The Regulating Discourses of Race and Ethnicity in Culturally Inclusive Literacy Education

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In this chapter, we examine struggles over the construction of racial identities in the pedagogic practices of English literacy studies in two Australian educational settings. Specifically, we analyze an interview with an Aboriginal student undertaking preservice teacher training, (see Appendix A) and a classroom interaction between an Anglo-Celtic-Australian teacher and a Vietnamese Australian primary school student (from Freiberg & Freebody, 1995). The interview involved discussion of the Aboriginal student’s experiences of English curriculum studies at a Queensland university. The classroom interaction is an excerpt from a

1Freebody, Ludwig, & Gunn’s (1995) study involved 18 months of data collection from teachers, and young primary students and their families. The study focused on the ideas and everyday practices informing cultures of literacy in the schools of these communities. The methodology for this study is documented in detail in chapter 4 (Freiberg and Freebody) of the report.
reading comprehension lesson in a Queensland primary school in a low socioeconomic area with a large Asian refugee population. We propose that the social relations of everyday classroom practice are racialized (Essed, 1991; D. Smith, 1987), and in turn, regulate the selection, organization, distribution, and evaluation of English literacy curricula (see Bernstein, 1975, 1996; Julien & Mercer, 1996). In other words, the racialization of social relations in pedagogic practice works to define what constitutes valid English literacy knowledge and valid transmission and acquisition of this knowledge. The everyday activities of teachers and students as they interact with each other, think about their options, explain their predicaments, and formulate a sense of being in the world, are thus grounded in racialized meanings or representations. These representations are produced through ideological struggles within relations of power/knowledge, and as such, are fragmentary, contradictory and always subject to revision and renewal (Rizvi, 1996).

One aspect of representation examined here is the depiction of students and teachers in the “text” of classroom interaction, specifically, the depiction of these classroom participants as Anglo-Celtic, Indigenous, and Vietnamese Australian. The other aspect is the practice of delegation, whereby students depicted so are positioned to speak as representatives of their group (Julien & Mercer, 1996). Depiction and delegation are dynamic in that they are produced through ongoing ideological struggle over issues of value, specifically, issues of inclusion and exclusion and of speech and silence, the issues as to what can be said, by whom, and in what contexts (Derrida, 1994; Gunew, 1994b). These questions of value pertain to what counts as valid literacy practice on the part of students and teachers who are depicted in racialized terms.

In documenting the experiences of an Indigenous and an ethnic minority student, we emphasize similarities in the processes of racialized representation in two contexts that have historically been considered separately in social science research (Castles & Vasta, 1996). This emphasis on similarity does not mean that we homogenize the differences of these two contexts. Indeed, we acknowledge Indigenous Australian insistence on the inadequacy of multiculturalism to Indigenous political projects given the settler status of ethnic minorities and the difference in treatment of ethnic minority and Indigenous groups by the dominant Anglo-Celtic group (Gunew, 1994a, 1987; Rizvi & Crowley, 1993). Rather, our studies of both indigenous and ethnic minority students aim to foreground the racism that is obscured in the cultural pluralist rhetoric of the liberal version of multiculturalism that has “now become thoroughly entrenched in contemporary educational discourse” (Rizvi, 1992, p. 69). Accordingly, we follow Castles and Vasta (1996) in examining “the unity of racism as a process of social differentiation” (p. 5) that has subjected both Indigenous people and non-

Anglo-Celtic settlers to processes of control and subordination in the interests of the dominant group, particularly when these settlers are Asian, non-English-speaking or refugees. Although discrimination against Australian Indigenous people has often been predicated on phenotypical characteristics (race) and discrimination against non-Anglo-Celtic immigrants has frequently, but not always, been predicated on culture (ethnicity), we argue that the commonsense ideologies, practices, and interests of discrimination in both cases has grown from the same historical and cultural roots—the dominance of one group of settlers.

Racist ideologies were central to the development of an Australian nationalism, which assumed that only White people could be acceptable members of the imagined Australian community (Rizvi, 1996). Laws and policies based on popular, religious, and scientific belief in the inferiority of natives constructed the non-White, non-European people of the Australian continent and of Europe’s Asian and African empires as Other, and therefore to be excluded from the Australian nation. The Whiteness claimed so zealously by White Australians at Federation assumed superiority to all other races, a superiority “proved” by British imperial ascendency and “legitimated” by Social Darwinism (Lake, 1994; Stratton & Ang, 1994).

Overly racist Australian laws and social policies were only dismantled fully in the 1970s. New inclusionary definitions of Australian identity have since been formulated in policies of multiculturalism (e.g., National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia, 1989) and Indigenous reconciliation (e.g., The Native Title Act, 1993). These policies have two key aspects: First, they provide principles to combat socioeconomic inequality; second, they are concerned with the relations between cultural diversity, racial and ethnic identities, and Australian national identity (Vasta, 1996). Inherent in these policies is the articulation of a desire for the Australian nation to be seen as progressive and tolerant and on a transformative road from a racist, exclusionary past to a multicultural, inclusive present and future (Ang, 1996). Indeed, fair treatment of ethnic minorities and Indigenous people have become central to attempts to secure a place of respect and integrity for Australia in the Asian region that is increasingly important to Australian economic and security interests (Yeatman, 1994).

However, the ideologies of progressive tolerance that have become prominent in Australian social life (albeit subject to ongoing contestation) are ambiguous. That is, these discourses are at once discourses of social control and the containment of difference and discourses of anti-racism. They are expressions of power relations in which domination is routinely exercised over minorities by the majority. And yet, they also point to the possibility of more equitable forms of social and cultural relations between minority and majority. However, because the
reading comprehension lesson in a Queensland primary school in a low socioeconomic area with a large Asian refugee population. We propose that the social relations of everyday classroom practice are racialized (Essed, 1991; D. Smith, 1987), and in turn, regulate the selection, organization, distribution, and evaluation of English literacy curricula (see Bernstein, 1975, 1996; Julien & Mercer, 1996). In other words, the racialization of social relations in pedagogic practice works to define what constitutes valid English literacy knowledge and valid transmission and acquisition of this knowledge. The everyday activities of teachers and students as they interact with each other, think about their options, explain their predicaments, and formulate a sense of being in the world, are thus grounded in racialized meanings or representations. These representations are produced through ideological struggles within relations of power/knowledge, and as such, are fragmentary, contradictory and always subject to revision and renewal (Rizvi, 1996).

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containment of cultural difference within these discourses can never be completely successful, multiculturalism will always be ambivalent. Ambivalence operates at two levels. At the structural level, ambivalence is created in the inherent contradictions in the idea of the "multicultural nation" and its fantasy of a harmonious "unity-in-diversity." This fantasy is discursively constructed by suppressing the "ongoing tension between difference as benign diversity and difference as conflict, disruption, dis-sension" (Ang, 1995, p. 68). But this fantasy entails a contradiction of terms in that modernist nations have been imagined historically as homogenous communities. There is ambivalence at the subjective level, too, because the ethos of multiculturalism produces relations of acceptance or rejection between majority and minority subjects.

