2018

Language, Literacy, and Conscientização in American Public Schools

Julie Ward
Virginia Commonwealth University

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at
Virginia Commonwealth University

by

Julie Ward
BA, Virginia Commonwealth University, December 2012
MA, Virginia Commonwealth University, May 2018

Director: David Coogan, Ph.D., Department of English

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
April 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This problem can and must be related to the modern way of considering educational doctrine and practice, according to which the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is always a pupil and every pupil a teacher.
—Antonio Gramsci, "Problems of Philosophy and History"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Julie Ward, MA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2018

Director: David Coogan, Ph.D., Department of English

Language, Literacy, and Conscientização in American Public Schools synthesizes poststructural language theory to critique literacy teaching and assessment norms in American public schools in order to theorize a pedagogy of racial and economic justice that embraces globalization and immigration. Chapter I creates a theoretical framework for language that rests firmly on both Lev Vygotsky's and Jacques Lacan's sociohistorical approach to language acquisition and language use. Mikhail Bakhtin's work demonstrates the heteroglossic nature of discourse, while Antonio Gramsci politicizes this framework through an understanding of hegemony. Chapter II sketches ethnographic research on teaching practices of various American communities, focusing on ideology perpetuating through discourse. A cultural critique of public school economics and epistemologies determines that shortfalls in public education derive from discourse practices among economically and racially stratified lines, as well as the capitalistic

intrigue for reform movements like charter schools. Chapter III turns to Paulo Freire, and his

praxis of critical awareness through literacy, or, more simply: *conscientização*.

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INTRODUCTION

Language's positionality within human identity threads the works of philosophers and theorists dating back to ancient Greece, as seen in Plato's *Cratylus*. Modern linguistic and educational research reflect a surging interest in language and identity, as the world continues to experience increasing globalization, immigration, and educational reform. Such investigations into language and identity rest on the fundamental, age-old question: is there a selfhood outside of language, or does language construct the self? The historicism of language and its modern social influences merit further investigation, particularly when focusing on American history and American social constructions. One may argue that the language learned in the United States— the language that shapes us—is a language associated with racial binaries, economic stagnation, and historical prejudices. Language practices manifest, with most consequence, within state-sanctioned public-school classrooms, where ideological stances intimately inform literacy-teaching. As literacy practices further language acquisition and critical understanding, students from varying socioeconomic backgrounds are not given an equitable education, but are instead delivered a predetermined social status grounded in critical skills tailored to class necessity.

Language's role in constructing thought and/or thought's role in constructing language becomes vital when applied to the arguably hegemonic institutions of contemporary society. Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci tackled this correlation between power and knowledge extensively in their respective works, reminding readers throughout time that power originates

from the naming acts in which we participate. How does this power distill or collide when teaching language—particularly literacy—in the classroom? Academic "achievement gaps" along lines of socioeconomics and race is a reverberating and deep-seated failure in the U.S. Decades of educational research on these persisting achievement gaps has led to no significant closure in the gaps of reading performances and economic stances across racial populations in the U.S. Haphazard efforts by government agencies to close these gaps are fundamentally ineffectual and promote a hegemonic practice of "attempting" to help historically disenfranchised groups while in actuality furthering their disenfranchisement, and, in some instances, capitalizing upon it through the creation of new industries like charter schools and vouchers. Literacy, then, becomes a mechanism for class reproduction and stratification, disallowing authentic discourse between differing populations and maintaining a society segregated by class and race. Hegemonic, capitalistic endeavors preserve this stratification by enforcing common-sense ideals about American culture, such as academic language, college access, and standardized English, while ignoring the sociohistorical realities of language communities, varying discourse practices, and economic inequality. Acts of erasure towards the experiences of historically-marginalized student groups manifest in public school classrooms as an effort to "equalize" learning opportunities and assimilate common-sense ideals, while in actuality ignoring the pedagogically-grounded importance of social experiences in shaping student learning and student language.

If knowledge and power are one, as Foucault reminds us, and if literacy is a means to liberation, as Paulo Freire reminds us: what pedagogical methodologies, then, in public school classrooms perpetuate or challenge the unjust power systems that be? How can deconstructive approaches in hidden curriculum help to create a more culturally-responsive literacy; or, how can

such post-structuralist approaches to literacy pedagogy help to destabilize networks of privileges? By centering the critical literacy work of Freire and applying it to public school criticism, cultural criticism, and economic criticism, educational researchers may find a holistically effectual way to begin closing persistent "achievement gaps," or more accurately, "opportunity-to-learn standards" (Gorlewski 23). With a critical eye on the power of literacy and a critical awareness of the sociohistorical nature of language, educators can become better equipped to offer equalizing opportunities to students instead of continuing systems of class stratification. These teaching practices, though, must be rooted in an ideological shift that takes place in educator preparation and maintains throughout professional development. By altering educator ideology and instilling a critical pedagogy within federal curriculum, America's promises of democratic education may actually become a reality. This will also require honest and unpopular investigations into America's history and a keen discernment towards the ways in which race and class have shaped the literary canon and other texts often used in classrooms across the country. Furthermore, failure to allow for discourse in the classroom that tackles such political stakes is a direct affront to the very notion of education. The necessary space for discourse will require non-adherence to standardized testing culture and a relinquishing of authoritative power. Critical literacy, as a reality and not a theory, can inform teaching practices that work to generate students as active agents in their own lives, rather than reiterative forms of classist and racial oppression. This agency begins with language.

CHAPTER I: LANGUAGE

Je m'identifie dans le langage, mais seulement à m'y perdre comme un objet.
—*Jacques Lacan,* Fonction et Champ de la Parole et du Langage en Psychanalyse *(1953)*

I identify myself in Language, but only by losing myself in it as an object.
—*Jacques Lacan,* The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis *(1996)*

Chapter I establishes a theoretical and foundational framework of language as sociohistorically-constructed, negating the framework of language as biologically-constructed. Such approach must be realized if critical literacy is to hold any merit in the proceeding chapters. The sociohistorical stance follows that social and historical associations construct Language and then construct Thought; this chapter, therefore, also refutes the notion that linguistic thought arises naturally and firstly in the human mind. In a thorough investigation of the language theories behind twentieth-century psychologists Jacques Lacan and Lev Vygotsky, the sociohistorical approach to language-acquisition rises paramount. Vygotsky—a key figure upheld in many teacher-preparation programs and educational research, albeit without his Marxist leanings—emphasized that language occurs out of socialization, and that the individual develops a socialized language that then becomes the medium of one's cognitive domain: the domain for knowledge acquisition, mental processing, attention, perception. Lacan's psychoanalytic theories rest on the platform that the unconscious is structured like a language and through language, and that it is through culturally-established language practices that one's individual consciousness is born. The historical element of this chapter derives from the works of Mikhail Bakhtin, another twentieth century scholar, but who specialized in philosophy, not

psychology. Bakhtin's nestles his linguistic theories within a historical approach to language-use and language-acquisition, coining terms such as *heteroglossia* and *dialogism*, *chronotope* and *polyphony*. The theme behind these terms and much, if not all, of Bakhtin's work is the idea that language is constructed through a historical amalgamation of voices, leaving all language dripping with the context of the who and the what that came before, and allowing for the who and the what that comes after; he acknowledges that voices, texts, and authors speak to one another across times and across space. Language is a finite space. Bakhtin discusses extensively, also in a Marxist fashion, how history has shaped language and language use. But to understand why this matters—why the historical weight of language and how those historical implications shape the socialized language one uses to construct their consciousness—one must turn to the last early-twentieth-century thinker in this chapter: Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci's politicized discussions on language as the seat of *hegemonic* power demonstrate what is at stake in modern language practices. His theories bring in a political milieu that is not as explicit in the works of the aforementioned thinkers. By investigating and connecting the linguistic-theoretical frames of Lacan, Vygotsky, Bahktin, and Gramsci, it becomes evident that language-acquisition is fundamentally a sociohistorically-rooted phenomenon that maintains its socialization and historicism through politicized efforts, ultimately shaping language- and thought-practices of all who partake in the medium.

COGNITIVE IMPLICATIONS: SOCIAL LANGUAGE SHAPES INDIVIDUAL THOUGHT

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) was a Russian psychologist whose theories on language socialization stood in direct contrast with those of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980). Much of Piaget's work focused on early childhood development, from which he conceived the

constructivist approach to development: children are constantly constructing their knowledge through their individual experiences and their individual ideas, and with parental imitation/praise/guidance, those individual ideas are eventually communicated through language. The child, in this sense, is like a scientist, constantly testing out small hypotheses and altering their understanding of the world based on the responses to those tests. For Piaget, language functioned as merely another constructivist development in human cognition. Thought preceded language: ideas are developed, tested, re-developed, and eventually language evolves to articulate those developed and re-developed ideas.

In contrast to Piaget's constructivist and individualistic approach to development, Vygotsky explored a much more socialized approach to development vis-à-vis language. This concept of language means that linguistic forms do not naturally arise to articulate ideas that had existed beforehand. Vygotsky posited that the means by which cognitive development takes place are inseparable from language development itself. Cognitive development, therefore, hinges on language mastery. For Vygotsky, language *precedes* thought, therefore, language *shapes* thought.

The science of semiotics remained necessary for Vygotsky to study the science of cognition. He posited that cognitive thought finds its facilitation in signs and symbols— ultimately, in language. In their academic compilation of secondary essays, *Theory for Education* (2006)*,* Greg Dimitriadis and George Kamberelis discuss Vygotsky's foundational use of semiotics: "He believed that mental processes can be understood only if we first understand the social and semiotic instruments that mediate them" (193). Language functions, for Vygotsky, as the catalyst for thought and higher mental functioning. These symbols and signs, i.e. language, are only learned by the child through his social interactions, and these interactions vary

dramatically depending on a child's social placement. Questioning the research at the time regarding child development, Vygotsky "showed how children's learning is complex, dynamic, socially based and semiotically mediated" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 197). While psychologists and scientists other than Vygotsky in the early-twentieth century had developed their own complex and dynamic theories at the time regarding child development, Vygotsky's most striking difference in his approach to explaining child development was the focus not only on language and semiotics, but on the social influence of language and semiotics. Dimitraidis and Kamberelis write that Vygotsky went so far as to entirely "disrupt the traditional idea that individuals are separate from the sociohistorical settings in which they function" (197). An example of the premise that Vygotsky "disrupt[ed]" is evidenced in the works of Piaget, who argued that higher mental functioning is a natural and biological process that is built upon constructivist creativities.

According to Piaget, biology drives development—not language, not settings, not history. Language only comes to the forefront when the child is seeking to make sense of the thought that already exists in his mind. In his 1926 work *Language and Thought of the Child*, Piaget extensively discusses the implications of the "verbal monologue," one major characteristic of small children's "ego-centric" speech and behavior (9). The ego-centricity of a young child's language functions only to foster construction of the new knowledge that he is constantly absorbing and reconstructing. In monologue, "the child talks to himself as though he were thinking aloud. He does not address anyone" (9). The nonaddressivity of the child's ego-centric speech exemplifies Piaget's grounded belief that the child individualistically aims to construct his own knowledge of the world, and that this knowledge eventually, biologically, is capable of expression through communication and language.

Vygotsky's work, too, discusses egocentric speech at length, and he also believes that this phase in language development takes place in early childhood. The differences between the two psychologists are nuanced and complex. In his 1934 work *Thought and Language*, Vygtosky critiques Piaget, who mistakenly "believes that egocentric speech simply dies off" (32). This is true, as Piaget writes in *Language and Thought of the Child* that the egocentric speech, broken into three phases—repetition, monologue, and dual monologue—eventually climbs to socialized speech, which is also broken into phases, those being adapted information, criticism, commands/requests/threats, questions, answers (9). While this gradation itself is not inherently problematic, what is overlooked in Piaget's theory is that "inner speech and voiced egocentric speech fulfill the same function, [therefore] the implication would be that if, as Piaget maintains, ego-centric speech precedes socialized speech, then inner speech also must precede socialized speech—an assumption untenable from the genetic point of view" (Vygotsky 32). This critique by Vygotsky is perhaps the most candid and exemplary when analyzing the differences between the two men. In a more thorough elaboration, Vygotsky describes how his own experiments differed from Piaget's, but while also crediting Piaget with developing the basis of the theory which Vygotsky then further explored in *Thought and Language*:

> Piaget was the first to pay attention to the child's egocentric speech and to see its theoretical significance, but he remained blind to the most important trait of egocentric speech—its genetic connection with inner speech—and this warped his interpretation of its function and structure. We made that relation the central problem of our study, and thus were able to investigate the nature of inner speech with unusual completeness. (226)

Vygotsky's findings consequentially became fundamentally contrary to Piaget's as the "results indicate that the function of egocentric speech is similar to that of inner speech: It does not merely accompany the child's activity; it serves mental orientation, conscious understanding…it is speech for oneself, intimately and usefully connected with the child's thinking. Its fate is very

different from that described by Piaget…In the end, it becomes inner speech" (227). This "inner speech" then contributes to both the conscious and unconscious cognitive development of the individual. And considering the socialized nature of language input, the egocentric speech of the child, which eventually develops his inner speech, is an entirely socially-constructed medium.

Vygotsky devoted a lengthy chapter in his book *Thought and Language* to a comprehensive critique of Piaget's theories (12). He argues the "central flaws" of Piaget's work are his absence of "reality and the relations between a child and reality" and that his "attempt to derive the logical thinking of a child and his entire development from the pure dialogue of consciousness, which is divorced from practical activity and which disregards the social practice" is also a flawed theoretical approach (52). Vygotsky's own theories and their emphasis on the socialized nature of cognition and language acquisition naturally compels him to point out Piaget's lack thereof. Vygotsky goes on, though, to further critique the very notion of constructivist behavior when he writes that Piaget's theories suggest that development "is not self-development, but obeys the 'logic' of circumstance. But where there is no self-development, there can be no development in a strict sense of this term, only a dislodging of one form by another" (54). Vygotsky thus finds issue in Piaget's approaches to development, as they are implying that the child perpetually "dislodge[es]" one idea with another idea. (This idea of dislodging ideas in the "banking method" of education is also critiqued in the work of Paulo Freire, and will be explored further in Chapter III.) Vygotsky sought to determine how reality and *place* re-shaped otherwise dislodged ideas. He critiques Piaget for working to prove "that the logic of action precedes the logic of thought," while "insist[ing] that thinking is separated from reality" (53). Vygotsky's chapter-length critique of Piaget is academically rigorous, but

Vygotsky's heavy emphasis on the social might have blinded the spots where Piaget also addressed the social, albeit more soft-handedly.

Inherently, Piaget's theory on constructivism requires there be a social outside world to which the child is always reacting and responding. The process of constructivism "all takes place within a social world, [but] Piaget did not emphasize the influence of social input…instead focus[ing] on the actions and reflections of the individual learner" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 170). It was this lack of focus on the social—not the irrelevancy or absence of it—in Piaget's theories that led to Vygotsky's critiques. And Piaget himself also admits to the limits of his own theory, when he writes that "when one works, as I do, with one and the same social milieu in Geneva, one is unable to give relative weights to the social and individual contributions in the development of a child's thought," thus suggesting that in order to fully understand child development, studies must take place in "the most varied and contrasting social milieus" (Piaget qtd. in Vygotsky 56). Piaget acknowledges the importance of the social but does not ultimately alter his theories to reflect that importance, maintaining an individualistic emphasis instead. While both psychologists do, to some degree—albeit vastly differing degrees—discuss the social implications for individual development, the most explicit divide between the two lies in how they each associate thought with language.

Vygotsky held that the social world created the child's language. This acquisition process takes place through a series of "more knowledgeable others," from whom the child begins learning language, semiotics, and the general concept of words being associated with things. This information from the more knowledgeable other eventually embeds itself within the child during a process of "internalization," or "the process whereby the individual, through participation in interpersonal interaction in which cultural ways of thinking are demonstrated in action, is able to

appropriate them so they become transformed from being social phenomena to being part of his or her own intrapersonal mental functioning" (Cole qtd. in Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 193). Language, therefore, birthed out of "cultural ways of thinking" become the tools with which the young individual begins constructing his thought. Vygotsky argued for an acknowledgement that "the surrounding culture…provides children with the mediational means for their thinking" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 192). Those means were semiotic means, linguistic means. Language is learned by the outside world; that language then constructs our inner world; thought processes are "determined by…the sociocultural experience of the child…*the development of inner speech depends on outside factors*" (Vygotsky 94, italics in original). Piaget too discussed outside factors contributing to a child's cognitive development—after all, that is the premise of constructivism. But he did not consider the way that language and meaning-making contributed to child development, instead maintaining that "thought and language are not related…[and] that language does not facilitate cognitive development" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis174). This is the true dividing point of these two developmental psychologists. Vygotsky writes that "Thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought…The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language" (94). Language input not only precedes thought, but it creates and constructs thought. Thought or inner speech is therefore entirely a product of the outside cultural or social frameworks within which the child is situated.

Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to language learning is much more modern and reflective of learning considering that he, unlike Piaget, went outside of one "social milieu" for his findings. Both men did agree that the individual was constantly constructing oneself cognitively based on the input received, as Vygotsky demonstrates in the "more knowledgable

other" and the process of "internalization," however Vygotsky was also interested in how "semiotic mediation may vary from one social group to another" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 193). Since the milieus of Piaget did not change, such an inquiry naturally does not arise in his work. Both Vygotsky and Piaget were born in 1896. No great theory changed the work of one to modernize the work of another. Both of these theoretical frameworks manifested in the same time period. The approaches are what make them so very different. Vygotsky writes that:

> *The nature of the development itself changes, from biological to sociohistorical.* Verbal thought [repressed speech] is not an innate, natural form of behavior but is determined by a historical-cultural process…Once we acknowledge the historical character of verbal thought, we must consider it subject to all the premises of historical materialism, which are valid for any historical phenomenon in human society. (94, italics in original)

Taking into account Piagetian theories of biological and constructivist development, Vygotsky argues that a shift occurs. Critiquing notions of innateness, he explores how thought finds itself rooted in history and culture, not in constructivism or biology. He suggests that in order to truly understand verbal thought/inner speech/repressed speech, one must understand a long historical association of words in the context of historical materialism. This Marxist influence and its implications currently aside, Vygotsky here implies that conceptual understanding and cognitive development pivot on the historically-driven associations of language. He explains that conceptual maturity only takes place through language: "the use of a word is an integral part of the developing processes, and the word maintains its guiding function in the formation of genuine concepts, to which these processes lead" (Vygtosky 145). These words, though, are socially influenced and contextually used in the same milieu as the one from which the child is born. Conceptual thought is therefore sociohistorical. And the means by which one develops conceptual thought, i.e., language, is sociohistorical. The notion of historical materialism brings

into the conversation historical patterns of labor, economics, and politics. To what extent are these economic factors, then, driving cognitive development vis-à-vis linguistic means?

Higher mental functioning and the processes by which humans gain this mental functioning are topics explored by many psychologists and scientists of the twentieth century. Influential thinkers are not limited to Piaget and Vygotsky, but these two are particularly relevant for the discussion of language. While Piaget saw language as a medium by which the artist expresses her art, Vygotksy saw language as both the medium and the final product. It is through language that thought can even occur. The most interesting and consequential claim, though, is that this language-acquisition process is a socialized one, deeply influenced by historical trends and cultural norms. Despite a plethora of research on developmental, biological, individualistic, or innate approaches to language-acquisition, Vygosky's drastically different approach merits much warrant in the twenty-first century. His early death has left much to be explored—gaps which shall be further developed and possibly filled through a discussion of other thinkers across nations and across time.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS: LANGUAGE IS CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL

With a similar Vygotskyan attention to semiotics, French psychologist Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) grounded his psychoanalytic theories in language. His work is based upon the theories of Austrian scientist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). For Freud, similarly to Piaget, the biological development of the individual causes psychological development, manifesting in mental maturity. Freud's focus on biological maturity through oral/anal/genital stages and sexual Oedipal phases demonstrates a particular attention to the human body and biology for psychoanalytic explanation. For Lacan, though, the psychoanalytic development of the human

happens through language, not biology. The biological phases of a child's development are of little concern to Lacan, these phases being called the pre-mirror and mirror stages, where the child discovers his body and bodily awareness. But the post-mirror stage, where the child comes into language and expression, reverberates in Lacan's most consequential works. In the same ways that Vygotsky claims the social environment constructs the linguistic tools of the individual, thus shaping his cognitive thought, Lacan too sought to dive into the parts of the unconscious that were structured by language, in language, or through language. His work is often contrasted to Freud in a very similar fashion to how Vygotsky is contrasted to Piaget. Lacan's focus on the Law of Order—the law that rules the Symbolic Order—demonstrates how the individual comes out of his biological development and into his human development, or essentially *becomes* human. (This approach by Lacan is similar to Freire's claim that "To exist, humanly, is to name the world"—this quote and its implications will be discussed further in Chapter III.) Lacan's Law of Order, or, the law of culture and society and language customs, has existed before the individual's realization, before their becoming "human," and is an outside force that shapes the individual's psychology. This Law of Order is similar to Vygotsky's emphasis on the social: both claim that there is a major outside influencer, on the macro-scale, determining individual development.

