

Desperately Seeking Self-Reflexivity: A Critique of a Duoethnography About Becoming a Postcolonial Teacher

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As an educator of current and future teachers, I—like many people I know—speak of teaching in ways that promote justice, equity, and post-colonialism. However, while it is easy to speak of teaching in ways that respect the voice and democratic inclusion of different cultures and people (Brettschneider, 2001; Gutmann, 1999; Henderson & Kesson, 1999), it is exceptionally difficult to do so. To begin a journey of critical self-understanding and self-reflexivity, one must transverse personal and cultural ontological traps. These traps include one's personal history and positionality in relation to schools, subjects, students, and communities. They include our embodied ways of talking to friends, students, and strangers. They include how comfortable and complicit we are with our ways of knowing. And they include our imaginative capacity to begin and maintain this journey. Maxine Greene reminds us of the need to be critically self-aware, to engage our existential reality:

Alienated teachers, out of touch with their own existential reality, may contribute

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to the distancing and even to the manipulating that presumably take place in many schools. This is because, estranged from themselves as they are, they may well treat whatever they imagine to be selfhood as a kind of commodity, a possession they carry within, impervious to organizational demand and impervious to control. Such people are not personally present to others or in the situations of their lives. This is because human beings who lack an awareness of their own personal reality (which is futuring, questing) cannot exist in a ‘we-relation’ with other human beings. (Greene, 1991, p. 8)

The challenge is for us to conceptualize and then reconceptualize our process of becoming. For us to enter this process of becoming with *conscientiation* (Freire, 1970), we are faced with a nearly impossible dilemma: we need to disassociate from our stories to restory them, to shatter them before recreating them, as we gain a greater critical understanding of society at the same time.

Perhaps a first step in such a goal, to refer to the initial quote by Maxine Greene, is to become *in-touch* “with [one’s] own existential reality.” Such emancipation requires an examination of our deep positionality in relation to the objects of our critique (e.g., schools, students, people different from ourselves). To conduct such a critique, a friend (Tonda Liggett) and I engaged in a duoethnography about the extent to which we teach in postcolonial ways (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012a, 2012b). Specifically, we each focused on the deconstruction of one particular lesson plan. We selected the lesson plan as perhaps the clearest and strongest example of postcolonial teaching, that is, where we thought we did not teach in colonial ways. Thus, we examined one’s practice as cultural text and artifact. The intention was for us to consider this lesson as something of a critical case: To what extent did our best example of postcolonial teaching retain vestiges of colonialism? Our rationale was that if we were to discover examples of colonialism in the best lesson, we could conclude that there was a very good chance that such examples existed throughout our curriculum. Throughout this process, we both individually and communally examined our cultural scripts and ways in which we have been enculturated by and through them.

DUOETHNOGRAPHY DESCRIBED

Duoethnography presents a dialogic approach to self-study. Instead of being individualistic, it is relational, instead of singular, it is pluralistic and dynamic. Joe Norris and I have constructed duoethnography as a relational and dialogic self-study methodology. Just as one's identity and sense of interpretation develop in relation to culture and significant others in one's life, duoethnography as a reflexive form of self-study evolves in a relational way. We think that by examining one's life in relation to another (and different) person's perceptions of that life, the inquirer begins to first destabilize his or her life story and then restory it in the face of the other.

In duoethnography, two people of difference assist each other in reconceptualizing their life histories in relation to a particular phenomenon (e.g., sexual orientation, racism, immigration, beauty, teaching, and so on). In this quest, the researcher/subject becomes not the topic but the site of inquiry (Oberg & Wilson, 1992). Working together, duoethnographers conduct an archeological dig on their life histories as embedded in rich and ongoing multigenerational genealogies. These genealogies contain the histories of their socialization and internalization of beliefs and values in relation to a topic. We examine our histories not for what they *mean*, but for discourses they *contain* (Derrida, 1976). Drawing from both Derrida (1976) and Foucault (1972), duoethnographers deconstruct/reconstruct their lives as text. As such, they do not add a new sequence to their unfolding narrative, but rather transform the existing sequences and stories.

As an open and phenomenological method, there are not prescribed methodological steps in doing a duoethnography, but rather tenets of inquiry. As living tenets, they have evolved over time. In this particular inquiry, we foregrounded specific tenets that facilitated our inquiry.