Within discourses of multicultural tolerance, minorities are accepted because of the culture by which they have enriched Australian life. That is, minorities are accepted unless they are rejected on the grounds of difference that is intolerable because it violates tenets of the Australian way of life. The ideology of tolerance thus places the dominant majority in a structural position of power. "Minorities can only be at the receiving end of tolerance, or, if they are for some reason . . . considered beyond the realm of the tolerable, deemed unworthy of being tolerated" (Ang, 1996, pp. 45–46). In other words, the inclusion of ethnically and racially marked people in the Australian nation through the ambivalent and contradictory discourses of tolerance is only by virtue of being constructed as a desirable Other (Ang, 1996). As Ang argued:

> if the ambivalence of multicultural discourse creates a space, itself replete with ambivalence, in-between sameness and otherness, then it is a space in which minority subjects are both discursively confined and symbolically embraced. Ambivalence is not only a source of power but a trap, a predicament. (p. 46)

This discourse of tolerance has sometimes even been extended to Aboriginal Australians—the group subjected to the most brutal intolerance in Australian history. In the context of the crisis of Australian national identity induced by non-Anglo-Celtic postwar immigration and Australia's need for respect in the Asian region, many non-Indigenous Australians "are increasingly drawing upon Aboriginality to define Australia" (Attwood, 1996, p. xxiv). This valorization of Aboriginality, along with multiculturalism, "functions as a means of representing a relatively homogenous Australia as culturally diverse and less European than it predominantly is" (p. xxiv). Indigenized has, in fact, become ethnicized in some contexts, for example, in school programs and social science research that reduce Aboriginal culture to the art, dance, habits, and customs of supposedly timeless pre-colonial Australia, while rejecting the politicized culture of urban Aborigines and the conflict, disruption, dissenion that that culture inserts into Australian national life (Huggins et al., 1991; Rizvi & Crowley, 1993). By the mid-1990s this ambivalent ideological space of tolerance of ethnic minorities and Indigenous people had been appropriated by the conservative government: The Office of Multicultural Affairs was disbanded; funding to The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research was significantly reduced. Indigenous funding was under threat and there was agitation for removal of "the word multicultural as a policy description" (Wood, 1996, p. 22). Similarly, in some states with conservative governments, social justice and inclusion were being de-emphasized in the formulation of new state policies. These ideological shifts were justified as ruling for "mainstream Australia" and not giving in to the demands of "minority groups" (Kerin, 1996, p. 4). In other words, ethnic minority and Indigenous activism for greater inclusion in the political, economic, and cultural spheres of Australian life became intolerable to an electorally significant portion of the Australian majority. In the words of the editor of The Weekend Australian ("Negative Influence," 1996), ethnic minority groups resorted too readily to "the racism tag" in their efforts to accumulate "too much influence" in the formulation of Australian social policy. In this ideological struggle, representations of minority and Indigenous activists were revised in the contradictory terms of the discourse of tolerance, and the Anglo-Celtic domination of Australian national identity is being renewed. Accordingly, ethnic minority and Indigenous Australians could be silenced and excluded in public spaces to the extent that they did not speak as and for "ordinary Australians"—the supposedly silenced majority during the years of Labor government (1983-1996).

In the remainder of this chapter, we analyze two case studies of English literacy pedagogy. Our analysis focuses on struggles over racialized representations in the ambivalent and contradictory discourses of multicultural and Indigenous tolerance regulating pedagogic practice in Australian educational institutions.

### INDIGENOUS LITERACY PRACTICE IN A UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM

In the interview data examined here, Margaret Williamson, an Aboriginal Australian student, recounts her experiences of English curriculum studies in an initial teacher-training course. These experiences can be understood in terms of the ideological struggles over racialized relations that Margaret engaged in at university. Margaret originally decided to
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become a teacher so that she could work from within the institution of schooling to understand and transform the racist educational practices that she had observed as the mother of Aboriginal school students (for a similar perspective, see also Behrendt, 1996):

MW:  I really did want to find out what was going on inside those teachers’ heads...

R:  So what have you found out?

MW:  That Australians are very, very racist, very, very proud of it and don’t intend to change. ... I get very angry about it ... because they have a problem with the children who are darker, or because they have a problem with the children who are lighter and still identify as Aboriginal ...

R:  You were talking about Australians being proud of their racism. What do you mean by that?

MW:  That it has become a very Australian characteristic, that it’s something they can, something Australians, White Australians, can cling to as part of their national identity: “This is what I am, and this is what makes me what I am, and I have the right to be here, but none of these ‘people of colour’ have the right to be here, we fought for this country.”

Historically, the racism described by Margaret precluded Indigenous Australians from educational institutions, and barred “people of color” from the Australian nation. However, as a result of Indigenous activism (Malin, 1994), Margaret is now entitled to a full education and professional training: “struggles for inclusion on the part of those who have been marginalized by the modern discourse of freedom and equality has brought about a very high degree of formal inclusion” (Yeatman, 1995, p. 49). With the passing of nondiscriminatory laws, exclusionary practices have taken new forms and produced new racism(s) (Castles, Kalantzis, Cope, & Morrissey, 1988). These new forms of racism avoid being recognized as such because they are masked behind notions of Australian nationalism, citizenship, and social cohesion (Rizvi, 1993). Marginalization and exclusion are thus not so much legal as ideological, informed by a theory that Anglo-Celtic-Australians are the “real Aussies”. Others are merely tolerated. For example, despite the passing of nondiscriminatory laws, Margaret’s right to a place in teacher-training is repeatedly questioned. There is overt resistance to her formal inclusion in an Australian tertiary institution. Lecturers and peers at university, and administrators in the schools where she has undertaken the practicum requirements of her course, have all insisted that Margaret is taking up the place of a more eligible student. The eligibility criterion invoked here cannot be academic performance because Margaret is an outstanding student; it seems that the criterion is racial despite the nondiscriminatory conventions of the Australian state:

MW:  ... right through the wonderful Whitlam [Labor prime minister, early 1970s] years of, “oh, let’s do some thing for all these people,” and yes, he did. But no, I don’t think Australia wanted to change ... I think the will of the government was there, certainly some of the legislation was passed, but I think Australia didn’t want to change

R:  Have you seen any change in attitudes in your time?

MW:  No. Fifty years—it’s gone from being blatant and out in the open, to hidden away, and very subtle. And now, I feel in the last, probably since I’ve been here [4 years] becoming more open again. More blatant. Less subtle. More explicit.

Another blatant form of exclusion Margaret experienced is that the education made available to her is, by her account, exclusive of her Aboriginality: “If it’s not ‘Australian’ and it’s not English, then it’s not valid.” In other words, the regulative discourse of tolerance operative in Australian race relations means that Margaret is only tolerated within teacher-training if she is like the Anglo-Celtic Australian “us.” Resisting and challenging the culturally exclusive pedagogical practice of her pre-service teacher-education course is one way in which Margaret has worked to transform the racial relations of education that prompted her to enroll at university. The identity that Margaret has constructed for herself in pursuit of this vision can be described as ‘prospective’ (Bernstein, 1996, p. 79). This is an identity constructed from the discursive resources made available by narratives on race (in other cases, prospective identities are constructed from narratives on gender, sexuality, and other significant categories of social subordination). The construction of such an identity does not rely on the racial identities and relations of the past, but is grounded in a vision of a transformed social future. Specifically, race is mobilized as a resource in political struggles for a more racially equitable future. A prospective identity is likely to be constructed in struggles over the specialized forms of communication legitimized in universities that shape these culturally exclusive pedagogic practices (Bernstein, 1996). In Margaret’s case, the forms of commu-
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of cultural identity is not resisted, it produces "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless—a race of angels" (Fanon, 1963, p. 176). Margaret struggled with this loss of social identity during her time at university. She struggled with the loss of the Indigenous identity by which she could locate or anchor herself, and from which the world comes into perspective for her, that is, the identity from which her world and its horizons are created. The identity offered Margaret at university—the universal, and therefore colorless, stateless, rootless identity offered her—provided no place from which to speak her Indigeneity. This is because the so-called universal identity offered Margaret was in fact the normalized Whiteness or Anglo-Celtic ethnicity by comparison with which Aboriginality was distorted, disfigured, and destroyed in Margaret's English class.