One cannot study Lacan without acknowledging Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's (1857–1913) work. It was from Saussure's theory of semiotics that Lacan was able to develop his theory of the unconscious, claiming that the unconscious is structured in the same way as Saussure's semiotics. Briefly, per Saussure, there is the sign, composed of its two parts: its signifier and its signified. There is the signifier, or the word that is attached to the object or concept; the object or concept in turn is the signified. This signifier may or may not reflect

characteristics or attributes of the thing itself. In fact, Saussure argued in his theory of the

"Concept of Arbitrariness" that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is a

random one at best. This arbitrariness escapes the child though, as Vygotsky observed: "We can

see how difficult it is for children to separate the name of an object from its attributes" (223).

Considering this arbitrary nature then, meaning can only be constructed by placing signs in

relation to other signs. This relativity is also reflected in Vygotsky's work: "A child's ability to

communicate through language is directly related to the differentiation of word meanings in his

speech and consciousness" (223). These meanings and their relationality are sociohistorically

constructed.

Freud had explored the unconscious prior to Lacan, of course, but Lacan's contributions

further explored what Freud had already established. Whereas Freud theorized the trinity of the

unconscious—the ego, the id, and the superego—Lacan explored the structure of that

unconscious and determined that this structure was through language. Saussure's linguistics,

therefore, were naturally appealing. Louis Althusser, a prominent French Marxist philosopher of

the twentieth century, discusses the relationship between Lacan and Freud in his essay "Freud

and Lacan," first published in 1964 in *La Nouvelle Critique*, a French Communist journal.

Althusser writes that "Lacan's first word is to say: in principle, Freud founded a *science*. A new

science which was the science of a new object: the unconscious" (87). Lacan sought to explore

the structure of this "new object," and the structure he posited was one that functioned similarly

to Saussure's linguistics: "the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language" (Lacan

qtd. in Althusser 90). Freud's work on dream analysis served as an example of Lacan's theory.

The very "slips, failures, jokes, and symptoms, like the elements of dreams themselves, are

signifiers, inscribed in the chain of an unconscious discourse" (Althusser 90). The signified,

then, is the substance of the unconscious itself. The semiotic nature of the unconscious, while inherent, is still a cultural and social manifestation.

According to Lacan, the individual does not transition into his humanity—his subjectivity, his ego, his perspective—until he approaches *language* in the Law of Order. Althusser writes "Lacan has shown that this transition from (ultimately purely) biological existence to human existence (the human child) is achieved within the Law of Order, the law I shall call the Law of Culture, and that this Law of Order is confounded in its *formal* essence with the order of language" (91). This "Law of Culture" represents an outside, social influence that structures the third and final phase of the unconscious vis-à-vis language. The Law of Order, which Lacan associated with the father in a somewhat Freudian context, is preceded by the entrance into the Symbolic Order. Lacan's basic premise follows thus: the child grows from the Real Order, a neonatal phase associated with the mother and an animalistic and need-driven registry, similar to Freud's id; then to the Imaginary Order, where the individual begins associating meanings with images including his realization of the image of himself, also known as the Mirror Stage. In his essay "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," originally published in French in 1953, Lacan writes that "the most profound alienation of the subject in our scientific civilization…is this alienation that we encounter first of all when the subject begins to talk to us about himself"—this stance is reminiscent of the notion of ego-centric speech, but such connection is a digression (233). After the Mirror Stage, after the "talk…about himself," the individual enters the Law of Order, which consequentially propels him into the Symbolic Order, that is, a registry based in language, sign systems, and culture. This is the registry in which humans live and grow into adulthood, forever seeking an inaccessible element of the Real but constantly insufficiently symbolizing it with the medium of language.

The Symbolic Order is "the order of objectifying language that will finally allow him [the individual] to say: I, you, he, she or it, that will therefore allow the small child to situate itself as a *human* child in a world of adult thirds" (Althusser 91). The entrance into the Symbolic Order, therefore, is when the child moves from being a biological entity to a human entity with a developing ego. This was much different from psychoanalytic work at the time, as Dimitriadis and Kamberelis acknowledge: "Before Lacan, most psychoanalysts believed that the development of the ego as the seat of consciousness was a biological phenomenon. Lacan argued that it was a linguistic-symbolic development. Birth into language is birth into subjectivity" (154). Language is the creation of the human. The structure of this language, though, and how that structure is realized, suggests that a human's social existence—thus, modernly, also his economic and political existence—could be a predetermined one.

As Althusser noted above, the Law of Order is also a Law of Culture. This culture contributes to the language that rules the Law of Order and therefore rules the Symbolic Order of the individual. Lacan's theories on linguistic competence and ego-formation rely much more heavily on sociohistorical practices rather than biological phases, as they "are grounded in the historical development of signifying practices rather than in the intentional activity of an agent" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 162). The historical connotations of signifying norms are perhaps what Althusser was referencing when he interchanged the "Law of Order" with a "Law of Culture." Lacan himself observes the potential downsides to this Law of Culture when he writes "the problem is that of the relations between speech and language in the subject…The absence of the speech is manifested in madness by the stereotypes of a discourse in which the subject, one might say, is spoken instead of speaking" (231). The passivity discussed here, an implied lack of agency, suggests the notion of a predetermined path based in the Law of Culture that is a product

of historical signifying practices. Stanford's *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* writes that The Law of Order/Law of Culture in which individuals live is a "non-natural universe [that] is an elaborate set of inter-subjective…contexts into which individual human beings are thrown at birth…a pre-existing order preparing places for them in advance and influencing the vicissitudes of their ensuing lives" (Johnston). Language practices, therefore, are not an arbitrary or disinterested medium, but represent signifying practices that are sociohistorically-influenced. Despite Saussure's "Law of Arbitrariness," the arbitrary nature of signifiers associated to signified become not-so-arbitrary after examining their sociohistorical contexts. In an essay compilation titled *The Communication Theory Reader*, editor Paul Cobley writes that "Saussure would have it that the mental concept pre-exists the word which simply becomes attached to the signified in an arbitrary way, [but] Lacan seeks to demonstrate that the mental concept is created by the way in which language operates... *[There is] an incessant possibility of the signified sliding under the signifier*" (10, emphasis added). Signifiers gather these contexts and meanings throughout their use in language, and these contexts are realized during psychological development. Cobley's succinct discussion of Lacanian theory reflects too a content similar to Vygotsky's, regarding language preceding thought.

Lacan grasped this inherent power of language within its sociohistorical contexts, and realized that the ways in which language functions ebb and flow similar to the ways in which power functions ebb and flow. He discusses the implications of the individual whose language or linguistic development is curtailed. Lacan writes:

> We recognize here the symbols of the unconscious in petrified forms that find their place in a natural history of these symbols alongside the embalmed forms in which myths are presented in our collections of them…Let it be said in passing that it would be worthwhile noting the places in social space that our culture has assigned to these subjects, especially as regards their relegation to the social services relating to language, for it is not unlikely that we find here one of the factors that consign such subjects to the

> effects of the breakdown produced by the symbolic discordances characteristic of the complex structures of civilization. (232)

Those "petrified forms" within the human unconscious are the thoughts, actions, ideas, dreams, or feelings, that the unconscious keeps. These thoughts, actions, ideas, dreams, or feelings, all have a signified and a signifier. Those "myths" that are "presented in our collections" are those archetypal constructs that have come to fruition through sociohistorical practices and assignments. Lacan suggests that inherent within any "complex structures of civilization" resides some kind of "symbolic discordances." Existing within those discordances is the consignment or *assignment* of various subjects who suffer from the "petrified" or frozen forms of archetypal assignments. In their analysis of Lacan's work, Dimitriadis and Kamberelis observe the notion of socially predetermined roles exhibited through language; they write that Lacan's psychoanalytic theories have "helped educational sociologists understand the ways in which schools function—largely through practices of linguistic and material surveillance—*to produce particular kinds of citizens and thus to reproduce systems of social and economic stratification*" (163, emphasis added). The economic reference by Dimitriadis and Kamberelis is not out of context, for Lacan himself observes the ways in which "action and knowledge [*connaissance*] alternate" at all times, in and through language (236). The signifying practices that construct the unconscious are a means by which the individual constructs his knowledge. To limit or manipulate those signifying practices is to limit or manipulate that knowledge.

Lacan's work demonstrates the extent to which linguistic repertoires influence the psychology of individuals. By basing the unconscious in a signifier/signified process, exploring signifiers becomes an important task for those who seek to understand the ways in which human consciousness forms. Understanding the high stakes of language acquisition in forming both the cognitive and psychological development of humans requires an adamant respect and adherence

to the power within language itself. There is the constant risk of the unconscious absorbing sociohistorical signifying practices, thus constructing itself not as an individual and independent entity, but one entirely based upon those systems that came before it. Lacan's application of Saussure's structural linguistics is an excellent example of the ways in which language practices shape the reality of the world, and this application led to a critique of psychoanalysis as it was known at the time, as well as a critique of structuralism itself. Much like Vygotsky's cognitive theories on language development hinging on social input, and Lacan's psychoanalytic theories hinging on the historical signifying norms of differentiated Law(s) of Order, Mikhail Bakhtin too explores how multiple voices, both in writing and in utterance, construct an individual's voice, eliminating the possibility of a truly independent language.

EXTENDING THE INTERIOR BACK TO THE EXTERIOR: STRATIFICATION WITHIN THE LAW OF ORDER

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was interested in the *dialogic* relationships of language, particularly the communicative relationship between larger institutional structures and the individual. His work may conveniently extend the theories of Vygtosky, since the threads that connect the major themes of Bakhtin's work are the notions of multiple voices, the impossibility of singular authorship, and, ultimately, the social consequences of such multiplicity. Bakhtin, a Russian philosopher, was a literary critic and Marxist theorist who analyzed literature in order to develop theories on semiotics and language. His literary explorations remain clear in his work, as he discusses textuality and the relationship between texts and voices within the text. In this context then, one can begin exploring the ways that social institutions present language, and thus influence those cognitive and psychological consequences discussed by Vygotsky and Lacan. Through texts and through utterances, a society develops their language practices and linguistic

norms. These practices and these norms continuously influence the individual as one develops

one's own semantic repertoire. Bakhtin's *heteroglossia* is a term reflecting the many inherent

voices of a text: in a novel, there is always more than one voice happening at any given

moment—the author's voice is certainly not the only one. The multiple voices happening within

a single text reflect the conflicting and ubiquitous nature of social languages, as one's language

practices are a product of multiple voices happening within their social strata (the term *discourse*

is useful here, and will be comprehensively discussed in Chapter II). Nodding back to Saussure,

the sheer diversity of language practices exemplifies what Saussure called *parole*, a distinctly

different side of language than its counterpart, *langue.*

Saussure rested his theories solely on *langue*: it was this side of language, with its

structures and its predictability, that he considered the only way to study language. For Saussure,

there are systems in place which dominate language use, and it is these systems that deserve

further analysis, since *parole*, in all its unpredictability, remains an impossibility for study.

Bakhtin, however, negated this approach and rested his interests firmly in the study of *parole,* or

spoken language, which demands an awareness of spoken-language's social influence. Despite

its messiness, Bakhtin remained interested in the multiplicity of voices, their trends, their

dialects. His fascination with *parole* rested on the implication that it is in fact not as

unpredictable as Saussure posited. Bakhtin explains this predictability when he writes "The

single utterance, with all its individuality and creativity, can in no way be regarded as a

completely free combination of forms of language as is supposed by Saussure...who juxtaposed

the utterance (*la parole*) as a purely individual act" (qtd. in Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 81,

italics in original). Bakhtin claims that no *parole*, no vernacular or dialect or speaking pattern is

an act of freedom, individualism, or unpredictability—but that these utterances too, like *langue,*

are governed by a system of socially and culturally constructed rules. Similar to the multiple voices of the novel is the multiple novels in communication with one another, which create a literary genre or a literary movement. Bakhtin termed the inter-relationality of novels as *dialogism.* He expanded *dialogism* to encompass all utterances, and therefore all thought. Dialogism refers to a world that is dominated by heteroglossia. All language, all thoughts, and all ideas are in an inter-relational and infinite play with the language, thoughts, and ideas preceding and proceeding. It is quite possible to argue that Lacan's Law of Order is an application of Bakhtin's theoretical dialogism, as the two men wrote around the same time period. Both *heteroglossia* and *dialogism* serve well to compliment the works of Vygotksy and Lacan.

Vygotsky's early death left much work to be done regarding an analysis of the institutional implications of a language that is socially-derived. James Wertsch, in his 1991 work *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action*, seeks to fill these gaps by expanding upon Vygotsky's socialized language theories with the dialogic sociopolitical theories of Bakhtin. In Wertsch's chapter titled "Beyond Vygotsky: Bakhtin's Contribution," Wertsch explains the necessity of connecting socialized theories of language acquisition to the greater "historical, cultural, and institutional settings [that] are tied to various forms of mediated action" (47). This "mediated action" is also briefly mentioned in Lacan's discussion of the interplay between knowledge and action. And Vygtosky, too, maintained some discussion of these historical and cultural implications as evidenced above; however, Wertsch argues that these considerations on Vygotsky's behalf are not sufficient, and that the scholar need turn to Bakhtin to truly apply Vygotskyan approaches to the greater institutions of modern society. One can find this connection especially in the term *discourse*, as outlined in Bakhtin's 1936 essay "Discourse in the Novel," in which he writes:

Discourse lives, as it were, beyond itself, in a living impulse…toward the object; if we detach ourselves completely from this impulse all we have left is the naked corpse of the word, from which we can learn nothing at all about the social situation or the fate of a given word in life. *To study the word as such, ignoring the impulse that reaches out beyond it, is just as senseless as to study psychological experience outside the context of that real life toward which it was directed and by which it is determined.* (292, italics in original)

This discourse, as described by Bakhtin, is similar to Lacan's Law of Order: both live outside the subject to which it indicts, and both are based in its "social situation." In the Law of Order, there are cultural rules and linguistic practices established well before the individual comes into his consciousness or subjectivity. The laws of certain cultural signifying practices—and the implication that the signified can at any moment "slide under" the signifier—represent the very discourse that Bakhtin discusses above. These signifying practices, as established by Lacan, are the "living impulse[s]" Bakhtin suggests. Furthermore, the "naked corpse" that Bakhtin warns against is representative of Lacan's own beliefs in the cultural assignments that words must adhere to. What Lacan perhaps did not investigate was the ways in which individuals themselves change this Law. It may be through dialogue.

The social background of discourse is also reminiscent of Vygotsky's socialized theories of language learning. *Discourse* reflects Bakhtin's belief that voices are a multiplicity functioning indefinitely. Bakhtin does not suggest that discourse is always necessarily between two people, but instead suggests that discourse can be personally dialogic. Dimitraidis and Kamberelis write, in their discussion of Bakhtin's work, that the speaker or writer's "discourse, like her identity, is essentially a coalescence of the many voices and languages that constitute her as a subject…the subject is thus a space of dialogue" (50). This emphasis on the social constructing the individual—through language—is obviously similar to Vygotsky. The

individual is always negotiating between multiple voices that are socially situated and historically saturated.

The most fundamental elements to Bakhtin's work are language's historical and social contexts. All language is bathed in its own context, is determinant upon this context, and fully relies upon this context. The novel, then, works as the exemplar realm to demonstrate the fluidity and cacophonous nature of language in reality. With the distinctive speech of individual characters, the specific writing style of the author, and the formality of the reading act, the novel presents the model of how language functions in real life: heterogeneously. There is no "naked corpse of the word," since the word is always clothed by the context in which it exists, whether that be the current social context in which the word is being uttered by the speaker, or the historical context of the novel at the time it was written. An example of Bakhtin's importance of context is the very definition of his term *heteroglossia*, as defined by *The Dialogic Imagination* editor and co-translator Michael Holquist: *heteroglossia* is "that which insures the primacy of context over text. At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical…that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions" (428). Bakhtin's sociohistorical approach to language and utterances only further demonstrates that language acquisition is actually not a biological process, developing from the natural occurrences of the mind, but instead is socially constructed and influenced by the historical implications of that society.

Similar to a literary genre, Bakhtin's *genre* creates rules and systems within which certain language practices function. His discussion of genres suggests that language is infinitely stratified for different purposes in both the literary world and the social world. In this discussion of genres and stratification of language, he writes:

> What is important to us here is the intentional dimensions, that is, the denotative and expressive dimension of the "shared" language's stratification. It is in fact not the neutral linguistic components of language being stratified and differentiated, but rather a situation in which the intentional possibilities of language are being expropriated: these possibilities are realized in specific directions. (289)

Language, even the "'shared' language" creates a stratification of social groups and social classes. Bakhin's use of the phrase "specific directions" suggests that this stratification is indeed an intentional one. The language practices of social groups, even under the surmise of a national language, demonstrates a stratification of cultures or social classes that continues under Lacan's Law of Order. As an individual learns language through socialized contexts, one becomes placed into a *Stratified* Law of Order. Bakhtin further suggests a politicization of this stratification when he writes that "Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others" (294). These intentions might be those of individuals within the same social or cultural environment. These intentions might also be a product of those *outside* the individual's immediate social or cultural environment. Bakhtin acknowledges agency when he writes that "Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life…Language, for the living consciousness, lies in the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention…" (293).

The construction of "one's own" language, though, is not entirely "one's own." Because of the inherently social nature of language acquisition and the psychological adherence to the Law of Order, "one's own" language, despite the agency of the utterer, still necessarily entails an influence outside of oneself. This false agency lends itself to an investigation of Bakhtin's two discourses: the internally persuasive discourse and the authoritative discourse. As its name

suggests, internally persuasive discourse "is of decisive significance in the evolution of an individual consciousness" (Bakhtin 345). This type of discourse may be examined through Lacan's stance that "birth into language is birth into subjectivity" (Dimitriadis and Kamberelis 154). In the same way that Lacan equated language use with a birth into humanity and an exit from the purely biological, Bakhtin too established that human consciousness is based in this realization of an internally-held dialogue. This is, of course, a difficult and painful process as "consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it cannot initially separate itself" (Bakhtin 345). These "alien discourses" are representative of the Law of Order, which may also be a theoretical companion to Bakhtin's "authoritative discourse." This is the discourse instilled by those in power, such as educators, politicians, institutional stakeholders, policymakers, and the like.

To begin the process of thought "work[ing] in an independent, experimenting and discriminating way," requires an entry into *dialogue* (Bakhtin 345). This is perhaps the most fundamental concept of Bakhtin's. Through dialogue—which is not just mere speech or utterance between two people—the individual encounters ideas, language, and thought of those who are different from him, perhaps one who breaches the aforementioned social stratification. Through dialogue, the individual does not necessarily change his internally persuasive discourse, but returns back to this discourse forever altered. This alteration is the fundamental crux of heteroglossia and context. In dialogue, the notion of the *carnival* becomes possible, in which "People who are separated by impenetrable hierarchal barriers enter into free, familiar contact on the carnival square" (Bakhtin qtd. in Shields 10). Scholar Carolyn M. Shields writes, in her 2007 work *Bakhtin Primer*, that "carnival, as Bakhtin thinks of it, is a temporary event, but one which holds the potential to change forever, in subtle and real ways, some of the barriers to

communication and relationship that exist in institutional life" (10). To subscribe to Bakhtin's theories requires also a subscription to notions of power and hierarchy, as these are the forces serving to stratify language practices and the people whom they implicate. In closing his essay "Dialogue in the Novel," Bakhtin writes that "what is needed is a profound understanding of each language's socio-ideological meaning and an exact knowledge of the social distribution and ordering of all the other ideological voices of the era" (417). To fully understand the consequences of such distribution, one may turn to Antonio Gramsci's more political critiques.