The first aspect of duoethnography that helped Tonda Liggett and me frame this particular inquiry about colonialism (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012a) was Bill Pinar's concept of *currere* (Pinar, 1975, 1994). *Currere* as a lens provided a framework for me to begin to approach my experience as a lived curricular text. Pinar defines *currere* as regressive (looking back), progressive (considering the present and looking forward), analytical (deconstructing), and synthetical (reconstructing) that is "temporal and conceptual in nature" (Pinar, 1994, p. 19). In *currere*, one engages in a journey of self-understanding by examining how one's skills, knowledge, and beliefs have been experientially formed. The goal is to reconceptualize one's beliefs and perceptions about self and society. In this study, *currere* was central as I examined childhood photographs as artifacts of my early

socialization process. In terms of this particular study, we used old childhood photos to take us back into our early history, with a goal of engaging in a process of historical deconstruction. We placed our photos within their time frames and explored the social/cultural foundations of normative meanings and representations within the photos.

A second aspect of duoethnography important to this inquiry was its dialogic process. Within this process of dialogue, we highlighted difference as a heuristic. Exploring differences (not safe commonalities) within our dialogues, we created dialectical exchanges. These exchanges were informed by Bakhtin's (1981) view of the role of dialogue as a heteroglossia—a multivoiced and critical tension. Within his theory, dialogue functions as a mediating device to promote readers' development of higher forms of consciousness. In duoethnography, these dialogues are first between the researchers. In our study we identified the speaker of specific lines as if in a play or performance in order to highlight differing viewpoints. But in duoethnography, dialogue can also be between researcher(s) and artifacts of cultural media (e.g., photographs, songs, the written study itself). In this study we examined childhood photos, high school yearbooks, and old lesson plans. Echoing Rosenblatt's (1978) reader response theory, this process creates a new text through a reader-text transaction. For example, gender was not an initial topic of inquiry in this study, but as I examined my life through Tonda's experience, it became central. As a woman growing up in the USA, Tonda was more aware of the explicitly gendered nature of experience, and our dialogue transformed me with her differently situated lens.

This dialogic format scaffolded a process of critical engagement of our perceptions of our stories to prevent them from becoming our personal mythologies. Instead of viewing these intertwined intersections as binary relationships (I'm here; you're there), we sought "to engage, instead of repress or deny, our hybrid identities, our in-between locations" (Asher, 2007, 68). This dialogic format offers shared yet contrasting critical educational incidents and dialogic analyses of insights related to those incidents. Through the use of dialogue, we sought to create a dynamic, layered, critical, and ultimately democratic form of self-understanding in relation to other and more diverse representations of the world. Furthermore, we sought to locate a space as inquirers to articulate and grasp the moral outrage often silenced by everyday life.

Duoethnography is consistent with postmodern theories that frame identity in complex ways inconsistent with tidy normative categories of

essentialist attributes (Butler, 2006). As we worked together, we sought to explore the differences, not the similarities in our two perspectives. We worked to create dialectics—multivoiced texts—as we explored contrasting and differing perspectives. We began by talking about our general topic—of teaching in postcolonial ways—and then doing an initial review of this discussion. We identified emergent themes and asked ourselves which ones seemed resonant enough as the basis of our study.

THE INQUIRY DESCRIBED

Duoethnographies are embodied, living inquiries. This particular study on postcolonialism, now spanning several years, has become a cornerstone of my self-examination. In this study, Tonda and I examined (1) a trans-temporal exchange of our perceptions and beliefs, (2) the intergenerational and cultural genealogies of those perceptions and beliefs (Foucault, 1972), (3) the differences between the content of our perceptions, and (4) the concrete manifestations of our perceptions and beliefs as objectified by past school lesson plans and teaching approaches.

In this study, Tonda and I selected a number of artifacts for critical examination, trying to keep our choices somewhat parallel to promote cross-dialogue and contrasting positions. We did the first iteration of this study about 5 years ago. At that time, we met a number of times at work. Sitting around a conference table, we turned on a tape recorder and started talking about postcolonial teaching more generally. We also considered possible artifacts to illuminate the topic and theory to frame it. These were “free-flowing” conversations and all thoughts were welcome. After two or three meetings, we listened to the tapes and identified the specific foci of our study: the legacy of colonial discourses from our childhoods to examine their relationship to our current (and ideally, postcolonial) teaching.

