

“It Lived in the Classroom:” Multiracial Teachers, Narrative, and Identity

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Abstract

“It Lived in the Classroom:” Multiracial Teachers, Narrative, and Identity

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“It Lived in the Classroom:” Multiracial Teachers, Narrative, and Identity engages the narratives of four Multiracial educators with a focus on their educational experiences and how they situate identity in their educational practice. The dissertation has empirical and conceptual elements. The empirical element is based on a series of interviews that were conducted with Multiracial teachers. The conceptual element uses fiction as an analytical lens for the empirical research.

The dissertation is organized around the following research questions:

1. What narratives do Multiracial educators construct about their racial identities? How are these constructions represented in their educational practice?
2. How can works of fiction illuminate themes that appear in Multiracial educators’ narratives and professional practice?

Critical Mixed Race Studies and Critical Race Theory ground the theoretical framework. The concepts of “rememory” and “marginality/centrality” are central to the conceptual framework. The novels *Beloved* and *The English Patient* are the sources of the organizing concepts and the primary analytical lenses for the research findings. The dissertation makes two contributions to the field of education: 1) it develops a body of research about Multiracial teachers’ educational experiences and practices, and 2) it utilizes fiction as an analytical lens for empirical research about teacher identity and practice.

Dedication and Acknowledgments

For Khaled

I would like to thank Professors James A. Banks, Rebecca Aanerud, and Deborah Kerdeman for their encouragement, support, and care as I have worked on my dissertation. Each of you has contributed significantly to my growth as a person and as a scholar.

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Chapter One: Multiracial Presence in the United States

This dissertation explores the narratives that Multiracial educators develop about their identities and their professional practice. Multicultural education scholars conceptualize ways for educators to meaningfully integrate personal, family, and community identity into curricular and structural elements of schooling. However, research that discusses race in teacher identity (Achinstein and Ogawa, 2011; Delpit, 1995; Chubbuck and Zembylas, 2008) is largely silent on the topic of Mixed Race identities. This dissertation seeks to address that gap.

The questions that guide the dissertation are:

1. What narratives do Multiracial educators construct about their racial identities? How are these constructions represented in their educational practice?
2. How can works of fiction illuminate themes that appear in Multiracial educators' narratives and professional practice?

Problem Statement

The 2000 and 2010 Census Data indicate that that the numbers of Multiracial youth are increasing. However, there is limited research available about the experiences and practices of Multiracial teachers and students in K-12 schools. The U.S. Department of Education (2008) reports that in 2007-2008, 83.5% of teachers identified as White, 6.9% identified as Hispanic, 6.7% identified as Black, and .9% of teachers identified as two or more races. This demonstrates that while the numbers of students who identify as being Two or More Races is rapidly increasing, they have few role models amongst their teachers. Multiracial teachers are uniquely situated to illuminate the experiences of and to support Mixed Race students. Because Mixed Race children constitute a growing demographic, it is worthwhile to increase range and depth of scholarship about Multiracial people's experiences in the school system.

The teachers who participated in this study actively seek opportunities to integrate themes of identity, social justice, and their experiences as Multiracial people into their classrooms. Several of the educators that I interviewed use their K-12 experiences to inform their current educational practice. Unlike those adults who “don’t know what I go through,” Mixed Race teachers have years of experience in the school system. However, little research has been conducted about Multiracial educators, their perceptions of how race influences their professional practice.

A lack of opportunities to identify as Multiracial on school enrollment forms makes it challenging to identify demographics relevant to Mixed Race elementary, middle, and high school students, most of whom are classified as Monoracial on official forms (Chiong, 1998; Lopez, 2003). This is evidence that the right to self identify has not translated into the ability to self-identify on school forms; many continue to lack a “Multiracial/Mixed Race” category, which has resulted in a lack of longitudinal information about Multiracial people in schools. For instance, the National Center for Education Statistics did not collect or report data about students who identify as 2 or more races prior to 2008 (U.S. Department of Education, “Racial/ethnic enrollment in Public Schools”). This dearth of information, which extends to 8 years after the 2000 census, is evidence of the need for an increased depth and breadth of research about Multiracial populations in schools.

Mixed Race students are not unaware of the lack of representations of their experiences and adults’ limited knowledge of their experiences. In a study of the role of friendship for identity formation among Mixed Race youth, Sheets (2004) writes, “...most students repeatedly reported that teachers and parents were ‘clueless’ of the social pressures they encountered daily, such as, ‘teachers don’t care if your [*sic*] Biracial, they just assume you’re just Asian or Black’ and ‘my parents don’t know what I go through, they’re not mixed’” (p. 150). These comments indicate that, in spite of the aforementioned increasing presence of Mixed Race students in schools, many feel that their experiences are not understood, or even fully acknowledged, by many teachers and

parents. In addition to a dearth of statistical information about Multiracial students, there is also a lack of anecdotal information that reflects their experiences.

Some students have begun to form social organizations and work towards the creation of classes that reflect their experiences (Elam, 2011; Fraczek, 2011; Joseph, 2013; Chang, 2013). Students do not have as much direct impact on curriculum in K-12 setting as they can in university settings. However, the Multiracial teachers who participated in this study are acting to expand curriculum that integrates the experiences and perceptions of Multiracial people. While some adults may be unaware of, or disinterested in, the experiences of Multiracial youth, I posit that Multiracial teachers have an intimate familiarity with the experiences of Multiracial youth in schools.

The Language of Identity

Academics assert that race is socially constructed (Omi and Winant, 2015). Additionally, it has been demonstrated that there is no credence to the myth of biological difference between races. As early as 1950, UNESCO published the “Statement on Race,” which claimed that there are no links between race and biology, and that race is a “social myth” (Omi and Winant, 2015). In spite of this, the idea that race is biologically real continues to exist. McKibben (2014) writes, “A vigilant critical approach is essential because, while advocates, politicians, and academics alike seem to agree that race is a social rather than a scientific system, biology tends to creep back into the discussion. The incorporation of biological language is often the result of carelessness and a lack of critical thought rather than any genuine proposal that race is biological—or at least locatable as a gene” (p. 187). A challenge faced by academics is how to write about race, a social reality, meaningfully without evoking biological language that relies on hundreds of years of racist practices and scholarship.

I have also struggled with this problem while writing this dissertation. For instance, in this dissertation, the children of cross-racial unions are referred to as “Mixed Race,” or “Multiracial.” In

some cases, when the person is, in the language of the US Census Bureau, “exactly two races,” the term “Biracial” will be used. People whose parents share the same racial background will be referred to as “Monoracial.” The use of race-based terminology reifies the concept of race and by extension reinforces the race-based practices of the United States. Phrases such as “Mixed Race” and “Monoracial” support the idea that races are a biological reality, and that it is possible to “mix” races. Likewise, it is impossible to use the term “Monoracial” without to some extent supporting the harmful myth that there is such a thing as a person whose race is “pure.” However, it has been impossible for me to engage with the narratives included in this dissertation while ignoring the language associated with the racialized system that shapes and informs them.

Words such as “Biracial,” “Monoracial,” “Black,” “White” and “Asian” in this dissertation refer to the social practices and ideology associated with race in the United States, rather than to the myth of biological race. I have used language that indicates ethnicity, such as “Mexican” or “Armenian” when they are used by the study participants, and racial terms when the participants use that language. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) define ethnicity as “Group characteristic often based on national origin, ancestry, language, or other cultural characteristic” (162). The study participants referred to these elements of ethnicity interchangeably with race: there was no consistent way that they referenced ethnic identity. However, it was clear that some participants preferred terms that are associated with ethnicity, while others preferred terms that was associated with race. Most often, the terminology was used interchangeably. For instance, a participant might refer to himself as Armenian and Black. All participants also referred to themselves as Bi-racial or Multiracial. I sought to mirror the participants’ language as much as possible.

Racial Constructions in the United States

Omi and Winant (1994) trace the modern conceptualization of race to the European arrival to/invasion of the Americas. There have been anti-miscegenation laws in the territory that is now

the United States since 1661 (Wardle and Cruz-Janzen, 2004). These laws did not prevent interracial unions and the birth of Multiracial children. However, interracial unions largely went unacknowledged. Additionally, the practice of hypodescent, also known as the “one-drop rule,” assured that children born of cross-racial unions would have the social status of the lower-status parent. “Hypodescent” refers to the practice of assigning Multiracial people to the category of the parent from the subordinate racial group, particularly when one of the parents is White. This method of categorization developed and maintained a social hierarchy in which Whiteness was privileged and the myth of White purity was preserved. Additionally, it assured that the Mixed Race children of slave owners would remain slaves. This perpetuated social hierarchies and protected White men from the necessity of taking responsibility for their Mixed Race children. In the article “Whiteness as Property,” Harris (1993) writes,

Because whites could not be enslaved or held as slaves, the racial line between white and Black was extremely critical; it became a line of protection and demarcation from the potential threat of commodification, and it determined the allocation of the benefits and burdens of this form of property. White identity and whiteness were sources of privilege and protection; their absence meant being the object of property (1720-1721).

Rather than being family members for whom parenting and care were expected, Black/White Multiracial children and adults were slaves and could be bought and sold.

The concept of Blackness has remained more stable than that of Whiteness in American society, not least because of the “one drop rule.” The opposition between the categories of White and Black is often referred to in race scholarship as the “Black-White binary,” and is central to the American racial project. Patricia Hill Collins (2009) explains the concept of the binary as follows:

difference is defined in oppositional terms. One part is not simply different from its counterpart; it is inherently opposed to its ‘other.’ Whites and Blacks, males and

females, thought and feeling are not complementary counterparts—they are fundamentally different entities related only through their definitions as opposites (p 77).

