ladson-Billings, G., & Tate, W. F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory in education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68
- Lynn, M. (1999). Toward a critical race pedagogy. *Urban Education*, 33(5), 606-626.
- Memmi, A. (1991). *The colonizer and the colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Méndez-Bernal, E. (1997). Colonialism and Catholic schools in Puerto Rico. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. New York: Sage.
- Milner, H. R. (2008). Critical race theory and interest convergence as analytic tools in teacher education policies and practices. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 59(4), 332-346.
- Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & González, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge of teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.
- Muntaner, A. (1990). The language question in Puerto Rico: 1898-1988. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, Stony Brook.
- Navarro, J. M. (1995). Creating tropical Yankees: The "spiritual conquest" of Puerto Rico: 1898-1908. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago.
- Negrón de Montilla, A. (1975). *Americanization in Puerto Rico and the public school system: 1900-1930*. Río Piedras, PR: Editorial Universitaria.
- Nieto, S. (1995). A history of the education of Puerto Rican students in U.S. mainland schools: "Losers," "outsiders," or "leaders"? In J. A. Banks & C. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 388-411). New York: Macmillan.
- Nieto, S., (Ed). (2000). *Puerto Rican students in U.S. schools*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Osuna, J. J. (1949). *A history of education in Puerto Rico*. Río Piedras, PR: University of Puerto Rico Press.
- Pollock, M. (2008). *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in school*. New York: The New Press.
- Pousada, A. (1996). Puerto Rico: On the horns of a language planning dilemma. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(3), 499-510.
- Quiñones, S., Ares, N., Padela, M., Hopper, M., & Webster, S. (2011). ¿Y nosotros, qué?: Moving beyond the margins in a community change initiative. *Anthropology and*

- Education Quarterly*, 42(2), 103-120.
- Resnick, M.C. (1993). ESL and language planning in Puerto Rican education. *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(2), 262-275.
- Ryan, M. (1981). Puerto Rico's educational policy and its relation to political power: 1898-1976. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2001). Preparing teachers for culturally diverse schools: research and the overwhelming presence of Whiteness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52, 94-106.
- Sokolowski, J., Antrop-González, R., & Maldonado, Z. (2010). Chasing the Florida dream: Examining the schooling experiences of Puerto Rican students in a Central Florida high school. *Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies*, 22(1), 219-241.
- Solís-Jordán, J. (1994). *Public school reform in Puerto Rico*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Solorzano, D. G., & Delgado-Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and later theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308-342.
- Spring, J. (2001). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Steele, C. (2010). *Whistling Vivaldi: How stereotypes affect us and what we can do*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Trías Monge, J. (1997). *Puerto Rico: The trials of the oldest colony in the world*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Tucker-Raymond, E., Rosario-Ramos, E., & Rosario, M. (2011). Cultural persistence, political resistance, and hope in the community and school-based art of a Puerto Rican diaspora neighborhood. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 44(2), 270-286.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). *The 2012 statistical abstract*. Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *Population estimates*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Vargas-Ramos, C. (2006). Settlement patterns and residential segregation of Puerto Ricans in the United States. *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Hunter College (CUNY) Policy Report*, 1(2).
- Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

*Jason G. Irizarry is an associate professor of multicultural education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of the Neag School of Education and faculty associate in the Institute for Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, both at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut. His e-mail address is jason.irizarry@uconn.edu*

*René Antrop-González is a professor of curriculum and instruction/second language education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His e-mail address is antrop@uwm.edu*

## “Can We Just Get Rid of the Classroom?” Thinking Space, Relationally

Sophia Rodriguez

*From the moment there is genius, there is something that belongs to no school,  
no period, something that achieves a breakthrough.*

—Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, The “Anti-Oedipus” from *A Thousand Plateaus*

*. . . to begin always anew, to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bu-  
reaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process—live to become.*

—Paulo Freire

While I was observing teacher candidates at a University in the Midwest U.S. a few months ago, I expected to hear questions and comments from the teacher candidates on the value of philosophy in education. But, as these future teachers considered the works of John Dewey, I listened intently to their interactions. At one point, the professor of the course said, “We need an intelligent theory of education which is different from an ideology.” Unexpectedly, a teacher candidate said, “Well, can’t we just get rid of the classroom?” There was a long pause and some nervous laughter that ensued. These teacher candidates were not suggesting that schools or classroom spaces be removed from being a central figure of an education system. Rather, these teacher candidates were raising the issue of how learning occurs and in what types of conditions, or spaces, these occurrences materialize. Reflecting on this moment in preparation for this article led me to think about the rules and norms that encode modern schooling practices—things so simple as a classroom with four walls, a space for formal learning. I wonder about the current ideologies that govern modern schooling practices in formal and informal spaces, and importantly, for this article, the ideologies that govern teaching preparations and teaching practices in contested, alternative spaces. What happens if we fail to see alternative spaces? I tend to believe that much happens beneath the surface when we are engaged in educational theory and research.

The argument of this article is primarily a theoretical one that engages with



conceptual ideas in critical geography scholarship and more recent theorizing in comparative education literature on globalization and education. I see continuity within the critical geography theorizing found in Edward Soja's work in *Seeking Spatial Justice* and more recent literature on “scale” by comparative education researchers (Roberston & Dale, 2008). Thus, I explore the relationship between critical geography and comparative education research on globalization theory. As Helfenbein (2010) notes, “Critical geographers are interested in space, place, power and identity” (p. 304). This article engages with these elements of spatial analysis but by drawing attention to the nuances of space as distinct from place. In addition, it argues that we need to theorize space as “relational” and fluid through poststructuralist theories of becoming offered by the work of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Hugu Tomlinson, and Graham Burchell entitled, *What is philosophy?* and the individual work of Gilles Deleuze entitled *Bergsonism*.<sup>1</sup> Ultimately, in examining the critical geography literature from Edward Soja (2010), this article tests the limits of Edward Soja's conception of space. In addition, I discuss a teaching experience in Cuba to shed some light on how we might reconceptualize space as distinct from place. I will spend some time drawing out the distinction between space and place and am ultimately concerned with what and who constitutes space. Finally, I argue for a more nuanced theorization of space using Deleuzian (1988, 1994) concepts of becoming and multiplicity to understand space as fluid, contested, negotiated and emergent. Within this latter discussion of Deleuze's concepts I will define “becoming” and argue that it is a concept that can potentially capture the materiality of lived experiences in spaces of possibility. The call for a nuanced post-structuralist conceptualization of space draws attention to alternative spaces that are not governed by normative, positivistic ontologies, and thus merges the historical, the social and the spatial.