Since we knew that we wanted to use Pinar’s *carrere* (1975) as a frame, we critiqued the present with the past and the past with the present. Consistent with the tenets of duoethnography, we began by examining our childhoods. Again, considering ourselves the site, not the topic of our inquiry, we excavated early childhood experiences to examine how our beliefs and assumptions about colonialism were formed.

In our first version of this study, I examined an old booklet that my father brought back to the USA following WWII. Because I spent the first few years of my life in Germany in the 1950s, I thought this booklet of the US military club—“Club 48”—that he went to in Berlin would provide

traces about my early socialization landscape. I found the borders of the cover image especially interesting. In the center pane is the building that housed the club. To the left of this building is a border, within which is listed all the names of the then 48 United States. The border on the right is white, a blank canvas. When I first examined this image, I was struck by the subliminal message of colonialism in its layout: If you read the image from left to right, the names of the states come first as a frame to the building in the center of the cover. Then, to the right of the building as if in the future, is empty space, the unknown. The future of this building (and of Germany) is framed by the collective United States. The subsequent images in the book are of the interior of the club. Featuring the “Coca Cola” bar and American swing music (played by a German band), they leave little doubt that this is a future not so much of democracy but of commercialism and consumerism.

After examining this booklet I considered my early schooling and outlined key memories about socialization. Thinking back, I was struck by certain insights: the march of the Manifest Destiny (the doctrine extolling US global expansionism) in the curriculum, the commercial underpinnings of school popularity (e.g., number of Valentine’s cards, age of your clothing, parents’ car), grades based on identity (e.g., family’s socioeconomic status), and the lack of consideration for difference or diversity.

In the next step in the study, we examined examples of our own curriculum from when we became teachers. The goal was to examine how our early socialization framed our latter-day teaching. As I mentioned, for this study I selected what I thought was one of my better examples of postcolonial teaching, an activity where I had students write in both the vernacular and its formal standard English translation. For example, one student wrote these passages:

Slang

Yeah, homes, I was chilling with the beat, just kickin it down on two-four when I seen Grizzz from the crew. She said, “Hey cuz, got a square?” I said, don’t mess with it, babe.” “Why don’t we stop off at Mickey D’s and get some grub?” asked Grizzz. I said, “Na, let’s go score on some steers.”

Standard English

Yes, my friend, I was calmly sitting listening to the radio, just relaxing down on twenty-fourth street, when I saw Grizzz from the gang. She said, “Hey, you got a cigarette?” I said, “I don’t smoke.” “Why don’t we go to McDonald’s and get something to eat?” asked Grizzz. I said, “Na, let’s go get some beer.”

I expected to learn that there was room for improvement in my teaching, but still, I was surprised by the insights. Here are some quotes from the earlier publication:

This assignment represents an improvement from the more decontextualized and test-framed curriculum then found at the school. It [...] recognized students' more personal language and encouraged them to construct a story from it, possibly for the first time in their lives. However, there are some things that I would change if I were to repeat this assignment. In this duoethnography, I have noted that colonial notions framed some of my earlier perceptions, symbolized by the brochure from the 48 Club in Berlin. What I found fascinating in doing this duoethnography was that I discovered that a similar "red-white-and-blue" border framed some of my teaching. In teaching writing, for example, I framed authentic student voice with the dominant discourse. The fact that I isolated the students' language with quotation marks and called it "slang" represented a privileging of standard English. And while the activity was fun to do in class, the not-so-hidden message suggested that the students' language needed to be translated, not the other way around. I ask myself if this, then, becomes an act of colonialism. (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012a, p. 84)

Another imbalance of privilege in this assignment may be found in the grading process. While all students who did this assignment received maximum points for doing it (an "A"), students who didn't do it were marked down. But can I really blame some of them for resisting what they may have considered an act of appropriation in the pairing of their personal language with standard English, a language that privileges some (Christensen, 2009) and condemns others? I now think that an improvement to this assignment would be to use it as a means to examine the overall framing of power and privilege in language in general, and in standard English in particular. (p. 84)