Collins explains that binary thinking is “inherently unstable” (p. 78), creating relationships that can only be maintained through the subjugation of one group by another.

The assumption of fundamental difference that lies at the center of Black/White binary is extremely important for an understanding of the American racial landscape. If White people and Black people are “fundamentally different entities,” one can not be both Black *and* White in the American racial construction. One must be Black *or* White. In the Black-White binary, Black/White Multiracials must not exist, lest the American racial hierarchy be disrupted. Part of the response to this was the erasure of a Multiracial identity in which both parents could be acknowledged as family.

The relevance of Whiteness for membership and social power is consistent in American history, though who is considered to be White has changed over time. The identifier of “White” was legally significant for immigration to the United States from its inception; in 1790, the new nation created its first naturalization law, which limited citizenship through naturalization to “free White persons” (Jacobson, 1998; Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). With this law, the question of Whiteness became simultaneously extremely important and a matter that could be decided in court. The American legal system has remained extremely important in creating and enforcing (or not) legal cases with relevance to race, membership, and citizenship rights.

For historical examples of how Whiteness, currently considered a monoracial identity in the United States, has been constructed, one can examine Jacobson (1998) and Brodtkin (1998). Each of these authors explores how the classifications and social position of European immigrants changed over time and how these classifications were impacted by social, economic, and demographic pressures. This permitted for the shift of “races” such as “Jewish” or “Irish” mid-18th

until the mid-20th century to a single racial group by the late 20th century: White (Jacobson; 1998). This is not to suggest that what Americans think of today as “ethnicity” is no longer important. However, racial classifications have changed over time, and it is race, rather than ethnicity, that is foremost in the United States. Jacobson and Brodtkin’s work contextualizes White identity by engaging in a scholarly study of a time when Whiteness was not situated as property, but rather among competing ethnicities.

In the 21st century American construction of race, Whiteness has become the invisible norm by which all else is measured (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). Whiteness Studies explore the content and impact of conceptualizations of Whiteness. A challenge that Whiteness Studies scholars face is the task of rendering Whiteness visible and discussible in research, particularly when it is so often a challenge for White people to perceive (Frankenberg, 1993). Whiteness studies scholars indicate that Whiteness, rather than appearing in representations as what it *is*, is most often defined by what it is *not* (Aanerud, 1997; Dyer, 1988). As Toni Morrison (1992) notes in her analysis of Ernest Hemingway’s novel *To Have and Have Not*, the reader knows that the character Eddy is White “because nobody says so” (p. 72). In this construct, Whiteness is unremarkable; it is centered. Those who are not-White require commentary and explanation, while those who *are* White receive unquestioning acceptance.

The cultural silence surrounding Whiteness renders it extremely powerful in the Black/White binary. The question of who is White, however, has changed over time. This is evidence that Whiteness, and the privileges that accompany it, have been extended to some and withheld from others. While definitions of Whiteness have had some malleability, it has been shaped and protected by the American justice system with the intention of protecting the privileged position of White people. With this in mind, it is important to consider the extent to which race can be said to be “real.”

Identifying Black/White Multiracial Populations in United States History

Though Multiracial identity is being treated as a relatively new phenomenon, Black/White Multiracials were not always invisible in official US documents. In the 1790 US Census, there were categories for “Mulatto” (a person who had one Black and one White parent), “Quadroon” (a person who was considered to be three quarters White and one quarter Black), and “Octoroon” (seven eighths White and one eighth Black ancestry). It was acknowledged that the people who were categorized in this way had Multiracial ancestry. Though all Black/White Multiracials except those who were “Mulattoes” had more White than Black ancestors, they were not considered to be White. This is further evidence of the American Black/White binary: a person could not be both Black *and* White. Additionally, in order to maintain a myth of White racial purity, a person could not be White and any other race.

Black/White Multiracials’ “non-White” status was further formalized in the 1920 US Census, when it was stipulated that ‘any mixture of White and some other race was to be reported according to the person who was not White’ (Omi and Winant 2015, pp. 123-124). As of the 1930 Census, racial classification changed again, eliminating the “Mulatto” category. This left only the racial categories “White,” “Black,” “Mexican,” “Chinese,” “Japanese,” “American Indian,” “Hindu,” “Filipino,” and “Korean.” As before, any Multiracial person who had White lineage was classified by her non-White heritage, and a person who had two parents of color was classified according to his father’s race (Census history staff, 2014). With this change, Multiracial identity disappeared from the US Census for 70 years, not to re-appear until 2000.

Contesting “Multiracial History:” The Impact of *Loving v. Virginia*

While (admittedly limited) racial hybridity was removed from the US Census after 1930, questions of race did not disappear from the court system. Anti-miscegenation laws, intended to maintain the illusion of racial purity in American society, came under attack in the *Loving v.*

Virginia Supreme Court Case in 1967, 37 years after the Mulatto category was eliminated from the Census. The Supreme Court's decision that Virginia's 1924 *Act to Preserve Racial Integrity* was unconstitutional set into motion the overturning of remaining anti-miscegenation laws throughout the country.

The *Loving v. Virginia* ruling is widely celebrated in the Multiracial movement as the seminal moment of "Multiracial history." Nishime (2014) contests this idea, arguing that anti-miscegenation legislation was initially overturned earlier, with the War Brides Act of 1945. This act, which permitted the foreign wives of US military men to enter the United States, initially excluded Asian wives. However, a later revision to the act permitted Asian military wives to emigrate to the United States. According to Nishime, the War Brides Act is significant because, though it was not as sweeping as the *Loving* legislation, it did legally sanction interracial families. She writes, "I do not discount this history to displace *Loving v. Virginia* as the originary moment of Multiracial legislation and to assert a new origin. Rather, this reframing of the War Brides Act as a repeal of anti-miscegenation law that predated *Loving v. Virginia* illuminates the stakes of creating a Multiracial history. Choosing a moment of origin is itself an ideological act with consequences for how we understand the social function of the 'Multiracial' category" (Nishime, 2014, p. 4). Elam (2011) argues that an over-emphasis of the *Loving v. Virginia* decision can lead to simplistic thinking about the nature of cross-racial relationships in American history, replacing the coercive nature of much cross-racial sexual contact with a romanticized notion of love conquering all boundaries in American society.

Daniel, Kina, Dariotis, & Fojas (2014) also interrogate the *Loving v. Virginia* decision as the starting point for a "Multiracial history," pointing out that the decision did not have a significant impact on the rates of interracial marriages between Black and White people in the South. They write that the growth of an interracial Asian population was most influenced by factors such as missionary activity and American military involvement in Asia and the Pacific islands. Rather than

being a defining moment in the creation of a legitimized “Multiracial history,” Daniel et al. argue that *Loving v. Virginia*’s greatest value lies in its role as a symbol. They write, “The power of *Loving* is therefore in its positive affectivity or emotional resonance as a historic landmark in the development of a sense of community, evident in the annual June 12th lovingday.org celebrations across the United States” (p. 19).

Nishime's (2014), Elam’s (2011), and Daniel et al.’s (2014) arguments demonstrate that claiming that there is a single “Multiracial history” is political, contestable, and worthy of close examination. If there is to be a concept of “Multiracial history,” one must first a) identify Multiracial populations, and b) have a way of identifying who can be qualified as Multiracial. One way of to do this is to accumulate and track information that is available in the US Census.

The Multiracial Movement and the Development of “More than One” on the American Census

The ability to indicate Multiracial identity on the US Census is the result of the political and social work of individuals and groups that developed and participated in the Multiracial movement. It became possible to indicate membership in “More than 1 Race” on the 2000 census, 70 years after the removal of hybrid identities from the 1930 Census. The term “Multiracial movement” refers to the movement during the fifteen years predating the 2000 Census. Two of the Multiracial Movement’s goals were to build recognition and support for Multiracial people and cross-racial families. In 1988, the Association of MultiEthnic Americans (AMEA) was formed with the goal of advocating for the needs of the “Multiracial community.”

With the much-celebrated inclusion of the “more than one race” option on the 2000 census, it is possible to argue that the battle for acknowledgement of Multiracial identity has been won, at least in part. The United States government is no longer ignoring the existence of Mixed Race people. The collection of data about Mixed Race populations offers the opportunity to learn more about the Mixed Race population than has previously been possible. That being said, one wonders

how the “Multiracial movement” will adapt to this new-found acknowledgement. With so much attention previously paid to questions of classification and recognition, what directions will scholarship and art around Mixed Race identity take? One response to this question is present in the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS).

While White mothers of Multiracial children were particularly influential in shaping the Multiracial movement in the 1980s and 1990s (Ibrahim, 2012), the Mixed Race children of the 1970s and 1980s are increasingly the drivers of this movement (DaCosta, 2007). As Multiracial people have become the leaders of the Multiracial movement, the interests and questions have changed. This is evident in the academic sphere, through the development of conferences such as the bi-annual Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference and the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, which had its inaugural issue in 2013. It is also apparent in the development of podcasts, such as the award-winning *Mixed Chicks Chat*, and in curated museum shows, such as *War Baby/Love Child*, recently at the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle, Washington and Kip Fulbeck’s exhibition *Mixed* at the Japanese-American National Museum in Los Angeles, California. Concurrent with these scholarly and artistic explorations of the mixed experience are others that are purely social, such as the annual “Loving Day” parties held nationwide to commemorate the anniversary of the *Loving v. Virginia* decision. Each of these efforts, spearheaded by Multiracial individuals and organizations, is evidence of the effort to mobilize Multiracial people for academic, artistic, and social purposes.