In producing culturally inclusive literacy practice in her English curriculum subject, Margaret was working to transform the colonizing, Othering communicative practices shaped at university for reproduction in schooling. In other words, she was resisting the regulation effected by the discourse within which her presence at university was tolerated so long as she was like the White, Anglo-Celtic "us" and ascribed to pedagogical practice that rendered Aboriginality as Other. Progressive discourses of tolerance create a liminal or third space that allows inclusion of racial or ethnic peoples by virtue of their othering. Margaret took up this space to define an inclusive Aboriginal identity, and culturally inclusive curricular and pedagogic practices. However, given the ambiguity and contradiction inherent in discourses of tolerance, Margaret was disciplined by both peers and lecturer for this resistant practice. The following is Margaret's account of the reception of her interview assignment:

MW: ... when I came to play that back in the class, because we had to play them back in the class situation, and like, critically analyze them, people laughed. I was told that sort of thing was just like "Little Red Riding Hood," "Three Little Pigs" type situation anyway.

R: By the lecturer?

MW: No, by different students.

R: In the class, when the lecturer was there?

MW: Yeah. And it was backed up that. Yes, ... and it was not appropriate to use that interview. I did get a little visibly distressed at this, and I came out and actually said to him: "You're determined," [I] said to the lecturer, "You're determined not to find one single posi-
communication shaped and transmitted in English curriculum studies for reproduction in schools have been a primary object of struggle: "... within the English area... the Aboriginal person is constantly referred to as 'them, those, the Other.' Margaret has been evangelistic and confrontational in her English courses—a stance typical of prospective identities (Bernstein, 1996, p. 79). It is Margaret's account of an instance of such struggle that we analyze in this chapter. In analyzing Margaret's account, we focus on her description of the pedagogy she constructed to contest the social scientific form of English literacy. We also examine the way in which Margaret's lecturer and peers denigrated not only her pedagogic practice, but also her Aboriginal identity—an identity constructed in relation to the historical dominance of "Whiteness." 

In her account, Margaret described an assessment item that required her to conduct an interview and then replay a videotape of this interview to her tutorial class for the critical comments of her lecturer and peers. Margaret decided to conduct the interview in a format adapted from the storytelling conventions of her Aboriginal community: "It was like a storyteller, like an actual storyteller would do it in the community." In taking this approach to her assignment, Margaret attempted to adapt the social scientific formal interview format so that it was inclusive of Aboriginal content and pedagogy. Specifically, she told an Aboriginal story commonly referred to as a story of the "Dreaming," to a group of Aboriginal adolescents. In the pedagogic practice Margaret developed, the adolescents were "sitting around, in a circle on the floor. The [Aboriginal] flag was prominent."

As noted above, Margaret found that Aboriginal people were "constantly referred to as 'them, those, the Other'" in university English studies. This treatment of Aboriginality might be understood in terms of the traditional mission of English studies. Historically, English studies have served the colonization of Other identities and the assimilation of colonized and working-class people to imperialistic, middle-class, and nationalistic values (Bhabha, 1994; Eagleton, 1983; Prain, 1996). This process of colonization has not only constructed the colonized as outside the normative literacy practices of English, but also forced them to internalize a sense of their Otherness. The ambivalence of colonial discourse means that the colonized can become Anglicized, but never English; "not quite/not white" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 92). In Fanon's (1963) words, "Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (p. 170).

In other words, the colonized have only been able to succeed at English studies by internalizing a distorted construction of themselves as not-White, that is, as the lacking Other of Whiteness. If this expropriation of cultural identity is not resisted, it produces "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless—a race of angels" (Fanon, 1963, p. 176). Margaret struggled with this loss of social identity during her time at university. She struggled with the loss of the Indigenous identity by which she could locate or anchor herself, and from which the world comes into perspective for her, that is, the identity from which her world and its horizons are created. The identity offered Margaret at university—the universal, and therefore colorless, stateless, rootless identity offered her—provided no place from which to speak her Indigeneity. This is because the so-called universal identity offered Margaret was in fact the normalized Whiteness or Anglo-Celtic ethnicity by comparison with which Aboriginality was distorted, disfigured, and destroyed in Margaret's English class.

In producing culturally inclusive literacy practice in her English curriculum subject, Margaret was working to transform the colonizing, Othering communicative practices shaped at university for reproduction in schooling. In other words, she was resisting the regulation effected by the discourse within which her presence at university was tolerated so long as she was like the White, Anglo-Celtic "us" and ascribed to pedagogical practice that rendered Aboriginality as Other. Progressive discourses of tolerance create a liminal or third space that allows inclusion of racial or ethnic peoples by virtue of their othering. Margaret took up this space to define an inclusive Aboriginal identity, and culturally inclusive curricular and pedagogic practices. However, given the ambiguity and contradiction inherent in discourses of tolerance, Margaret was disciplined by both peers and lecturer for this resistant practice. The following is Margaret's account of the reception of her interview assignment:

MW: ... when I came to play that back in the class, because we had to play them back in the class situation, and like, critically analyze them, people laughed. I was told that sort of thing was just like "Little Red Riding Hood," "Three Little Pigs" type situation anyway.

R: By the lecturer?

MW: No, by different students.

R: In the class, when the lecturer was there?

MW: Yeah. And it was backed up that. Yes, ... and it was not appropriate to use that interview. I did get a little visibly distressed at this, and I came out and actually said to him: "You're determined," [I] said to the lecturer, "You're determined not to find one single posi-
tive point in this presentation, so I’m not going to bother continuing.” [and so I] ejected the video and sat down. I just barely scraped past that.

Political work like that undertaken by Margaret is not a zero-sum cultural game, but “always about shifting the balance of power in the relations of culture ... about changing the dispositions and the configurations of cultural power” (Hall, 1996, p. 468). In Margaret’s case, her attempts to shift the balance of power in racial relations through the production of culturally inclusive literacy curriculum practice, can be described in terms of the concept of mimicry (Bhabha, 1994). Margaret’s performance in her English course was in some ways the same as her peers—she produced an assignment—and yet, in others, different—her assignment inscribed her as an Aboriginal student of education. It is this state of being “almost the same, but not quite” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86), which is at the heart of an act of mimicry, at the heart that is, of an act in which the colonized mimic the colonizer while inscribing alterity or difference from them. The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence, a desire to reproduce the self and simultaneously project a difference. In Margaret’s case, this is the ambivalence of the discourse of tolerance that regulates the way in which communication practices are shaped in university teacher-education courses for reproduction in schooling. Specifically, Margaret took up the expectation that she be like the White, Anglo-Celtic teacher-trainee. However, in doing so, she inscribed Indigenous difference. This difference was inscribed in opposition to the denigrated difference produced by the colonizing discourses of her English curriculum subject, discourses that produced Indigeneity as the intolerable Other of Western fantasy.