Bakhtin's analysis of the novel and his evaluations of literary critics before him fundamentally shifted academia's understanding of both the novel and the function of language. By examining the heteroglossic nature of the novel and its multiple voices all working both in tandem and in tension, he was able to determine that written language in the form of the novel or the essay is not as unitarily constructed under a singular author's pen, as once believed. He turned Saussure's dismissal of *parole* completely around, insisting that the discordance between speakers and the utterances of speakers themselves are actually not entirely unpredictable and unruly: they deserve study, analysis, and in turn can demonstrate the social and cultural forces that are underlying the speech and writing acts of any individual. These social, historical contexts create a predictability of individual language practices, eliminating the notion of individualism altogether. Despite this common ground of predictability, Bakhtin maintained that there was stratification resulting from the social and cultural contexts, even when under a shared national language. He suggested the use of dialogue to correct such stratification and isolation among social and cultural groups. Dialogism reflects the dialogue that is also in between authors of novels throughout time, thus creating a literary genre. But this dialogue can also interweave individuals who are otherwise kept separate by their discourse practices. Chapter II more

comprehensively explores discourse in all of its mannerisms, beyond simply language. But to demonstrate the political and economic repercussions of discourse and dialogue, Gramsci's work deserves much consideration.

THE CONSEQUENTIAL POWER: SOCIOHISTORICALLY-SITUATED LANGUAGE PRACTICES

This chapter establishes, first and foremost, that language acquisition is a social process, not a biological one. Through socialized language learning, an individual begins constructing cognitive abilities to think, and this thinking takes place in the medium of the socially-learned language. One develops their cognitive thought processes, their internal speech, and their very ways of thinking through this socialized language, while also developing their unconscious. Being born into a culture of people and language practices constitutes a perception of language rules and language norms, as well as historically-rooted signifying processes. By associating these historically-sanctioned signifiers with one's signified, through the Law of Order, one always holds the potential for interchanging this signified and signifier, thus allowing the word—commonly believed under Saussurean semiotics to be arbitrarily attached to the signified—to directly shape the signified and ultimately the unconscious. Lacan argues that the individual leaves biological development and enters into a human development only after he has entered language. This entrance is inundated with historically-mediated unconscious structures that contribute to the individuals' inception of his subjectivity and his ego. The individual is, therefore, entirely a product of the language surrounding him, both cognitively and psychologically. Bakthin's work reminds the reader that these language practices that surround the individual and contribute to these developments is indeed one that is historically based; language is not neutral. These sociohistorical contexts thus frame the "genres" in which people

function, and it is through these genres that more, potentially insidious, stratification efforts manifest, typically through those of the authoritative discourse. One's internally persuasive discourse may be fostered through the practice of dialogue, which serves best when it breaches these aforementioned barriers.

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) was a highly politicized Italian Marxist philosopher. A prisoner for much of his life due to the Fascist regime in Italy at the time, he wrote *The Prison Notebooks*, in which he analyzed power structures and politics, including language and education. Of most relevancy here are his insistences on predetermined power constructs maintained through his idea of hegemony, his complex theoretical framework of history, and his critical analyses of the intersection of economics, politics, and education. Gramsci argued that those in power, including the elite intellectual class, work to establish cultural norms and values that develop into "common sense," in turn, becoming hegemonic ideologies that rule the surrounding culture. By enlisting "common sense" ideas that actually compliment and perpetuate power relations already established, those not in power consequentially subscribe to an ideology that actually works against them. Their subscription to such a system works to propagate it, through cultural "common sense" norms—norms that are established by language. In a complex understanding of individual autonomy, he believed that compulsion and consent may be intimately influenced and maintained through language and rhetoric, detailing even the facets of grammar to demonstrate how language holds and manipulates power.

Gramsci writes in his essay "'Language,' Languages and Common Sense," within *The Prison Notebooks*, that philosophy itself functions "as a cultural battle to transform the popular 'mentality' and to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be 'historically true' to the extent that they become concretely—i.e. historically and socially—

universal" (663). The medium through which this "popular 'mentality'" happens is language, rhetoric, and discourse. This relationship is why Gramsci's political theories inherently require an acknowledgment of and discussion of language. He writes, "Language also means culture and philosophy (if only at the level of common sense) and therefore the fact of 'language' is in reality a multiplicity of facts more or less organically coherent and co-ordinated." (665). Indeed, he is correct, as both Bakhtin and Lacan have demonstrated that it is through language that both "popular mentalities" and culture are created. It is especially within Bakhtin's work that one sees the connection between polyphony and Gramsci's "multiplicity."

Gramsci's political interests in language were not necessarily the ways in which one dialect functions in a hierarchy over another dialect, but the ways in which hegemonic powers work to continue a stratification of cultures and classes through language. By disabling communication—or Bakhtin's dialogue—between classes and cultures, under one nation or under one world, the "masses" become unable to overthrow any powers that be. Furthermore, within these hegemonic language practices rest the desire to *not* cross cultural boundaries, therefore arranging people to behave in their own oppressive interests through isolation.

Gramsci's focus on history and the Marxist interpretation of it—that humans are agents of history but do not construct this history under the free conditions often supposed— compliments Bakhtin's contextual importance of history. The ways in which heteroglossia and dialogue function requires an acknowledgement of the historically- and socially-charged language used. And while Gramsci does acknowledge human agency in the construction of history, he does implicate that larger systemic powers control—to an extent—the freedom with which people have to construct; similarly, Bakhtin recognizes that while humans have agency over their utterances and thus their *parole*, there are rules that regulate and restrict this *parole*,

thus making it more of a construct than a chaotic interplay. These larger structures that determine both history and *parole*, to an extent, are structures built out of economic and political power. Gramsci discusses agency when he writes that "At the limit it could be said that every speaking being has a personal language of his own, that is his own particular way of thinking and feeling" (665). Agency does indeed exist, but it functions within a "culture, [which is] at its various levels, unifie[d] in a series of strata" (Gramsci 665). It is through language that cultural stratas are born and maintained. Despite sharing a language, there are still working underneath all texts, written and spoken, "historico-social distinctions and differences which are reflected in common language" (665). The existence of these "distinctions and differences" is not in itself problematic; in fact, the diversity is creative, artful, and inherently dialogic. The issue lies instead within the intentional stratification of these linguistic cultures. Peter Ives comprehensive discussion of Gramsci's work, *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci*, published in 2004, reflects a detailed understanding of Gramsci's explanations of the function of power. Using early women's movements as a cultural example of Gramsci's theoretical understanding, utilizing the "slogan, 'the personal is political'" (71). Ives writes that "Gramsci's focus on language is crucial to understanding how we interpret the world and create meaning…[and that] Gramsci's attention to language provides insights into the daily and molecular operations of power," including analyses of popular culture (71). These "molecular operations of power," though, can manifest in the seemingly neutral landscape of a public school classroom, or through the seemingly neutral medium that is the English language.

Schools are not immune from Gramsci's discussions of power; in fact, they are far from it. The Marxist critic devoted an entire essay, "On Education," within *The Prison Notebooks*, in which he called for a interpersonal relationship between the student and the teacher, where

power functions dialectically and interchangeably. Such an approach would help too also remediate the class-specific education that students in Italy were receiving during the time of Gramsci's imprisonment. He sketches an entire overhaul of the public education system, including the specificity of years spent studying until "the pupil passes to the creative phase, the phase of autonomous, independent work" (173). Gramsci's hopes are that an education based in humanities will allow students the opportunity to become a critical "autonomous, independent" human capable of identifying and critiquing power. Each school "must already contribute to developing the element of independent responsibility in each individual, [and therefore] must be a creative school" (Gramsci 174). His attention to creativity—recreation, even—foreshadows critical literacy movements of the late 1990s. Calling his theoretical solution to rote, mechanical schooling the "creative school," Gramsci defines this ideal school as "learning takes place especially through a spontaneous and autonomous effort of the pupil, with the teacher only exercising a function of friendly guide" (175). Gramsci's attention to schooling necessarily comes in tandem with his attention to hegemony, power, and how both work through language. As Ives points out, a "broad theme of Gramsci's hegemony consists of institutional and social analysis of various classes and organizations in society" (71). Since schools require class organization and structuring, along both social and economic lines, this site then functions inherently as a power structure in dialogue with other power structures in a given culture. In understanding language theory, it is necessary to examine how language functions—how it is taught, learned, and assessed—in public, state-run schools. Ives reduces the relationship concisely when he writes "language [is] intricately connected to how we think about and make sense of the world. Thus, it is central to politics and hegemony" (72).

Public-school systems function within cultural communities and bear some intellectual weight of teaching literacy to students throughout their cognitive and psychological development. A task as this therefore requires critical attention to the ways in which society achieves its goals of making the population "literate." In a perhaps egregiously simplistic form, literacy translates to the ability to read and write. The reading, writing, speaking, and generally linguistic meaning-making, of written and spoken texts, cultural tales, literary genres and canons, as well as political figures, requires the ability to circumnavigate and transcend the otherwise stratified discourses that a given society speaks. Gramsci's outline of hegemony's functioning through language, then, must represent a framework applicable to an analysis of literacy instruction in public schools.

CHAPTER I CONCLUSION

Lev Vygotsky's innovative work on child development realized through socialized signs and cultural meaning-making practices works to compliment the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan. Building off of Freud, Lacan argues that the human unconscious is structured like a language and through language, or semiotics. Lacan's attention to the role of language in psychoanalytic development revealed not only a reverence and understanding of the medium, but also a keen awareness of how history—as captured in language—therefore works to influence the unconscious as well. His Law of Order, the law of language, rules, and meaning that precede the individual, is exemplary of Vygotsky's own approach regarding language socialization, as well as Bakhtin's theory of *dialogism*: the ability for texts and individuals to transcend time or place and speak to one another. Just as individuals are dialogic by nature, so too are the social, political, and economic institutions that they create. These institutions, though, can become

powerhouses of linguistic manipulation or intentional differentiation to serve outside interests, as

Gramsci argues. Schools are not exempt from this dialogic relationship: they are both producers

and products of the societies in which they exist. Lacan argued that individuals "become" human

once they enter language, and Bakhtin argued that internally-held dialogue functions as the basis

for consciousness—they both therefore agree with what pedagogue Paulo Freire posited: "To

exist, humanly, is to name the world." The ways in which educators teach these naming

processes ire overwhelmingly powerful; and those teaching practices can, at times, reflect the

hegemonic characteristics that Gramsci warns against in his works. As schools and communities

and other social institutions function together dialogically, so too can the educator and the

student. The ensuing chapters adopt the following theoretical framework of language in order to

critically and comprehensively examine literacy and language within American public schools.
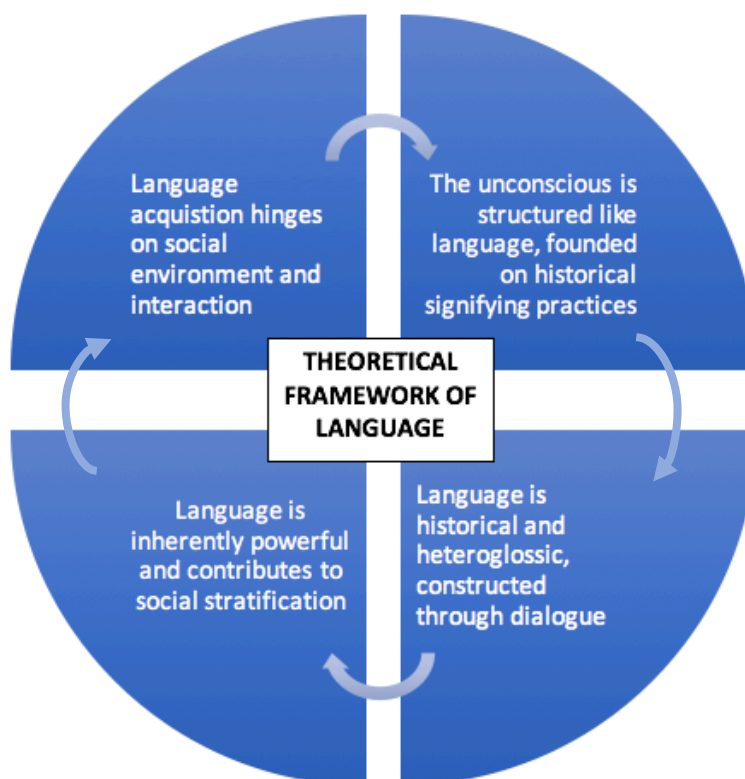
CHAPTER II: LITERACY

Any system of education is a political way of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourses, along with the knowledges and powers which they carry.
—Michel Foucault, "The Order of Discourse" (1981)

Language cannot exist as a disinterested and unpoliticized medium, but rather, it is a sociohistorical construction heavily influenced by historical power dynamics, social institutions, and common-sense beliefs regarding equality. Elements of economic and social inequality present in modern American society and within American history lead language, given its sociohistorical nature, to potentially harbor and foster these inequalities. As established in Chapter I, language—and perhaps literacy—is sociohistorically constructed, meaning that cognitive development, realized through language-acquisition, is intimately influenced by sociohistorical power dynamics. Chapter II now begins to question how rippling historical inequities continue to influence language and literacy acquisition processes. This stance holds that literacy is predominantly learned in schools—a place that serves as both a product and a producer of a society. Chapter II serves to more comprehensively explore how waves of historical and social inequality observably manifest in literacy teaching practices in American public schools, predominantly among racial and class lines. Following the premise of Vygotsky, Lacan, Bakhtin, and Gramsci, a critical analysis of public school *discourse* and practices reveals that these inequalities are far from being universally challenged; rather, they are, at times,

reproduced through systems of class stratification and racial hierarchies, based upon the highly politicized vehicle that is language.

As established with Vygtosky and Lacan, it is through language that an individual establishes identity, comes into consciousness, and structures thoughts. Now moving into the more political nuances behind the language acquisition process—political nuances which began to emerge in discussions of Bakhtin, vis-à-vis *heteroglossia*, and Gramsci, vis-à-vis *hegemony*— Chapter II argues that common-sense ideas of being "literate," hierarchized classroom discourses, and a limited literary canon and curriculum have all resulted in hegemonic reform efforts and assimilation, denying many students in American public schools equitable opportunity in their classrooms. In the United States, where democracy remains the flagship mantra and public education is advertised as accessible and equitable to all, it is paradoxically undemocratic that this is also where literacy skills become tiered and taught to unprivileged and privileged student populations along racial and class boundaries. Hidden curriculums and ideologies held by educators and policy-makers alike can possibly function as tacit procedures for reiterating and reproducing historical inequities rather than a methodology for equalizing and liberating. These practices are not necessarily done insidiously, but are a delayed effect of historically unchecked biases and beliefs that persist through language practices and discourse, particularly in the classroom. Due to the sociohistorical nature of language-acquisition and literacy-learning, linguistic communities tend to carry with them historical inequalities, further contributing to this notion of reiteration. Many literacy teaching practices that are used in public schools—predominantly public schools within low-income communities—are not actively seeking to challenge historically-rooted power dynamics, but are knowingly or unknowingly recreating them in new forms.

LITERACY IS NOT READING: HOW PHONETIC AND LINGUISTIC MASTERY
DISGUISES DISCOURSES AND INEQUALITY

Like language, sociohistorical contexts frame literacy skills and literacy abilities. Literacy

is a broad term, encompassing not just the cognitive ability to read and write, but to conduct such

skills with a critical eye towards the social, political, or cultural contexts which shape the text-at-

hand, in whatever form it might take. It is far more than the ability to read and write, as literacy

requires a degree of critical inquiry. Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo define literacy in their

1987 book *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* as the following:

> Literacy must be seen as a medium that constitutes and affirms the historical and
> existential moments of lived experience…hence, it is an eminently political phenomenon,
> and it must be analyzed within the context of a theory of power relations and an
> understanding of social and cultural reproduction and production. (142)

Freire and Macedo acknowledge that literacy is a social and historical construction that

influences, and is influenced by, political and economic power, rather than perpetuating the myth

of a linear and uniform development. Such a complex approach to literacy often goes

unacknowledged in schools, where literacy must be maintained as a unilateral, homogenous

process of language acquisition and understanding, particularly when used for assessment

purposes. Sociolinguist and scholar James Paul Gee highlights the fundamental ways in which

culture shapes language and literacy in his concise 2015 work *Literacy and Education*. Just as

language practices pivot on their social and cultural frameworks, literacy too "has no

effects…apart from particular social, institutional, political, and cultural contexts in which it is

used" (48). Bakhtin certainly highlights these multifaceted contexts in his work regarding

heteroglossia, and Gramsci connects the social and political implications of heteroglossic

language within public schooling.

But these twentieth-century theorists focus their ideas on the larger umbrella of language, and/or the politics of the state, whereas Gee explores with more specificity *literacy*, never failing to account for the role of the public school. He questions the omnipresent "literacy myth," the commonly-held assumption that literacy merely means the ability to decode words on the page. Gee holds that this literacy myth is untrue and perhaps even toxic, since "the role of literacy is always more complex and contradictory and more deeply intertwined with other factors than the literacy myth allows" (*Literacy* 28). Gee continues to provide the example of nineteenth-century Sweden, one of the first instances of a country reaching near-universal literacy; however, Sweden based their literacy initiative in a religious context, demanding that all citizens should learn to read in order to read the Bible. The Protestant Church at the time spearheaded this literacy program in Sweden. It is important, argues Gee, to understand this "literacy" is not true literacy, as defined above by Freire and Macedo, since the population became "literate" only under the context of the church, or, more specifically, those in power in the church. While clergy members, and eventually the entire nation, was able to "read," they were not actually "literate." This example provided by Gee resonates back to Bakhtin's discussion of authoritative discourse, since the language and language skills learned in Sweden were wrought with the historical context of an authoritative institution. To ensure that the population read "correctly," the church instilled an initiative—a positive one at that, in the "common-sense" regard—to ensure that religion maintained is stature in the state as a powerful being. Gee highlights this authoritative discourse when he writes:

> A common dilemma with literacy arises here: People are given a text for themselves, but then something must ensure they see it 'right,' not in reality through their own eyes, but rather from the perspective of an authoritative institution that delimits correct interpretations. Clearly, in these cases, the individual reader does not need any very deep comprehension skills and surely doesn't need to be able to write. (*Literacy* 30)

Gee's critique of literacy in Sweden in the 1800s is applicable to the demands of standardized testing in America today. Such testing requires students to read and comprehend a text under the expectation or hopes that "they [the students] see it [the text] 'right.'" The power to "delimit[t] correct interpretations"—a power not held by the students—can become hegemonic, as it demands a homogenous reading of a text. Gee's real contribution here is his investigation into the ways that literacy is inherently politicized. It is possible that Sweden's universal literacy was actually not literacy at all, but a powerful means of control, where reading skills were simply a recitation of a religiously-affiliated Law of Order.

Simply put: reading is not literacy. Learning a new literacy practice "involves complicity with values, social practices, and ways of knowing that [can] conflict" with prior established cultural values or social identities; therefore, passive reading is not an act of a literate individual (*Literacy* 49). Literacy is a much more complex phenomenon than simply reading phonetics, or identifying syllabic words, or understanding syntactical structures. Henry Giroux offers a definition for literacy in his 1983 work *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition,* writing that literacy is actually "a vehicle for critical reason…a mode of thought and assemblage of skills that allow individuals to break with the predefined…[based] in the tenets of critical thinking and democratic principles" (206). In this definition, the sociohistorical norms of a given culture require examination and critique on behalf of the individual if they are to be "literate"; this inherently requires the individual's ability to be *critical*. To be critical requires both a vocabulary to name one's experiences, as well as the privilege of distance from those experiences in order to have the opportunity to name them. This can be quite different from literacy as taught in some public schools, where educators tend to measure literacy more as the

mastering of predetermined theories and concepts instead of critical investigations into the given dynamics of a culture (Giroux 213).