Most of the early participants in and organizers of the Multiracial movements were monoracial people who were in cross-racial relationships and/or had Multiracial children. Many of the earliest leaders in the Multiracial movement were White women who had been accustomed to the social privileges of Whiteness and were having first personal experiences with racism after partnering with or becoming parents of people who either personally identified as or were ascribed the identity of color. Ibrahim (2012) writes, “...the overwhelming concern for the self-esteem of

multiracial children was the engine behind much multiracial activism” (p. 85). As a reflection of this concern, part of the focus of the early Multiracial movement was the creation of a “Multiracial” category on the census. In 1993, AMEA testified to the Census Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives about the need to eliminate the practice of categorizing people according to hypodescent (Fernandez, 1996).

DaCosta reports that more recently, there has been tension between monoracial and Multiracial participants in the Multiracial Movement. As stated above, most of the monoracial participants in the movement are the monoracial parents of Multiracial children. Many of these parents were political activists in the movement to include a “more than one race” category on the census prior to 2000, and some were participants in Multiracial heritage organizations, such as the AMEA or the Biracial Family network. As such, these monoracial adults sometimes claimed the right to remain at the forefront of the movement, even as their children grew into Multiracial adults who were capable of taking the Multiracial movement in the directions that they chose. DaCosta (2007) describes the tension that arose between a monoracial parent and a Multiracial adult at an AMEA meeting: “Arguing for her right to speak for multiracials, the parent insisted, ‘I am a member of this community. This is my community.’ Marking a difference between multiracials and this monoracial woman, the multiracial adult explained how she understood the situation: ‘it doesn’t mean you can’t work with us and support us, but this is something we have to do ourselves’” (p. 226).

The political goals of the Multiracial movement were somewhat realized by development of the “mark one or more” option on the 2000 census. This option requires some adherence to the Census’ recognized racial and ethnic categories. It does not include the development of a “Multiracial” category, which was the goal of some activists. However, “Mark One or More” allows for a more complex reflection of identity than has previously been available on modern American census documents. For many in the Multiracial community, this was a development of great import

because it invited Mixed Race people to acknowledge all parts of their racial heritage, rather than being required to identify monoracially in accordance with rules of hypodescent (Ibrahim 2012; Joseph; 2013). In turn, the existence of Multiracial people was acknowledged and recorded by the government. This is an important development. It allows people to document a more complex racial identity than had previously been possible. Additionally, it is an improvement on the 1930 Census, which had only documented the identity of Black/White Multiracials, and only according to the terminology selected by the government rather than on their own terms. Though the “one drop rule” is still sometimes used as a matter of choice and custom, it is no longer mandated by the US government. This provides opportunities for public self-determination that had not previously been available.

In the 10 years between the administration of the 2000 and the 2010 Census, the US government has collected demographic information about the population of people who identify as “more than one race.” Statistics in the 2000 census demonstrated that Americans who identified as Multiracial were predominantly under the age of eighteen and that 40% of people who reported being two or more races lived in the Western states (Jones & Symens Smith, 2001). This indicates that they represented an increasing percentage of school-age children, particularly in the Western states (Root, 2004).

The 2010 Census demonstrated that the number of people who identified as Mixed Race had grown during the intervening ten years; 9 million people identified as more than one race. About 92% of people who identified as being more than one race reported being exactly two races. Of those reporting membership in exactly two races, Black and White was the most frequent combination (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). These data confirmed that those who identify as “more than one race” represent one of the fastest growing racial groups in the United States, with an increase of 32% between the 2000 and the 2010 Census. Of that group, 47.4% of Mixed Race people were under 18 years of age, and 71.6% were under 35 (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011).

The youth of the group tells us that schools may provide a particularly rich landscape for research about Mixed Race populations.

The majority of people in the USA who report being more than one race live in the Western states, especially Hawai'i, California, and Alaska. Over half of the people who reported being native Hawai'ian or other Pacific islander identified as being multiple races (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). As a result of a higher population concentration, it is possible that Multiracial people in the Western states have an experience of more Multiracial peers and greater social acceptance than those in other parts of the country. This possibility is supported by the findings from this study. The three teachers who grew up in the western United States reported having Multiracial peers and family members, which they report was significant for their sense of normalcy in their racial identity, though two of the three still reported experiences of discrimination and isolation related to their race.

Multiracials and Teacher Identity

Research about teacher identity demonstrates that a variety of factors influence teachers' sense of motivation and agency in the classroom (Chubbuck and Zembylas, 2008; Horn et al, 2008; Varghese, 2006; Varghese et al, 2005), and that professional motivation and agency can be linked to racial and/or ethnic identity. Delpit (1995) also identifies links between teachers of colors' identities and *how* they teach: in series of interviews with African American and Native teachers, she found that "... these teachers cited internal sources of knowledge as a primary basis for their own teaching: reflections of their own experiences as learners or their own ability to assess and create" (p. 117). These findings are supported by my research; the study participants used reflections about their experiences to shape curriculum and guide their relationships with students.

Galindo's (1996) description of "bridging identity" highlights an element of teacher identity that can contribute to the understanding of connections between personal experience and the workplace. He describes bridging identity as

...a certain type of identity that links past biographical experiences with a current occupational role....This term is especially relevant for minority teachers in that it presents teacher role identity as an occupational identity in which their experiences as minorities are validated, affirmed, and considered to be central to their occupational identity (p. 85).

Because Mixed Race identities have historically been ignored and/or suppressed, it is valuable to understand ways that Mixed Race teachers knowingly "bridge identity," even utilizing aspects of their identity as a resource in their educational practices.

In the book *Change(d) agents: New Teachers of Color in Urban Schools*, Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) indicate that the presence of teachers of color has a positive correlation with increased academic performance, a drop in school absences, increased enrollment in advanced coursework, and college attendance (England & Meier, 1986; Farkas, Grobe, Sheehan, & Shaun, 1990; Fraga, Meier, & England, 1986; Hess & Leal, 1997; Klopfenstein, 2005; McIntyre & Pernell, 1983; Meier, Stuart, & England, 1989, as cited in Achinstein and Ogawa, 2011). They also report that teachers of colors' decision to work in education is often particularly impacted by family, community, and schooling experiences. Several of their study participants, three of whom identified as Mixed Race, named a desire to be a role model as a motivation for teaching (pp.15-16). This work is significant for expanding our understanding of the broad motivations and goals of teachers of color. However, it does little to address the complex racial identity of teachers who have multiple racial identifications and/or who identify as White. Research that addresses the experiences and goals of teachers of color as a group fails to address the complex sense of identity of Multiracial

people. Automatically identifying Multiracial teachers as people of color without exploring how they prefer to identify themselves runs the risk of relying on the “one-drop rule.”

Varghese et al. (2005) indicate that there are three prevailing ideas in scholarship about teacher identity:

1. Identity as multiple, shifting, and in conflict;
2. Identity as crucially related to social, cultural, and political context; and
3. Identity being constructed, maintained, and negotiated primarily through discourse” (p. 35).

These constructs are generative for a discussion of teacher identity in general, and of Mixed Race teacher identity in particular. These three directions in the nature of teacher identity research provide an opportunity for considering the intersectional nature of influences on and expressions of teacher identity.

While research about experience, family, and community is not exclusive to Mixed Race educators, it supports the argument that Mixed Race teachers may feel particularly attentive to the need of students of color in general, and Mixed Race students in particular. The findings of this dissertation indicate that some Mixed Race teachers *do* feel a particular interest in the needs of students of color, whether or not the students are Mixed Race. However, it should not be assumed that all Multiracial educators identify as people of color; they may have monoracial or non-racial identifications that preclude a primary identification as a person of color.

In the article “Am I enough? A Multi-Race Teacher's Experience In-Between Contested Race, Gender, Class, and Power,” Janis (2012) explores social constructions and perceptions of race from her position as a teacher and teacher-educator. She situates her Multiracial identity as essential to how she experiences racialized discourse in educational environments. Further, she identifies her phenotype, or visible physical “type,” as central to how teachers interact with her. Janis states that most people assume that she is White.

Janis positions the inclusion of multi-race in curriculum and teacher education as a social justice issue and argues that “...it was not me that was not mixed *enough*, but it was the academic fields that misrepresented and limited the spaces between race” (p. 135). Janis’ argument that the inclusion of Multiracial identity in curriculum is a social justice issue supports the development of curricular materials and professional development opportunities that highlight Mixed Race identities. This article is a step towards increasing the quantity of scholarship that explores Multiracial teacher identity.

Personal Positionality:

In *Covering: the hidden assault on our civil rights*, Kenji Yoshino (2006) writes, “We all have a story we must repeat until we get it right, a story whose conveniences must be corrected and whose simplifications must be seen through before we are done with it, or it with us” (p. 50).

For me, the story “whose conveniences must be corrected and whose simplifications must be seen through before we are done with it, or it with us” is race, and more specifically, Mixed Race identity. I am Biracial. My mother is White and my father is African American. The Black part of my family includes people of various skin hues, an indicator of the racial and ethnic diversity that is thinly veiled by the one-drop rule.

Both of my African American grandparents grew up in Pennsylvania, but I also have Black family in Mississippi. I am unable to be more specific about the African part of my heritage; the legacy of American slavery erased the memory of that part of my ancestry. On the White side of my family, my grandmother, the daughter of Portuguese immigrants, was born and raised on the island of Maui before Hawai‘i became a state. My White grandfather was the son of Polish immigrants to the United States. My grandparents met during WWII, when my grandfather was a US Marine.