The interview, or pedagogic text, produced by Margaret in the process of mimicry can be described by the concept of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994). This is a concept describing the text produced when the subjugated knowledge of a colonized group is inscribed into the discourse of the dominant, altering that discourse. For example, Margaret altered the content of legitimate university literacy communication by bringing the visual text of the Aboriginal flag, and the verbal text of Aboriginal knowledge, into her classroom. She altered the pedagogy of legitimate practice by bringing Aboriginal storytelling procedures into the classroom. This hybridization of communication practice is consistent with the political work of Indigenous poets, novelists, playwrights, songwriters, and writers of short stories, autobiographies, histories, and memoirs, who are disrupting the practice of Australian culture:

they are appropriating European genres and adapting them to their own purposes; they are inventing hybrid forms; they are transforming their own traditional forms to new ends, in new contexts - and making the language and literature of the colonies bear the burden of their particular experiences and knowledges. (Morgan, 1993, p. 5)

After the hostile reception of her assignment, Margaret was asked to resubmit. She was given another chance to recognize and display her knowledge of the rules that structure legitimate literacy practice in an Australian university classroom. In her second attempt, Margaret repeated the interview in the social scientific style expected by the lecturer. In other words, she used an interactional style considered to be legitimate for the production of knowledge in this classroom: “I re-did the same interview, on campus, to a group of first-year university students, in the library, in a conference room, all very ‘up in the chair’, formal.”

Although Margaret changed the interactional style of the interview context, she continued to use the politicized content of Aboriginal cultural knowledge, namely the Aboriginal flag, and to use her Indigenous community’s storytelling practices:

MW: Well, I had to do exactly the same interview, like, set-up. So I chose, I did exactly the same story, with the same wordage of a story, and it obviously offended. There was one, two, three, four, five women, female students, and a male Aboriginal student videotaping. It obviously offended two of them quite deeply. The story itself.
R: The Aboriginal story you’re talking about, right?
MW: Because I was talking about the beginning of time.
R: What, they thought it was pagan?
MW: Yes. It’s not right according to the Bible.
R: Did they actually use those words?
MW: Yes. And the other one backed her up and said: “Well, you’re right, it’s not and anyway, people like that”—there’s an Aboriginal boy standing behind me videotaping, I’m sitting there—“people like that, we know they’re only, by the Bible, they’re only marked like that because they’re evil anyway.” Blew my interview.
R: Sorry, this is actually in the interview?
MW: Mmmm.
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R: Sorry, this is actually in the interview?

MW: Mmmmm.
Right, okay. What did you mean “marked”? That they had Black skin? [Margaret nodded her head]. Right.

We weren’t allowed to delete anything, we had to transcribe it and take it back and do the same thing, show this whole painful performance, and critique your whole body language and voice and tone and what have you, and I literally got ripped apart again ...

By the students?

No. By the lecturer.

In front of the students?

In front of the students, the students, at this stage I think, were starting to feel a little, I don’t know, they could see I was upset. And certainly the other four Aboriginal students that were in the classroom were feeling very upset on my behalf, and more or less the rest of them sat there in silence while he ripped me apart over the persistence in trying to introduce a non-relevant subject to English ... it was one of the most destructive experiences that I had encountered up till then. Totally blew apart any image that I had that this is the institution of higher learning and that people come here with open minds. Blew that concept right out the window. Forget that.

In terms of the students or the lecturers?

Both. Forget that one, forget that one, just push that one aside, it’s not real. Came down, and it took a few sessions with the convenor of the Aboriginal Support Unit to diffuse that situation because I was leaving.

The reaction of Margaret’s peers to her story can be understood as evidence that the opening of spaces to voices of cultural, language and social difference within the discourse of tolerance is “carefully policed and regulated” (Hall, 1996, p. 468). In other words, the silence and invisibility imposed on Indigenous students under assimilation has been replaced by a carefully regulated visibility (Hall, 1996) in the discourse of tolerance. Although Margaret authorized her assignment by reference to the practices of her Indigenous community, we emphasize that her authority rests not only in this community, but also in the nondiscriminatory conventions of Australia’s secular educational institutions (Yeatman, 1994).

Under Commonwealth and state Labor governments, these conventions were strengthened by the sanctioning of multicultural and Indigenous perspectives in state and national educational policies and guidelines. In other words, there existed an officially sanctioned curricular space within which Margaret’s Aboriginality could be made visible. However, this space was carefully regulated. When Margaret refused the terms of the discourse by which non-White, non-Anglo-Celtic Australians are tolerated as long as they do not challenge White, Anglo-Celtic norms (such as the content and procedural norms of the Western interview as a communicative form in English studies), she was disciplined by her peers. In invoking Judeo-Christian admonitions to challenge Margaret’s story, her peers constructed for themselves a fundamentalist religious identity (Bernstein, 1996). By contrast with the future-oriented prospective identity constructed by Margaret, this is a retrospective identity constructed from fundamentalist religious resources, in this case, a literal reading of the Biblical Creation story. This type of identity gives the self a location outside current social instability and ambiguity, for example, the contradictions of Australian social life under multiculturalism. From this location the individual is able to make judgments, relate to others and conduct oneself socially.

In the case we are analyzing, these were judgments of Margaret as a pagan, hostile relations between the Christian students and Margaret, and intolerant conduct on the part of the Christian peers. In constructing such an identity, Margaret’s peers drew on a pre-existing curricular text that valorized the religious literacy practices of the dominant Australian settler groups. For example, under the earlier state conservative governments (1957–1989), it was common practice for primary school students to recite the Lord’s Prayer on a daily basis during school assembly. It was also common practice for each classroom to contain a copy of the Bible and for teachers to read stories from the Bible to students on a regular basis. It was only at the initiative of individual teachers, parents, and students that more culturally inclusive literacy practices were implemented. However, during the late 1970s and 1980s, these teachers, parents, and students had to contend with the demands of fundamentalist Christians who insisted that the privileging of Christian literacy practices enshrined in state educational policies be enacted in state-run classrooms (Singh, 1987; R. Smith & Knight, 1981). It is in the tradition of this privileging of Christian literacy practices that Margaret’s attempts to include her community’s Indigenous cultural knowledge were contested by her peers. Her authority as a member of an Indigenous community, and her knowledge about Indigenous texts and cultural practices, were rejected by peers who invoked the superiority of another textual authority—the Book, the Bible, the ultimate source of authority for people of Judeo-Christian cultural backgrounds.
R: Right, okay. What did you mean "marked"? That they had Black skin? [Margaret nodded her head]. Right.

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Margaret's lecturer and peers thus exercised a form of disciplinary power. According to Foucault (1977), disciplinary power works through the processes of normalization and individualization. In these processes, a division is established between the normal individual (e.g., a teacher-trainee who conforms to the social scientific and Christian communication practices legitimated in English studies) and the abnormal individual (e.g., a teacher-trainee whose communication practice hybridized Western and Indigenous forms). A whole set of disciplinary techniques for measuring, supervising, and correcting the abnormal individual is thereby institutionalized in these processes. In Margaret's case, these techniques were the ridicule and moral condemnation by her peers, and the public humiliation and punitive grading by her lecturer.