If approaching literacy with a truly Vygotskyan approach—with a deep appreciation for the social world of the learner—then the ways students obtain literacy must be in the context of their social world or lived experiences. Gee exemplifies such an approach to a socially-mediated literacy when he writes that a true investigation of literacy includes "what literacy and schooling come wrapped up in, namely the attitudes, values, norms, and beliefs (at once social, cultural, and political) that always accompany literacy and schooling" (*Literacy* 45). Much like all language theorists discussed in Chapter I, Gee too insists that social institutions—schools, communities, churches, political bodies—influence and situate language far more than any biological-constructivist approach. Freire and Macedo explore the nuances of the reading act, writing that "Reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word or language; rather, it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world. Language and reality are dynamically interconnected" (29). As Vygotsky too pointed out, the social reality of a child is absolutely interconnected to their language development. This "interconnect[ivity]" is just an example of the *context* required for any meaningful reading act. The importance of context in any reading act—the context of the reader, the context of the text, the context under what authority the reader is reading the text—cannot possibly be extracted from the act of reading itself. This attention to context reverberates throughout Freire's work, and functions as the crux on which Macedo critiques public education in later works.

To truly explore the consequences of literacy and the extent to which it functions more than phonetically, Gee coins the term Discourse—capital D—as a way to name and discuss the differences in discourse between specific social groups in a given society (*Literacy*). Gee's

Discourse may be thought of similarly to Bakhtin's *parole*, but Gee pays particular attention to the social and communal forces that shape Discourse. In any individual lies multiple Discourses, which one must master in order to survive, thrive, and communicate in a particular community or communities. The inherent multiplicity of Discourses within the individual is certainly an application of Bakhtin's heteroglossia, as it exemplifies how the individual is always housing and experiencing multiple "languages," or discourses, at any given time. The necessity to master these multiple discourses represents the major influence the social world has upon one's language and literacy development: how do these discourses intermingle within one's cognitive domain? Such inquiry does not necessarily permeate educational research even though discourse practices impact school-sanctioned literacy practices, as literacy is "always part and parcel of different Discourses, different ways of being in the world…We cannot study literacy by itself" (*Literacy* 100). Innate within any literacy practice is a Discourse community in which it is used, or by which it was constructed. And Discourse itself functions as much more than conversation between individuals or groups—it represents mannerisms, social behaviors and norms, linguistic practices that can be products of, or reactions to, a "common sense" hegemony. Giroux explores specifically Gee's theory of Discourses and argues that Discourses, as used in public spheres, function as a way to maintain stratification between social classes. Giroux turns here to Michel Foucault's work, as Foucault worked to demonstrate that educational systems can theoretically function as a place where one has access to all Discourses of many communities outside one's own, thus allowing the possibility for cross-cultural community and understanding (Giroux 207). Some educator practices, however, can truncate this potential for crossing Discourses, and consequentially compliment forms of class alienation and stratification.

THE LANGUAGE IN THE LITERACY CLASSROOM: "DOMINANT DISCOURSE"
VERSUS "DOMINATING THE DISCOURSE"

Different social and ethnic communities speak different Discourses; this practice serves

as an application of the historical signifying processes described by Lacan, and as an example of

the ramifications of a socially-acquired language described by Vygotsky. When investigating

Discourses vis-à-vis class, Gee describes a system in which certain Discourse communities are

constantly trying to maintain the status quo of the "mainstream" Discourse, but in doing so only

"gain just enough mastery to ensure that they continually mark themselves as outsiders while

using them and are, at best, colonized by them" (*Social* 146). Some educators tend to uphold this

mainstream Discourse in the public-school system, and it ultimately must be so if standardized

testing is to hold any validity. But the expectation of a mainstream, homogenous discourse in

schools can operate as a form of Bakhtin's oppressive authoritative discourse. Students of

socioeconomic statuses that function fluently within the mainstream Discourse often experience

disguised privileges that their peers may not experience—keeping in mind that discourse

encompasses not just speaking patterns, but social mannerisms and "soft skill" knowledge as

well. In his earlier 1996 work *Social Linguistics and Literacies, Second Edition*, Gee boldly

claims that an individual cannot be "in a Discourse unless one has mastered it and mastery comes

about through acquisition, not learning" (146). If the mastery of a mainstream Discourse cannot

be "learned," then the work of public schools may consequentially be in a dire situation of

unproductivity, unless they are constantly fostering Discourse "acquisition." Gee claims this isn't

possible, however, because schools themselves are "poor at facilitating acquisition" of the

mainstream Discourse for the students who come from different Discourse backgrounds (*Social*

146). Acquisition, also, is a phenomenon at a young age, rather than one that takes place in

young adulthood.

Never failing to take economic status into consideration, Gee questions how an equitable education is possible for students who do not come into the mainstream discourse until much later in their public-school years. The possibility exists for schools to then facilitate a form of predetermination for their students, perhaps propagating historical inequities rather than equalizing them. There is hope, though, Gee argues, in becoming "consciously aware…[as it] can actually make one better able to manipulate the society in which the Discourse is dominant, provided it is coupled with the right sort of liberating literacy" (*Social* 147). While upholding students' social and cultural identities, the dominant discourse should not necessarily be altogether eliminated from the classroom. Such an approach creates what Freire and Macedo call a "linguistic ghetto": they claim "the goal should never be to restrict students to their own vernacular" (151). It is necessary for students to utilize their own discourse in the classroom while also mastering the dominant discourse. This way, students are not only uplifted and affirmed in their social selves, but are also given—with respect to their culture and their lives—the tools with which to dominate the dominant discourse. Freire and Macedo argue that "It is through the full appropriation of the dominant standard language that students find themselves linguistically empowered to engage in dialogue with the various sectors of the wider society" (152). What public education seems to at times endorse, however, is a somewhat-forceful use of the dominant discourse without allowing classroom space to explore different non-mainstream discourse communities. Kate Seltzer, in her dissertation *"Resisting from Within": (Re)Imagining a Critical Translingual English Classroom*, claims that there is a somewhat persistent gap in English classrooms, particularly in high schools, where "language is often left out of the conversation" (4). Her dissertation focuses on a research project that centers "explicit,

transparent talk about language, and a focus on *critical metalinguistic awareness*" (Seltzer 3).

Her dissertation works in conversation with Freire's pedagogy furthermore in Chapter III.

Gee's theoretical construct of Discourses requires attention to the orality and materiality of discourse in the first place. This attention to utterance also reverberates through much of Bakhtin's work. James Wertsch writes that according to Bakhtin, "the production of any utterance involves the appropriation of at least one social language and speech genre, and because these social speech types are socioculturally situated, the ensuing account assumes that meaning is inextricably linked with historical, cultural, and institutional setting" (66). Any speech act inherently invokes the context of place, persons, and the history that got those persons in those places. The act of Gee's Discourse, or the act of Bakhtin's utterance, or Saussure's *parole*, evokes a necessity for sociohistoricism. Gee's particular attention to orality in Discourse stems heavily from the work of Walter Ong's 1982 *Orality and Literacy*. Ong writes that "Thought is nested in speech, not in texts" (73). Classroom space, in order to nurture thought, must therefore nurture speech—or, in Bakhtinian terms, dialogue. Gee claims that "Saying (language) and doing (action) are also inextricably linked to being (identity)…[and that] Socially significant identities do not belong to us as individuals…They belong, as well, to the groups of people and institutions that create the conditions for their recognition" (*Social* 91). Gee's communal emphasis mirrors Ong's communal emphasis too, although Ong works to demonstrate how orality manifested into literacy, but maintains that the technology of writing derived from the social action of communicating.

The conditions that shape social groups, though, are not always conditions decided by the group itself. Outside forces—such as political or economic institutions or otherwise hegemonic entities—also shape the boundaries of social groups, and determine the borderlands between

them. What is of concern in public education is how its institutionalization contributes to the

ways in which Discourses become affirmed or disvalued, and the ways in which literacy

constructs borders. In agreement with Gee but in a more politicized effort, Henry Giroux writes

that:

> What must be stressed here is that while language practices are primarily class-specific…they are anchored in what might be called a selective affinity to class-specific experiences. But it is important to note that such practices form and establish themselves amidst class relationships of dominance and domination…*language practices and subjectivities are formed through relations of struggle and resistance*. (212, italics added)

Inseparable from the very history of its users, language inherently is a medium that reflects

antiquities of "struggle and resistance," particularly in marginalized communities. In passing, it

is worth noting that Giroux too subscribes to a Vygotskyan approach to language acquisition,

claiming that language is "anchored in…class-specific experiences." Giroux extends such an

approach though—taking the notion social from Vygotsky and the notion of economic class from

Gee—to claim that socialized languages are a product of power relations. In her book *Teaching

To Transgress*, bell hooks, like Giroux, discusses how language works as a site of struggle and

resistance. Her analysis exemplifies Freire's stance that the word is both action and reflection

(*Pedagogy*). In discussing the use of Black vernacular in the classroom, hooks writes that "The

power of this speech [Black vernacular] is not simply that it enables resistance to white

supremacy, but that it also forges a space for *alternative cultural production and alternative

epistemologies*—different ways of thinking and knowing that were crucial to creating a counter-

hegemonic worldview" (171, italics added). Not only does hooks advocate for a more

multilingual approach in a classroom, but she recognizes the ways that language practices create

and contribute to cultural norms and "ways of thinking." The productivity of language also

resonates in Freire and Macedo's work. Macedo writes that "language [is] *productive* rather than

reflective of social reality…language [is] both…a practice of signification and also a *site* for cultural struggle and as a *mechanism* which produces antagonistic relations between different social groups" (*Reading* 153). Macedo recognizes the productive power of language, and notes that it can be used "antagonistic[ally]." That hooks also acknowledges speech and orality as holding the power for "cultural production" is worth exploring: if speech and discourse are catalysts for cultural production, what is the eventual product of a school system that demands a homogenous and mainstream Discourse rooted in white American privilege and power?

Giroux and hooks agree that social discourses require institutional representation, but Giroux demands also an investigation into how those social languages came into being in the first place. His mentioning of "class-specific experiences" suggests that the language practices used by a specific social class may not be entirely a product of their own, but a reactive mechanism to something larger and hegemonic happening *to* them. Giroux fails to mention the implications on human autonomy that such an argument suggests, but hooks, a Black feminist scholar, writes "To heal the splitting of mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves and our experiences in language" (175). When an institution, such as a public school, does not acknowledge this "splitting" in the curriculum or policy—which could perhaps be done through an unromanticized version of American history or the use of a comprehensive literary canon—the potential for recovery does not exist. Furthermore, oppressing all discourses in schools other than those endorsed by those in power only leads to specific populations of students failing consistently in a system that typically determine social status and wealth, especially when considering the correlation between education and social class.

AN INTERLUDE: LITERATURE AS A POLITICAL HISTORICAL ACT

Gee's work *Literacy and Education* serves well to reestablish the fundamental social connection to language acquisition, and the importance of orality in developing literacy. What he fails to include in this work, according to critic Andrew Burn's 2017 review of Gee, is the "relation of literacy to literature," as "this is a central relation in literacy education, and one plagued by the language/literature divide" (114). To mediate this gap regarding the explicit connection between literature and literacy, one may turn to Toni Morrison, specifically her 1992 work *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. In this book, Morrison discusses at length the implicit racism within the literature of early America, and claims that the American literary canon—and perhaps the literature classrooms themselves—are built upon a language that inherently requires a racial "other." Literacy as learned through the American literature canon requires acknowledgement and complicity with a racial binary. Morrison writes that in critical discussions of literature, "What did happen frequently was an effort to talk about these [racial] matters with a vocabulary designed to disguise the subject" (50). Here, Morrison exemplifies the way in which language practices—specifically vocabulary—can function to disguise historically-sanctioned racial hierarchies and perhaps even racial inequality in schools.

Morrison devotes significant discussion to the American historical period of the Enlightenment. According to the current federal curriculum, Common Core, the Enlightenment is a required literary and historical period of study for high school students. As a large historic and literary period in American history, thinkers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes often exemplify American figures who demonstrated foundational American ideals of freedom, individualism, and independence. A closer examination of the Enlightenment, according to Morrison, reveals that this very period of writing and ideological shift was fundamentally based

in slavery. Morrison writes that "Black slavery enriched the country's creative possibilities" (38). The American Enlightenment actually *needed* slavery in order to establish and muse on the notion of individual freedom and rights. Without the juxtaposition of slavery and captivity, the literary canon never would have begun to explore the very ideals of freedom and democracy which serve as the basis for American ethos and education. Basing discourse and literature in an American canon that inherently requires a racial "other"—an underclass, an oppressed population—can silently create a classroom culture that adheres to and acknowledges inequality as a norm.

In a critique of canonization with attention to Black women writers, globally, Carole Boyce Davies argues that the exceptionalism required for Black female writers to enter into the canon is an exceptionalism determined by a white, privilege, mostly-male cast. While her introductory essay to the book *Moving Beyond Boundaries: Volume 1: International Dimensions of Black Women's Writing*, focuses on the international canonization or international dismissal of Black female voices, her critique of literary power and acknowledgement of its importance in social, economic, and political representation remains relevant. Davies writes:

> It is important to state that most departments of literature are organized on the basis of studying 'major literature' and that this is at the heart of discussions which set curricula requirements for English literature courses as predominantly European/American and male. An understanding of the major/minor writer distinction is central to any transformation of curricula as it identifies issues of marginalization and the subordination of a variety of underrepresented literatures and voices. (4)

When educators fail to acknowledge underrepresentation in literary decisions within a classroom, they further the practice of "disguise[ing] the subject," as Morrison says. The Eurocentric focus on literature and history in classrooms results in an tacit use of a mainstream discourse: one that upholds Eurocentric perspectives of history, language, and culture. Failure to investigate literature from outside the traditional canon, or outside the "master texts [which] have survived

the test of time," reproduces systems of racial and economic stratification while furthering

hegemonic common-sense ideas of literature, literacy, and culture (Davies 3). This approach to

literature as a tool for literacy creates a demand for students from nonmainstream discourses to

adapt the mainstream discourse as an effort to succeed and assimilate. Seltzer discusses the

necessity for students to interact with language and discourses representative of other races,

particularly for "linguistically marginalized students of color"—or, the very same students who

seem to systematically and consistently underperform white peers. She proposes that by "reading

texts that bring forth students' explicit talk about elements of language, or their *metacommentary*

and their experiences with linguistic racialization and *raciolinguistic ideologies* to the surface,

students can grapple with those realities and discuss the possibilities of reimaging those realities

through their own creative and critical ways of using language" (Selzter 4). Remaining faithful to

an antiquated, Eurocentric, homogenous literary canon is representative of ignoring the social

differences of language acquisition. To truly approach language with a Vygotskyan approach

means teaching literacy with a keen awareness of different student discourses in the classroom,

and how those discourses vary from the literature or texts used to further language and literacy

skills.

Chinua Achebe's critiques of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* serves well to

exemplify the hidden curriculum and violence of language within a canonical text. Achebe

directly names Conrad as a racist. Achebe acknowledges the implicit assumptions associated

with language that often "disguise the subject," when he writes, regarding Conrad's racism:

"That this simple truth is glossed over in criticisms of his work is due to the fact that white

racism against Africa is such a normal way of thinking that its manifestations go completely

unremarked" (21). The couched racism in Conrad's language and in his works, as pointed out by

Achebe, represent the ways in which literature can function in classrooms to further historical notions of racial hierarchies and/or economic inequities. Such linguistic awareness is not a common product or purpose of English classrooms in public schools, as a homogenous reading is, again, necessary in order to validate any use of standardized assessment: there must be a standardized reading. And such a standardized reading may not allow space for the opportunities of exploring "raciolingusitic ideologies," as Seltzer works to point out. The long history of colonization carries on in language and in texts, as it does in educators' understandings of texts and of history. Teaching *Heart of Darkness*, for example, certainly varies in classrooms across the country, but a national look into teacher preparation—further explored in Chapter III— demonstrates how and why educator ideology is so consequential. As Davies points out, teachers must be critically aware of how their own "culturally based assumptions about what is literary [factor] into the classroom and to the evaluation of the text…[therefore] it is necessary to identify how a set of given ideas can attain a certain hegemonic existence in a culture and is thereby maintained, reshaped, and reproduced by a variety of practitioners who write and read that culture" (5). Such a "reproduction" is certainly highlighted by Achebe's critiques of an otherwise notably canonical text. And it is this very lack of critical analysis that leads to a reproductively inequitable system.

A Marxist approach to literary analysis may do well to help amend the ways in which inequity persists in literature and in classrooms that analyze literature. Marxist literary theory calls for all literary analysis and criticism to take place under the pretense of historicism. In his article "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act," Fredric Jameson critiques the New Criticism approach as being completely separated from the historical context of a given text and/or its author and/or its reader. He advocates for all literary interpretation to also consider the

historical and political contexts that shape the text. Many public schools, however, must prescribe to a New Criticism approach to teaching literature and history due to the demands of standardized testing and thus school funding. By implementing this New Criticism approach—that there is one interpretation of any text, whether it be literary or historical—relies on an authoritative assertion and a master perspective. Jameson critiques this approach as it necessitates a blind eye towards history and social experiences. He writes that "It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity" (4). Jameson argues that all studies of literature must inherently be political: "The only effective liberation…begins with the recognition that there is nothing that is not social and historical—indeed, that everything is 'in the last analysis' political" (5). The politicizing efforts of literature are possibly lost in public school classrooms, where literary interpretation rests on a single or few authoritative platforms by which students are assessed. And Jameson questions, since all history must be accessed through texts, how the authoritative perspective of a New Criticism approach distorts history as society knows it and furthers oppressive class relations. Freire and Macedo can also interject here with their discussion of the need to include diverse histories in the classroom as they write "It was urgent that they [the students] study their history…which gave them back the right to make their own history" (144). This understanding of history rests heavily on those who teach it. Much like the literary canon, the history canon works as well to continue iterative notions of power.

LITERACY IS RACE: THE ECONOMICS OF HISTORY, ACCESS, AND FALSE REFORM

By keeping student populations segregated along class or racial boundaries, a hegemonic society can maintain a separation between races and economic classes; this separation also contributes to a discontinuation of dialogue between spheres of different cultures and different peoples. An inability to communicate with cultures different from one's own may begin in the school system. James Baldwin writes in "A Talk to Teachers" that "the crucial paradox which confronts us here is that the whole process of education occurs within a social framework and is designed to perpetuate the aims of society" (678). Baldwin goes on to further critique the school system in America and its seemingly systematic failure of students of color, writing that "it isn't long—in fact it begins when he is in school—before he [the student] discovers the shape of his oppression…You [the black student] know—you know instinctively—that none of this is for you" (680). This instinctive knowing could be based within the student's discourse: a child may become keenly aware that the social language learned and the social discourse used is not the same as the one of the public school. As Lacan demonstrated, the individual comes into consciousness once he enters language. The entire ego and human subjectivity manifests through language. The disenfranchised student comes into his own identity through the language that has been socially used around him. When he enters school, there is an "oppression" that he notices "instinctively." This oppression may be through the language practices and dominant discourse in school—and not necessarily because the classroom doesn't uphold a Spanish variation or a Black vernacular as an "official language." As Freire and Macedo argue, "The legitimation of black English as an educational tool does not…preclude the need to acquire proficiency in the linguistic code of the dominant group…Dialects encode different world views" (127). Certainly, educators can allow the space to uphold such dialects, as hooks advocates for, but this doesn't suggest that the access to the dominant Discourse should be denied. Educators could, perhaps

instead, explore with students that there is dominance and subordinance in discourses, and then further explore instances of this dominance in the literary canon. Such an approach represents Seltzer's dissertation and works to examine metalinguistic awareness.