My parents grew up in Pennsylvania, where I was born in the early 1970s, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement. My childhood music was the BeeGees, Barry Manilow, and Earth, Wind,

and Fire; my childhood hairdo was at times an afro, at others, hair straightened by a hot comb. My childhood best friend, who was also Biracial, and I had a name for ourselves: the Silly Sisters, and a color that we used to describe ourselves: Tan. My mother worked in the city park, and Becky and I spent the summers swinging, sliding, playing in the park and going on Adventures of Great Magnitude.

I became aware of others' interest in my appearance early. I remember standing under a dryer (the "under" indicates that I couldn't have been more than 5 or 6) in the bathroom, drying my hair after going to the pool. Two older, possibly adult females looked me over and discussed "what I was." Was I Hawai'ian? Puerto Rican? This conversation advanced into a discussion of whether or not I could talk, since, though I was looking at the grown-ups and clearly listening to their conversation, I hadn't said anything. What's more, I don't think that I ever did. Nor did they invite me to, perhaps more interested in their guesses than in my humanity.

I always planned to travel. When I was 5, I decided that I would live in Greece some day, inspired by the Greek myths of Odysseus and the Cyclops that my father would tell my siblings and me. During my junior year of high school, I was an exchange student in Mexico. I got to Greece when I was 19 and spent 5 more years teaching there in my 20s. During vacations in the "Greek years," I travelled in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean. I spent my 30s teaching at one school in the United States and another in the Netherlands. While there was not a surplus of funds in my house, the intellectual, emotional, and financial support of my parents and of benefactors who contribute to scholarship funds afforded me a life of great privilege in education and travel.

When I travel, the racial ambiguity that some people take as an invitation to ask "what are you?," serves me. Though I am not always assumed to be a native of the countries in which I travel, I am rarely assumed to be American. Over time, I have realized that I often feel more comfortable abroad than living than in the United States, though "comfortable" is not the same as "at home."

In the United States, where I am “at home,” I resent a social structure that marginalizes and objectifies me, marking me as “other” in my own country. Abroad, fewer people approach me to ask, “What are you?” In truth, I cannot remember being asked that question at all, though people *do*, upon hearing my imperfect Greek/Italian/Spanish/Dutch, sometimes ask where I am *from*, a question that feels less invasive to me. I feel more comfortable with my status as an outsider when I am abroad. After all, I *am* a cultural outsider in other countries, though I try to participate as much as I can in the culture and language.

Years of being an *other* in the United States makes it easier for me to adjust to life abroad. I find that my White counterparts, generally used to the social privilege and social invisibility that accompanies Whiteness, struggle with suddenly being visible when they are abroad. From the moment that it becomes clear that they are American (and it is often clear before they even speak), they are treated differently, and many resent the questions that they are asked, the assumptions that are made about their lives. Having been the object of American gazes and assumptions my entire life, I find White American objections understandable, but unremarkable. Having never felt entirely “at home” in the United States, I only have to adjust to a new set of cultural rules that feel far less prohibitive than the American ones. Abroad, I am relieved.

This does not imply that my years abroad have been free of racial incident. I remember showing family pictures to a friend in Greece. He looked at a picture of my African American father in confusion.

“He’s not Black.” I was confused.

“What do you mean?”

“He’s not Black! He’s good looking.”

This conversation served as a reminder of the racism and stereotypes that surround Blackness in much of the world. However, the incident, as painful and offensive as it is, stands apart

from the stabbing repetition of racial assumptions, rules, and privilege that I encounter in the United States.

I planned to be an anthropology major in college, because I was interested in culture and language. However, I quickly became suspicious of what discipline's emphasis on cultural observation. I imagined that a career as an anthropologist would require me always to remain at a distance from the people that I was meeting, never fully engaging or permitting myself to become "one of them." I had spent my entire life with my relatives of different races and cultures, learning how to participate fully in their lives. I had no interest in being an observer. I wanted to be a participant. I did not remain an anthropology major long enough to learn the details of anthropological method. Instead, I double majored in history and English; I was drawn to history because I thought that it would help me to understand culture without having to remain outside of it, and to English because of my love of story and because the professors were close readers, deep listeners, and fun to talk to. Both majors enabled me to engage with my love of story and my interest in how stories are constructed and used to make meaning.

I volunteered in elementary school classrooms throughout college. During the summers, I was a camp counselor. When it came time to graduate, I looked for teaching positions because working with children was meaningful to me, and it was work that I understood and was passionate about. This career has enabled me to teach at public and private schools in Greece, The Netherlands, the USA, and Italy. As I hoped, it has allowed me to engage in culture as a participant.

After over 10 years of teaching middle and high school English and history, I enrolled in the PhD program at the University of Washington. During my first year at UW, I was a research assistant in the area of international programs and partnerships. This gave me the opportunity to interact with scholars from other countries and to connect my international interests to my doctoral studies. During the second and third years of doctoral studies, I was a coach in the University of

Washington's Teacher Education Program (TEP). As a coach, I had the opportunity to observe and collaborate with experienced and novice teachers.

Some of the teacher candidates asked me questions about how to create a curriculum that was inclusive of Multiracial students. This was intriguing, because I had never encountered educators who posed this question. My curiosity deepened after I spoke with a Biracial teacher who said that she used her Biracial identity as an asset in the classroom, and that she saw it as a cultural resource in her work with students. Prior to this conversation, I had never consciously considered how to integrate my racial identity into teaching, nor had I sought to identify resources for or about "mixed" experiences and students, though I tried to develop classes in which identity was discussed and integrated into the curriculum and the classroom practices. It could be that I avoided discussing my own racialized experiences out of the pain that I had experienced from the objectifying gaze of strangers. I did not wish to be objectified in my classes.

After this conversation, I wondered whether other Multiracial teachers were discussing their identities with their classes, and if so, how. I wondered about the effects of this decision for the classroom climate and curriculum. I sought a way to explore identity while remaining open about my positionality. I also wanted to remain rooted in history and literature while exploring questions of classroom teaching and racial subjectivity. This curiosity led me to design and implement this study, into which I integrated my interest in Multiracial teacher identity and the narratives of history and literature.

Why "Multiracials"?

Writing about "Multiracials" provides two opportunities: 1) exploring Multiraciality/racial identity as its own position, to explore what Fraczek (2011) calls a Multiracial subject position, and 2) to explore the conversations and tensions that arise between Multiracial educators who have different racial mixes and Multiracial subject positions. Some scholars interrogate the ability to

meaningfully form a “Multiracial identity.” (DaCosta, 2007; Tashiro, 2012). Can there be a unified Multiracial identity that effectively recognizes the histories and perceptions of different racialized identities? For instance, can a Black-White person and an Indian-Japanese person be said to share a common Multiracial identity? This is a central question of the construction of Mixed Race (DaCosta, 2007).

Tashiro (2012) writes, “It remains to be seen whether the shared experience of racial ambiguity and alienation will be enough to forge a new collective identity for people of mixed race. Certainly, the possibility of such a collective formation is made more difficult by the racial rules that have been applied to different groups” (p. 136). Additionally, Mawhinney and Petchauer (2012) state that “It is important to highlight...that different multiracial “combinations” are not always viewed in the same way in society and can produce very different social experiences. Thus, considering all multiracial people as part of one group overlooks important differences that result from the specific identity markers that people have” (p. 3). These statements support the argument for disaggregating studies of different Mixed Race combinations. However, my research indicates that Multiracial teachers and students do share commonalities of experience and practice that are valuable to explore.

In the dissertation, I use the terms Mixed Race/Multiracial to be inclusive of all racial mixes, and the study participants, all racially mixed, represent several racial mixes. The choice to write about “Multiracials” generally, rather than people with a particular racial mix has significant implications for the dissertation. The decision to focus on “general” Multiracial identity, rather than a particular mix or group of mixes, comes at a cost of some analytical specificity. It also represents my position that there are some commonalities experienced by Multiracial people. However, I do not believe that “Multiracial” should be the primary identification of all Mixed Race people. A

Multiracial person's racial identification (if any) is a matter of personal identity and positionality. This position echoes Dr. Maria Root's (1993) "Bill of Rights for People of Mixed Heritage."¹

Black/White is the most common mix reported in the US Census. Two of the people that I interviewed are Black/White. While there are a number of statistical and social reasons for focusing on this group, it is also important to acknowledge that not all Black/White people have similar experiences, phenotypes, or understandings of their identities. However, to ignore the particular relevance of the American social construction of Blackness for Multiracials would be problematic. While the Black/White binary is not only racial construct in the United States, it is essential to *every* racial construct in the United States (Nishime, 2014).

Do "Multiracials" Constitute an Oppressed Group?

I contend that Multiracial people as a whole do not constitute a systematically oppressed group, but a silenced one. Two criteria should be present for oppression to occur: 1) a group identity, and 2) systems, such as laws and social practices, that are designed to subjugate members of that group. As noted in the previous section, Multiracial people have not yet acquired a consistent group identity. Given the range of historical experiences, racial, and ethnic mixes that Multiracial people have, it is unlikely that a unified Multiracial group identity will develop in the near future.