In summary, the conflict over Margaret's assignment can be understood as racialized struggles over cultural literacy practices. Margaret's pedagogy was authorized by both the practice of her Indigenous community and secular and inclusive Australian education policy. It is important to note that this latter authorization of Margaret's practice is not necessarily secure. As the 1996 election of a conservative state government with the objective of restoring a core school curriculum there are pressures for the closing of even those carefully regulated spaces that were opened to racial and ethnic difference in Australian curricula through the discourse of tolerance. The intolerant reaction to Margaret's practice was authorized by a conservative curricular theory that privileges Christian literacy practices by constructing other texts as the mythical or pagan Other of Western literacy practice. This curricular theory is consistent with the history of English as a colonizing discipline. Explicating an alternative to such colonization through curriculum, Gunew (1993) followed Spivak in calling for the development of "transcultural literacy" practices in education. This requires restoring the literacy practices of colonized groups "to their place as literatures in and of the world" (Gunew, 1993, p. 457). In Margaret's case, this would have meant that the curriculum and pedagogy she constructed were accepted as legitimate, rather than rejected as on the grounds of their difference from the practice of the dominant Australian settler groups.

MULTICULTURAL LITERACY PRACTICE IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM

The second piece of data examined here is a classroom exchange between an Anglo-Celtic Australian teacher and Vi, a primary school student of Australian ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese background. As stated earlier, Indigenous and multicultural education have been considered separately in social science research. In this chapter, however, we juxtapose analyses of the educational experiences of an Aboriginal and a Vietnamese Australian student. The purpose of this approach is to foreground the racialized dynamic of Australian Self and non-White, non-Anglo-Celtic Other at work in both contexts. As in the case of Margaret, we focus on racialized representation in English pedagogy in the senses of depiction and delegation. Specifically, we consider both the depiction of Vi as "Vietnamese speaking" and the expectation that he speak as a Vietnamese in his English class. This analysis builds on the insights of Freiberg and Freebody (1995), who initially collected and analyzed this data as part of a larger project examining everyday literacy practices in and out of schools in low socioeconomic urban communities. The exchange between Vi and his teacher proceeds as follows:

24 T: No. Are you stuck Vi? Do you know what number one says?
WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE IN JAMAICA? Let's read it.
JAMAICA IS AN ISLAND IN THE CARIBBEAN SEA. IT IS WARM AND SUNNY ALL YEAR ROUND. What's the weather like?
25 S: Sunny
26 T: How do you say the weather Vi? In Vietnamese? The weather?
27 S: I'm Chinese. I can't speak Vietnamese so well.
28 T: Ah you ca:an. How do you say weather? Like, the weather? You know?
29 V: I don't talk Vietnamese at home. I got English.
30 T: What do your parents speak?
31 V: Um Vietnamese.
32 T: So how do, what do you speak back to them?
33 V: When they tell me something I don't know what they mean.
34 T: So how do, what do you speak back to them?
35 V: Um Vietnamese. But I talk to my sister, and brother! // in English?
yeh. That's O.K. So you wouldn't be able, you can't say to them, oh the weather today's hot mum. Couldn't you say that? In Vietnamese?
36 T: No

Historically, languages other than English have been proscribed in Australian schools. Students of ethnic minority backgrounds have been
Margaret's lecturer and peers thus exercised a form of disciplinary power. According to Foucault (1977), disciplinary power works through the processes of normalization and individualization. In these processes, a division is established between the normal individual (e.g., a teacher-trainee who conforms to the social scientific and Christian communication practices legitimated in English studies) and the abnormal individual (e.g., a teacher-trainee whose communication practice hybridizes Western and Indigenous forms). A whole set of disciplinary techniques for measuring, supervising, and correcting the abnormal individual is thereby institutionalized in these processes. In Margaret's case, these techniques were the ridicule and moral condemnation by her peers, and the public humiliation and punitive grading by her lecturer.

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29 V: I don't talk Vietnamese at home. I got English.

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33 V: When they tell me something I don't know what they mean.

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36 T: // in English?
yeh. That's O.K. So you wouldn't be able, you can't say to them, oh the weather today's hot mum. Couldn't you say that? In Vietnamese?

37 V: No


Historically, languages other than English have been proscribed in Australian schools. Students of ethnic minority backgrounds have been
ordered to “speak English at school” and their parents have been directed
to “speak English at home.” However, with the emergence of the discourse
of multicultural tolerance, some teachers have encouraged ethnic minority
students to share their languages other than English with their classmates.
The ascendency of multicultural discourse in some contexts has meant that
languages other than English have come to be perceived by some Anglo-
Celtic Australians as part of the “richness” of Australian life and the inclu-
sion of ethnic minority Australians has become a social priority. In educa-
tion, for example, there has emerged “a powerful rhetoric” extolling “the
virtues of cultural pluralism” (Rizvi, 1992, p. 69). The diverse cultural back-
grounds of Australian schoolchildren are no longer viewed as part of “the
migrant problem,” but as instances of Australia’s cultural richness and as a
resource for the creation of inclusive schooling:

Multiculturalism thus advocates a new approach to curriculum, peda-
gogy and evaluation through the promotion of a specific set of cultural
attitudes to difference and through the creation of the kind of school environment in which every student can participate (Rizvi,
1992, p. 69).

The pleasure in “other cultures” signalled by the notion of “cultural
enrichment” contrasts favorably with the ethnocentric rejection of cultural
difference prominent in assimilation discourse of culture because it
opens a space for divergent cultural expression (Ang, 1996). However,
as the exchange between Vi and his teacher indicates, the curricular spaces made available for this enriching speech, like those made available for Aboriginal culture in Margaret’s case, are policed and regulated carefully (Hall, 1996). In other words, the silence and invisibility imposed on ethnic minority students under assimilation has been replaced by a
carefully regulated visibility (Hall, 1996).

Specifically, Vi was expected to perform his cultural difference at
the teacher’s behest. Where once he would have been ordered to
“speak English,” he was now ordered to “speak Vietnamese.” Ang
(1996) described a similar incident:

At a party, I was introduced to a man who, upon giving me his hand,
immediately started to blurt out some words in Cantonese, then
Japanese, then Malay. . . . It surprised and frustrated him that I
understood nothing of what he said and that I refused to speak to
him other than in English. Unfortunately, the conversation was
doomed to be extremely brief because I couldn’t think of anything to
say to unlock me from the pigeonhole of “Asiansness” in which he insisted on placing me, continuing to say how much he loved Asia.
(p. 44)

Following Trinh Minh-ha, Ang suggested that such incidents entail a
form of othering in which the cultural Other is endowed with an aura.
Asians are not excluded from multicultural Australia because of their cul-
tural difference; they are not included grudgingly despite this difference;
rather, they are included—enthusiastically—because of their difference
of culture: “[w]hat we have here is acceptance through difference, inclu-
sion by virtue of otherwise” (Ang, 1996, p. 44). To reiterate, in the plural-
ist multiculturalism of contemporary Australia, the cultural difference of
the migrant is made visible in a carefully regulated, segregated space—
the space of the enriching cultural Other.