Reaching back to colonialism and slavery, Baldwin writes that because the American society has "never faced this fact [the history of slavery]," it is "in intolerable trouble" (682). Howard Zinn also explores the necessity to teach an unromanticized version of American history, in some ways then, "facing the facts," as Baldwin puts it. As Bakhtin discusses in his theory of dialogism, a heteroglossic framework of language means that historical implications of words carry on, and especially in schools—vis-à-vis certain texts used, or discussion norms implemented, or academic testing practices. Much like Macedo, Baldwin, too, critiques the educator's potentially dangerous complacency with history when he writes that "What passes for identity in America is a series of myths about one's heroic ancestors" (683). This connection to history arises also in Vygotsky's work and other Marxist thinkers. As noted in Chapter I, Vygotsky believed that all "verbal thought…must [be considered] subject to all the premises of historical materialism" (94). All inner dialogue and conscious thought is structured regarding historical and economic structures. Such an argument, though, brings into question the notion of human autonomy. Gramsci's discussion of autonomy in a hegemony is a complex one, and it reverberates throughout the work of other thinkers, such as Baldwin, especially when he considers historical myths that contribute to racial hierarchies and binaries. Lacan also had considered these myths, contributing their very creation to the historical context of signifying practices, and how the very historicism of those practices contributes to "myths in storybooks" that become the very ideologies Gramsci warns against.

Macedo's emphasis on the ideology of educators warrants further exploration, as does his economic attention to education. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that in 2015, in all American universities, "Of the 17.0 million undergraduate students in fall 2015, some 9.3 million were White, 3.0 million were Hispanic, 2.3 million were Black" ("Undergraduate" 2). This representation in college enrollment has led to much reform in school choice, school vouchers, and charter schools, all of which operate under the premise of increasing college access for mostly Black and Hispanic students. These reform schools, however, may only work to perpetuate their very need. The notion of school choice or reform schools is similarly representative of hegemonic institutions appearing to bargain with subordinate groups, but actually continuing the very inequalities that contribute to their creation in the first place.

School reform efforts have grown from the reactions of literacy gaps, but these school reforms are based in a continuation of the dominant Discourse, rather than eliminating the dominance. In her article "Raising Citizens or Raising Test Scores? Teach For America, 'No Excuses' Charters, and the Development of the Neoliberal Citizen," Beth Sondel vehemently attacks reform efforts and charter schools for continuing the oppression by public schools on students of color in America, rather than providing the equitable education they claim to work towards. Under the grandiloquence of social justice, reform schools tend to function to perpetuate the hegemonic systems that they claim to be working against. Sondel examines how such a practice manifests through her interviews with educators in these reform schools, exploring their respective teaching philosophies and how it influences their literacy instruction. She contextualizes her argument by describing the ways in which dialogue or discourse in the public sphere functions in regards to education, which circles around management and

accountability (290). A tactile example of this circling would be the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which emphasized accountability as measured through test scores. Sondel frankly summarizes the intersection between the sociohistorical and the economy when she writes: "This focus on bureaucratic problems, rather than resource neglect and racist public policy, obfuscates the structural and historical root causes of our increasingly stratified society and effectively convinces the general public that we must not alleviate poverty to work toward equity" (291). The structuring of reform schools, on the surface, reflect an effort to surpass the great task of repairing public schools, and to instead drive educational equity through the American spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation. Sondel found, through her interviews, that teachers within these schools tend to hold ideologies housed by historical racism and hierarchies. Sondel writes that "Preparing students from marginalized communities to relinquish their identities to compliantly work within the status quo helps to preserve, rather than revolutionize or transform, our current system" (306). It is the ideology, created through Discourse communities, and historical signifying practices that create economic, political, educational systems, that further reiterate inequalities in different mutations. Such false reform, however, may continue growing, as 2017 Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos advocates for more charter schools and school vouchers.

Gloria Anzaldúa defines a borderland as "physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle, and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy" in her preface of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. This physical and intimate space can be a classroom. Reform schools are typically industrialized with teachers who are not from the community in which they are working, and the schools themselves utilize strictly-enforced systems of rewards and consequences under the popular school slogan of "no

excuses" when fighting against poverty and educational inequity. The intricate systems of

rewards and consequences are also an attempt to teach students how "real-life" repercussions

derive from actions, thus inserting an ideology that when one adheres to the status quo, one is

rewarded. To rebel against it means detention or other forms of punitive punishment. Sondel

investigates individual teacher ideologies that shape their daily classroom practices in one of the

many KIPP reform school in New Orleans. Her goal is to "address the type of citizen that

educational entrepreneurs seek to develop" (293). She develops a framework of three ideologies

that manifest in KIPPSuccess classrooms: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory

citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen. The majority of teachers in reform or charter schools

must subscribe to the personally-responsible citizen ideology in order to maintain their

employment and find correlation between their classroom pedagogy and their school's ideology.

The personally-responsible citizen aims to be a law-abiding, economically contributory

individual in a productive society. This ethos plays out in the classroom practices. Sondel

interviews a teacher at KIPPSuccess in New Orleans, who explains that "Getting students into

college to gain them access to the economy" was the number one priority of the teachers and the

school. Not only was economic access fundamental, but so was instilling "a strong work ethic, a

sense of motivation and agency, and professional behavior, or middle-class values" (297). In this

pedagogical framework, students function intimately with their teachers to establish a

borderland: where the teacher instills within the "lower class" a work ethic that will gain them

"the luxury cruise to the middle class," maintaining that "any impediments to success are

personal flaws, while institutional racism is either dismissed or claimed to have no merit" (298).

The emphasis on "personal flaws" and accountability for behavior reverberate in reform schools

that place high priority on student behavior as a key factor to student success.

Such reform efforts are a reaction to the "achievement gap," but rather than correcting access and student input, these efforts instead "involve instruction that resembles test preparation…a logical, predictable effect of test-based accountability systems" (Gorlewski 86). As Julie Gorlewski points out in her book *English Language Arts: A Critical Introduction*, shifting the language from "achievement gap," to Gloria Ladson-Billings' "education debts" helps to shift the conversations on educational inequity to address historical debts incurred by marginalized students (44). The focus on output or productivity perhaps mirrors American capitalism and a production-centric economy. Focusing instead on student input, or critically examining the curriculum by which students are taught—again a wink to the literary canon or Eurocentric American history—can allow educators to examine, instead of student performance, the "opportunity-to-learn standards," which "emphasize inputs related to resources for students, teachers, and communities" and represent "a systemic perspective of educational institutions and the communities they serve" (Gorlewski 23). This attention to the cultural forces and institutional forces surrounding child input reflect poststructuralist language theory as established in Chapter I.

An individual's language—obtained through socialization, historicism, and institutions—shapes one's literacy. And literacy itself comes in many forms. Within the school, literacy is the way in which one flexes their language practices to analyze texts, which can come in various mediums: oral texts, visual texts, audio texts, written texts. Literacy is an application of language, compounded upon by language's inherent historical and institutional context. Giroux expands:

> The relationship between literacy and schooling becomes clear if we consider that while a child may first enter a language through his or her family, it is primarily in the school that literacy is learned…School is also the site where students from different socioeconomic groups become aware that literacy is intimately connected to forms of knowledge, ways

of communicating, and classroom social practices through which they define themselves as subjects…Literacy, in this case, is interconnected with language practices and modes of learning that can only be understood in terms of their articulation with the power relations that structure the wider society. (207)

If language is sociohistorical, then literacy is economic-political. By stratifying literacy instruction in schools, according to class and race, the result becomes a series of predetermined student-types on predetermined economic paths. Freire and Macedo write that "it is impossible to dichotomize what takes place in the economic process of the world from the process of discourse…The problem of understanding the culture in which education takes place cannot negate the presence and influence of economic production" (50). While underprivileged students have a form of literacy instruction in their schools, the students' Discourse practices tend to be different from the mainstream literacy practices that are upheld in curriculum. Giroux cites educational ethnographer Jean Anyon, whose 1981 work reflected specific disparities between social classes of students and the literacy instruction they received, observing that within poor and working-class school communities, the instruction children receive typically resonates with rote mechanical work thus preparing them to continue their poor or working-class economic status. Children of higher class typically receive instruction based far more in critical thinking, analysis, arts, and problem-solving. Determining children's trajectories based upon the literacy instruction they receive is one way to continue an iterative process of economic and cultural systems of power, rather than constructing individuals to become authentic change agents and critical questioners. In her 1983 book, *Ways With Words*, Shirley Bryce Heath shifted the academic understanding of ethnographic studies in education when she lived amongst and worked with three different school communities. Below is a brief objective synopsis of her study, written by educational researchers Robert B. Ruddell and Martha Rapp Ruddell in their 1994 article "Language Acquisition and Literacy Processes":

> Children of Gateway (black and white families constituting the mainstream community) received early initiation to books, written and oral narratives, book-reading behaviors, and questioning routines. Children from Roadville, a white mill community, were expected to accept the power of print by learning alphabet letters and doing workbook-like activities…Trackton children lived in a highly oral black mill community where storytelling and verbal attention-getting skills were prized and few children's books and book-reading activities were found in the home. Heath concludes that…Roadville and Trackton children's language and literacy development, while extensive, did not match closely classroom language and literacy routines and expectations, while Gateway [children]…did. (94)

Despite the convenient conciseness of Ruddell and Ruddell's scientific summary above, they fail to mention the true conclusion and implications of Heath's work. Ruddell and Ruddell's willingness to dismiss the politics and economics behind these disparities potentially reflects a well-hidden or well-ignored agenda within educational research. Euphemisms in educational research may arise when discussing the "achievement gaps" between students of color or students in poverty. While it is well-recognized, even by the National Center of Education Statistics, that these gaps persist, the conversation has yet to shift entirely into why this gap actually matters. To acknowledge, truly, the power that literacy holds, would require such studies and reports to critically analyze how literacy gaps perpetuate a lack of political power and representation, inaccessibility to equitable health care and housing, social stigmatization and economic stagnation. And such an investigation would be counter-hegemonic and potentially fatalistic to those whose economic security rests on continuing the narrative. In her Epilogue, Heath directly addresses what is at stake when analyzing literacy gaps such as the ones she wrote lengthily about:

> The significance of these different patterns of language socialization for success in schools soon becomes clear. After initial years of success, Roadville children fall behind, and by junior high, most are simply waiting out school's end or their sixteenth birthday, the legal age for leaving school…Trackton students fall quickly into a pattern of failure…often drift through school, hoping to escape with the valued piece of paper which will add…little to their paychecks. (349)

Heath's findings regarding the economic repercussions of "language socialization" in schools continues in their original forms and in new forms today.

An example of familial economic status and its influence on student literacy can be found within the National Center for Education Statistics, which publishes annual reports consistently finding that the Hispanic student population has the highest drop-out rates in U.S. public schools. Socioeconomically disadvantaged and/or Hispanic communities continue to be perceived as an underclass and given inadequate literacy access: "Among ELLs who were not proficient [in English] by the spring of kindergarten, non-Hispanic and non-poor students performed better on the reading assessment than their Hispanic and poor peers" (*The Condition* 144). These literacy gaps then contribute to Hispanic students or students of poverty lacking critical tools necessary for self-reflection and participation in a democratic society. Possibly linguistically euthanized from the early stages of their academic journey, the disparity between their academic curriculum and their socially-derived language practices leaves them consistently underrepresented in positions of power. Similarly, NCES finds consistent gaps between white and black students in public schools**.** In their 2015 report *School Composition and the Black-White Achievement Gap*, NCES lists six major reasons why this gap exists, citing research from as far back as the 1980s: inexperienced teachers, low socioeconomic statuses of predominantly black communities, an "oppositional culture" that equates academic success with "acting white," discriminatory teacher expectations of black students, discriminatory tracking methods, and discriminatory disciplinary practices (5). Each of these causes could be attributed to an ideological subscription, with the exception, perhaps, of the historically low socioeconomic statuses of black communities. A critical investigation of teacher preparation may help to explain why these trends have persisted with such stamina. The graphs below, published by NCES, demonstrates the consistent reading

gap between Hispanic, Black, and White students, for over 35 years. While gaps have narrowed, it is possible that a mainstream white discourse tends to dominate standardized testing and "academic language." It follows that these disparities in reading performance—or the impossibility for a majority of students of color to acquire a mainstream discourse within a curriculum unresponsive to their social discourses—manifest into disparities in school completion. The rate at which black students drop out is almost twice as frequent as white peers, and Hispanic students are almost thrice as frequent.

Figure 9.4. Average reading scale scores on the long-term trend National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) for 17-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: Selected years, 1971 through 2012
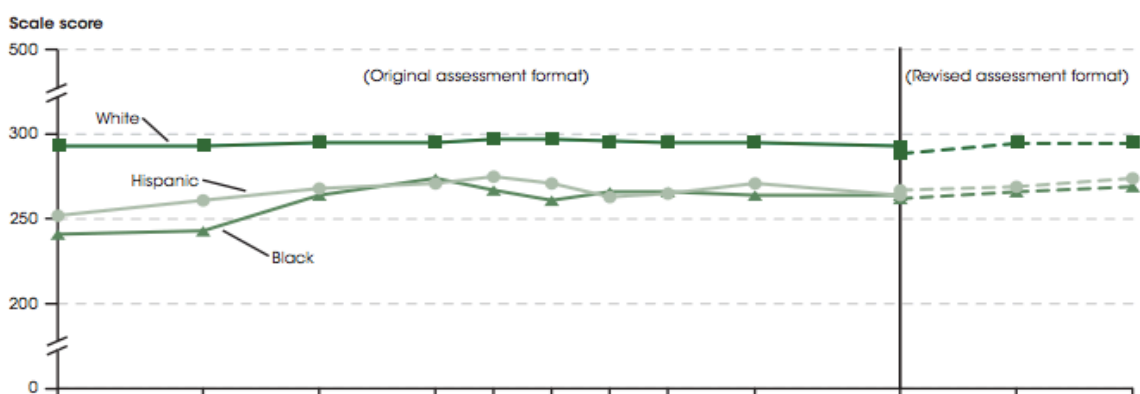
Figure 16.1. Status dropout rates of 16- to 24-year-olds, by race/ethnicity: 1990 through 2013
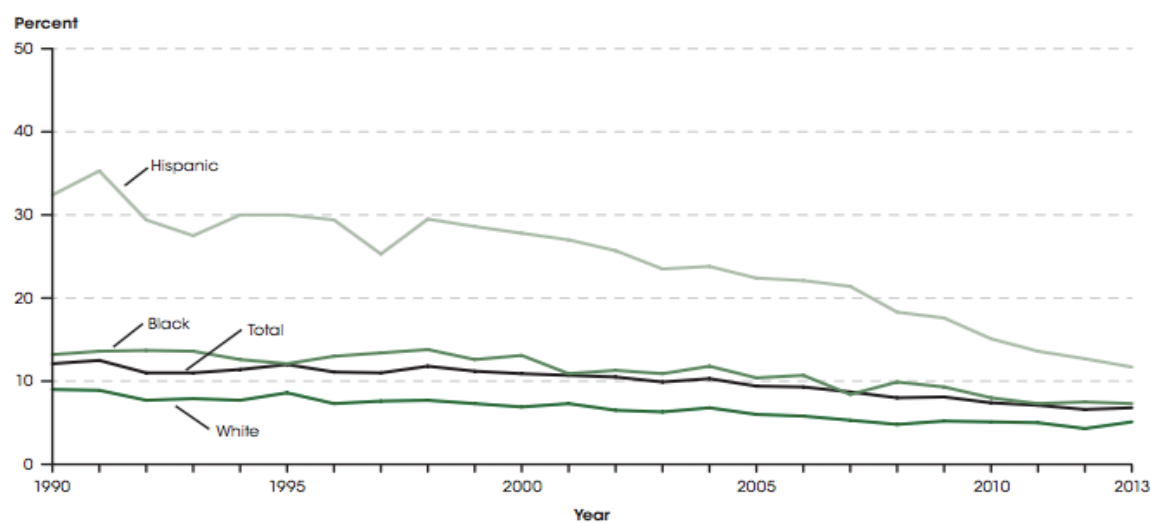
NOTE: The status dropout rate is the percentage of 16- to 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential (either a diploma or an equivalency credential such as a GED certificate). Data for total include other racial/ethnic categories not separately shown. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Data are based on sample surveys of the civilian noninstitutionalized population.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), October 1990 through 2013. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, table 219.70.

Federal legislation efforts and publicized reform efforts represent the very actions which Gramsci detailed when discussing hegemony: that those in power constantly negotiate with subordinate groups in order to appear fair while actually still advancing the interests of elites. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 aimed to equalize resources and monetary allowances to schools nationwide, and its reincarnation from 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), failed the very students it aimed to support, claims researcher Dierdre Glenn Paul in the May 2004 edition of the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. In his article "The Train Has Left: The No Child Left Behind Act Leaves Black and Latino Literacy Learners Waiting at the Station," Paul describes just how devastating NCLB was to Black and Hispanic students. Citing a Harvard study from 2001, Paul examines the higher percentages of Black and Hispanic students living in poverty versus their white peers. Psychological effects of poverty are further catapulted by school systems that insist on high-stakes testing, writes Paul. He negates the popular perception of standardized testing working as a mechanism for equality: "while the number of Houston students who passed statewide achievement tests went from 44% to 64%, the gains were boosted by an 'abysmal dropout rate'…Low-performing students, under constant pressure, simply surrenders and left school prematurely" and that the "children most likely to be tested frequently are poor children" (Paul 651). The discourse communities that are products of social "struggle and resistance," such as poverty, are not necessarily upheld in classrooms. By failing to "develop radical pedagogical structures that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis for literacy," students become highly unlikely to demonstrate mastery on assessments that determine their future trajectories (Freire and Macedo 151).

And future trajectories are indeed mirrored by reading performance. Trends in test scores and drop-out rates eventually contribute to a racio-economic disparity, leading to housing and
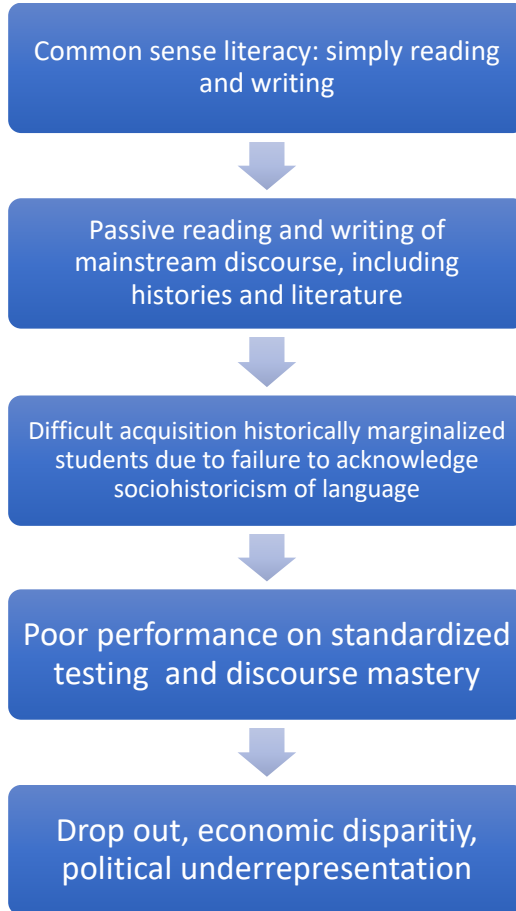
zoning practices that harbor economically segregated school communities, which further contributes to lower levels of academic performance and economic/cultural stratification. In 2015, the Pew Research Center found that racial gaps in American household income in 2014 followed thus: Asians, \$63,400 – \$77,900; Whites, \$44,700 – \$71,300; Hispanics, \$34,000 – \$43,300; Blacks \$24,700 – \$43,300. Interestingly, this hierarchy of income correlates well with the reading scores reported by NCES. Furthermore, the Pew Research Center published in 2015 also that Black Americans are "more than twice as likely as whites to be poor, despite narrowing of poverty gap." This economic relationship is decidedly identical to the drop-out rates reported by NCES.