### Critical Geography and Space

Recent understandings of space consider the ways in which social processes shape and are shaped by space simultaneously. This is an entry point for my understanding of how space is shaped by the lived, everyday experiences of those within a given space. Soja (2010) argues that within the last ten years, scholars have tended to space in their analyses, or what has been labeled the “spatial turn” seemingly in the fashion of the “linguistic turn” post-1968 in philosophy. This move in the realm of philosophy and social theory represents a shift away from a time when the spatial was “subordinate” to the historical (Soja, 2010, p. 15). The uprising of the spatial turn redefined space across disciplines and paved the way for scholars to articulate, problematize, and re-imagine definitions of space. For this present article, it is important to note the ways in which educational researchers and theorists considered space at theoretical level and the material level. For instance, Soja (2010) notes, “It [space] is more than just a physical quality of the

material world or an essential philosophical attribute having absolute, relative, or relational dimensions” (p. 17). In this line of thinking, Soja makes the case for space as something that is both a complex product of social processes and simultaneously something that is historically produced. Moreover, Soja described this “socialized lived space as constructed out of physical and natural spatial forms” (p. 18). In other words, recent understandings of space consider the ways in which social processes shape and are shaped by space simultaneously. While this is an important step in understanding space as something that is more than merely historical or political, I argue here that one can extend Soja’s conceptualization of space beyond this socio-spatial interaction. In particular, I am interested in ways that theorizing space as distinct from place—as the convergence of the spatial, the social, and the historical in Soja’s conception—can help us capture the ways in which actors (teachers and students alike) strategically construct and navigate space. In other words, instead of theorizing space through Soja’s conception of place, this article argues for a conception of space as relational—materializing in/through a set of relations. I will provide an example of this with my experience as a teacher trainer in Cuba in a later section.

To extend the argument for space, Helfenbein and Taylor (2009) aptly argue, “Critical Geography insists on the addition of spatial analysis beyond the merely discursive” (p. 236). The interest in space means more than the ways in which language—educational policies and historical narratives—construct space. Instead, this position (2009) desires a spatial analysis that sees space as “relational” and malleable over time. These authors conceive of space as a “rhizomatic interaction of space where power and identity emerge” and the dynamics within this space, whether contradictory and multiple, are brought into view (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009, p. 237). The argument here seeks to add to the discussion begun in this characterization of space offered by Helfenbein and Taylor (2009), and continues in the tradition of Critical Geography insofar as it problematizes conceptions of space and place. Using concepts from post-structural theorists Gilles Deleuze and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, I re-think space. Through this conception of space, we can understand the dynamic, interactive, multiplicitious attributes of space wherein lived subjects “become-” other than who or what they are in such dichotomous, positivist conceptions of space that often dominant theories of globalization in comparative education research. Indeed, the literature in Critical Geography connects with debates in comparative education regarding this issue of globalization. The next section examines the ways in which comparative education has dealt with and theorized globalization, and its implications for educational research. At times the discourse around globalization functions as a rhetoric of political inevitability (Massey, 2005). This relationship between globalization and space is complex and it is through Deleuzian conceptual tools that we can come to understand spaces in their dynamic, rhizomatically interactive fashion.

### Globalization and Educational Spaces

Soja (2010) engages with globalization as it relates to justice in its most broad sense, as a political movement. He writes, “Globalization has also been associated with state restructuring and challenges to the political domination of the nation-state as the exclusive political space for defining citizenship, legal systems, and hence justice itself. Struggles for justice, more than ever before, stretch across political scales, from the global to the local” (p. 22). Indeed, the process of globalization—while marketed as inevitable—has been more complex with regard to schooling practices, globally. In order to transcend the boundaries of what is “global” or how things have become “globalized,” comparative education scholars in particular have engaged with various theoretical and methodological debates around what constitutes “the global” and “the local.” More specifically, I offer in the next section the debates around the global and the local with regard to spaces in which schooling, teaching and learning occur. This discussion provides an understanding of how scholars of comparative education more recently have conceptualized space and scale in new and complex ways that are complimentary in some cases to the work of early critical geographers.

Various scholarly works address “global forces” and local places (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Tsing, 2004; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). These scholars engage in ethnographic study that is guided by social and critical theory. To this end, these scholars address how globalization processes penetrate local places. More importantly, within these studies, scholars address the local, material resistance to these global forces. In effect, there is a divide between those that see globalization as an inevitable force, and those who envision room for resistance at the local level. Additionally, multiple disciplines engage with theories of global spaces (e.g., anthropology and education, sociology of education, and historians of curriculum and education), and all of these find niches within comparative education research and theory.<sup>2</sup> My aim in this section is to give brief attention to the overarching theoretical paradigms in comparative education research on globalization. The point is to revisit debates around globalization, global spaces, and space more broadly by considering a theory that accounts for the “relationality” of space in a “globalized” world. This is a task that has yet to be achieved in comparative education research on globalization studies. In addition, this article is arguing from recent understandings of global spaces, and space as relational and scalar as opposed to global conditions influencing or governing local spaces—the common argument of “neoinstitutionalist” scholars (Robertson and Dale, 2008). Further, a theory of space that accounts for social relations that links social relations, material, lived experiences of human agents uncovers how space is transformative and not normative. This has not been the commonplace of globalization research.<sup>3</sup> Previous conceptions of space-globalized spaces, or institutionalizations of modern schooling spaces have set up norms and stabilizes and essentializes features of a given cultural or

social practice or phenomena within a space without tending the multiple forces that interact in a given, lived space.