Based in the criteria outlined above, Multiracials have not been oppressed based on group identity. Because Multiracial people have historically been required to categorize themselves as members of racial minority groups, they have been subject to laws and government actions that pertain to the minority groups of which they are a part. Thus, for instance, a Multiracial person who

¹ The document states, "I have the right not to justify my existence in this world. Not to keep the races separate within me. Not to justify my ethnic legitimacy. Not to be responsible for people's discomfort with my physical or ethnic ambiguity. I have the right to identify differently than strangers expect me to identify. To identify myself differently than how my parents identify me. To identify myself differently than my brothers and sisters. To identify myself differently in different situations. "I have the right to create a vocabulary to communicate about being multiracial or multiethnic. To change my identity over my lifetime—and more than once. To have loyalties and identification with more than one group of people. To freely choose whom I befriend and love."

was categorized as Japanese would have been required to go to the Japanese internment camps during World War Two. Likewise, a Multiracial person who was categorized as Black would have been required to attend an all-Black school under the “Separate but Equal” laws that resulted from the Supreme Court’s 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling. Thus, it was not a person’s *Multiracial* identity, but his or her categorization as a member of a particular racial or ethnic group that the government used to justify his or her oppression. This is the reason that I argue that Multiracials are not an oppressed, but an historically silenced group.

Elam (2011) states that an unquestioning celebration of the *Loving v. Virginia* decision ignores the coercive nature of many historical cross-racial unions. She writes, “...overwhelmingly from a historical perspective, they are the result of hypergamic relations, in which one party, usually the woman, occupies a significantly lower social and racial status” (p. 147). She argues that in the post-*Loving* era, cross-racial marriage is celebrated as the union of two consenting adults in which love outweighs a history of oppression and rape. While I do agree with Elam’s discussion of the oppression of women, I disagree with her statement that “...mixed race people bear oppression because, historically, their bodies have borne physical testimony to sexual violation as an exercise of racial privilege, what Hortense Spillers has called ‘the will to sin,’ by a dominant culture” (p. 147). The range of skin tones and physical markers among groups that have historically been ascribed as monoracial make it clear that a person who is “monoracial” is likely to have ancestors who belonged to other racial groups. However, ignoring Multiracial heritage is not the same thing as oppression.

While Multiracials do not constitute an oppressed group according to my criteria, they do constitute a demographic from whom something can be learned. I contend that many people who identify as Multiracial have a heightened awareness of the subtleties and tensions surrounding race in the United States. By openly exploring complex racialized experiences with students, Multiracial teachers can engage with students in ways that increase students’ awareness of, and engagement

with, questions of race, culture, and ethnicity in the United States. By engaging students in thinking about identity in society, teachers also become capable of thinking more meaningfully about their own identities and what they mean in the context of American society. This positions Multiracial teachers to develop a liberatory educational practice.

Conversation Between and Among Multiracials

Multiracial identity is statistically rare, as documented by 2000-2010 census data. Because of this, Multiracial people often lack a peer group to which they are locally connected. The emergence of social media such as Facebook groups is used by some Multiracial people as a way to connect socially and academically. However, in contrast to most monoracial people, it is rare that a Multiracial person on the mainland United States will, in the normal course of days, weeks, or even years, “naturally” find herself in a social space that consists primarily of other Multiracial people, unless the group consists of other Multiracial family members. If a situation arises in which a Mixed Race person is with other Multiracials, it is likely that there is racial variation among the group, as there was in this study. This diversity of racial mixes means that individual members of a Multiracial “group” may feel highly identified, somewhat identified, or not at all identified with other Multiracial people. Tashiro’s (2011) research indicates that many Multiracial people share experiences of discrimination, as well as the ability to identify with more than one racialized perspective. Some scholars argue that this shared experience of “otherness” has caused Multiracials to develop a shared, Multiracial consciousness (Daniel et al, 2014). Others point out that shared experiences of of racial ambiguity and difference from most family members may not be sufficient to develop a shared “Multiracial” identity (DaCosta, 2007).

The relationships and discussions that developed during the dissertation interviews were significant to the information about the relationship between Multiracial teachers’ personal experience and professional practice that emerged. Tensions about what it means to “be” Multiracial

arose in some of the dissertation interviews, and in others, the interview participants discussed similarities in our experiences. The fact that I am a Multiracial person who was interviewing other Multiracial people was essential to the tone and content of the interviews.

Overview of the Dissertation Chapters:

Chapter One has provided an introduction to the topics that are discussed in this dissertation. Chapter Two presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the dissertation. It explores the advantages and limitations of Critical Race Theory as an informing framework and introduces issues and themes in the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies. Chapter Three presents the methods used in preparing and analyzing the dissertation. Chapter Four focuses on the uses and shape of narrative in the Multiracial experience. Chapter Five focuses on the themes of marginality and centrality in Multiracial experiences. In chapter Six, I share conclusions and discuss new questions that arose for me as a result of the research. I also engage with the implications of this research educational research and for teacher practice.

Chapter Two: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

In the field of education, Critical Race Theory is most often utilized as an analytic to make sense of systemic issues, such as legal rulings that impact the structure of schooling, and student outcomes such as academic achievement and graduation rates (Rousseau & Dixon, 2006; Love, 2004; Chang, 2013). It has been less frequently linked to an analysis of *teacher* experience, though there are examples of this approach (Lynn, 2002; Morris, 2006). This dissertation seeks to contribute to a body of scholarship about Multiracial teachers through an analysis that is grounded in Critical Race Theory in general, and Critical Mixed Race Studies in particular.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is central to the theoretical framework of this dissertation. CRT scholars situate race and racism as the central ideology of the United States (Delgado, 1989; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Leonardo, 2013; Kumasi, 2011). This idea is indispensable to this dissertation, since the idea of “Multiracial” identity could not exist without the concept of “race.” Racial identity is located in the experience of many Multiracial people through questions that they encounter, such as “what are you?”, and in situations in which they are considered to be a “racial mismatch” with their parents (Olumide, 2002). These are regular events for many Multiracial people. CRT uses narrative to illuminate experience. CRT scholars write about the liberatory effects of voice. CRT’s emphasis on intersectionality informs the analytical methods and emphasis of this dissertation.

Critical Race Theory and Racial Ideology in the United States:

Ladson-Billings (1998) has argued that educational researchers must study the original Critical Race Theory literature in the field of law in order to understand CRT’s initial methods and goals. Doing so will enable scholars of education to contribute to the field while ensuring that they understand its core principles. Ladson-Billings’ suggestion led me to explore CRT analysis that was written in the field of law (Bell, 1992; Delgado, 1989; Harris, 1993; Williams, 1991). CRT’s roots

in legal theory are salient for making sense of Mixed Race experiences, though I have not found legal critical race theory analysis that is specific to Multiracial identity. However, the identification and recognition of Mixed Race people in the United States has been regulated by anti-miscegenation laws, immigration laws, and other forms of government regulation such as the census, discussed in Chapter 1. This makes legal CRT analysis particularly applicable to a study of Multiracial people. Reading legal CRT scholarship was essential to helping me to develop an understanding of the role of government regulation in establishing and maintaining the ideology of race in the United States. It also helped me to see that racial constructions are not only social; they are also created and maintained by law.

Practices Associated with Critical Race Theory Scholarship:

Rather than constituting a single theory, CRT scholarship is united by a core set of beliefs about race and racism and by an approach to scholarship. Hylton (2012) writes, “A CRT methodology can be identified by its focus on ‘race’ and racism and its intersections and a commitment to challenge racialised power relation” (p. 27). It is an analytic device that can be used to deepen our understanding of American society. CRT scholarship must integrate the political project of disrupting racism (Hylton, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Three elements of CRT scholarship that are central to analysis in this dissertation are: a) the CRT orientation toward narrative, b) the important role of voice in CRT scholarship, and c) the conceptualization of CRT as a set of intersectional and interdisciplinary practices.

a) Narrative: Building and sharing narratives is central to the practices of Critical Race Theory. Delgado (1989) explains the role of narrative in CRT and the effect of building strength and social cohesion amongst outgroups, and empathy and understandings amongst ingroups. He writes, “Members of outgroups can use stories in two basic ways: first, as a means of psychic self-preservation; and second, as a means of lessening their own subordination. These two means

correspond to the two perspectives from which a story can be viewed—that of the teller, and that of the listener. The storyteller gains psychically, the listener morally and epistemologically” (pp. 2436-2437).

Narrative takes two forms in CRT: the “true” narrative of a person or group, and the counter-narrative, or “counter-storytelling,” a construction that is designed to illuminate a set of circumstances, laws, or social realities. While “true” narrative tells us “what really happened,” counter-storytelling engages a fictionalized narrative to explore a topic or theme. A counter-story can take such forms as a dialogue between a taxi driver and his client as they discuss the social position of Black people in the United States (Bell, 1992) or a constructed narrative in which Thurgood Marshall talks with a modern day mother about her children’s experiences in the school system (Love, 2004). While this approach can be problematic for some scholars, CRT scholars argue that counter-storytelling allows for increased access to emotional and intellectual truths (Delgado, 1989).

CRT troubles notions both of “truth” and of “objectivity.” By constructing stories that are not chronologically “true,” CRT scholars provide opportunities for the reader to develop her understanding of social truths. Because of the traditional silencing of the voices of people of color and women in academia, it is difficult to find our voices fully represented in most scholarship (Collins, 2009). This leads to the question of the extent to which scholarship can be considered to be “objective.” CRT scholars argue that objectivity in the social sciences and politics does not exist. Delgado and Stefancic (2012) write that, “In these realms, truth is a social construct created to suit the purposes of the dominant group” (p. 104). According to critical race theorists, scholarship that ignores or systematically silences the scholarship or experiences of people of color cannot be said to be “objective,” because it is incomplete. Counter-narrative can connect the “objectivity” of academia with the lived experiences of people of color by using the context of an invented scenario to discuss realities of inequities in education or biased sentencing in the American justice system.