Like Ang, Vi refused to occupy this space. Calling up the same-
ness that is a part of the ambivalent discourse of multicultural tolerance,
Vi constructed himself as an English speaker. In the following discussion
we undertake a turn-by-turn analysis of the struggle that unfolded
between Vi and his teacher over her attempt to impose the identity of
Vietnamese speaker on him. In this analysis, we attend to what Ang
(1994) described as “the continuing and continuous operation of ‘fixing’
performed by the categories of race and ethnicity ... in the formation of
‘identity’” (p. 5). In our analysis, we focus on how markers of category
difference were made salient and effective “in the course of concrete his-
tories” (p. 5), in this case, concrete multicultural teacher and ethnic
Chinese-Vietnamese Australian student histories. In addressing these
markers of category difference, we focus on the meanings that “accrued
to them in the context of specific social, cultural and political conjunc-
tures” (Ang, 1994, p. 5), in this case, the sociocultural and political con-
text of a classroom in multicultural Australia. The purpose of the analysis
is to illustrate how “actual social subjects become incommensurably dif-
f erent and similar” in the trajectories and interactions of individual biogra-
phies in particular conditions (Ang,1994, p. 5). It is in these trajectories
and interactions that the cultural politics of race and ethnicity is played
out in Australian classrooms.

The struggle between Vi and his teacher began in turn 26 of the
data when the teacher tried to impose a Vietnamese-speaking identity
on Vi. In other words, the struggle began when she constructed him as a
social subject who was different from his peers in that he spoke a lan-
guage other than English. In imposing this identity on Vi, the teacher
spoke from the social location or identity of multicultural teacher. She
recognized the educative potential of Vi’s cultural difference and was
committed to including an ethnic minority child—in his difference—in
classroom interactions. In teaching from this multicultural identity, how-
ever, the teacher ethnicized the division of labor in terms of knowledge
production in her classroom (Essed, 1991). It has been suggested that
the racial-ethnic segregation of knowledge production in Western edu-
cational institutions results in the structural marginalization of people of
ordered to “speak English at school” and their parents have been directed to “speak English at home.” However, with the emergence of the discourse of multicultural tolerance, some teachers have encouraged ethnic minority students to share their languages other than English with their classmates. The ascendancy of multicultural discourse in some contexts has meant that languages other than English have come to be perceived by some Anglo-Celtic Australians as part of the “richness” of Australian life and the inclusion of ethnic minority Australians has become a social priority. In education, for example, there has emerged “a powerful rhetoric” extolling “the virtues of cultural pluralism” (Rizvi, 1992, p. 69). The diverse cultural backgrounds of Australian schoolchildren are no longer viewed as part of “the migrant problem,” but as instances of Australia’s cultural richness and as a resource for the creation of inclusive schooling:

Multiculturalism thus advocates a new approach to curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation through the promotion of a specific set of cultural attitudes to difference and through the creation of the kind of school environment in which every student can participate (Rizvi, 1992, p. 69).

The pleasure in “other cultures” signalled by the notion of “cultural enrichment” contrasts favorably with the ethnocentric rejection of cultural difference prominent in assimilation discourse of culture because it opens a space for divergent cultural expression (Ang, 1996). However, as the exchange between Vi and his teacher indicates, the curricular spaces made available for this enriching speech, like those made available for Aboriginal culture in Margaret’s case, are policed and regulated carefully (Hall, 1996). In other words, the silence and invisibility imposed on ethnic minority students under assimilation has been replaced by a carefully regulated visibility (Hall, 1996).

Specifically, Vi was expected to perform his cultural difference at the teacher’s behest. Where once he would have been ordered to “speak English,” he was now ordered to “speak Vietnamese.” Ang (1996) described a similar incident:

At a party, I was introduced to a man who, upon giving me his hand, immediately started to blurt out some words in Cantonese, then Japanese, then Malay. . . . It surprised and frustrated him that I understood nothing of what he said and that I refused to speak to him other than in English. Unfortunately, the conversation was doomed to be extremely brief because I couldn’t think of anything to say to unlock me from the pigeonhole of “Asianness” in which he insisted on placing me, continuing to say how much he loved Asia.

Following Trinh Minh-ha, Ang suggested that such incidents entail a form of othering in which the cultural Other is endowed with an aura. Asians are not excluded from multicultural Australia because of their cultural difference; they are not included grudgingly despite this difference; rather, they are included—enthusiastically—because of their difference of culture: “[w]hat we have here is acceptance through difference, inclusion by virtue of otherness” (Ang, 1996, p. 44). To reiterate, in the pluralist multiculturalism of contemporary Australia, the cultural difference of the migrant is made visible in a carefully regulated, segregated space—the space of the enriching cultural Other.

Like Ang, Vi refused to occupy this space. Calling up the sameness that is part of the ambivalent discourse of multicultural tolerance, Vi constructed himself as an English speaker. In the following discussion we undertake a turn-by-turn analysis of the struggle that unfolded between Vi and his teacher over her attempt to impose the identity of Vietnamese speaker on him. In this analysis, we attend to what Ang (1994) described as “the continuing and continuous operation of ‘fixing’ performed by the categories of race and ethnicity . . . in the formation of ‘identity’” (p. 5). In our analysis, we focus on how markers of category difference were made salient and effective “in the course of concrete histories” (p. 5), in this case, concrete multicultural teacher and ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese Australian student histories. In addressing these markers of category difference, we focus on the meanings that “accrued to them in the context of specific social, cultural and political conjunctures” (Ang, 1994, p. 5), in this case, the sociocultural and political context of a classroom in multicultural Australia. The purpose of the analysis is to illustrate how “actual social subjects become incommensurably different and similar” in the trajectories and interactions of individual biographies in particular conditions (Ang, 1994, p. 5). It is in these trajectories and interactions that the cultural politics of race and ethnicity is played out in Australian classrooms.

The struggle between Vi and his teacher began in turn 26 of the data when the teacher tried to impose a Vietnamese-speaking identity on Vi. In other words, the struggle began when she constructed him as a social subject who was different from his peers in that he spoke a language other than English. In imposing this identity on Vi, the teacher spoke from the social location or identity of multicultural teacher. She recognized the educative potential of Vi’s cultural difference and was committed to including an ethnic minority child—in his difference—in classroom interactions. In teaching from this multicultural identity, however, the teacher ethnicized the division of labor in terms of knowledge production in her classroom (Essed, 1991). It has been suggested that the racial-ethnic segregation of knowledge production in Western educational institutions results in the structural marginalization of people of
color in that the knowledge they produce is only ever peripheral to what is perceived as the curricular core. In other words, within the social division of the labor of knowledge production, an ethnic or racial hierarchy is produced in which those who are marked by race and ethnicity are only authorized to supplement the core curriculum with information drawn from their lived cultural experience (Essed, 1991, p. 23).