The literacy gap, then, is possibly a self-sustaining phenomenon. It has persisted despite federal mandates and school reform. This persistence could be because literacy practices in classrooms are not adequately addressing the sociohistorical emphasis of student language and discourse communities. Giroux writes that the concern is not necessarily in the methodologies or teaching strategies being used, but that the focus needs to shift to the underlying ideologies that "are constituted and inscribed in the discourse and social practices of daily classroom life" (208). In his independent 2006 work *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know, Second Edition*, Macedo questions how America's history and politics remain based in the rhetoric of equality and democracy, but maintain persistent gaps towards literacy and economics. He writes that he is "increasingly convinced that the U.S. educational system is not a failure. The failure that it generates represents its ultimate victory to the extent that large groups of people…were never intended to be educated. They were never intended to be part of the dominant political and economic spheres" (36). While Macedo's perspective here reflects an

insidious intentionality, the following chapter holds faith in educators and policymakers to shift the narrative of the "achievement gap" and the impulses to further a dominant discourse.

CHAPTER II CONCLUSION

National school performance regarding student literacy skills reflect a historical pattern of privilege and access along class and racial lines. The performance gaps in reading, the access gaps in college enrollment, and the economic gaps in drop-out rates all reflect some sort of continual classroom practice that is systemically failing particularly low-income students or particularly students of color. These shortfalls on behalf of the schools themselves may be a result of Discourse practices, as examined by Gee. The Gramscian common-sense assumptions about literacy can leave students as passive absorbers of texts and history, without necessarily demonstrating critical skills to examine the texts or histories given to them. These Freirean "banking practices" of education result in what both Morrison and Baldwin identify as a limited literary canon and an entire system of education built out of a romanticized and white-washed discourse of American history and American literature. This discourse lends itself to devastating gaps along racial and economic lines of student performance, resulting in Anzaldúa's "borderlands" of reform schools that only perpetuate an unequal system rather than revolutionizing it. If schools and educators are willing to look critically at discourses within their communities, and examine critically those hierarchies of discourses with the students themselves, then there may be a brighter future ahead for the student populations that have been historically marginalized. With greater access to literacy performance and higher education, society can realize a less stratified class system and begin to embrace a democratic system of education that benefits students across racial and class lines.

Common sense literacy: simply reading and writing

↓

Passive reading and writing of mainstream discourse, including histories and literature

↓

Difficult acquisition historically marginalized students due to failure to acknowledge sociohistoricism of language

↓

Poor performance on standardized testing and discourse mastery

↓

Drop out, economic disparitiy, political underrepresentation

CHAPTER III: CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO

If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects.
—*Paulo Freire,* The Politics of Education *(1985)*

While the social constructs who we are, so do we construct the social. This dialectical relationship is fluid and dynamic, creating possibilities for social action and change.
—*Hilary Janks,* Literacy and Power *(2009)*

Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was a Brazilian educator and the author of renowned books on critical literacy, including *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), *Pedagogy of Hope* (1994), and *Pedagogy of Freedom* (1996). He remains a central leading figure in the field of critical pedagogy. Working as an adult educator with aims to challenge economic and social inequality in Brazil, Freire's teaching philosophy and extensive discussions on the role of literacy in the development of equality are the foundational theories by which educators worldwide have established their own teaching practices with an eye towards social justice. The power of reading and writing function as a tool by which students can reconstruct their own realities and therefore reconstruct the world at large. This involves students identifying their social worlds—through the act of naming them—in order to change social and historical hegemonies. The ultimate goal in such a revolution, according to Freire, is *conscientização,* or "critical consciousness." By establishing one's critical consciousness, one is then able to critically examine their reality, identify injustices or objectification, and then act upon those injustices, that world, and recreate—as an artist, or as a creative *subject*. Conscientização serves as a methodology which

allows both oppressed students and their oppressors—whether that intentionally or unintentionally be teachers, administration, educational stakeholders, policymakers—are essentially liberated from the reiterative and stratified forms that permeate social structures like schools. This liberation takes place by implementing a critical literacy approach, which involves examining and analyzing critically and closely the power structures in a society, primarily through the ways in which discourses manifest and maintain, whether that be through political representation, economic opportunity, higher education access, advertisements and/or acquisition. It is worth noting that liberation fundamentally requires literacy, and literacy fundamentally requires language. For any liberation, language is its medium.

Critical literacy extends, though, beyond words in a book, as established in Chapter II with James Gee's example of "universal literacy" in Sweden in the 1800s. For Freire, literacy includes the ways that individuals function dialectically with material and social structures, such as jobs, schools, and communities. In Freire's work with Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, they write that "literacy becomes a meaningful construct to the degree that it is viewed as a set of practices that functions to either empower or disempower people … In the larger sense, literacy is analyzed according to whether it serves as a set of cultural practices that promotes democratic and emancipatory change" (141). This "empower[ment] or disempower[ment]" reflects both an economic and a social well-being. Critical educator and self-proclaimed Neo-Marxist, Wayne Au, writes in his article "The Dialectical Materialism of Freire," that Freire's critical pedagogy inherently requires an acknowledgement of the material world—a material, economic world that is both a result of and is influenced by the literacy practices of a people or a community. Au writes that in Freire's work, "dialectical materialism provides a framework for analyzing objectively existing conditions in the world (i.e., various

forms of institutionalized and systemic oppression), for understanding that humans can become actively conscious of both the conditions themselves and their sources, and for changing these conditions through human (social) intervention and action" (174). The attention to materialism is also within Vygotsky's work from 1934: he writes that verbal thought is "subject to all the premises of historical materialism" (94). Both Vygotsky and Freire, although worlds away, showed significant interest in the ways that materiality influenced dialogue, history, language, and identity. If subscribing to the sociohistorical approach to language-acquisition, and acknowledging that this "conscious[ness]" manifests through and by language—as demonstrated by both Lacan and Vygotsky—then one must confront language as a means to "become actively conscious of both the conditions themselves and their sources" (Au 174). It is this consciousness that allows critical examination of the world, and accordingly, change.

Bakhtin's *dialogism* requires a revisit because it is language's very power on the material conditions of the world that constitute its dialogic nature. Dialogism demands that "there can be no actual monologue," since "there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others" (Holquist 426). Just as essays or texts are in conversation with one another across time and across space, so too are the discourse practices of communities. And the dialogic nature between these discourses is just as dialogic as the relationship between the communities themselves and the institutions from which they acquire their discourses, such as schools, churches, businesses, or other social organizations. In order to capture both the dialogic nature of language and its sociohistoricism, the word *discourse* allows the researcher to refer to actual language and semiotics as well as socially-acquired mannerisms, behaviors, and practices with that language. The term also works to signify discourse *groups* who utilize different language practices depending on their independent sociohistorical influences which are

largely determined by, as hooks writes, "struggle and resistance." Discourse itself is a reaction to "struggle and resistance" in different social and historical contexts. As established by Henry Giroux in Chapter II, the use—or misuse—of discourses can become oppressive, especially within public schools. The greater, federal structure under which schools function actually require a sort of standardized, mainstream discourse which naturally disenfranchises any students arriving from outside that standardized, mainstream discourse. While the extent of intentionality behind such disenfranchisement is worth pursuing but is not the intention of this chapter, it is important to note that public schools must inherently utilize some form of a standardized discourse: standardized testing demands a standardized discourse to be used across measurements. These measurements of success then directly influence economic and political circumstances, such as teacher performance, school funding, school accreditation, and student access to higher education and/or job markets. This necessity of a standardized discourse has resulted in particular discourse communities being pushed out of mainstream American Dream-ism and instead into a series of stratified and dispersed communities, seemingly unable to communicate amongst each other. In her book *Literacy and Power*, an ethnographic and theoretical hybrid text, Hilary Janks writes that "discourses manufacture or product people. They construct subjectivities, both as an 'us' and an 'other'…discourses combine to produce a social climate" (60). The social climate, a product of discourse, can therefore become altered or revolutionized through discourse. Some elements of literacy, particularly within schools—such as teacher preparation and classroom practices—could withstand a shift so as to make room for a discourse-revolution that could begin to change the persisting inequities outlined in Chapter II.

TEACHER PREPARATION: THE CALL FOR BRICOLAGIC / DIALOGIC CLASSROOMS

Teacher preparation in the U.S. typically requires completion of a university degree, including a series of state-certified courses with requirements along content-subject, human development, classroom management, behavioral sciences, assessment analysis, and special education services. The history of teacher preparation demonstrates an ascension of little formal training to state-mandated curriculums held almost exclusively within universities. David F. Labaree of Stanford University discusses, in 2008, the history of teacher-preparation in the university to be one of reluctance on both ends, in his book chapter titled "An Uneasy Relationship: The History of Teacher Education in the University." He examines the growing demand for teachers in the nineteenth century, simply as a result of the growing "common school" model that developed around the same time: the common school being "a community elementary school, operated by local public officials and supplemented over time by a grammar school and a high school" (291). This model of schooling, reflective of today's model, took the task of educating out of small homestead houses and family-homes, and instead placed them into bigger institutions. The ensuing demand for teachers resulted in the need for mass-scale teacher preparation. Labaree skims the history of teacher preparation since then, analyzing the professionalization of the teaching occupation and also the ways in which the teaching profession transitioned from predominantly-male to predominantly-female. He also explains why the prestige of teaching wanes in relation to other professions such as doctors or lawyers—this waning being partially due to the historically- and socially-developed association of teaching as "women's work," thus degrading its rigor, prestige, and pay. Furthermore, argues Labaree, given the public performance of the teacher and the typical American citizen to have undergone over a decade of public schooling with teachers present, the profession itself seems to be one of ease after everyone has "apprenticed" the profession during their developmental years (Labaree 299).

Of most relevance in Labaree's book chapter, though, is his belief that the relationship between

teacher-preparation programs and the larger university in which they function has been one of

isolation, and that universities at-large remain interested mostly, if not exclusively, in the profits

associated with schools of education. Labaree writes:

> What makes teacher education so attractive to universities, however, is not only the numbers of students it brings but their low cost. Universities have long treated teacher education as what has come to be known as a 'cash cow.' In these programs, if one is not too punctilious about maintaining high professional standards, an education school can generate a nice profit for the rest of the university. This is possible if the school keeps class sizes large and faculty salaries low… (300)

This "cash cow" model fosters a type of "banking education" that Freire warns against. It is

worth noting that Labaree's argument now stands ten years old; however, his essay suggests that

the caliber of teacher-preparation programs has been a contested and nuanced question

throughout the life of public education. The extent to which teacher-preparation business models

impact the critical quality of teacher-preparation curriculum remains debated and unresolved.

In her 2010 article "Encouraging Agitation: Teaching Teacher Candidates to Confront

Words That Wound," sociocultural literacist and Black feminist scholar Jeanine M. Staples

writes that "the majority of elementary and secondary school teachers are White women…It may

be hypothesized from…statistics [previously cited] that many White teacher candidates do not

interact with 'diverse' students in any direct or sustained ways in their preparation programs"

(55). Staples argues that White teacher-candidates are not typically, adequately prepared to

eventually enter a classroom with students from different discourses, backgrounds, and

ethnicities. bell hooks, also a Black feminist scholar, writes on her own experiences teaching in a

multicultural environment and her feelings of unpreparedness. While hooks does not fall into the

pool of "White teacher candidates" that Staples discusses, her feelings of inadequacy in

navigating a "'diverse'" classroom remain important. In *Teaching to Transgress*, hooks reflects:

> When I first entered the multicultural, multiethnic classroom setting I was unprepared. I did not know how to cope effectively with so much "difference." Despite progressive politics, and my deep engagement with the feminist movement, I had never before been compelled to work within a truly diverse setting and I lacked the necessary skills. This is the case with most educators. It is difficult for many educators in the United States to conceptualize how the classroom will look when they are confronted with the demographics which indicate that "whiteness" may cease to be the norm ethnicity in classroom settings on all levels. Hence, educators are poorly prepared when we actually confront diversity. (41)

The inadequacies noted by Staples in teacher-preparation resound in hooks' reflection of her own teacher-preparation experiences. Labaree's "cash cow" theory and Staples' data on the teacher-candidate demographic remain important and fundamental in critical investigations of teacher-preparation, as does hooks' experiences as an individual whose education was molded by "progressive politics…[and] the feminist movement." A school of education that might or might not abide by Laberee's "cash cow" model could still reflect a strong teacher-preparation curriculum reflecting progressivism, feminism, Freire, and critical race theory—but the possibility and likelihood of sending teacher-candidates into their respective classrooms "poorly prepared…[to] confront diversity" remains.

As established in the extensive publication *School Composition and the Black-White Achievement Gap* from NCES in 2015, the leading causes of Black-white "achievement gaps" in classrooms are connected directly to teacher ideologies of their Black students: from lower academic expectations to behavioral mismanagement to academic tracking. Staples acknowledges the power of teacher ideology in her own work, and she cites California State University's Christine Sleeter's 2001 argument that "'Most White [teacher candidates] bring little awareness or understanding of discrimination and its effects'" ("Encouraging" 56). And not only do some teachers possess little understanding of the lived experiences behind "diverse"

students, but particularly in the literacy classroom where literature grounds schoolwork, teacher understandings of literature and language can also foster misunderstanding between student and teacher. As Davies established in Chapter II, "teachers and scholar-critics…bring [their] own culturally-based assumptions….into the classroom" (5). It could follow, then, that public school teachers emerging from an inadequate *cultural* teacher-preparation program may unintentionally enter into an oppressive relationship with their students. Despite the intentions of teacher-candidates and teacher-preparation programs in universities, the data remains that oppressive teacher expectations function as a major predictor of student achievement, and a leading cause behind the "achievement gap." Gloria Ladson-Billings points out that the "achievement gap" itself is a problematic term that focuses on short-term problems with a production-oriented mindset. She calls instead for the conversation to shift to the "education debt," a phrase that encompasses "the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society" (Ladson-Billings 5). Among these decisions are the history American slavery, intergenerational denial of education, forced assimilation of Native American students, political underrepresentation and legislative paralysis, truncated home ownership and employment opportunities. These characteristics of the nation's history and society are the actual causes of the "achievement gap"—not a gap at all, but a debt that continues to increase like the national spending budget due to an inability to address its root causes (Ladson-Billings 4).

A shift in the required coursework for teachers in university programs could begin to change the ways in which American classrooms are addressing this debt. In his 2010 article "Social Foundations and Multicultural Education Course Requirements in Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States," Richard Neumann writes that "One area of teacher preparation that has been marginalized in the debate on teacher quality is the social foundations of education

(SFE), a critical, interdisciplinary area of study that examines education and schooling through

lenses of history, philosophy, and the social sciences" (3). Neumann conducted a national study

on 302 American universities in order to analyze how these university's teacher-preparation

programs, which grant an initial-teaching-credential, include, or do not include, course

requirements involving SFE or multicultural education (ME). The following data refers solely to

secondary teacher preparation, omitting Neumann's findings on elementary teacher preparation:

"65% [of university-affiliated teacher-preparation programs] require a SFE course and 45%

require a course with 50%-100% SFE content" (12). And regarding multicultural education

courses, "49% require a course in this area and 34% require a course that contains 50%-100%

ME content, although only 31% of programs require a course with 3 or more units of credit value

in this content range" (12). Neumann's empirical evidence speaks some volume to the priorities

of schools of education and teacher-preparation. If adapting a critical literacy approach to teacher

education and public education in general, these above findings could be concerning. Neumann

discusses his findings and what they suggest regarding the greater intention of the public

education landscape. He is quoted here at-large due to the nature of his argument and counter-

argument, as well as for the statistics provided:

> If one believes that social, democratic purposes of schooling and preparation of young
> people for political participation should be the first and primary goals of public education
> then the finding that nearly half of university-based teacher preparation programs do not
> require a SFE course combination SFE/ME course of 3 units or more in the 50% to 100%
> content range may be problematic. Those who think teachers should ideally be
> professionals who engage the institution and process of education critically are also likely
> to be dissatisfied with SFE requirements in many programs. If goals of equal educational
> opportunity and social justice are considered high priorities, then the finding that
> approximately 75% of programs do not require a distinct ME course of 3 units or more in
> the 50% to 100% content range may be troubling.
> Alternatively, if one believes the primary goal of public education is to prepare a
> competitive workforce and that teachers should ideally function as technicians who
> implement programs designed by others and emphasize the instrumental, workplace

value of their subjects, then existing course requirements for SFE may seem appropriate
or perhaps excessive in some programs. (13)

Neumann's above summary on teacher-preparation in America, while perhaps oversimplifying a

more nuanced dichotomy, calls back to Gramsci's discussions on the role of education in the

state of Italy in the mid-1900s. The importance placed on the economic production of students,

rather than the fostering of critical investigation regarding political and social structures in their

respective worlds and communities, further exemplifies Freire's "banking method" of education.

And much like Staples' argument, Neumann uses his data analysis to conclude that "many new

teachers are beginning practice with little understanding of social, democratic purposes of

education, and cultural diversity and its implications for schooling" (14). This lack of

understanding, especially when considered alongside the NCES findings that most teachers

going into linguistically or economically disenfranchised school communities are new teachers—

a de facto of high teacher turnover—it is quite unsurprising that the education debt has remained

uncorrected. While many of these new teachers are indeed versed in some SFE/ME courses, the

lack of nationwide mandates for this coursework is problematic. But let it also be noted that

these courses are not "magic bullets"—they are important but they do not encompass the totality

of critical theory that can effectively help teachers function as change agents within their

classrooms, as hooks points out.

Indeed, those who see multicultural courses as excessive coursework for future teachers

might also subscribe to the ideology of individualism and hard work, much like the reform

schools discussed in Chapter II. Gloria Anzaldúa writes in her essay "The New Mestiza Nation,"

that there are only "a few disciplines...that are progressive and open to other ways of thinking

and to the literatures of people of color" (204). Among them, for Anzaldúa, are "Women's

Studies, Ethnic Studies, and some segments of American Studies and Latin American Studies"

(204). Such courses can be integrated with teacher preparation to combat long-standing

sociohistorical discourses of privilege in the classroom. It may also allow teacher-candidates to

enter into critical discourse analysis in a way that can inform their future teaching practices. In

this regard, teachers can acknowledge that, as Hilary Janks wrote, "the linguistic market is tied to

the labour market," and to—intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or unconsciously—

deprivilege particular discourses in the classroom is to essentially delimit opportunities to

students. These fields that Anzaldúa lists can inform teacher theory and ultimately practice; as

Freire writes, "Men's activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action" (*Pedagogy* 119).

Janks' observation regarding the relationship between linguistics and labor/economics is not to

champion Neumann's hypothetical stance of education as a platform for a "competitive

workforce," but is rather a confrontation to the reality of well-being necessitating an economic

ability.

To understand how exactly such courses can benefit teacher-candidates, one may turn

again to bell hooks' book *Teaching to Transgress*, in which she argues that educators have the

potential power to invert, challenge, and obliterate long-standing forms of social inequities by

examining the intersections of race and class. hooks writes that "To engage in dialogue is one of

the simplest ways we can begin as teachers, scholars, and critical thinkers to cross boundaries"

(130). hooks' emphasis on dialogue—perhaps a nod towards Bakhtin's dialogism—inherently

acknowledges Staples' premise that teachers' language practices can sometimes perpetuate

inequality or discrimination in the classroom. In 1976, Clyde Kluckhohn, American

anthropologist, wrote that "'everyone is unconscious of [their] native language as a system

through which we understand and enable racism and sexism'" (57). This natural unconsciousness

is perhaps why hooks advocates for dialogue as the best way to begin integrating cross cultural

communication in teacher-preparation. Acknowledging the inherent power of language, and its role of creating or maintaining social discourses is also perhaps why Rosentene B. Purnell wrote in 1982 that "the teaching of language use is one of the most controversial areas in academia today" (1). Purnell further argues that the Western ethnocentrism of American education—as evidenced by Toni Morrison's discussion on the American literary canon, and Howard Zinn's and James Baldwin's discussion on American history—leads to the very biases mentioned in the NCES report from 2015.