My perception of my students' conceptual worlds was normative and often seen as a point of departure in teaching, not arrival. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we are operating in our classes within a "culturally neutral" model. But of course we are not. Attempting to create a respectful classroom space in a vacuum is both an act of cultural genocide and a subtle guarantee of the dominant narrative since it is not critiqued and remains hidden. The dominant culture can become so normative that it is difficult to even see it, making the process of deconstruction nearly impossible. (p. 86)

After we "completed" this initial duoethnography, we kept thinking about it and raising further questions. I personally kept contemplating

Tonda's concern with gender in her own reading of her work in the initial study. We decided to open the inquiry again and explore the topics of gender and sexuality more deeply. Three years ago, we thus revisited the inquiry. I selected new artifacts, specifically a picture of myself at age 3 to juxtapose against a picture of Tonda at the same age. I also found an old school report card with the grading rubric on the back. We now examined colonialism in terms of enforced identity in relation to constructions of gender. She examined a photo of herself dressed like Snow White in a frilly dress and hat. I examined the photo of myself dressed as a miniature gentleman, only wearing bold white sunglasses. Interrogating these images, I thought of a quote from Prikryl (2010), who stated, "The way a photograph lops off a slice of reality, severing it from the narrative flow of time, is a seductive thing; it acts like a little hammer to the reflex in our brain that wants to tell stories" (p. 29). As we examined our photos, we tried to pull them out of their familiar narratives and see them as a stranger might. Drawing from arts-based research, we created new meanings from our transactions with the photos (Leavy, 2009; Sullivan, 2005).

In the second iteration of this study, I wrote:

What stands out to me now in the photo, undeniably and profoundly, is its framing. Much of my body has been cut off—removed from the photo by my father who took the picture. I'm lounging but definitely not sitting the way an "all American" boy would. My lower legs have been cut off. Were they crossed? Curled beneath me? For me, right now, this—the shorts, the sunglasses, the posture, and the photo's framing—all create a tension within the picture. They break the narrative memory of the day—a pleasant relaxing day. They call for analysis and deconstruction of what I now perceive to be happening in relation to the narrowly (and self-servingly) normative notions of behavior in that Eisenhower era. [...] Who I was or supposed to be was being shaped in ways that felt uncomfortable to me. I definitely did not intend to "resist"; rather, it was quite the opposite. In trying to please and be the perfect boy, I could only express myself in ways that broke the normativity of the moment.

A key insight for me from the second study was—in spite of my rhetoric in the first study about the importance of gender and gendered spaces—I was not aware of gender, that I did not really "see" it. While this admission might sound like a good thing (seeing individuals and not gender), in my case what it meant was that by not perceiving gender, I was interpreting

situations with a normative and biased lens. Once I realized what was happening, I started, in the words of Maxine Greene, to become “[aware] of [my] own personal reality” (Greene, 1991, p. 8).

Perhaps the best example of this change, one found in the second study but not the first, is in my reconceptualization of my students’ work in the critical case lesson. In addition to the new understandings that I listed above, when we revisited this lesson I now saw how my enacted curriculum contained a hidden curriculum (Krammer & Mangiardi, 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2015) that defaulted to my own normative male notion of not perceiving gender. In the second study (Sawyer & Liggett, 2012b), I had this epiphany:

The [...] piece that is now hitting me so strongly and which is stemming from our earlier discussion of gender, is the way that I have not recognized gender in anyway in this assignment. It is as if in my mind the assignment is gender neutral. But nothing is gender neutral. By not recognizing it within the assignment, I am actually defaulting to a normalized view of gender within the curriculum, which is a colonial view of it. There were many rich and generative things that I could have done to recognize (not introduce—since it was already there in an unstated way) gender in the assignment, but I did none of these. There is a parallel here between what I did and how I was raised. (p. 641)

After this new understanding, I began to again realize the power of embodied and experiential processes. I now began to understand that by NOT recognizing gender in a clearly gendered activity (using vernacular language) I am not creating a gender neutral situation. Rather, I AM creating a null curriculum (Sawyer & Norris, 2015), one that is at the least a vaguely disconcerting absent-present situation for some or a glaring festering omission for others.