In this dissertation, I employ a form of narrative by using literature to highlight themes that emerged in educator interviews. I seek to gain access to “truth effects” (Leonardo, 2013) through narrative by exploring insights that were not available through interviews alone. These “truth effects,” accessed by using literature as an analytic tool, provide a way to explore how Multiracial teachers’ racialized standpoint impacts their professional practice.

Because literature is composed of constructed narrative, I was interested to explore how the “story” that emerges in interviews could be illuminated by the images and concepts in works of literature. The use of literature as an analytic tool is unusual in the social sciences. However, Billingsley argues that it is possible to use works of literature and art in order to deepen understanding of the experiences of people of color (Billingsley refers specifically to Black people) that are not commonly found in social science research (Billingsley, *ctd.* in Duncan, 2002). Literature and art are not, however, designed to be an analytic tool. Therefore, though I do use images from literature to interact with the interviews by highlighting ideas of identity, belonging, and marginalization that were raised by the study participants, I do not claim that the experiences represented in literature are “the same” as the stories that are shared by the educators.

This dissertation, which is representation of the research study that I conducted, is also constructed. Like an author of a novel, I made choices about the structure, content, and form of this academic narrative. By including concepts from novels, I seek to provide images and ideas that illuminate the teachers’ thinking *and* that build transparency about the constructed nature of this scholarly narrative. I seek to provide, as Clifford (1986) describes in his discussion of the literary qualities of ethnography, a “true fiction.” A “true fiction” both renders a truth through research *and*, because the research constitutes a new, constructed narrative, it constitutes a sort of fiction. Scholarship as “true fiction” also aligns with the Critical Race Theory approach to narrative and counter-narrative.

b) Voice: Described by Ladson-Billings & Tate (2006) as “naming your own reality,” voice is a defining aspect of CRT. It is both integral to and an outcome of the narrative practices of CRT. Through narrative or counter-narrative, an individual can express voice by sharing a story about one’s experience and how it represents a social or historical reality. This is because “truths only exist for this person in this predicament at this time in history” (Delgado, 1991, p. 111, as quoted in Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). Voice invites us to hear stories directly, and to perhaps begin to understand more deeply, the experiences of People of Color. It invites us to be personally affected by stories.

The CRT practice of voice emphasizes that People of Color are best situated to describe and express our own experiences (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012). Further, CRT scholars claim that voice and storytelling can constitute a liberatory practice. For oppressed groups, speaking these stories can be, according to Delgado (1989), a form of “psychic preservation” and of “lessening their own subordination” (2436-2437). In Chapter 1, I argue that Multiracial people are a silenced group, but not a systematically oppressed group. By engaging with Multiracial educators’ voices, we are able to gain some understanding of previously unheard stories and to build recognition and empowerment for rarely acknowledged experiences. I hope to contribute to loosening the silence surrounding Multiracial voices and standpoints. This discussion of voice will be picked up in greater detail in chapter 5.

c) Intersectionality: Intersectionality is essential to CRT analysis. While race is central to the CRT scholar’s analysis of society, his or her analysis of society also includes gender, social class, and sexual orientation. Mixed Race people are situated at intersections of racial ideologies; the crossing and/or integration of these ideologies are imprinted on Multiracial bodies. Because of this, the CRT construct of intersectionality is particularly relevant as an analytic for the discussion of the experiences of Multiracial educators. Scholarship in multicultural education emphasizes the

intersections of race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and social class with curriculum and school culture (Steele, 1997; Nieto, 2010; Howard, 2010). This connection with multicultural education research also makes the construct of intersectionality particularly relevant for the dissertation.

Deficits of the Critical Race Theory Model for this Study

A deficit of CRT for making sense of Multiracial teachers' narratives is its lack of complexity in its conceptualization of people of color. Because it is designed to make sense of the experiences of people of color in a racially structured society, CRT does not fully account for identities of Multiracial people, especially those who identify with Whiteness, whether or not they appear to be phenotypically "White." Whiteness Studies, which examine and critique the role of Whiteness in US society, do not include a space for the Multiracial person who has a White parent, but may or may not experience the social privileges of Whiteness.

Some Critical Race theorists acknowledge that Multiracial people exist. However, Delgado and Stefancic (2012) write, "Armchair issues such as the social construction of race, the role of multiracial people, 'passing,' ... may pose intriguing intellectual puzzles, but they lie far from the central issues of our age" (p. 107). Their dismissal of the social construction of race and of the role of Multiracial people as serious topics misses the importance of both of these topics in American society. Building an understanding of the social construction of race offers the opportunity to expose the mythologies of superiority and inferiority that are embedded in the mythology of a biological understanding of race. Acknowledging the role and placement of Multiracial people in American society helps to build our understanding of the social construction of race and creates a space for children and adults to develop a deepened sense of personal identity and of others' identities. I will explore some ways that teachers are engaging with this work in chapters 4 and 5 in this dissertation.

Critical Mixed Race Studies

An emerging field that expresses the racial nuance lacking in CRT is Critical Mixed Race Studies (CMRS). CMRS is an interpretive lens, rather than a unified theory or set of interests; there are scholars from a variety of academic fields who identify as Critical Mixed Race Studies scholars. In the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies*, Daniel, Kina, Dariotis & Fojas (2014) identify 2004 as the year in which publications about Mixed Race reached “a self-sustaining viability” (p. 8). After 2004, there was a sufficiently significant body of work to identify and develop the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies. In the article *Emerging Paradigms in Critical Mixed Race Studies*, Daniel et al. (2014) describe Critical Mixed Race Studies as “a lens that enables an examination of the comparative processes of racialization without resorting to or privileging any single defined group identity or place in an absolute sense” (p. 26). Most of the scholars and scholarship that I discuss in this dissertation use the American context as their frame of reference. However, some scholars have also begun to apply this analytical tool in international contexts. The 2014 *Critical Mixed Race Studies* conference, “Global Mixed Race,” emphasized an increasingly international interest in Multiracial identities.

Adopting the Subject Position

Rather than being objectified, or treated as “tragic,” “confused,” or otherwise pathologized, Multiracial people are driving the conversation in Critical Mixed Race Studies. Increasingly, Mixed Race scholars are conducting scholarship about representations and identifications of Mixed Race people (Root, 2004; Dawkins, 2012; Fraczek, 2011; Villegas, 1997). Daniel et al. (2014) indicate that an element of CMRS which distinguishes it from Multiracial studies is that Mixed Race people are subjects who are engaged in creating the field of study, rather than being observed objects as they sometimes were in previous work about Multiracial identity. They write, “Critical mixed race studies places mixed race at the critical center of focus. Multiracials become subjects of historical,

social, and cultural processes rather than simply objects of analysis” (p. 8). The significance of this shift for Multiracial studies and CMRS is difficult to over emphasize. This is because much of the foundational scholarship in Multiracial studies was conducted by monoracial scholars and scholars who, “...like the individuals and communities that were the primary focus of their studies, have internalized not only hypodescent but monoracial norms” (p. 11). In the field of education, much of the early scholarship about Multiracial students was written by White parents who focused on their concerns about the effect of a lack of recognition and relevant curriculum for their Multiracial children. (Ayers-Chiong, 1998; Wardle, 2004, 2004b).

The shift from research conducted by monoracial people to work developed by multi-racial scholars has shifted the conversation about Multiracial identity from classification to experience. “What are you?” a classification question, is evolving into a question of *how*, or *why* one experiences “mixed-ness.” How is Mixed Race identity represented in the arts and in culture? How can one understand the experience of “being” Mixed Race? The field of Critical Mixed Race Studies has roots in the two major areas of study: Multiracial studies and critical race theory. However, it departs significantly from these bodies of scholarship. Multiracial studies are primarily based in psychology and sociology and focus on questions of Multiracial people’s racial identity formation and social experience. CMRS is particularly attentive to expressions of Mixed Race experience in literature and the media. Critical Mixed Race Studies scholars analyze representations of Multiracial people and experience to construct understandings about the reification of race and the impact of racial hierarchy in American society.

The move from “object” to “subject” in CMRS is facilitated by the increasing numbers of Multiracially-identified scholars who are writing about and exploring expressions of Multiracial identity, interpretation, and commercialization in American society. The 2010 inaugural Critical Mixed Race Studies Conference, hosted by DePaul University, provided an opportunity for scholars, artists, and activists who were working separately to explore and express Mixed Race

experiences together. The interdisciplinarity of this biannual conference supports the development of CMRS into a field that is fundamentally interdisciplinary and intersectional (Daniel et al., 2014).

Critical Mixed Race Studies moves beyond the Multiracial movement's focus on issues of recognition and classification and introduces an analysis of social dynamics and power. In spite of this, a question that continues to be debated in of Critical Mixed Race Studies is the question of classification, or how Multiracial people could or should racially self-identify. While the question as expressed in the Multiracial movement focused on recognition, CMRS focuses on group membership. Specifically, if "Multiracial" is ultimately deemed to be a single category, how does this affect feelings of membership in other racial groups? In other words, is it possible to identify as Multiracial *and* Black *and* Korean? Must one select a particular identifier? This is a question of import for institutional policies as funding for and access to some government programs is impacted by demographic data.

Directions in Critical Mixed Race Studies Scholarship:

Intersectionality and cross-disciplinarity are central to Critical Mixed Race Studies (Daniel et al., 2014). This is evident in a focus on intersecting racialized identities and studies of the role of gender and sexual orientation in representations of Mixed Race identity (Ibrahim, 2012; Nashimi, 2014). There are several concerns that are emerging as particular interests in CMRS. These are described in the following sections:

Heteronormativity, gender, and Multiracial representations

Ibrahim (2012) discusses the institution of family, children, and marriage in the light of the *Loving v. Virginia* case. She argues that the Multiracial movement is focused on cross-racial marriages and Multiracial children. However, same-sex families are not included in this conceptualization. Ibrahim's critique highlights the heterocentrism in the Multiracial movement that

marginalizes those whose family structure does not mirror the societally constructed “norm” of a heterosexual couple.