Comparative education scholars Dale and Robertson (2008) desire a shift away from this binary understanding of the global and the local in the process of globalization. These authors seek to include “space” as part of educational analysis. For instance, Robertson and Dale (2008) argue “There is broad agreement that it [globalization] is an historical process involving the uneven development and partial contingent transformation of political, economic, and cultural structures, practices, and social relations whose distinctive features involvement the denationalization and transformation of polices, capital, political subjectivities, urban spaces, temporal frameworks” (p. 2). It is important to note within this definition of the global and the process of globalization that new institutions and actors are partaking in social and class struggles in new, operative and emergent spaces beyond national and transnational boundaries. One of the implications for understanding globalization as an historical, unfolding process is that it occurs in fragments, and spaces that cannot be contained. Robertson and Dale suggest that educational policy and educational systems shift to a fragmented, “multiscalar and multisectoral” conceptualization of space. “Thinking through scale” is a moment of interaction between critical geography and globalization studies (Helfenbein, 2010; Dale & Robertson, 2008). This article extends this new multi-scalar space by theorizing space as multiplicity and sites of becomings. Moreover, in globalization research, space, as it is currently conceptualized in the dominant neo-institutionalist paradigm is not considered in analyses of schooling practices. Instead, in this neo-institutionalist paradigm, relations and networks that emerge in educative spaces are not considered because agency is secondary to the convergence of institutions.<sup>4</sup> Space is conceived as “timeless and static” and immune to the possibility of change. We are not asking why space matters. Instead, in comparative education research, there is much attention on institutional isomorphism and the ways in which educational systems seek convergence (Meyer & Ramirez, 1997).

Before we can answer the question, “Why does space matter?” we need to conceptualize space in such a way that allows for transformation, nuance, and multiplicity. Lefebvre (1991) and Robertson and Dale (2008) argue that we must avoid the problem of fetishizing space by understanding space as integral to social process and simultaneously something that is produced from social relations (Robertson & Dale, 2008, p. 10). I will return to this theory of space as relational after discussing the context of Cuba.

### Space Instead of Place

This article is not concerned with place in terms of a location per se, but rather it is concerned with “space” as constituted by and constitutive of a set of relations. This fluidity of space is connected to arguments in comparative educa-

tion about global forces penetrating local places. Yet this article challenges the paradigm of the “global” ruling the “local” place in order to transcend binary logic that governs globalization studies in comparative education and the binary logic that underlies Soja’s “socio-spatial dialectic” (Soja, 2010, p. 18). As stated earlier, this article resists the binary logic that underlies Soja’s conception of space—a logic even with the advancement of a “thirdspace”—which still relies on a fixed notion of place in which space is a part. And, while Helfenbein and Taylor (2009) note the challenge of understanding educational practices in the face of global forces, the argument here contributes to their position. These authors (2009) argue that educational theorizing and the spaces of education need to be opened up to the possibility of understanding the material experiences and multiple identities that occur in educative spaces. The question that lingers is: How can educational theory do this, and with which concepts? In an effort to substantiate their call, this article provides the post-structuralist—Deleuzian—conception of space as fluid, multiple and a site of becoming. To contribute to this, I explore a few questions related to a teacher training experience in Cuba and discuss the learning spaces of Cuban teachers in the context of scholarship on Cuba, and Cuban education. I share personal interactions with Cuban teachers in the context of scholarship in order to think about how Cubans generally occupy space, and how these spatial strategies they use within space can shed light on the importance of thinking of space relationally in educational research that cuts across areas of scholarship on critical geography, globalization theory and research in comparative education, and discourses on curriculum theory (Pinar, 1995; Popkewitz, 1997; Robertson & Dale, 2008; Soja, 1996, 2010).<sup>5</sup>

### Cuba as a Potential Space of Possibility

It is my hope that reflecting upon the teacher training experiences in Cuba sheds light on the use of and need for spatial analysis—where space is conceptualized as a network of relations. Interactions with Cubans revealed two things: First, the social and cultural positioning of teachers was challenged by the youth cultures many young teachers were apart of in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Gonzalez & McCarthy, 2004). Along with this, educational projects of the Cuban government defined the professional, social, and cultural position of the Cuban pedagogue. On the level of policy discourse, we see a vision of the pedagogue projected as a “lifelong” trainee in their profession (Gasperini, 2000, p. 9). This fails to account for the ways in which Cubans navigate their social conditions and realities and subsequently *use* space. The second point of interest is relates to Cuban educational policy and teacher education programs there are challenged by the ways in which Cubans (teachers specifically) are more recently using social networks to navigate and negotiate space—both spaces of learning and lived spaces (Lutjens, 2006).

The social, cultural and professional position of teachers can be understood

through a report on the Cuban educational system (Gasperini, 2000). The report to the World Bank in 2000 highlights several features of Cuban teacher training within country and provides the context of teacher training in Cuba. Some of the features of the life of a teacher in Cuba according to the World Bank report 2000 include: “lifelong training, school-based teacher preparation, community of learning teachers, action research, evaluation, and professional status” (Gasperini, 2000, p. 9). It is noted, “Teacher training is a lifelong process including training on the job as well as formal and informal training. Its aim is to support teachers to improve classroom practice” (p. 9). It is further explained that teacher preparation for pre and in service teachers receive much coursework in basic knowledge, values, pedagogy and direct subject matter knowledge. Additionally, there is a built in “community of learning teachers” in which teachers are encouraged to have “exchanges of experience” (p. 9). The report to the World Bank goes onto highlight the ways that teachers are positioned as “community activists” and their work extends beyond the classroom because education is a “shared responsibility” between teachers, families and communities.

Recent scholarship points to the lack of attention paid to the social realities and spaces that constrain Cuban teachers (Lutjens, 2006). Since little educational research investigates Cuba beyond the level of policy discourse we do not know for sure the ways in which this vision of the Cuban pedagogue is disseminated into local spaces and evidence in the early 2000s of teachers leaving the profession suggest that conditions were not as “collaborative” as reports would indicate.<sup>6</sup> Teachers are not prepared as intellectuals, instead, the training is just a focus on skills and vocation as it relates to a strong national agenda (Carnoy, Gove, & Marshall, 2007). The social context of schooling/teaching matters in Cuba, but the social is a direct result of the political. The Cuban Constitution mandates that education is “an activity in which all members of society participate”—national objective is ensured through educational policy that dictates social and cultural practice (Taylor, 2009, p. 88). Despite this “high professional status of teachers” as Gasperini notes, it is evidenced that Cuba’s educational spaces that have seen past success are not penetrated to include how teachers use space. Rather, a strong national agenda and community support for educational objectives contribute to the educational success of Cubans.

Research on alternative forms of teacher training is neither abundant nor recent. However, there is an established relationship between Cuba and various NGOs as they related to educational “rehabilitation” (Cruz-Taura, 2003). In this section I reflect on my experience as a trainer with an NGO project as a way to rethink concepts of space. The interactions with Cuban teachers reveals a few themes that are relevant if we are to think of space as something that is used, negotiated, and produced through social networks and academic exchange (Eckstein, 2010; Lutjens, 2006). I discuss my experience in Cuba in relation to recent scholarship research on academic exchange and social relations as a way of highlighting the importance of spatial relations and strategies in the lives of Cuban teachers. My

experience interacts and confirms key observations made in recent scholarship on the prominence of social networks and the negotiation of space in the Cuban context (Eckstein, 2010).