My second new and profound insight involved notions of power in the classroom. I realized that

if I were to teach this lesson again, I would consider using this activity as a means to examine the overall framing of power and privilege in formal English. This concern is echoed by Christensen (2009) as she reflects on her own teaching: “Without examining the legacy of language supremacy, I maintain the old world order because I haven’t explored why formal English is the standard and how it came to power, and how that power is wielded to make some people feel welcome and others feel like outsiders.” (p. 209)

I then became aware of the need to discuss with students questions of power and privilege embedded within language. As a follow-up to this unit on language, it would have been interesting to have the students explore “The Autobiography of Malcolm X,” which foregrounds power dimensions of language.

My third insight in the second iteration of the study was about larger discourses framing colonialism in the classroom. As part of the extended study, I examined an old high school report card. What I found interesting was the grading rubric that was printed on the back of the card. I was surprised by the pronounced focus of the rubric on behavior, socialization, and “life adjustment” in contrast to academic disciplinary content. For example, one of the categories was “initiative.” Under superior for initiative, the rubric gave this statement: “Pupil works independently and has sufficient interest and initiative to undertake original projects beyond assigned work.” What was interesting was the statement for “unsatisfactory” for the initiative category: “Pupil is indifferent toward suggestions for daily work.” Clearly, independence is a desirable behavior in the first in relation to original projects. The unsatisfactory one also, however, emphasizes independence in relation to original projects, but student initiative here is rejected.

PERSONAL CHALLENGES

As I consider my life, I tend to reflect on my personal mythology. After a difficult early adulthood I made a successful transition into being a productive and, I would like to think, moral person. I quickly form the following thought: I succeeded because of who I am. Without personal merit, determination, drive, and complex coping skills, my life would have been different. In this reverie, I never consider the socio/cultural currents in my life moving me in particular directions. I rarely consider my privilege as a context within spaces reinforcing that privilege. The challenge is to consider these privileged narratives and spaces, to go beyond the perception of life as personal mythology and examine the interrelated narratives of one’s life. These do include one’s personal narrative, but a key consideration is how that narrative is situated within bigger narratives related to race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, cultural capital, empire, capitalism, colonialism, religion, language, place, disability, and family—to name a few. And of course, these are not linear and separate narratives, but intertwined. For the lucky few, these intertwined narratives

mutually lead to the good life. For others, they create systemic obstacles to potential happiness.

In terms of duoethnography, the challenge is to begin to deconstruct our perception of these intertwined narratives. The theories of both Derrida and Foucault facilitate this project. Derrida (1976) viewed the deconstruction of a text as an ongoing process—open and playful—rather than a quest for ultimate and fixed findings. While a goal may be to examine the presuppositions of a text and its origin, he thought that texts have no pure origins. Rather, what we are examining is our projection of the origin of the text. In this study on decolonialism, I was first examining my reading of “colonialism” within the context of my childhood. I was not trying to explicate a fixed finding of the meaning of this concept. Rather, I was constructing new interpretations of its meaning as I examined previous interpretations.

Again, dialogue helps the inquirer to open a text to multiple interpretations, provoking a sense of heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981)—of meaning generation occurring within in-between spaces involving difference. More obviously, conversations about a particular event can create such an in-between space. Throughout the study, my conversations with Tonda provided me with new insights about first, how colonialism impacts perceptions of gender and second, how I, as a white male, was oblivious to this dynamic.

Perhaps less obviously, however, participants can also open in-between spaces with their engagement with the oppositional capabilities of art. As Leavy (2009) states, “The arts always retain oppositional capabilities” (p. 216). “The kind of dialogue promoted by arts-based practices is predicated on *evoking* meanings [emphasis in original], not denoting them” (Leavy, 2009, p. 14). Sameshima and Irwin (2008) describe the active role art plays in these transactions: “The text of artful representation is...a text seeking a response” (p. 3).