As Freberg and Freebody (1995) noted in their original analysis of this data, the teacher effectively made Vi "visibly curious" in what is likely to have been intended as "inclusive talk." This making strange or exoticizing of Vi is an example of the inclusion of a culture construed as Other to Anglo-Celtic Australian culture, as distinct from an example of a "culturally inclusive curriculum" (Léauchere, 1992), in which Australian culture would not be constructed in Othering terms. Specifically, where the other children were expected to show evidence of remembering what they had read ("the weather in Jamaica is sunny"), Vi, the Other child, was expected to provide some cultural enrichment in the lesson by telling his peers and teacher how to say "weather" in Vietnamese. Furthermore, the ambivalence of the discourse of tolerance is evident in this data. As Freberg and Freebody (1995) also noted in their analysis, Vi's home life, including communication in his family, is construed as linguistically problematic. Ethnic minority languages are thus contradictorily, at once educative resource and educational problem. In other words, the flip side of multicultural tolerance of ethnic minority languages is assimilationist intolerance of the potential deficiencies of bilingual backgrounds.

Vi resisted the teacher's attempt to segregate him on ethnic grounds within the division of labor of knowledge production in the reading lesson. In turn 27 he modified the identity of Vietnamese speaker imposed on him: "I'm Chinese. I can't speak Vietnamese so well." Vi thus countered the teacher's construction of his identity by self-identifying as Chinese. Through this act of self-identification, Vi modified the position of speech made available to him by the teacher, and claimed a new social location from which to speak—that of ethnic Chinese Vietnamese.

Nonetheless, in turn 28 the teacher dismissed Vi's statement that he could not speak Vietnamese well. Vi countered this dismissal by mobilizing his autobiography. He seized the authority of his lived experience (Ang, 1994) to support his rejection of the identity the teacher was trying to impose on him: "I don't talk Vietnamese at home. I got English." Thus, where the teacher constructed and imposed an incommensurably different social identity on Vi as a Vietnamese speaker, Vi countered by constructing himself as similar to his peers. He drew on his autobiography to insist that like them he was an English speaker at home.

In turn 30, the teacher persisted in her attempt to impose the identity of Vietnamese speaker on Vi. She did this by asking him what language his parents spoke. Vi hesitated and then admitted that it was Vietnamese: "Um Vietnamese." In this turn the teacher drew on Vi's lived experience to compel him to accept the identity that she was trying to impose on him. Vi subverted the teacher's potentially triumphal moment by drawing on his autobiography. In turn 32 he stated that although his parents spoke Vietnamese, he was not fluent in this language: "When they tell me something I don't know what they mean." The teacher proceeded to elicit from Vi a hesitant confession as to what language he used with his parents: "Um Vietnamese." Nonetheless, Vi maintained that his lived experience supported his construction of an identity for himself as someone who spoke English at home. After admitting that he did, in fact, speak Vietnamese, Vi immediately modified this social identity by saying: "But I talk to my sister, and brother [in English]."

And when the teacher finally acceded that perhaps Vi could not discuss the weather in Vietnamese, he agreed: "No." Vi had thus successfully established for himself the identity of an English speaker. He had resisted the expectation that he produce particular knowledge about Vietnamese culture from his experience of that culture.

We suggest that the depiction of students as Vietnamese or English speaking, for example, and the delegation of places of speech in the division of labor by which knowledge is produced in classrooms, are neo-colonial practices if they construct students as "normal Australians" and "visibly curious" Others. In making such an analysis of the interaction between Vi and his teacher, we are not suggesting that the teacher was deliberately colonizing him by imposing a particular identity on him and expecting him to speak in a particular way. Rather, we are suggesting that perhaps the colonial effect was produced by the teacher's ambivalent desire to celebrate cultural diversity. In this classroom, diversity is individualized, personalized, and included as cultural curiosity located in the body of the ethnic Other. In her attempt to implement state directives for inclusive curriculum that were issued in Australian educational systems during the 1980s and early- to mid-1990s, this teacher drew on commonsense understandings of multiculturalism. In Queensland, for example, these directives were contained in the Social Justice Strategy, 1994-98 (Department of Education, Queensland, 1994), the policy on Cultural and Language Diversity in Education (Cultural Equity Unit Studies Directorate, n.d.), and the Principles of Inclusive Curriculum, 1995 (Department of Education Manual, 1995). Commonsense is a repository of beliefs laid down over time (Hall, 1986). Belief in binary ethnic oppositions (e.g., English speaker/non-English speaker) is among the tenets of commonsense on multiculturalism. This logic of opposition was first manifest in immigration restriction (keeping "them" out), then in assimilation (making "them" like "us"), and now, in some forms of multiculturalism (celebrating the richness "they" insert into
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“our” national cultural life). Belief in incommensurable differences between ethnic groups has become a taken-for-granted part of everyday Australian life and a “normal” way of seeing.

We analyzed the conflict between Margaret and her peers as a conflict between a prospective identity centered in Aboriginality and a fundamentalist identity retrospectively centered in Christian cultural resources. In the case of VI and his teacher, we suggest that the teacher’s identity is alternately a market and a nationalist-populist identity. When the teacher is accepting VI’s linguistic Otherness as an enriching educative resource, her identity is of the market, that is, it is constructed from a projection of self onto culture as the consumable (Bernstein, 1996) it has become in late capitalism. “What attracts” people to multiculturalism “is surely the reality of multicultural consumption, that is, the transnational commodification of cultural texts and artefacts” (Milner, 1993, p. 135). Multicultural consumption sends messages. It is a form of cultural capital. Hence, as stated here, Australia now “sells” itself to Asia in these terms, and individuals likewise “sell” themselves as tolerant through their projection of self onto the ethnic minority languages and culture they consciously consume (Ang, 1996). However, when the teacher is hinting at the deficiencies of VI’s multilingual background, her identity is nationalist-populist. Like religious fundamentalist identities, this identity is constructed from “mythological resources of origin, belonging, progression, destiny” (Bernstein, 1996, p. 78). In the Australian case, this is the myth of Anglo-Celtic Self and the deficient non-Anglo-Celtic Other. Turning to VI, we suggest that the identities he constructs for himself are of a type that has been described as therapeutic (Bernstein, 1996). Therapeutic identities are constructed in opposition to market identities. Where market identities are produced by projection of the self onto consumables, therapeutic identities are produced by introjection. In this process, internal sense-making procedures are applied to the external segmentation of the market (Bernstein, 1996). It will be recalled that VI self-identified as Chinese, then English speaking and then English-Vietnamese speaking. We suggest that this succession of identities is an attempt to make sense of the teacher’s segmentation, or classification, of her class in terms of ethnic Self and Other. To elaborate, VI takes in the identity of the desired cultural Other imposed on him, but in making sense of this identity he processes it in terms of his lived experience, and therefore identifies progressively as ethnic Chinese, English speaking, and Vietnamese speaking. As these shifts in identity indicate, therapeutic identities are an open narrative and the identities of the past are no necessary guide to the identities of the present and the future. Hence, the succession of identities claimed by VI as he struggles to make sense of the marketable identity of desirable cultural Other imposed on him.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we examined the racialized relations of English literacy practice in two apparently different contexts—a university preservice teacher-training course undertaken by an Aboriginal student, and an early primary reading class involving a Vietnamese Australian student and an Anglo-Celtic teacher. We argued that the racialized discourses regulating everyday classroom practice in these cases structured the division of labor for the production of classroom knowledge. In other words, the process by which English literacy curriculum was selected, organized, transmitted and acquired (Bernstein, 1996) in the classrooms we analyzed was racialized. In examining the experiences of an Indigenous and ethnic minority Australian student we drew attention to the similarities, as well as the differences, in racialized representations of students who have been historically Othered in English literacy curricula. We argued for the necessity of examining the unity of racism as a socially divisive ideological process constructing and expressing power relationships between majority and minority groups. Specifically, racial discrimination against Indigenous and non-Anglo-Celtic Australians emerged from a common set of assumptions about the superiority of the White Man and British culture. It was these assumptions that formed the basis of the legislation that excluded non-British, non-White people from the Australian nation, and justified the expropriation of Aboriginal land and the attempted genocide of Aboriginal people. Although formal exclusionary measures have since been rescinded, Indigenous people and immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds are still subject to discrimination in that they “suffer from disproportionately high unemployment, are overlooked in labour market programs, and are employed in jobs below their abilities” (Collins, 1996, p. 95). Vietnamese-born Australians experience rates of unemployment four or five times the national average, and were the worst hit by the high levels of unemployment during the 1990s (Viviani et al., cited in Collins, 1996). Similarly, in 1991, the overall unemployment rate of Indigenous people was three times the national average (Miller, cited in Collins, 1996).