The first of two themes that surfaced during my experience in Cuba was the theme of academic exchange or academic knowledge production and consumption. The challenges faced in the area of academic exchange in Cuba have been noted in scholarship (Lutjens, 2006; Martinez, 2006). Lutjens (2006) emphasizes the “disruption of academic collaboration and exchange” between scholars in both the U.S. and Cuba. One can conjecture that these strained relations are related to differing ideologies and agendas for the academic circulation of knowledge. Interestingly, this scholarly work focuses on the ways in which strains on academic exchange impacted individual scholars, but Lutjens did not give an account of the impact of the spatial realities of Cuban teachers who would have had limited access to academic material related to the teaching profession. Part and parcel of this issue is the limited access to and cost of the internet as a major source for academic research related to the teaching profession.<sup>7</sup> Yet the teachers that I interacted with had a desire to learn more academic knowledge that was related to their professional needs as teachers. Many of the teachers, following the report on the World Bank from 2000, had experience with action research projects, rudimentary understandings of academic disciplines and the ways in which knowledge circulates in academia. Despite the high cost and limited access to Internet resources and academic publications, “finding space within regulations is possible” (Lutjens, 2006, p. 73). Lutjens (2006) goes on to note the “informal terrain” and the use of “electronic networking, and social movement-like strategies and tactics” that are operating within the Cuban context in relation to academic knowledge circulation. It is suspected that much of the “space” is generated through networks of relations.

The second theme that has recently surfaced in scholarship relating to Cuba and as part of my reflection on the experience there is the use of social networks. In other words, teachers in Cuba use and create space out of a network of relations. Given that there is a strong desire to learn more about the teaching profession, I reflected upon the ways that Cuban teachers used spatial strategies to acquire more knowledge related to their profession. The use of networks across spaces and a culture of exchanging information through friends, colleagues, family, neighbors, non-governmental organizations, and tourism are prevalent in recent years (Eckstein, 2010). Teachers’ perceptions of school and learning about their profession are not associated with a fixed sense of place; instead, they increase knowledge about their profession through connections with friends and other teachers. Eckstein (2010) advances an argument about the importance of social capital and income sharing from families in the U.S. to their Cuban relatives on the island. Eckstein’s research “uncovers the small-scale informal, covert businesses that are built on people-to-people transnational ties and trust” (2010, p. 1659). This highlights the importance of networks of relations in a discussion on social capital, but it is important to



underscore the complexity and delicacy of these social relations. Other examples of Cubans using spatial strategies and networks of relations centered mostly on material gifts and objects, but also extend to knowledge of entrepreneurial strategies for informal businesses like selling flowers for funerals on the island. The point here is to offer up evidence that social networking and the use of relations within spaces is both present, and more importantly, it is strategic within the Cuban context. Interestingly, this use of social relations and networks across spaces has been applied to Cuba's "academic advantage" and teacher training (Carnoy, Gove, & Marshall, 2007). The importance of networks of relations for teachers to gain more academic knowledge related to their profession is evident, and it is within these moments of contact—with family, friends, colleagues, Churches, and non-governmental organizations—that can be captured through more inquiry into how space is used, and how space is shaped and shapes by these social relations.

### Implications and Rethinking Space

After considering conceptions of space, and reflecting upon the Cuban teacher-training context as a space of possibility, it is argued that education researchers and theorists would benefit from a conception of space as a network of relations. Space, here, is not limited to a place, a single experience, or an embodied feeling within an "inhabited" place.<sup>8</sup> Rather, space is negotiated through relations between multiple actors while space—simultaneously—shapes social action. The teachers that I interacted with used spatial strategies to "bypass" regulations on accessing information. As many Cubans do, these teachers "went elsewhere" to get information related to their professional needs. The current teacher-training context in Cuba moves beyond policy discourse at the national level and at the international level, and thus an analysis of space and spatial relations is critical. But, before this, a conceptualization of space that engenders relational, multiple experiences and becomings needs to be thought through. Here I rely on Doreen Massey's (2005) capturing of the "relationality" of space:

The lived reality of our daily lives is utterly dispersed, unlocalized in its sources and in its repercussions. The degree of dispersion, the stretching, may vary across social groups, but the point is that the geography will not be territorial. Where would you draw the line around the lived reality of your daily life? If we think space relationally, then it is the sum of all our connections, and in that sense utterly grounded, and those connections may go around the world. (pp. 184-85)

This conceptual journey of critical geography and globalization research in comparative education begins to inquire into a reconceptualization of space. Researchers in both critical geography and globalization research need to include a conception of space that considers social relations as "stretched out" from the individual, lived experiences of everyday life to the global (Massey, 2005; Robertson & Dale, 2008). In addition, this article argues that we see space as relational

and that it produces itself through networks of social and institutional relations. Intentionally, then, this article conceptualizes space as discursive and fluid—distinguishing space from place and other potential labels. If we fail to see space as a set of possibilities (Deleuze, 1988, 1994), then we fail to locate the imaginings of those subjects in processes of “becoming-other” than constrained by the governed space in which they live. And, if it is the task of critical geography to see the notions of space, identity, and power as the “critical” component of an analysis than a conceptualization of space as relational is necessary.

### Future Theorization: Space as Relational Enables the Possible

Reconceptualizing space beyond the normative and the prescriptive governing rationalities of research and theory allow for study of such a complex systems within a unique socialist context, and potentially other urban spaces that often get overlooked in educational research. We can investigate the “daily lives” and “strategies” used within the context of social relations in such spaces (Robertson & Dale, 2008, p. 11).