The theories of Foucault also facilitate a duoethnographic process in relation to a participant’s opening a text to new and generative readings. Foucault (1972) discussed the tension between the genealogy of historical events, which put a deterministic pressure on a subject and on the agency of the subject to disrupt this determinism and become transformative. In our study, Tonda and I found that many of the discourses of our early years were dominant narratives, not counternarratives. I also discovered that, to a certain extent, when I taught high school my curriculum may have facilitated counternarratives and difference. However, I would argue

that these counternarratives were safely contained, thus subversively in the service and production of dominate discourses. It takes a concerted effort to destabilize one's viewpoint. If one doesn't have the imagination to examine one's own narrative from the margins, how can one show the empathy necessary to view their narrative through the eyes of the other person of difference? This process, which is not neutral, requires humility and courage. To engage in this process, one needs a commitment to painful self-discovery.

Painful self-discovery may be a requisite for a duoethnographer to resist the normal tendency to seek similarities and commonalities with his or her duoethnography partner. To overcome this challenge—which is key to doing a duoethnography—duoethnographers have considered in various ways the concept of difference as a heuristic. For example, Sawyer, Dekker & Rasmor (*in press*) both gave interpretations of each other's stories to provide each other with a new interpretive lens. Dekker described this process as new form of reflection:

So, for me, to have Melody look at me and my life, and see things that I had not ever seen, even though I had been deeply reflective in my whole existence, but she could say—Oh, I kind of see it this way. Like she would have a completely different interpretation of my experience and it made me realize that there was a different interpretation beside my own that could very well have been my experience. I mean, there was the experience—what had happened to me, but that experience was only in my mind through my interpretation of it and if I could accept someone else's interpretation of it, it suddenly becomes a totally different experience. (*In press*)

Another example of a scholar beginning to find this pain can be found in Hummel and Toyosaki's duoethnography on the construction of male whiteness (Hummel & Toyosaki, 2015). Hummel shows how difficult it is to make the seductively invisible visible. In his duoethnography, he recognized that he was situating himself (as a white male) out of his analysis of whiteness in his own field of whiteness studies:

I claimed “doing” intersectional work (Chávez, 2012; Chávez & Griffin, 2012; Crenshaw, 1991), but I completely ignored race. It was not enough to identify myself as white in my own work, because I clearly had no clue what that meant. When I received feedback that I needed to attend more to race, I had no idea what that meant and what to do. (Hummel & Toyosaki, 2015, p. 31)

In their duoethnography, Toyosaki, who was raised in Japan, makes this statement to Hummel, who was raised in the USA, to encourage Hummel to deepen this thinking:

Toyosaki: I need to problematize the dichotomous construction between me as a nonwhite ethnographer and you as a white ethnographic participant.

Hummel: Whiteness is “parasitic” (West in Yep, 2007, p. 89) on nonwhiteness. They emerge interwoven. I need to problematize the dichotomous construction between me as a white ethnographer and you as a nonwhite ethnographic participant. (p. 32)

Later, Hummel states, “My skin is tainted with centuries of blood, labor, enslavement, colonization, and silence” (p. 33).

He adds:

I tend to move between the two opposite ends of a continuum—an unaware white and a “good” white. The dynamic middle filled with failures, sadness, misunderstandings, and so on is a dialogic space. I need to be dialogical and responsive in order to let your stories and difficult questions be part of who I am and, more importantly, who I can become. After all, this is a life-long journey to become more human. (p. 37)

In my study with Tonda, I operationalized Oberg and Wilson’s (1992) words about using self as site and not topic. I translated their words to mean I would do a personal and deep archeological dig on my life, and—perhaps more tellingly—on the underlying discourses of my history. As an archeological dig, you first recognize and name the situation (as Hummel did) and then you examine what the discourses were and where they came from. Like them, I did not want to rely on a process of reconceptualization happening naturally as an offshoot of the dialogic process. However, my approach was slightly different from that of Dekker and Rasmor and Toyosaki and Hummel. In my and Tonda’s study, I attempted to apply Tonda’s conceptual lens, which was very different from my own, to my own situation, thus destabilizing my perception. For example, Tonda was examining colonialism through a lens of gender and the occupation of one’s embodied persona. While this concept in the abstract was not new for me, it was new for me as a lived and experiential understanding. Norris and I maintain that duoethnography is as much about ontology as episte-

mology (Sawyer & Norris, 2015). It is a lived inquiry, not just a conceptual lens.