These structural socioeconomic inequalities indicate that the removal of overt exclusionary mechanisms has led to the emergence of new forms of discrimination and marginalisation. New racism(s) are often masked as discourses of Australian patriotism and national unity and therefore not perceived as racism. For example, ideologies of national unity have been evoked in conservative, as well as more progressive, discourses of multiculturalism and Indigenous reconciliation. Within these discourses, the ambiguous ideology of tolerance produces unequal power relations whereby the majority is structurally positioned to be tolerant or
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tolerant of minority groups. With the election of conservative governments at federal and state levels intolerance of minority groups was more overt, and there was agitation for the descriptor *multiculturalism* to be dropped from future Australian social policies. Under this new conservative regime multiculturalism was articulated as a divisive policy serving the interests of minority groups rather than mainstream Australia.

These macrolevel ideological struggles over race relations are articulated in the everyday practices of English literacy classrooms. We suggest that a progressive discourse of tolerance was regulating the English curriculum practice in the classrooms of both Margaret and Vi. In Margaret's class, students were given the opportunity for democratic participation in that they were expected to evaluate each others' assignments. In Vi's class, students were granted the space to share their cultural experiences. This discourse of tolerance is racialised in the binary terms of the Anglo-Celtic Self and the non-Anglo-Celtic Other. In Margaret's case, this binary takes the crude racist form of a social scientific Self and a mythological pagan Other. In Vi's case, this binary takes the form of normalized Australian culture and exoticized, ethnic minority culture. Both forms create a racialized division of labor for the selection, organization, transmission, and acquisition of English as a curriculum subject (Bernstein, 1975). To be precise, an ethnocentric form of social scientific literacy counts as valid literacy practice in the democratic peer evaluation processes of Margaret's class, and all students are expected to reproduce this. Historically, this practice has been a colonizing technique, for example, to collect information facilitative of the more efficient surveillance and management of Indigenous people. Margaret's attempts to resist and challenge these neo-colonizing practices were denigrated as myth. By contrast, in Vi's class valid literacy practice consisted of both literal comprehension of the class reading text, and the provision of culturally enriching information related only associatively to this text. However, in being expected to produce the latter, Vi, the ethnically marked student, was denied the opportunity to produce the marketable English knowledge expected of other students. This, too, is a form of social exclusion in that it does not promote the type of literacy skills essential to full participation in the economic, political, and cultural spheres of Australian life beyond the school. There is more to inclusive educational practice than acknowledging the cultural uniqueness of ethnic minority students.

In making these two case studies, we are not implying that teachers should abandon efforts to engage in culturally inclusive literacy curricular practice. Furthermore, given the racialized history of Australian cultural identity, we are not suggesting that classroom relations can be structured outside discourses of race. Rather, we are suggesting that teachers need to be cognizant of the ways in which racialized representations regulate classroom practices and the consequences of these for particular students.

APPENDIX A

Data on the experiences of women from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds in initial teacher-preparation courses at an Australian university were collected over a period of 3 years. Nine women were interviewed (three Indigenous Australians, four Asian Australians, two Southern European Australians). Each participant was interviewed on at least two occasions at the university or at a nearby coffee shop. The first interview was conducted after students completed the final requirements of their initial teacher education course. Subsequent interviews were conducted after the students formally graduated. Although the interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, they were focused with the following opening statement:

We are interested in the experiences of minority group women in teacher education courses. Although the student population in primary and secondary schools has become racially and ethnically diverse over the past 20 years, the population in teacher-education courses has remained fairly homogeneous. We want to hear about your experiences at university and during practicum to understand why students from minority ethnic and racial groups either do not enroll in teacher-education courses, or if they do enroll, do not complete their qualifications. We want to know if any of your experiences have been racialized, and what forms those racialized experiences may have taken.

Data were coded and analyzed in terms of racialized representations in the everyday context of university and school practicum relations. Racialized representations were gathered from curricula, pedagogy, student self-identification, teacher—student relations, student-student relations, graffiti... Indeed any text that the student considered to carry racialised depictions. In the second interview, participants were asked to elaborate on particular references to racialized experiences. During the final data analysis, each interview was divided into episodes. An episode constitutes a meaningful exchange in which the subjectivity of students and positioning in racialized relations is negotiated. A detailed description of each episode was recorded. The description of an interview episode entailed an account of the interview context. Interviewees were described in terms of socioeconomic background, racial and ethnic identity, age, academic achievements, perceptions of racialized identity. Additionally, descriptions of episodes consisted of a statement about why specific questions were asked of interviewees; expected responses; mode of responses; topics or subject matter addressed; and form of the pedagogical relation during the course of the interview. The description of the interview episode was followed by an interview extract and an
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tity, age, academic achievements, perceptions of racialized identity.
Additionally, descriptions of episodes consisted of a statement about
why specific questions were asked of interviewees; expected responses;
mode of responses; topics or subject matter addressed; and form of the
pedagogical relation during the course of the interview. The description of
the interview episode was followed by an interview extract and an
account of the social relations established during the interview. This account of social relations was analyzed in terms of mode of pedagogic communication and the differential positioning of interviewee and researcher in pedagogic communication. This was essential to reading the power relations manifested in silences, pauses, changes in subject topics, nervous giggles, and ardent pursuit of specific topics. Reflection also provided a focus for further interviews. Efforts were made to avoid leading questions and to delve deeper into topics and concerns that were raised by interviewees.

The discussion of an interview episode involved the use of theoretical concepts (postcolonial; postcolonial feminist; sociology of ethnicity and race; multicultural literature) to provide a focused, detailed reading of the data. Analysis was guided by what was being said, by whom and why. Contradictions and ambiguities in the interview data were emphasized. The study of contradictions and ambiguities provided insight into the social processes by which interviewees actively tried to make sense of their world. Contradictions were used to direct further inquiry about how students lived with ambiguity and positioning within conflicting and contradictory discourses, rather than to discredit previously collected data.

In the interview data it was imperative to analyze what was not said, as much as what was said about racialized relations and pedagogic communication. Silences were noted by comparing and contrasting the interview data across different categories of participants, social contexts, and social relations:

2. Younger and older students.
3. Primary and secondary initial teacher-education students.
4. Science, social science, English curriculum areas.
5. University relations (in and outside of formal lectures/tutorials).
6. School practicum relations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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