Future theorizations of space that can extend the scholarly conversation on “spaces of possibility” offered initially in Helfenbein and Taylor (2009) ought to be viewed through the post-structuralist work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri. These theorists’ concepts of becoming and multiplicity help understand space as the relational interactions of identity, power, and space. This is useful if we are to understand material, lived spaces of possibility. Both Deleuze and Guatarri’s work understand space as systems of complex relations. These spaces—constituted by these complex relations and connective social processes—organize social life (Deleuze, 1994; Martson, Jones, & Woodward, 2005). In addition, the concepts of becoming and multiplicity are further useful in our efforts to, as Helfenbein and Taylor (2009) argue, “move beyond the merely discursive” (p. 237). That said, however, the point of theorizing space—which becomes about social relations and identity formation—with Deleuze’s notions of multiplicity and becoming is both a starting point in engaged research as well as an analytic to guide education researchers in the data collection process. In other words, understanding space as relational, multiplicitous, and in a process of becoming, guides researchers in education by drawing attention to power relations, networks of relations, and alternative or becoming identities that form. Further, the philosophy of Deleuze and the subsequent analytical tools move us beyond the values and meanings that are ascribed to educational places of learning (e.g., a classroom or a school building). With this post-structuralist approach, educational theorists and researchers can “destabilize the conventions of ‘reason’ that limit the consideration of alternatives” (Popkewitz, 1997, p. 131). To destabilize the normative frameworks that govern educational practices (schools, classrooms, or curriculum), is to shift our ontological position to see power relations, identity and space as a “becoming.”<sup>9</sup> These becomings are

not always linear, logical, containable, or structured; however, instead we must think of them as conjured up, possible, emergent, and experimental, and interpreting these experiences requires researchers to be engaged and reflexive about their own position in the experience as well.

To recall the opening anecdote, a teacher remarks, “Can’t we just get rid of the classroom?” This is a question that exemplifies thinking beyond the normative frameworks that govern modern schooling practices. This utterance suggests that learning can and does occur in spaces and through networks of relations that we as theorists and researchers cannot always capture in conventional ways. That said, however, we need not “get rid of the classroom,” but certainly we can suggest it, ask if it is possible, or better, acknowledge that learning is not restricted to teacher-student interactions in school or classroom spaces. And, it also becomes our responsibility to inquire about these alternative spaces of possibility because it is in these spaces, these relations, that we potentially can observe resistance and transformation while learning of the daily lives of agents that navigate these spaces.

The work of Deleuze and Guattari and their concepts are underutilized in conversations about “relationality,” “spatiality,” or thinking of space as relational in comparative education research and critical geography despite some of the work already started by some of the scholars in these fields. However, to think of space as opposed to global forces and/or local places asks us to rethink issues of labeling, place, space, in the context of teaching and learning. Thinking of these “spaces of the possible” (Helfenbein & Taylor, 2009) moves us beyond Soja’s conception of space as tied to place, or a singular, directly lived place. It is argued here that space is neither a singular place, a period, nor a label to be known and inscribed with normative meaning. Rather, space, in this article is used, and contingent upon those acting within and upon the space—using and forming the spaces through networks of relations. At any given moment actors navigate these spaces and their identities become perhaps something more or something beyond what is governed through a fixed understanding of teaching and learning.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>These are foundational texts of the poststructuralist theories of Deleuze and Guattari. It is in these works one will find the concepts of multiplicity and becoming. It is of note, however, that the collected works of Deleuze interact with one another and for a broader understanding of Deleuze’s philosophy and the ways in which it developed with Felix Guattari, one might also reference their seminal text, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. Additionally, Deleuze’s philosophical concepts have not been utilized much in educational theory and research. But for additional scholars utilizing Deleuze’s concepts in issues related to social science research see, Hickey-Moody, A., & Malins, P. (2007). *Deleuzian encounters: Studies in contemporary social issues*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan. This sixteen-article collection addresses social issues broadly with one essay focusing in on globalization, education, and classroom learning.

<sup>2</sup> Recent scholars address global/local spaces that through theoretical concepts such as “difference” (Marston, Woodward, & Jones, 2007, drawing on Derrida), “disjuncture, fragments, and flows” (Appadurai, 1996; Carney, 2009; Carney, Bista, & Agergaard, 2007), “multiplicity” and “becoming” (Deleuze, 1988, 1994; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Staheli, 2003; Stivale, 2008; “governmentality” (Gupta & Sharma, 2006; Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Larner & Waters, 2004); cosmopolitanism (Appiah, 2006; Popkewitz, 2008); multiple identities/traveling identities (Clifford, 1997). Of importance, and missing from these theorizations is the attention paid to the relationship—the multiple forces—between identity, space, and power; these are the markers of critical geography theorizing, but nonetheless have been absent from theorizing of globalization and educational policy and research thus far.

<sup>3</sup> Instead the proliferation of writing on “global scripts” and “modernization” seems to have assisted in sustaining the authority of the global or processes of globalization. In other words, the conceptualization of globalization relates to a process by which all countries are moving toward “convergence” and isomorphism in with regard to institutions like schooling and other educative spaces (Lechner & Boli, 2005; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, & Ramirez, 1997; Meyer, Ramirez, & Soysal, 1992; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). Institutional theory and its parent discipline of educational sociology require critical attention if we are to reconceptualize space and understand space relationally.

<sup>4</sup> This dominant neo-institutionalist paradigm that governs the study of education and schooling practices in comparative education research on globalization focuses on institutional convergence and lacks consideration of actors and their networks of relations that emerge in spaces. For examples of this work, see: LeTendre, Baker, Akiba, Goesling, & Wiseman, 2001; Meyer & Ramirez, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> As mentioned, comparative education scholars Robertson and Dale (2008) advance the position that educational researchers ought to conceive of space as “multiscalar,” “vertical/horizontal” and “relational” in their attempt to resist the binary logic of the global and/or local debate in comparative education (See also, Robertson, 2012). Additionally, Popkewitz (1997) argues that curriculum—as one potential phenomenon—is governed by binary systems of reasoning. He argues for “an alternative conception of intellectual work and its relation to social change. It does this through viewing intellectual work as a strategy for destabilizing the conventions of ‘reason’ that limit the consideration of alternatives” (p. 131). This line of thinking in curriculum theory and curriculum history challenges the binary systems of logic that have been reproduced through educational research. Popkewitz’s poststructuralist approach advances the conversation around “alternative” uses of social theory concepts that transcend these binary systems of reasoning and value that is ascribed to what is deemed the norm, for instance, theories of space conceived through Deleuze as is argued for in this article.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, the Cuban government created the Emergency Teacher Program of 2002 in order to quickly train inexperienced teachers at a low salary in order to place teachers in schools. The ministry is training 4000 specially recruited new teachers for this high level training in two year intensive training. This training program offered by the government was in response to the fact that there was a “teacher exodus” in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Carnoy, 2007; Torres, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> The issue of internet access and cost of the internet in Cuba can be found here: U.S. Department of State. (2010.) Cuba. Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