Nishime (2014) argues that the heteronormativity in the Multiracial Movement stems from a desire to move away from the cultural belief that cross-racial relationships are somehow “unnatural.” She writes, “Multiracial literature frequently advocates respect for cross-racial, heterosexual, reproductive, true love to ‘redeem’ multiracial families from these narratives of deviance. They argue that we should accept multiracial families because they are ‘just like everyone else’ (p. 17). The *Loving v. Virginia* decision, which focused on the right of a White man and a Black woman to marry, is widely seen as “the first moment of Multiracial history.” This mythology of a “first moment” is bound up in the very question of what constitutes a “normal” family. One thing that is troubling here is the invisible referent: the “normal family” category. It is important to consider whose definition of “normal” is being reproduced, and what this might mean for the conceptualization of Multiracial identities and families.

Scholars such as Ibrahim (2012), Joseph (2013), and DaCosta (2007) have commented on the social power of White women in the early phases of the Movement, and that many of these women were encountering personalized racism for the first time through their unions with men of other races. It is possible the conceptualization of “normal” as a married, heteronormative ideal may come from their past experiences. The conceptualization of “normal” as heterosexual, biological, married reproduction also springs from American culture’s homophobia. The American legal system continues to struggle with definitions of “marriage.” Full marriage and civil rights have still not been universally extended to same-sex couples. The scholars who I have named in this section are breaking the silence that has existed around heteronormativity in Critical Mixed Race Studies. By introducing a critique of heteronormativity in Multiracial Studies and representations of Multiracial identity, CMRS scholars are developing a deeper understanding of hierarchies of power in society and heightening awareness of the intersectional nature of Mixed Race experiences.

Ibrahim also analyzes and problematizes the heteronormative focus on and silencing of Black motherhood in the Multiracial movement. In her analysis of the *Loving v. Virginia* decision, she writes, “Mildred Loving is a seminal figure in the multiracial movement, yet she is virtually unaccounted for in contemporary discourses of multiracialism as a black mother of black/multiracial children. Instead, the *Loving* case is interpreted as central to the legitimizing of marriage that subsequently legitimates the interracial family” (p. 104). She points out that most of the monoracial voices in the Multiracial movement that are heard in public spaces are those of White mothers, some of which are published in the form of memoirs about raising racially mixed children. She argues that this pushes the maternal voices of women of color further into the margins. This appearance of White privilege in a movement that claims to have the goal of facilitating acceptance of a range of family structures and extending ideas about racial membership is troubling. Further, it indicates that the voices and experiences of women of color must be consciously called upon in the Multiracial movement. To silence the voices of women of color is to reproduce forms of racial dominance, even oppression, in the Multiracial movement and Critical Mixed Race Studies.

Joseph (2013) focuses on gender and sexuality in representations of Black/White Multiracial women in the media, television, and literature. Joseph’s development of constructs such as “The New Millennium Mulatta” and “The Exceptional Multiracial” to explore typologies of “mixed-ness” highlights the extent to which archetypes such as the “tragic mulatta” continue to be reproduced in American society. Joseph’s analysis of cultural representations of Black/White Multiracials indicates that these cultural reproductions are adapting to a new American cultural mythology: the United States as a “post-racial” society.

In contrast to the hypersexualization and hysteria of the “tragic mulatta,” Joseph places a contrasting image of the Mixed Race *male* in the figure of Barack Obama: “...Obama’s presidential campaign was able to spin Mixed Race Blackness, or more specifically, his Mixed Race maleness, as emblematic of the racial experience of the United States. Maleness works like Whiteness in this

estimation: men are the default people. Obama can be representative of all America, as a Mixed Race African American *man*, in a way that a Mixed Race African American *woman* simply cannot be” (p. 121). This analysis offers the opportunity to reflect on both gender and race inequities in the United States. Joseph’s discussion of the significance of Obama’s maleness also can be significant for an analysis of heteronormativity in American society, as Obama is also represented as a heterosexual male with a wife and two daughters.

Gloria Anzaldua

Gloria Anzaldua (1983) uses language and theory to explore race-and-culture mixing and the corresponding realities that develop as a result. She has developed a language of multiplicity to discuss the hybridization of gendered, racial, cultural and linguistic experience that is increasingly utilized for the analysis and expression of Multiracial experiences (Turner, 2014; Chang-Ross, 2010, Chang, 2013; Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013). Anzaldua explores a deep connection to her languages, cultures, gender and sexual orientation rather than accepting the labels of the external world. She writes, “‘Your allegiance is to La Raza, the Chicano movement’ say the members of my race. ‘Your allegiance is to the Third World,’ say my Black and Asian friends. ‘Your allegiance is to your gender, to women,’ say the feminists. Then there’s my allegiance to the Gay movement, to the socialism revolution, to the New Age, to magic and the occult. And there’s my affinity to literature, to the world of the artist. What am I? *A third world lesbian feminist with Marxist and mystic leanings*. They would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label” (Anzaldua, 1983; p. 205). Anzaldua’s powerful indictment of naming culminates with the statement that, “I belong to myself and not to any one people” (p. 209). With the statement that “I belong to myself,” Anzaldua rejects group membership, instead marking herself as a completely autonomous person who has taken charge of her own belonging. Anzaldua’s (1983, 2002) work interrogates societal assumptions about and constructs for exploring personal realities. She achieves this through concept

formation in her use of language. Anzaldua integrates English, Spanish, and indigenous languages in her writing. Only sometimes are the Spanish and indigenous words and phrases translated into English.

This textured use of language creates both a border and an invitation in her work. Her writing, for the non-Spanish speaker, can seem unnecessarily inaccessible, even forbidding. However, through the lens of Anzaldua's words, one receives an invitation to think with *her* words, to see realities through her eyes. She achieves this with perspective; in the essay *now let us shift...the path of conocimiento...inner work, public acts* (2002), Anzaldua writes about herself in the second person, thus both directing a critical lens towards herself and inviting the reader to share in her experiences. The writing in this piece flows both *towards* and *from* the author.

Anzaldua's scholarship, rooted in Chicana feminism, casts a critical lens at the very constructs and assumptions of race. However, Anzaldua does not argue for the goal of racial or cultural "transcendence." Her placement both within *and* without group identity through her use of language creates opportunities, perhaps even a model, for pushing against reproductions of identity and race. This work can provide an example of one way that it is possible to draw strength from a conception of self that is situated in multiple ideologies, languages, and cultures.

Multiracials and Community

DaCosta (2007) is attentive to tensions and attitudes among Multiracial people concerning the possibilities for the formation of a Multiracially identified community. She addresses internal tensions that stem from the enactment of a Multiracial identity that both *relies upon* and also *pushes against* traditional racial categories (DaCosta, 2007; Joseph, 2013). This can be a source of internal tension, as Multiracial people seek both to connect through a positionality that reflects experiences of difference and also to identify with the specific racial and cultural groups in which they claim membership. A participant in DaCosta's study comments on this tension:

even within the multiracial community there is a problem related to Blackness...If the White/Asians are saying, you know, that our agendas aren't addressed in the organizations that focus on Black/White mixtures, they turn around and they do the same thing. They form an organization and they don't focus on Afro/Asian issues and Latino/Asian issues ("Elaine Johnson," qtd. in DaCosta, 2007, p. 143).

This quote is indicative of an issue that exists within the Multiracial movement and in research about Mixed Race people generally: the particularity of racism towards Black people. In her discussion of the experiences of Mixed Race people of African descent, DaCosta (2007) reports, "Several said that being of African descent afforded them a unique set of challenges in negotiating racial matters, not merely in terms of fitting into the Black community but in relation to other multiracials" (p. 146).

The case of Mixed Race Blackness

In Critical Mixed Race Studies literature, some scholars raise the question of the extent to which the adoption of a "mixed" or Multiracial identity might be a move to escape from Blackness due to its history of systematic oppression in the United States (Elam, 2011; Joseph; 2013). As described previously, Ibrahim (2012) interrogates the exclusion of Black motherhood from representations of Multiracial identity and the Multiracial movement. The complexities of Blackness within the Multiracial movement are supported by the number of scholarly texts that are specific to Black/White Multiraciality, as compared to a more generalized Multiracial identity (Elam, 2011; Joseph; 2013; Brown, 2001; Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013).

The "one-drop rule," which determines that any person who has a drop of Black blood is Black, continues to be significant for Americans of African descent. In some cases, the one drop rule has protected and provided community to Black Multiracial people. One possible way for addressing the complexity of Multiracial Blackness is present in Dagbovie-Mullins' concept of

“black-sentient mixed race identity” (p. 2). Dagbovie-Mullins (2013) writes, “Black sentience intimates a mixed-race subjectivity that includes a particular awareness of the world, a perception rooted in blackness. It suggests a connection to a black consciousness that does not overdetermine one’s racial identification but still plays a large role in it” (pp. 2-3).

An infamous example of a negative public response to a complex Multiracial stance is the outcry against Tiger’s Wood’s reference to his childhood use of the word “Cablinasian” to describe his Caucasian, Black, and Asian racial roots. The outraged response of many reflects an assumption that Woods was avoiding the African American identity that was ascribed to him by society (Nishime, 2014). This was made all the more problematic as it was clear that others did not share Woods’ complex understanding of his identity.