It is possible to shift the curriculum within teacher-preparation programs to reflect more critical investigations of classroom language and discourse as one positive step towards a more inclusive and equal learning environment for students in public school. Staples writes that "the majority of teacher candidates lack valuable experience with people who are different from them, [and] use of this [mainstream] language can yield discourses and actions that limit, even deny, opportunities, understanding, and respect" (58). Teacher preparation programs that require courses in cultural studies and/or critical race theory may begin to help alleviate some of the perpetuated biases exhibited by the majority of the teaching population, and challenge them to capitalize upon these positions of power they inhibit. Ira Shor, too, advocates for a teacher-education based in dialogue. He argues in his article "Educating the Educators" for seven basic "Freirean themes for teacher education," with the first one being dialogue teaching (23). Shor believes that by basing teacher-education in dialogue, teacher-candidates will have more opportunity to pursue study in "group dynamics, the social relations of discourse, and the linguistic habits of students in their communities, in relation to their sex, class, race, region, age, and ethnic origin" (23). A dialogic approach, based in SFE or ME courses, could help mediate the gaps that Staples identifies in teacher-candidates nationwide. Federal mandates, as discussed

in Chapter II, have not adequately addressed literacy and "opportunity-to-learn standards" in students from linguistic or economic minorities; therefore, state legislation may be able to alter their requirements for teacher-preparation courses, allowing space for cultural studies coursework, commonly held by university humanities departments, to be the bridge between profit initiatives and critical literacy.

Both hooks' and Shor's advocating for dialogue among educators is clearly representative of their Freirean influence. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire devotes the final chapter to an extensive discussion on "antidialogics and dialogics as matrices of opposing theories of cultural action" (119). He discusses the characteristics of both antidialogic and dialogic leadership, identifying ways that antidialogic regimes function and ways that truly revolutionary and dialogic leaders operate. His discussion on antidialogic leadership resounds with notions of alienation, separation, and individualism. He writes that "alienation" is necessary for oppression, because it is through alienation that the oppressor can "hamper the oppressed from perceiving reality critically and keep them isolated from the problems of oppressed men in other areas" (138). This notion of stratification reiterates the theme of Chapter II: that student populations tend to be compartmentalized, segregated, or stratified in order to continue their material conditions and generally avoid dialogic interaction that could contribute to greater learning and economic outcomes. Freire writes that "dividing in order to preserve the status quo…is necessarily a fundamental objective of the theory of antidialogical action" (*Pedagogy* 142). This "dividing" is similar to what Chapter II refers to as "stratifying." The "divide and rule" strategy works in-hand with Freire's concept of "conquering"—or the notion of treating students as objects to be assessed, organized, and "presented with prescriptions for behavior" (*Pedagogy* 128). The "conquering" approach is actually necessary in today's education model, in

order to uphold the validity of standardized curriculums and standardized testing, which are also necessary in order to create a school system that works in tandem with capitalism and labor markets. As Neumann states, many "policy documents on teacher quality…[reflect] an ideology that subordinates democratic values to market values and prioritizes economic purposes of schooling" (5). With attention to cultural studies as a genre of courses that implement non-Westernized approaches to epistemology, educators can begin to emerge from the university more as change agents better prepared to make shifts in the existing social order, rather than to reproduce it, intentionally or unintentionally. To adapt a Freirean model of critical literacy for public schools, educators must be adequately prepared so that they may have the ability to practice intentional design in the classroom that fosters investigations into power, access, and diversity.

CONFRONTING THE FOUR ELEMENTS: POWER, ACCESS, DIVERSITY, DESIGN

Hilary Janks' 2010 book *Literacy and Power* pivots on the argument that scholarship in critical literacy tends to isolate and focus on one of the four elements of literacy, which she identifies as power/domination, access, diversity, and design. Janks argues that scholars who focus on a single one of these elements fail to consider how the other three are integral to achieving critical literacy. Her book works to demonstrate how these four elements are all interrelated and interdependent on one another. Through some brief literature reviews of the scholarship or theorists who advocate for each approach, Janks brings them into conversation while also supplying classroom models and personal teaching experiences that reflect the approach she advocates for: one of interdependence.

I. Power
Classroom Practice: Using Dialogue

Keeping in mind the language theory established in Chapter I, and its emphasis on the sociohistoricism of language and its reproductions of power, Janks too acknowledges that "language as power" is one of the common approaches to critical literacy, and explains that Critical Language Awareness is the pedagogy that goes with such an approach. Of course, this singular approach is not enough; however, it is a popular approach. Janks' discussions on power involve a discussion on both Marxist critical discourse analysis and Foucaultian discourse analysis, and she writes that "When Foucault says that 'discourse is the power which is to be seized,' it is precisely because of this power of discourse to produce us as particular kinds of human subjects and to speak through us" (158). This "power of discourse to produce" resembles Vygotksy's social-cognitive approach to language learning, and also exemplifies Lacanian theory regarding communal signifying practices constructing the unconscious. Janks, Vygotsky, and Lacan all similarly argue for the sociohistorical language approach, claiming that both the immediate social environment and the history of that social environment contribute directly to language practices and therefore thought processes, ultimately manifesting in a discourse which in turn produces the community. This power of language to foster discourse and therefore dialogue permeates much of Freire's work as well.

In Chapter I, the contrast between Vygotsky and Piaget rejected Piaget's theories on language-acquisition, particularly in regards to his theories on children "dislodging" one idea for another idea, as they work to construct their realities. Freire too rejects the idea of merely replacing one idea with another idea, or one discourse with another discourse. In respect to heteroglossia, all discourses within the individual are working together at all times to produce an identity. Freire writes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that "The object of dialogical-liberation action is not to 'dislodge' the oppressed from a mythological reality in order to 'bind' them to

another reality. On the contrary, the object of dialogical action is to make it possible for the oppressed, by perceiving their adhesion, to opt to transform an unjust reality" (174). Whether intentionally or not, Freire's words here work well to integrate both the Marxist approach and the Foucaultian approach to critical discourse analysis. Freire acknowledges, like Marxism, the power of discourse to create an "adhesion" to a larger power system that work to "other" the oppressed, thus necessitating their adhesion to the mainstream discourse. But Freire allows for human agency in the way that a Foucaultian approach also does, by acknowledging the ability for people to simply "opt" or to choose to change their reality. Like Foucault, Freire believes that people work with a choice to either comply or to resist. Janks further describes the difference between these two approaches: "According to Marxist theorists such as Alhusser and Gramsci, subordinate groups can be persuaded, often below the level of consciousness, to consent to these relations or, where this fails, they can be coerced" (36). While such an approach is surely applicable to some degree in public schools regarding the ideologies of teachers and the ideologies taught to students, it negates agency. Foucault is slightly more generous in this regard, as Janks points out: "Foucault argues against overarching conceptions of domination, 'a binary structure with dominators on one side and dominated on the other'" (49). Foucault stresses more that the individual willingly or consciously enters into compliance with dominant discourses. This *knowing* of dominance and/or discourse is in a mild contrast to the Marxist belief in language and ideology working to blindly mold and shape people into compliance or hegemony. Freire too believes that critical literacy requires an awareness of agency and domination, and that this domination is not unbeknown to the persons dominated.

The established power within language necessitates the classroom practice of dialogue. If, as Freire points out, antidialogic leadership is what creates the hegemony, then dialogic

leadership creates revolution. Given the opportunity-to-learn gap discussed at length in Chapter II, it may be safe to argue that within the classroom, there are discourse practices that allow for a degree of hegemony to perpetuate, and it manifests in economic terms. To begin negating these hegemonic discourses, the classroom and the teacher can turn to dialogue. It is through dialogic interaction that students are able to learn from one another, establish agency, explore changes in perspective, and acknowledge the humanity in one another. And the language they use is in social and historical terms. Freire writes that "The methods used to achieve the unity of the oppressed will depend on the latter's historical and existential experience within the social structure" (*Pedagogy* 176). To begin exploring these historical experiences and the social structure which they influence, dialogue is necessary. Not only does dialogue allow for a student-centered classroom, but it can serve to exemplify Bakhtin's dialogism, which promotes and acknowledges the heteroglossic nature of all students.

Dialogue works to empower students so that they may begin to question the world around them. Editor Ira Shor's *Freire for the Classroom* includes an article titled "More Than the Basics: Teaching Critical Reading in High School," where Nancy Zimmet writes on using dialogue in her high school classroom to investigate readings and connect them to students lived experiences. She writes that through discussion and dialogue, "they [the students] had worked on exercises together and learned to value their own experience, [so] they felt more assured as individuals and as a group. They could go to each other for help; no longer did they rely only on the teacher" (128). By working to usurp student reliance on an authoritative figure, the educator also usurps authoritative discourse, and opts instead for students to establish their internally persuasive discourse. It allows for students to explore their own heteroglossic repertoires, to

uphold their experiences as valid despite any greater social force telling them otherwise, and to disavow reliance on an authoritative figure or regime.

II. Access
Classroom Practice: Investigating Language, Translanguaging

Much scholarship regarding critical literacy has taken up students' rights to their own language, or using vernacular in the classroom. While these approaches are well-intentioned, they fail to investigate *why* language use is so important. Allowing students to use their home language practices or their primary discourse in the classroom is important, but so is teaching them why this is important. And furthermore, many students from linguistically-disenfranchised communities seek to learn to dominant discourse. Janks writes that "diversity without access to powerful forms of language ghettoises students" (26). Similarly, Freire and Macedo write that "It is of tantamount importance that the incorporation of the students' language as the primary language of instruction be given top priority. It is through their own language that they will be able to construct their history and their culture," but that also, "the goal should never be to restrict students to their own vernacular," as this would create a "linguistic ghetto" (151). It is through *investigating* language hierarchies that students maintain their agency and their autonomy in their desire to learn the dominant discourse and to also uphold and value their discourse practices.

Whether consciously or not, teachers have the potential to harbor reductive expectations of linguistically disenfranchised students. In his article "Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling between Language: Learning from Multilingual Writers," Suresh Canagarajah acknowledges and criticizes the "monolinguist assumptions that conceive literacy as a unidirectional acquisition of competence" (589). He proposes the "Negotiation Model," a framework that encompasses the idea that student writers with diverse linguistic or ethnic backgrounds intentionally integrate their

discourses, and that their writings utilize a form of cultural awareness, rather than the perceived linguistic mistakes. He says that "multilingual writers move *between* texts" (590). He continues,

> The [Negotiation Model] is different from the first two in many respects: rather than studying multilingual writing as static, locating the writer within a language, we would study the movement of the writer between languages; rather than studying the *product* for descriptions of writing competence, we would study the *process* of composing in multiple languages; . . . rather than treating writers as passive, conditioned by their language and culture, we would treat them as agentive, shuttling creatively between discourses to achieve their communicative objectives. (591)

To accommodate multilingual or multi-discourse approaches in any type of literacy teaching, scholars suggest some solutions. Recent research considers the topic of "translanguaging." Translanguaging, similar to Canagarajah's "Negotiation Model" opens space in the classroom for students' entire linguistic repertoire, in order to fully capitalize upon the semantic inner-workings of their cognition. Translanguaging rests on the assumption that the student's language practices are not individually housed in separate spaces of the mind, but function as a coexisting repertoire. Students working to master mainstream discourse practices may struggle in "choosing" whether to use their own discourse or the normalized one in the classroom. Editor Catherine Mazak writes in her introductory article to *Translanguaging in Higher Education: Beyond Monolingual Ideologies*, that an example of translanguaging may be reading a text in one language and responding—or writing—in another. She goes on to offer definitions of this new term: it "is a pedagogical stance that teachers and students take on that allows them to draw on all of their linguistic and semiotic resources" (5).

Educators may also turn to select high-school classrooms that are adapting these practices. In her dissertation *"Resisting from Within": (Re)Imagining a Critical Translingual English Classroom*, Kate Seltzer discusses how a translingual approach, based in a Bakhtinian approach to dialogue, might function in a classroom. Seltzer provides an exemplar curriculum

co-developed with an inner-city high school English teacher in New York City who works with high populations of ESL Hispanic students (Seltzer 213). Much of her curriculum focuses on examining, with students, the ideologies behind languages and how language practices become a product of the social environment surrounding one. For example, Seltzer presents students with discussion materials to discuss why students were not asked to italicize words from their first-language when writing essays in English (Seltzer 213, 221, 238). These are choices, not mistakes. A homogenized classroom neglects the notion of choice. The chart below is taken directly from Seltzer's dissertation and works to exemplify how Janks' "access" can work in a curriculum. The table below shows the month, the activities, and the texts used to achieve the corresponding curricular focus, taken specifically from the beginning of the school year and the end of the school year. This curriculum exemplifies the ways in which educators can both uphold student discourse and language practices while also critically engaging them in discussion regarding the inherent power *of* language and of discourse. This allows them to exit out of the Marxist approach of discourse analysis—the notion that people are coerced into domination— and to enter a bit more into a Foucaultian discourse analysis, which grants them more autonomy in linguistic domination. This awareness is the first step, Freire claims, to a liberatory pedagogy. Selzter's Appendix 3.1 provides a curriculum, activities, resources, and texts for approaching a more discourse-centric classroom that examines the power of language rather than just the teaching of language. Investigating power and resistance within language practices works to not only uphold student variation of discourses, but serves to also teach students ways to critically examine texts around them: visual texts, media texts, advertisements, political rhetoric. Enabling this critical analysis supports students' ability to identify and name injustices rather than passively absorbing them, as standardized curriculum asks them to do.

Appendix 3.1
Curriculum Calendar: Curriculum focus, selected activities, and texts

Month	Curricular Focus	Selected Activities & Discussions	Selected Texts
September	- Establish themes that would be explored throughout the year - Engage students in introductory linguistic exploration and sharing - Introduce key vocabulary shifts, such as the move from "language" to "language practices"	- Writing about their own language backgrounds in "letter of introduction" - Taking a teacher- and student-generated language survey - Introducing the idea of "language practices" and exploring language practices students might be familiar with ("Englishes," including AAVE and slang, "Spanishes," "Regents Writing" as its own language practice) - Creating, sharing, and discussing "language	- Blog post, "What is AAVE?" (http://www.languagejones.com/blog-1/2014/6/8/what-is-aave) - Article, "The Power of Slang" (from PBS's "Do you speak American?" - http://www.pbs.org/speak/words/sezwho/slang/) - Article, "Spanish in the U.S." (from PBS's "Do you speak American?" - http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/americanvarieties/spanglish/usa/) - Article, "Standard American English" (from PBS's "Do you speak American?" - http://www.pbs.org/speak/seatosea/standardamerican/) Blog post "Language as

April & May	Unit: Author Study & College Essay Writing	- Building off of the idea of writing as resistance, students were broken into small groups and assigned an author who translanguaged in their writing and whose work pushed the boundaries of "standard" language practices. Writers included:
		  o Junot Díaz
		  o Gloria Anzaldúa
		  o Alice Walker
		  o Amy Tan
		  o Gustavo Perez Firmat
		- Discussing writers' language choices and the implications (both positive and possible negative) of those choices
			Reading heteroglossic authors:
			- Junot Díaz: Excerpts from *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao, Drown,* and *This is How You Lose Her*;
			- Gloria Anzaldúa: Excerpts from *Borderlands/La Frontera*
			- Alice Walker: Excerpts from *The Color Purple*
			- Amy Tan: Excerpts from *The Joy Luck Club,*
			- Gustavo Perez Firmat: Poem, "Bilingual Blues", excerpts from *Next Year in Cuba*
			
			Discussing writers' language choices:
			- Excerpts from media interviews with each writer in which he/she discusses choices about language
			- Video, "Why I Don't Italicize" (Daniel José Older - https://www.youtube.com/w

The selected texts above in Seltzer's curriculum map also reflect the educators' efforts to widen the literary canon and to relate directly to students lived experiences, which critical literacy theory argues to be foundational moves to any effective teaching approach. If students do not see themselves in the school's literature, they are oppressed, or, perhaps see themselves and understand themselves as lesser-valued humans, or subhuman. The necessity for diversifying the literary canon resounds in Toni Morrison's work when she writes that "I remain convinced that the metaphorical and metaphysical uses of race occupy definitive places in American literature, in the 'national' character, and ought to be a major concern of the literary scholarship that tries to know it" (63). While Morrison here is critiquing particularly academic inquiries and literary analysis, it can apply also to the high school classroom. Educators do, after all, ask students to analyze and produce their own scholarship or essays in regards to a text: how does the dominant discourse dissuade them from truly identifying and analyzing the presence of a racialized "other" in the literary canon, and thus identify and analyze the modernized efforts of "othering" that still maintain? But much like Jacques Derrida's *deconstruction*, the inversion of the discourse hierarchy is not the point: the point is to obliterate the hierarchy altogether. Educators can ultimately eliminate the false binary between diversity and mainstream epistemologies, upholding the ability for students to be heard by the powerful or hegemonic community. This leads the discussion of access to slip conveniently to the role of diversity; in fact, the two elements could arguably become one in the same.

III. Diversity
Classroom Practice: Interrogating Pop Culture Narratives for "Normalization"

Janks critiques critical literacy approaches that prioritize diversity without accommodating for the other three approaches to literacy. Widening the literary canon, or allowing students from different ethnic and/or linguistic backgrounds to be in dialogue, are both

important approaches that could be umbrellaed under "diversity," but Janks argues that this is a half-effort attempt to truly revolutionize literacy teaching and learning. In her table "The Place of Diversity in the Model," she explains the interrelationship between diversity and language, diversity and access, diversity and design—or, the other three interdependent elements of critical literacy. She writes that it is through diversity that classrooms have "the means, the ideas, the alternative perspectives for reconstruction and transformation. Without design, the potential that diversity offers is not realized" (102). An example of this would be allowing for classroom dialogue between diverse student populations without designing the space or intention to work towards the deconstruction and reconstruction of texts. Janks writes that any diverse classroom or literacy activity that highlights diversity requires explicitly designed attention to power relations: to ignore this "leads to a celebration of diversity without any recognition that difference is structured in dominance and that not all discourses/genres/languages/literacies are equally powerful" (102). Similar to examining *why* language and discourse is powerful, students need to examine why there is a system of dominance, or, in other words: the social. And they need to examine how that system of dominance came into being, or, in other words: the historical. This can be accomplished through the investigation of language as discussed above with Seltzer's work, but it can also be done by asking students to examine moments of normalization in their own realities and in their own words.

Much of Janks chapter on diversity in critical literacy involves the idea of "othering," critiquing the "valorization of sameness" (104). It is important, argues Janks, for students to learn how to identify these moments of "othering" or "sameness" in immediate society, so that they may critically examine them and then work to recreate or redesign them. Jeanine Staples

works to demonstrate this sameness or othering with high school students by analyzing pop

culture narratives (PCNs) from modern-day. Staples defines PCNs as:

> media texts such as films, videos, television programs, Internet websites and blogs, urban
> or street fiction, and popular periodicals. These narratives are artistic tools of public
> discourse that perform creatively and purposefully the languages, signs, social situations,
> political dilemmas and cultural contradictions particular to human beings and our lived
> experiences…[they] portray nuances of social constructs ("Encouraging" 61)

Staples argues that PCNs allow for a more nuanced examination of language practices than

traditional texts by investigating real social situations through both standard English and other

dialects or discourses. Marginalized student populations—specifically, in Staples' work, low-

income African American students—can find literacies and discourses representative of their

own in these PCNs, and can therefore use PCN texts to negotiate their heteroglossic literacies.

Educators can explore multimodal texts in order to utilize Janks' diversity approach to literacy.

By looking at literacy through immediately relevant social texts demonstrated in film, TV,

music, and Internet platforms, students can critically investigate specific moments of mainstream

discourse or privileged discourses, in order to then reconstruct that hierarchy of privilege.

Staples takes into consideration both the sociohistoricism of language and its influence on

identity and cognitive development. In her article "'How do I know what I think 'til I hear what I

say?': The Role of Collaborative Discourse in Critical (Media) Literacy Development," Staples

highlights, primarily, the use of dialogue among marginalized students, but also explains exactly

why a diverse array of texts amongst a diverse array of students is particularly effective when

working towards critical literacy. She argues that the texts students discover in the classroom can

directly influence their perceptions and their identities; in other words, what happens when a

student goes through their public-school career only rarely encountering a text that utilizes a

discourse similar to their own? Does this silently negate them? Staples writes "There is a great

deal of literature on the ways adolescents construct identities through naming and labeling…Yet few of these inquiries take into account seriously what it means to develop understanding about aspects of identity purposefully—in ways that are deconstructable, situationally responsive, public or private, and transferable/viewable/reproducible in relationship to texts" ("How" 108). While investigating student literacy practices through PCNs, educators themselves learn more about their students lived experiences, and can continue making the curriculum from their realities. As Freire and Macedo write, "Educators must develop radical pedagogical structures that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis for literacy" (151). It could be possible that persistent opportunity-to-learn gaps and rates of college matriculation for students of color reflect a problem of relevancy in the public-school curriculum.