<sup>8</sup> This article, again, challenges the conception of space as something that is tied to place in Soja’s work. For instance, Soja’s *Thirdspace* argues that this thirdspace is, “the experience of place, in place; OR “directly lived, with all its intractability intact, a space that stretches

across the images and symbols that accompany it, the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (Taylor & Helfenbein, 2009, p. 322 citing Soja, 1996, p. 67). While the attention to space and materiality is important, the argument here is that space is relational and not bound to particular place or embodied feeling of a place.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, comparative education scholars Marston *et al* (2007) explain that we need a “spatial ontology that recognizes a virtually infinite population of mobile, mutable, sites that [ . . . ] can self-organize” (p. 51). The key assumptions of this theoretical project are derived from Deleuzian (1988, 1994) philosophy on immanence, movement and fluidity, but this scholarly contribution has not been further explored in comparative education research despite efforts to think of space as relational in Roberston and Dale (2008). Their point is to bring spatial analyses to the fore much like the work of critical geography, but they also intend to see multiple, contested identities in spaces.

## References

- Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2003). *Local meanings, global schooling: Anthropology and world culture theory*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Appiah, A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- Carney, S., Bista, M. B., & Agergaard, J. (2007). ‘Empowering’ the ‘local’ through education?: Exploring community managed schooling in Nepal. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(5), 611-628.
- Carney, S. (February 01, 2009). Negotiating policy in an age of globalization: Exploring educational “policyscapes”; in Denmark, Nepal, and China. *Comparative Education Review*, 53(1), 63-88.
- Carnoy, M., Gove, A. K., & Marshall, J. H. (2007). *Cuba’s academic advantage: Why students in Cuba do better in school*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and translation in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cruz-Taura, G. (2003). *Rehabilitating education in Cuba: Assessment of conditions and policy recommendations*. Coral Gables, FL: Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, University of Miami.
- Deleuze, G. (1988). *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1988). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. London, UK: Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., Tomlinson, H., & Burchell, G. (1994). *What is philosophy?*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Eckstein, S. (2010). Immigration, remittances, and transnational social capital formation: a Cuban case study. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(9), 1648-1667.
- Ferguson, J., & Gupta, A. (November 01, 2002). Spatializing states: Toward an ethnography of neoliberal governmentality. *American Ethnologist*, 29(4), 981-1002.
- Gasparini, L. (2000). The Cuban education system: Lessons and dilemmas. *World Bank Country Studies Education Reform and Management Publication Series*, Vol. I. No. 5. Retrieved from <http://>

- siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099080026826/The\_Cuban\_education\_system\_lessonsEn00.pdf
- Gonzalez, E. & McCarthy, K. (2004). *Cuba after Castro: Legacies, challenges, and impediments*. Arlington, VA: Rand Corporation. Prepared for the National Defense Research Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND\\_MG111.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2004/RAND_MG111.pdf)
- Gupta, A., & Sharma, A. (April 01, 2006). Globalization and postcolonial states. *Current Anthropology*, 47(2), 277-307.
- Helfenbein, R. (2010). Thinking through scale: Critical geography and curriculum spaces. In E. Malewski (Ed.), *Curriculum studies handbook: The next moment* (304-317). New York: Routledge.
- Helfenbein, R. J., & Taylor, L. H. (May 01, 2009). Critical geographies in/of education: Introduction. *Educational Studies*, 45(3).
- Hickey-Moody, A., & Malins, P. (2007). *Deleuzian encounters: Studies in contemporary social issues*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Larner, W., & Walters, W. (2004). *Global governmentality: Governing international spaces*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Lechner, F. J., & Boli, J. (2005). *World culture: Origins and consequences*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- LeTendre, G. K., Baker, D. P., Akiba, M., Goesling, B., & Wiseman, A. (September 01, 2001). Teachers' Work: Institutional Isomorphism and Cultural Variation in the U.S., Germany, and Japan. *Educational Researcher*, 30(6).
- Lutjens, S. (2006). National security, the state, and the politics of U.S.-Cuba educational exchange. *Latin American Perspectives*, 33(5), 58-80.
- Marston, S. A., Jones, J. P., & Woodward, K. (December 01, 2005). Human geography without scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30(4), 416-432.
- Marston, S. A., Woodward, K., & Jones, J. P. (2007). Flattening ontologies of globalization: The Nollywood case. *Globalizations*, 4(1), 45-63.
- Martinez, M. (January 01, 2006). Academic exchange between Cuba and the United States. *Latin American Perspectives*, 33(5), 29-42.
- Massey, D. B. (2005). *For space*. London, UK: Sage.
- Meyer, J. W., Boli, J., Thomas, G. M., & Ramirez, F. O. (1997) World society and the nation state. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103(1), 144-181.
- Meyer, J. W., Ramirez, F. O., & Soysal, Y. N. (April 01, 1992). World expansion of mass education, 1870-1980. *Sociology of Education*, 65(2), 128-149.
- Pinar, W. (1995). *Understanding curriculum: An introduction to the study of historical and contemporary curriculum discourses*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Popkewitz, T. (March 01, 1997). The production of reason and power: curriculum history and intellectual traditions. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 29(2), 131-164.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (2008). *Cosmopolitanism and the age of school reform: Science, education, and making society by making the child*. New York: Routledge.
- Ramirez, F. O., & Boli, J. (January 01, 1987). The political construction of mass schooling: European origins and worldwide institutionalization. *Sociology of Education*, 60(1), 2-17.
- Robertson, S. (2012). Researching global education policy: Angles in/on/out. In A. Verger et al (Eds), *Global education policy and international development*. New York: Continuum.
- Robertson, S., & Dale, R. (2008). Researching education in a globalizing era. In J. Resnik (Ed.), *The production of educational knowledge in the global era*. Rotterdam, Neth-

- erlands: Sense Publishers.
- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Stäheli, U. (2003). The outside of the global. *New Centennial Review*, 3(2), 1-22.
- Stivale, C. J. (2005). *Gilles Deleuze: Key concepts*. Montreal, Quebec, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Taylor, H. L. (2009). *Inside el barrio: A bottom-up view of neighborhood life in Castro's Cuba*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press.
- Torres, C. A. (1991). The state, nonformal Education, and socialism in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada. *Comparative Education Review*, 35(1), 110-130.
- Tsing, A. L. (2005). *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton, NJ Princeton University Press.
- U.S. Department of State. (2010). *Cuba*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.
- Vavrus, F. K., & Bartlett, L. (2009). *Critical approaches to comparative education: Vertical case studies from Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