It's important to note that I had to consciously "push" myself to examine my own experience through a gendered lens. To examine my past curriculum, I asked myself questions Wineburg (2001) raised: "How do we navigate the tension between the familiar and the strange: How do we embrace what we share with the past but remain open to aspects that might startle us into reconsidering what it means to be human?" (p. 17) Doing the study, I first had to realize that when I considered gender, I defaulted to a normative "masculine" view of gender. This realization alone was an immense insight for me. I then asked myself how was the curricular text gendered? Then, recognizing the bias I created, I asked, what was the hidden curriculum? And I then understood that this curriculum reinforced negative gender views embedded both within the students' daily language as well as in the "standard English" I sought to teach.

A central tenet of duoethnography, *currere*, is one of the most challenging. *Currere*, an aspect of relational, dynamic, and embodied curriculum—and born in New York in the curriculum reconceptualization movement of the mid-1970s—has become a much-used but little-experienced concept. The relationship between *currere*, transtemporal and contingent *curriculum theory*, to duoethnography, a method of inquiry, can be difficult to grasp. But, it is important to understand what curriculum is: Curriculum is not empty and prescriptive implementation. It is life. People who engage in curriculum (as we all do), explore the deeply human and emic questions that we live. People who engage in duoethnography do the same (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). But the challenge of engaging in transtemporal research remains. In duoethnography we engage in transtemporal inquiry by mutually critiquing the past with the present and the present with the past.

In my study with Tonda, I interrogated the past by asking what is similar to what I do now and—keeping with the duoethnography tenet about difference—what is different. Examining the past with a present-tense lens, culturally, I am shocked by the racism, the sexism, the homophobia, and the powerful consistency between that year in the 1970s and other earlier years in the history of the USA (1945, 1929, 1865). The clothing and fashion may have been different in the 1970s, but the colonialism was deeply resonant of 1865 or 1885 or 1954, the year of *Brown v. the Board of Education*, the Supreme Court case decision that integrated public schools in the USA. By examining the years that I went to public

school in Seattle with a current lens, I isolated many stark themes of that time period. However, by examining the current time by the 1970s—a still racist, colonial, and time of international aggression on the part of the USA—the current time period still did not really seem so different. As Foucault reminds us, the genealogy of the current time is the same genealogy of the past (Foucault, 1972).

But, on a more personal level, the transtemporal analyses of these two time periods provides a deep and embodied connection to the analyses of life discourses. In duoethnography, reflexivity is facilitated by *currence*, by the critical transaction between the past and the present. Without my revisiting my childhood, I cannot make a deep connection between the topic of this inquiry and my life. And without this connection, there can be no reflexivity.

NEXT STEPS

Relational, contingent, generative, dialogic, and dynamic, this study on postcolonial teaching was both inquiry and reflexive pedagogy. As inquiry, it led to a new level of awareness about my personal complicity with educational structures that reinforce normative discourses. By itself this was not a surprising “finding” of the study. Years ago I read Dan Lortie’s discussion of “induction by observation” (Lortie, 1976), his theory that teachers measure classroom success by assessing the congruence of their curriculum to their educational histories. But I was surprised to expose the extent to which, at least in my own case, my own good intentions for pedagogic inclusion were subverted by the opportunistic nature of colonial discourses within my lived curriculum.

But also, as an experiential ethnography, this study was itself pedagogic and generative. It provided me with new ways of both imagining and engaging in my practice—through the eyes of difference—in inclusive ways. If you view curriculum as a dynamic and collective process generated by lived transactions and exchanges among the teacher(s) and students (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), as I do, then the necessity of trying to teach in nonnarcissistic ways that do not reinforce one’s own history as a teacher, student, and member of a dominant class and/or culture becomes painfully clear. The process of beginning to destabilize deeply held narcissistic ways of engaging in practice transcends perception and epistemology: it involves the ontology of lived experience and—in this case—of embodied pedagogy. In this study, I encountered this pedagogy

of reflexivity by (1) perceiving my practice through the eyes of difference, (2) reading the underlying historical discourses of that practice, and (3) conducting dialogic self-critique that promoted change.

However, this study also made clear that dialogic self-critique is not easy. Public disclosure is painful, but by its very nature, contributes to our becoming less narcissistic. As a shared event, its publication invites readers into its “third space” (Roth, 2005), presenting them with opportunities to dialogue with the text and engage in self-critique.

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