IV. Design
Classroom Practice: Deconstructing the Canon and Allowing for (Re)Creation

While poststructural literary theory is commonly reserved for the higher education classroom, particularly in English or humanities departments, the ideas of Jacques Derrida could have big implications for the field of critical literacy. In *Theory for Education*, Dimitriadis and Kamberelis describe Derrida's ideas of deconstructionism as a type of revolution. They explain that Derrida's approach "was not, as critics allege, out of nihilistic contempt for all things Western or a fascination with groundless intellectual free play. Instead, it was an effort to destabilize assumptions enough to open up spaces for continued reflection and the possibility of innovation and creative thinking" (102). An allowance for multiple discourses in a classroom may function the same way. As mentioned above, translanguaging can serve as a method of deconstruction, and so can investigations into language in general. Mazak claims that translanguaging "changes the world as it continually invents and reinvents languaging practices in a perpetual process of meaning-making … [this] transforms not only our traditional notions of

'languages,' but also the lives of bilinguals themselves as they remake the world through language" (6). The connection between translanguaging and deconstruction is explicit: by allowing for a multi-discourse space in the classroom, students may explore, identify, and investigate social or linguistic or racial hierarchies—and then work to recreate them.

The importance of creation when considering deconstruction and design is paramount. As Janks writes, "In the field of critical literacy, less attention has been paid to critical writing than to critical reading, despite the importance of resisting dominant forms and 'writing back' to power" (155). After students work to deconstruct a text, analyzing how dominant forms of discourse power the text at hand, they then must be activated as creative agents. Freire writes that after establishing unity amongst the oppressed and critical awareness of the injustices indicted upon them, "The [oppressed] now see themselves as transformers of reality (previously a mysterious entity) through their *creative labor*" (*Pedagogy* 175, italics added). The notion of production and creativity must constantly spiral into the practices of critical literacy. It is ineffectual for students to identify, analyze, and critique dominant systems of discourse and power if they are not asked to then recreate them in more equitable or inclusive terms. The act of creation restores power to the students that has been otherwise relinquished from oppressive systems. And as Janks points out, this idea of production and recreation can especially be capitalized upon through technological mediums and multimodality. She includes many examples throughout her book of students recreating realities/worlds/texts, from re-creating a shaving cream advertisement, to creating board games that utilize non-Eurocentric norms of characters and behaviors.

But perhaps more importantly, Janks writes that these productions must not "[remain] on the margins" (170). Student productions of texts deserve to take center-stage in the classroom in

order to actually subvert the very power systems that the class is critiquing. In one of her examples, Janks explains the necessity that "marginalised knowledge moves to the centre and is privileged in the classroom" (178). This inversion and re-privileging is similar to the deconstruction methods that Derrida asks readers to consider. Take the standard text, or the standard language, or the standard product, and analyze how its existence necessitates a hierarchal binary. By working to reverse that binary, the student comes into contact with ways that the binary exists and how it is upheld. And in their reversion, they become empowered to not only identify injustice or oppression, but to recreate it themselves. Derrida's ideas of deconstructive interplay asks readers to identify and explore the language binaries apparent in literature; it seeks to invert, to question, and to problematize the hierarchies that are inherent in signs. This approach, though, can be used when teaching linguistically-disenfranchised student populations, as a method of uplifting them and their identities.
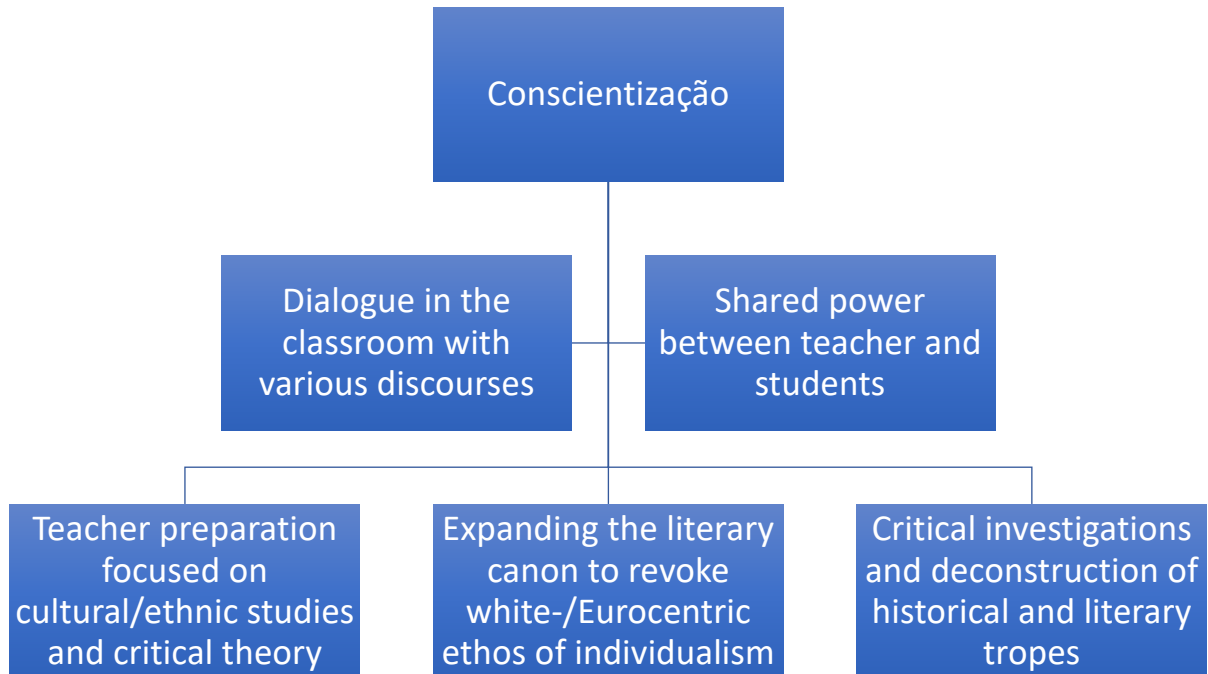
Gloria Anzaldua's work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* is an example of multi-discoursed choices for the purpose of voice, aesthetic, and theme. Her blend of creative nonfiction, poetry, and research writing has interjections of Spanish language in a mostly-English text, demonstrating the mind's fluidity of one who lives on the borderlands of any identity. This in-between is referred to by Anzaldua as "mestiza consciousness," often placed in the arena of queer theory, cultural theory, and/or feminist theory. In her 2010 article "Borderlands Studies and Border Theory: Linking Activism and Scholarship for Social Justice," Nancy A. Naples intertwines both education research and literary theory, as recommended in this chapter's previous section. She writes "It appears that many who adopt Anzaldúa's framework … view all border dwellers as resistant to 'the dichotomies of patriarchal/colonial modernity'" (507). The critical educator must examine to what extent writing and creation allows for a system

of difference, and to what extent it demands a "colonial modernity." It is true that students want to learn the current-mainstream discourse. And it is true that students need to learn this Discourse if they will succeed in the current American public-school system. But educators can also allow native interjections, as Anzaldúa does, when she writes "The US-Mexican border *es una herida abierta* [an open wound]" (*Borderlands* 3). The value and effect of bilingual nonfiction writing here is unequivocal. It is possible that educators compromise student identities in the demand for the writing or production that demands solely a mainstream or oppressive discourse.

CHAPTER III CONCLUSION

In response to the sociohistorical nature of language and the economic-political nature of literacy, educators across America hold a great power within their classrooms. If schools seek to truly, actually, begin remediating the opportunity-to-learn gaps that have plagued public education for decades, then they can begin to take on more critical literacy approaches as outlined in this chapter. Beginning with critical race theory and dialogic investigations in teacher-preparation, and negating the metaphorical and literal "banking" model of educating future teachers, the public-school industry may begin to see more teachers who are qualified and trained to critically analyze injustices with students, rather than ignore them. This confrontation takes place through an essential revoking of power. The results of a more critical-literacy approach in classrooms could be not only more equitable and higher results of student learning, but it can also result in the birth of an entirely new ethos across historically marginalized student populations. The benefits of adopting such a pedagogy can result in students feeling a sense of ownership and empowerment regarding their oppressed and repressed histories, and therefore a renewal in their abilities to participate as democratic change agents in the present. Such an

ideological shift can then manifest in more tangible results—as all ideologies do—in the form of less segregated housing communities, a more balanced economic dispersal of wealth and acquisition, less stratification among social classes, and more political representation for the changing and shifting population of the United States.

Conscientização

Dialogue in the classroom with various discourses

Shared power between teacher and students

Teacher preparation focused on cultural/ethnic studies and critical theory

Expanding the literary canon to revoke white-/Eurocentric ethos of individualism

Critical investigations and deconstruction of historical and literary tropes

LANGUAGE, LITERACY, AND CONSCIENTIZAÇÃO IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CONCLUSION

Research abounds on the social importance of a child's language acquisition. And modern realities demonstrate that for varying socioeconomic groups of children, their language practices differ. This leads to student populations, typically along racial and economic lines—since the two cannot be separated, given the history of the United States—to speak in different discourses. This reality is neither positive nor negative, but simply reflects the diversity of people living within the same country. This reality is not, however, entirely acknowledged in public school practices, where a product-oriented curriculum of standardized testing and Americanized individualism requests that students function in a homogenous practice of reading, writing, and speaking. This is quite a difficult practice for students who do not come from a social discourse that compliments or parallels the one requested in schools; and alas, the school discourse—much like its literary canon and its history books—is one of white, middle-class norms that compliments historical hierarchies of power and opposition. The ensuing result of a poorly diversified federal or state curriculum is a large population of historically oppressed students remaining even further oppressed despite the common goal of public education. The poor performance of marginalized students in schools then fosters unequal access in higher education institutions, and then unequal economic opportunity and political representation. Such a pattern repeats itself as schools remain unwilling or unable to fully realize the work of critical literacy.

It is difficult to imagine what the school or the country would look like if adopting a pedagogy reflecting dialogue, critical historicism, and racial investigations. It is an open-ended process that would require teachers to sacrifice the docile, mechanical power they tend to currently possess, in exchange for the very difficult work of dialogue and fostering student autonomy. Teacher-education programs might have to alter their course requirements and work interdisciplinarily with other schools of thought throughout the university. Such efforts are uncomfortable, time-consuming, and possibly even bureaucratic. To put literacy in a rich and contentious context is not currently in the public-school toolbox, and the ideas presented in Chapter III are merely suggestions that could help nudge the school industry a little bit closer to equality. But to truly create such a world, where all students—despite socioeconomic status, despite social discourses, despite historical inequities—can freely speak to and question the texts and the behaviors handed to them, is difficult to see, and it is possibly intimidating to those who hold dearly onto the comfort of the status quo.

If educators and policymakers are willing to make such shifts, with a willingness to divorce from capitalistic labor markets and profit initiatives, then the country could see increased success across racial and class lines, improved performance on the behalf of both students and teachers, and better designed schools that work towards the notion creating a "more perfect" community, nation, and union. This attention to critical literacy can work to change the worlds of the children—and therefore the adults—who have been historically and economically truncated. This could also result in more citizen agency and autonomy, decreasing incarceration and increasing democratic participation in the increasingly globalized world. If we work towards critically naming, with students, present and historical injustices, then they can work towards intentionally renaming—and recreating—the future.

POSTFACE

Freire's popularity among critical literacy scholars and educators does not go without

some criticism as well. Particularly in scholarship regarding colonialism and decolonization,

Freire's work regarding the oppressor/oppressed relationship reflects a problematic approach to

metaphorizing the actual violence of colonization. In a biting critique of his work through the use

of Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang offer a refreshing

and critical lens to analyze holes in Freire's pedagogy. Focusing on colonizers' "moves to

innocence," Tuck and Yang find the pedagogy offered by Freire to be one that alleviates guilt

and responsibility of the colonizer, and only partially begins the conversation and action

necessary to combat decades of colonization. They argues that in the "opening dedication of

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, [Freire] invoke[s] the…settler fantasy of mutuality based on

sympathy and suffering" (20). Tuck and Yang call specifically into action the need to redistribute

stolen indigenous land, and claim that pedagogies that work to achieve conscientização only

follow the notion that "freeing one's mind" is the equivalent to the more painful and more

truthful process of actual consciousness necessitating bodily and environmental freedom. They

write:

> We agree that curricula, literature, and pedagogy can be crafted to aid people in learning
> to see settler colonialism, to articulate critiques of settler epistemology, and set aside
> settler histories and values in search of ethics that reject domination and exploitation; this
> is not unimportant work. However, the front-loading of critical consciousness building
> can waylay decolonization, even though the experience of teaching and learning to be
> critical of settler colonialism can be so powerful it can feel like it is indeed making

change. Until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism. (19)

Tuck's and Yang's critiques are fundamentally valid and work to question decades of Freirean research and scholarship that might not adequately address colonization in classrooms. What all three scholars could possibly agree on, though, is that there is significant work still to be done.

Literature Cited

Literature Cited

Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.*" *The Massachusetts Review*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2016, pp. 14-27.

Althusser, Louis. "Freud and Lacan." *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by Ben Brewster, NYU Press, 2001, pp. 86-94.

Anyon, Jean. "Social Class and School Knowledge." *Curriculum Inquiry*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1 Mar. 1981, pp. 3-42.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.* Aunt Lute Books, 1987.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, Duke University Press, 2009.

Au, Wayne. "The Dialectical Materialism of Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy." *Reflexão e Ação*, vol. 25, no. 2, 23 Aug. 2017, pp. 171-195, DOI: 10.17058/rea/v25i2/9814. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination*, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1981.

Baldwin, James. "A Talk to Teachers." *Collected Essays,* The Library of America, 1998, pp. 678-686.

Burn, Andrew. Review of *Literacy and Education*, by James Paul Gee. *English in Education*, vol. 51, no. 1, 1 Mar. 2017, pp. 112-114, DOI: 10.1111/eie.12130. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Canagarajah, A. Suresh. "Toward a Writing Pedagogy of Shuttling Between Languages:

    Learning from Multilingual Writers." *College English*, vol. 68, no. 6, 2006, pp. 589-904.

Davies, Carole Boyce. "Hearing Black Women's Voices: Transgressing Imposed Boundaries."

    Moving Beyond Boundaries, Volume 1: International Dimensions of Black Women's

    Writing, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and 'Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, New York

    University Press, 1995, pp. 1-15.

Dierdre, Glenn Paul. "The Train Has Left: The No Child Left Behind Act Leaves Black and

    Latino Literacy Learners Waiting at the Station." *Journal of Adolescent and Adult*

    Literacy, vol. 47, no. 8, May 2004, pp. 648-656.

Dimitraidis, Greg, and George Kamberelis. *Theory for Education*. Routledge, 2006.

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, The Seabury

    Press, 1970.

Freire, Paulo. *The Politics of Education*, translated by Donaldo Macedo, Bergin & Garvey

    Publishers, Inc., 1985.

Freire, Paulo and Donaldo Macedo. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World.* Bergin &

    Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1987.

Gee, James Paul. *Literacy and Education*. Routledge, 2015.

Gee, James Paul. *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses, Second Edition*.

    Falmer Press, 1996.

Gorlewski, Julie. *English Language Arts: A Critical Introduction.* Routledge, 2018.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quentin Hoare

    and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, ElecBook, 1999.

Heath, Shirley Bryce. *Ways With Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and*

Classrooms. Cambridge University Press, 1983.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Routledge, 1994.

Ives, Peter. *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci.* Pluto Press, 2004.

Jameson, Fredric. "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act." *The Political*

Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act, Routledge, 2002, pp. 1-88.

Janks, Hilary. *Literacy and Power*. Routledge, 2010.

Johnston, Adrian. "Jacques Lacan." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2 Apr. 2013,

https://plato.standford.edu/entries/lacan. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Kluckhohn, Clyde. "The Gift of Tongues." *Intercultural Communication: A Reader, Second*

Edition, edited by L.A. Samovar and R.E. Porter, Routledge, 1976, pp. 144-158.

Labaree, David F. "An Uneasy Relationship: The History of Teacher Education in the

University." *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Issues in Changing*

Contexts, Third Edition, edited by Marilyn Cochran-Smith et al., Association of Teacher

Educators, 2008, pp. 290-306.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis." *Ecrits*,

translated by Bruce Fink, WW Norton & Company, 1996, pp. 197-268.

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding

Achievement in U.S. Schools." *Educational Researcher*, vol. 35. no. 7, 2006, pp. 3-12.

Mazak, Catherine. "Theorizing Translanguaging Practices In Higher Education."

Translanguaging in Higher Education: Beyond Monolingual Ideologies, edited by

Catherine Mazak and Kevin Carroll, Multilingual Matters, 2016, pp. 1-10.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Harvard

University Press, 1992.

Naples, Nancy A. "Borderlands Studies and Border Theory: Linking Activism and Scholarship

for Social Justice." *Sociology Compass*, vol. 4, no. 7, 2010, pp. 505-518.

National Center for Education Statistics. *School Composition and the Black-White Achievement

Gap.* U.S. Department of Education, 2015, https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject

/studies/pdf/school_composition_and_the_bw_achievement_gap_2015.pdf. Accessed 20

Apr. 2018.

National Center for Education Statistics. "Undergraduate Enrollment." Chapter 2: Participation

in Education, *The Condition of Education 2017*, U.S. Department of Education, 2017, pp.

1-6, nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_cha.pdf. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Neumann, Richard. "Social Foundations and Multicultural Education Course Requirements in

Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States." *Educational Foundations*, vol. 24,

no. 3-4, 2010, pp. 3-17.

Ong, Walter. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Routledge, 2002.

Piaget, Jean. *Language and Thought in the Child*, translated by Marjorie Warden, Harcourt,

Brace & Company, Inc., 1926.

Pew Research Center. "1. Demographic Trends and Economic Well-Being." *Social and

Demographic Trends*, June 2016, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/1-

demographic-trends-and-economic-well-being/. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Plato. *Cratylus*, translated by C. D. Reeve, Hackett, 1998.

Purnell, Rosentene B. "Teaching Them to Curse: Racial Bias in Language, Pedagogy and

Practices." *Phylon*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1 Sep. 1982, pp. 231-241.

Ruddell, Robert B. and Martha Rapp Ruddell. "Essential Elements of Literacy." *Theoretical

Models and Processes of Reading, Fourth Edition*, edited by Robert B. Ruddell et al.,

International Reading Association, 1994, pp. 83-103.

Seltzer, Kate. *"Resisting from Within": (Re)Imagining a Critical Translingual English Classroom.* Dissertation, City University of New York, 2017, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gc_etds/2058. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Shields, Carolyn M. *Bakhtin Primer*. Peter Lang, 2007.

Shor, Ira. "Educating the Educators: A Freirean Approach to the Crisis in Teacher Education." *Freire for the Classroom*, edited by Ira Shor, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1987, pp. 7-32.

Sondel, Beth. "Raising Citiziens or Raising Test Scores? Teach For America, 'No Excuses' Charters, and the Development of the Neoliberal Citizen." *Theory and Research in Social Education*, vol. 43, no. 3, 21 Aug. 2015, pp. 289-313, DOI: 10.1080/00933104.2015.1064505. Accessed 20 Apr. 2018.

Staples, Jeanine. "Encouraging Agitation: Teaching Teacher Candidates to Confront Words that Wound." *Teacher Education Quarterly,* vol. 37, no. 1, 2010, pp. 53-72.

Staples, Jeanine. "'How Do I Know What I Think 'till I Hear What I Say?'" *The International Journal of Learning: Annual Review*, vol. 14, no. 11, 2008, pp. 107-118.

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.

Vygotsky, Lev. *Thought and Language*, translated and edited by Alex Kozulin, The MIT Press, 1986.

Zimmet, Nancy. "More Than the Basics: Teaching Critical Reading in High School." *Freire for the Classroom*, edited by Ira Shor, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1987, pp. 122-128.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History to the United States.* Harper and Row, 1980.

Zinn, Howard. *On Democratic Education*. Paradigm Publishers, 2005.