*Sophia Rodriguez is pursuing a Ph.D. in cultural and educational policy studies at Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois. Her e-mail address is srodriguez4@luc.edu*



## Thinking Spatially and Moving towards the Material: A Essay on Seeking Spatial Justice by Edward Soja

Gabriel Huddleston

*Now main streets whitewashed windows and vacant stores  
Seems like there ain't nobody wants to come down here no more  
They're closing down the textile mill across the railroad tracks  
Foreman says these jobs are going boys and they ain't coming back to  
Your hometown, your hometown, your hometown, your hometown*

—Bruce Springsteen, “My Hometown” (1984)

While the circumstances in my hometown might not be as dire as the ones Bruce describes, the stakes are certainly as high. A large factory closing years ago never fully replaced, a devastating flood, empty storefronts, the Wal-Mart effect, all are signs and contributing factors to the changing landscape of the town in which I grew up and currently reside. In spite of these conditions, hope remains. A new Armed Forces Reserve Center’s construction holds the promise of a boost to the local economy, locally owned and managed restaurants are often full, and the possible construction of a new public library, provide examples of a small town on the verge of a rebirth. However, such progress is not without controversy. Perhaps the most contentious rhetoric revolves around a new library.

Following the story of the new library in the local paper, there appear to be two separate discussion points. The first is whether or not to even build a new library, as the current one could simply be renovated. The second is where a possible new library should be located. While the minutiae of the discussions are not important here, what is important is how this situation illuminates insights into spatial theory and, more specifically, Edward Soja’s (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Indeed, such juxtaposition offers a starting point for a much larger discussion revolving around putting theory into practice and the difficulties that lie therein.

The library has come to represent much more than a building as the discourse surrounding it touches on city planning, small town America, class, government services, and education. Until recently, the location was between two sites, one in the

town's "downtown" (as much as a small town can have a downtown) and the other near the interstate where most of the commercial real estate and the high school is located. Proponents of the downtown location say that a new library could be the centerpiece of a revitalization of downtown, which is sorely needed. Others say that a downtown location would severely limit the library's accessibility for those who need its services the most (The library board has since decided to only focus its energies on securing the downtown location). All of this back and forth might be moot if the public cannot be convinced that a new library should be built at all as the decision is up for public referendum.

My hometown's new library was at the forefront of my mind as I read Soja's work. While Soja's examples are of a much larger scale than mine, at their core, they serve the same purpose. That is, how space socially and politically works upon people and vice versa. He writes:

This definitive struggle over geography can be best understood from an assertive spatial perspective, one that emphasizes what can be described as the explanatory power of the consequential geographies of justice. Stated differently, these consequential geographies are not just the outcome of social and political processes, they are also a dynamic force affecting these processes in significant ways. (p. 2)

Indeed, the essential part of this book is Soja's ability to ground spatial theory in the material, showing practical examples of how space and urban planning work upon people.

Soja's aim with this book is twofold. The first is clearly stated in the title of the book itself. Soja is looking to stake out a firm starting place to seek and strive for social justice, specifically in spatial terms. However, to do so, he reasserts what seems to be the overall project of his work, to think and theorize spatially as a needed addition to other modes of social critique. Soja writes,

The time has come, so to speak, to rebalance this ontological triad, to see that all forms of knowledge production, from epistemology to theory formation, empirical analysis, and practical application are always simultaneously and interactively social, historical, and spatial, at least *a priori*. (p. 71)

Soja suggests that to seek spatial justice, one must begin from this new theoretical ground—a foundation of the social, historical and the spatial. The question is who needs to take this charge seriously: those seeking spatial justice, those engaging in spatial oppression (or simply blocking spatial justice achievement), or both? By thinking spatially, do those of us who fight for social justice gain an advantage in our constant struggle or does spatial awareness amongst all increase the likelihood of the same outcomes?

To begin to answer this question it would be helpful to layer upon this rebalanced ontological triad a cultural studies approach vis-à-vis Stuart Hall (1996). As the discursive turn before, the spatial turn, at the very least, offers new perspective on something that was, heretofore, statically defined. Given this, once these new

perspectives are taken up, the definition of space not only changes, but the entire lexicon of geography and the world it means to define and describe changes in meaning. Soja's aim of this book is that such a radical change opens a greater possibility for social justice. The static definitions of the world around us become fluid and where social justice seemed impossible, spaces of possibility emerge. In this sense, it reminds me of Stuart Hall's work in regards to encoding and decoding. To quickly summarize, Hall contends the meaning of media messages are not static, but rather, while they might be originally encoded with one intentioned meaning, this does not guarantee such a meaning will be received by the perspective audience (decoded). Additionally, this work theorizes how dominant hegemonic meanings are encoded and decoded. More specifically, Hall is looking at whether the audience decodes the message closely to the intended hegemonic meaning, thereby indicating the audience is operating within that hegemonic structure. A second type of decoding is the negotiated position, which recognizes the message as a larger hegemonic claim, but at the same time adapts such a message to account for the decoder's contextualized understandings. Finally, Hall suggests a third decoding, which rejects wholly the hegemony represented in the message. Hall contends that this reading is a resistant one that might include a deeper understanding of the hegemonic forces at work.

To think in this critically spatial way, both ontologically and epistemologically, means to encode space with a certain meaning. Soja's thread throughout the book is the successful "class action lawsuit brought against the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) by a coalition of grassroots organizations" (Soja, 2010, p. vii)—this action defines space with new meaning that includes special attention to social justice. In other words, the legal victory encodes space in a way that strengthens the overall spatial justice project by envisioning urban planning not just as another step in the temporal march of capitalism, but rather as a means to benefit the least advantaged citizens of the city by considering seriously the way space works in a socioeconomic manner. Due to the material effects of the lawsuit, this newly encoded meaning of space, more specifically urban planning, is imbued with social justice language thereby allowing for social justice to be in the discourse with/against the dominantly defined meaning. In doing so, the dominant position becomes noted for its lack of social justice and can be criticized because of it. In other words, to think in the spatial way Soja outlines is to problematize a bedrock of how we make sense of the world around us—and this might be the answer to the question I raised earlier, strategic spatial thinking for those seeking social justice or increased spatial awareness for all? In other words, the benefits of troubling traditional notions of space are too great to save for an enlightened few.

Soja's point here is that by rebalancing the way we think of the world with a more critically aware notion of space, one cannot help but to decode dominant cultural messages in a counter-hegemonic way, or at the very least, in a negotiated way that allows for the contrasting of the local against the global. Does the lawsuit itself or

critical geography, as outlined by Soja, guarantee such decodings? No, it is likely that these victories continue to be seen within the dominant hegemonic structure, branded as infringements on the rights of corporations and thereby attacks on capitalism itself. And yet, the L.A. lawsuit had meaningful, material effects that begin to place spatial justice on an equal plane with abstract notions equity and fairness. Therefore, spatial awareness with an eye towards material consequences makes it more likely for social justice to gain a foothold in a larger political struggle.

This is the guiding light that Soja provides. To think spatially is not enough. Spatial thinking must always seek ways to ground itself in the material. For example the debate around my hometown's new library represents a localized, community decision somewhat shielded from the neoliberal forces at play in urban planning and therefore making it an ideal place where the effects of spatial thinking grounded in the material could be easier to identify. Instead of the debate discussing the usual suspects of taxes and politics, it could focus on the socially material effects the library would have on the towns' residents. On face value, this might seem easily done, but the steady stream of letters to the editor of the local paper that focus solely on the costs of building the library say otherwise. Proponents for the new library should look for ways to make their argument outside of this tired debate and instead begin to think critically about space in way that inspires action beyond a simple voter referendum. For example, a downtown library branch could have a greater impact on the underserved, poorer areas of town. Such a discussion might galvanize the community to think beyond cost and towards a broader definition of the community itself. When this happens, the possible courses of action expand beyond what has become the taken-for-granted typical means. To return this point to Hall, if the messages in favor of building the library are originally encoded with social justice, the decoding of these same messages will, at the very least, have to contend with these ideas. Social justice ideas may be dismissed or watered down in the eventual decoding by those who decide the library's fate, but they will have to make sense of such ideas. A recent letter to the editor provides such an example,

I have carefully read the reasons posted in the *Daily Journal* for not wanting to support the library. One thing I notice is that they are very personal reasons, such as not wanting to have additional taxes, the belief that libraries are no longer needed, or that they just don't think it is the right time to build a library. From the point of view of the individual, these may make sense, but they miss the point of making a small personal investment for the greater good of our community. (Matthews, 2012)

Critical geography offers a sharp contrast to the current neoliberal discourse that swallows whole any nuanced notions of space by defining it in terms of the bottom line and how it serves the free market. As an educational scholar, I have seen the similar effects neoliberalism has had on the education discourse—pushing aside the material effects of poverty on education for pie-in-the-sky theories of accountability and high-stakes testing. Schools, while often symbolic of the local, have

## 116 Thinking Spatially and Moving towards the Material

become increasingly pulled towards a more global scale, subjugated to neoliberal, free-market reforms (Helfenbein, 2011). We should both unify localized opposition to such reforms and limit their influence through spatial awareness because it runs counter to neoliberalism's attempt to open public school districts as new markets of investment and exploitation. Such a counter becomes even more powerful when those with spatial awareness seek to apply it in a concrete, meaningful way. By opening the public to business interests, neoliberalism forecloses the discussion of schools in terms of capitalism. The application of spatial awareness can reframe the debate to include ideas of social justice and community. To return to Springsteen's lyrics, the closing of factories in small communities happen because such actions are only seen in terms of the bottom line, not on how it will affect those who live in the shadows of the smokestacks. Neoliberalism's effect on how we view space is a *fait accompli*, as it guarantees the success of industry over the concerns of the community. Springsteen (2012) hints at this in his most recent album in a track entitled, *Death to My Hometown*

No shells ripped the evening sky  
No cities burning down  
No armies stormed the shores for which we'd die  
No dictators were crowned  
High off on a quiet night  
I never heard a sound  
The marauders raided in the dark and brought death to my hometown, boys  
Death to my hometown.

To think spatially is the kernel of a move towards social justice, but the full effects will not be felt unless an application of such thinking is done. In reaction to the current economic crisis Soja writes,

There is little doubt that the crash of 2008 marked a crucial turning point in these restructuring processes and that new directions of change are likely to be set in motion, but what we have learned from the *application* [italics added] of a critical spatial perspective has the potential for stimulating continuing innovation and perhaps unexpected breakthroughs in the search for greater social and spatial justice. (p. 192)

The word application is the key to critical spatial awareness having the impact that Soja believes it can. I am not one to return us to the age-old debate of theory versus practice and so, to avoid the particulars of that (sometimes useful) rabbit hole, critical spatial awareness should *by definition* include working towards the material.

### References

- Hall, S. (1996). *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies, 1972-1979*. London, UK: Routledge in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

- Helfenbein, R. J. (2011). The urbanization of everything: Thoughts on globalization and education. In S. Tozer, B. P. Gallegos, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Handbook of research in the social foundations of education*. New York: Routledge.
- Matthews, J. (2012, March 11). Letter: New Franklin library advances community, Letter to the Editor, *Daily Journal*.
- Soja, E. W. (2010). *Seeking spatial justice*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Springsteen, B. (1984). *Born in the U.S.A.* New York: Columbia.
- Springsteen, B. (2012). *Wrecking ball*. New York: Columbia.

*Gabriel Huddleston is a Ph.D. candidate in curriculum studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, and a graduate assistant at the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. His e-mail address is gshuddle@indiana.edu*

# Taboo

The Journal of Culture and Education

**Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education** is an academic forum featuring the study of teaching and pedagogy that focuses on the relationship between education and its sociocultural context. Grounded on the notion of “radical contextualization,” **Taboo** presents compelling and controversial pieces from a wide range of contributors.

**Taboo** began as a publication of Peter Lang Publishing, with two issues published each year in 1995, 1996, and 1997. **Taboo** has since been acquired by Caddo Gap Press, which renewed publication of the journal with the Spring-Summer 2000 issue.

**Taboo** is published periodically. The annual subscription rate is \$50 for individuals and \$100 for institutions and libraries. (Add \$30 postage for addresses outside of the United States).

## Taboo Subscription Form

YES. Please enter my annual subscription for **Taboo**  
(\$50 for individuals; \$100 for institutions;  
add \$30 outside the United States):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Charge to:  Check enclosed (Payable to Caddo Gap Press)  
 Visa  Mastercard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Caddo Gap Press

3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, CA 94118, USA  
Telephone 415/666-3012; Fax 415/666-3552; E-mail [info@caddogap.com](mailto:info@caddogap.com)