Fuzzy Zoeller, a professional golfer, said of Woods, “You pat him on the back and say congratulations and enjoy it and tell him not to serve fried chicken next year...or collard greens or whatever the hell they serve” (qtd. in Nishime, 2014, p. 43). While Woods’ term for his identity was indicative of a complex sense of identity, Zoeller’s comment, which he later claimed was a joke, demonstrated that the one-drop rule defined his thinking about Woods’ race.

The marginalization of Americans of African descent means that the identity of Mixed Race African Americans may be particularly impacted by the American social construction of Blackness. Jennifer Lee and Frank D. Bean write that Blackness ““continues to constitute a fundamental racial construction in American society. Hence, it is not simply that race matters, but more specifically, that Black race matters, consistent with the African American exceptionalism thesis” (Lee and Bean, qtd. in Garrod et al, 2014, p. 3). In some instances this leads to a Black, rather than Multiracial, identity. As stated previously, some scholars argue that a Multiracial identification is, for some mixed-Black African Americans, an escape from the stigma of Blackness (Elam, 2011; Joseph, 2013; Ibrahim, 2012).

Relevance of Critical Race Theory and Critical Mixed Race Studies for This Study

The analytics of Critical Race Theory and Critical Mixed Race Studies are central to this dissertation. CRT's conceptualization of voice and narrative as forms of psychological preservation (Delgado, 1989), is central to my analysis of the interviews and of the relationships that arose between me and the study participants. As Mixed Race people in conversation about our experience with race in the United States, we discussed, and sometimes mutually confirmed, our experiences with race. This provided an experience of psychic self-preservation and of mutual recognition with is frequently absent for Multiracial people, especially in the mainland United States. Because of CRT's emphasis on structural racism and the growing body of scholarship around CRT in education, a CRT-grounded discussion of the experiences of Multiracial teachers is especially salient.

One way that CMRS scholars depart from the work of CRT is that Critical Mixed Race Studies scholars focus on the role of *Multiracial* identities in the racial paradigms and cultural dialogue in the United States. Like CRT, CMRS is grounded in intersectionality and questions of power in society. Unlike CRT, CMRS includes a more complex understanding of racial identity than is present in much CRT analysis. Much of the current research in Critical Mixed Race Studies is being developed in cultural theory and critical social theory, while Critical Race Theory is more frequently used as an analytic in legal and social sciences. Thus, the questions that the two disciplines might ask are fundamentally different in focus. For instance, a CRT scholar might ask "How did anti-miscegenation laws influence social power in the United States?" A Critical Mixed Race Studies scholar might ask "How were Multiracial characters inscribed in fiction before and after the *Loving v. Virginia* Supreme Court decision?"

CMRS is particularly relevant for building understanding a complex racial stance. The intersectional nature of CMRS, as well as the instances in which works of fiction have been studied in CMRS, provide examples and scholarship for that element of this dissertation. Like Critical Race

Theory, CMRS situates race as central to the lived experiences and social hierarchies in the United States. However, CMRS does not systematically integrate the element of counter-narrative that is central to Critical Race Theory. Due to the number of possible racial mixes, and the many ways that these mixes are “seen” and accepted (or not) in American society, it is not feasible to develop a single, paradigmatic counter-narrative to describe the “Mixed Race experience.”

Conceptual Framework: Themes and Novels

The conceptual framework of this dissertation is drawn from themes that arose in the interviews that I conducted and concepts, images and motifs from two novels: *The English Patient*, by Michael Ondaatje (1992), and *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison (1987, 2004). Each of these novels is prominent in the body of postcolonial literature. They are described as “postcolonial” because they engage with and reconstitute conceptualizations of race, identity, and Otherness that developed as an effect of Western colonialism (Bhabha, 2010; Klages, 2006). Central to the postcolonial project is a shift from object to subject, from being the seen, to the seer and voicer of experience. Klages (2006) writes, “...postcolonial discourses articulated the experience of the colonized, rather than the colonizer, giving what’s called the ‘subaltern’-the subordinated non-White, non-Western subject of colonial rule-a voice” (p. 153). In the voices of Sethe, the protagonist of *Beloved*, and Kip, a protagonist in *The English Patient*, we are able to gain access to two responses to colonization and its effects.

Postcolonialism and Multiracial Voices

By engaging the ideas of postcolonial authors, I am better able to explore the experiences expressed by Multiracial people. The concept of being “Multiracial” is inextricably bound up with colonialism. “Race” is dependent on constructs that were developed by colonizers as a way of marking difference from and subjugating the “Other.” There could be no “Multiracials” without the

preceding construction of “race.” Multiracial people exist because of meetings of cultures, bodies, and languages that encountered each other through processes of colonization (Aanerud, personal communication).

Although Multiracials’ existence depends on colonialism and migration, we are often seen as aberrant, a physical expression of an unnatural union. Postcolonial literature provides an opportunity to confront that assumption. Bhabha writes, “The Western metropole must confront its postcolonial history, told by its influx of postwar migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity...*” (p.9). Multiracial stories must be told, not because they are different or new, but because they are integral to and constitutive of the American experience. Themes that repeatedly arose across interviews included memory, phenotype, and questions of marginality. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation, the teachers that I interviewed have thought deeply about these topics and have used them to inform their educational practice. The novels that I have selected for my conceptual framework engage with questions of identity and language in ways that informed my analysis of the interviews. Each of these themes is shaped by both the interviews and the novels. The methods that I used for exploring these themes are discussed in Chapter 3.

Plot Summaries of *The English Patient* and *Beloved*

Michael Ondaatje’s Booker Prize winning novel *The English Patient* (1992) focuses on the experiences of four characters living together in a villa in Tuscany during the final months of World War II. “The English Patient” claims to have amnesia and was burned in a plane accident in the north African desert. His nationality is initially unknown, though he is later revealed to be Almásy, a Hungarian aristocrat and explorer. Hana, a Canadian woman, is his nurse. David Caravaggio, a professional thief, unexpectedly moves into the villa. As the text evolves, we discover that Caravaggio knew Hana in Canada and that he has become addicted to morphine during the war.

Caravaggio is obsessed with discovering the true identity of the English Patient. Kip, whose birth name is Kirpal Singh, is the last person to arrive to the villa. Kip, a bomb diffuser, joined the British military in India after his older brother refused to do so. He becomes Hana's lover. Ondaatje uses a frame narrative, or a narrative that contains stories-within-a-story, to disclose information about the characters' pasts. The novel progresses in two directions: the forward-moving narrative develops the evolving relationships between the English Patient, Kip, Hana, and Caravaggio in the "present." The backward-moving narrative returns to the "past," providing information about the characters' lives prior to and in the early days of the war. My discussion of marginal identity as central in chapter five is particularly informed by Kip, the Sikh sapper in *The English Patient*. My exploration of the concept of the imagined body is informed by both the English Patient and Kip.

Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* focuses on the life and decisions of Sethe, a Black woman who was enslaved on a Kentucky plantation called "Sweet Home." Sethe escapes from Sweet Home to Ohio. One month after arriving to Ohio, Sethe is faced with a terrible choice when her former owner arrives to her new home to return Sethe and her children to Sweet Home. Rather than accept this decision, Sethe decides to kill her children, succeeding in the case of one, who is referred to as the "crawling-already?" baby. Sethe is left with three of her children: the two oldest boys and Denver, the girl to whom Sethe had given birth after escaping from the plantation. "Schoolteacher," who had planned to return Sethe to Sweet Home, returns to Kentucky without Sethe or her children.

Eighteen years after Schoolteacher's attempt to capture Sethe, a young woman walks out of the water and arrives at Sethe's home. She identifies herself as "Beloved." Sethe takes Beloved into the house and begins to care for her. Like the English Patient, the young woman claims not to remember anything about her past life. However, Beloved remembers a number of details from the past that only the "crawling-already?" baby is likely to have known. Sethe and Denver become convinced that Beloved is the incarnation of Sethe's long-dead third child. As described below, Morrison's concept of "rememory" informs my analysis of the educator interviews.

Morrison's (1997) non-fiction writing also informs the conceptual framework of this dissertation. In the essay "Home," Morrison discusses her attempt to use language "to convert a racist house into a race-specific yet nonracist home. How to enunciate race while depriving it of its lethal cling?" (p. 5). In "Home," Morrison discusses attempts to address this question through her fiction. Morrison's ideas about the use of language are important for thinking through questions about how to voice race and racialized experiences. Her focus on using language as a liberating, rather than an imprisoning construct is particularly significant for this dissertation, because the question of how to describe Multiracial experiences without falling into a reification of race is a particularly significant question for this dissertation.

Key Concept I: Rememory:

The concept of "rememory," relevant for my discussion of key memories for the teachers that I interviewed, is taken directly from *Beloved*. Morrison (2004) introduces the concept of rememory in *Beloved*. Memory is essential to the interviews, as the study participants engage with memories of their first awareness of race and important moments in their lives that shaped, or were shaped by, their experiences of being a racialized Multiracial person. Morrison's concept of rememory, while it integrates the idea of memory, or recalling the past, is more complex. In the passage below, Sethe describes the nature of rememory to her daughter, Denver:

I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place-the picture of it-stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.'

‘Can other people see it?’ asked Denver.

‘Oh yes. Oh, yes, yes, yes. Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it’s you thinking it up. A thought picture. But no. It’s when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place was real. It’s never going away. Even if the whole farm-every tree and grass blade of it does. The picture is still there and what’s more, if you go there-you who never was there-if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can’t go there. Never. Because even though it’s all over-over and done with-it’s going to always be there waiting for you. That’s how come I had to get all my children out. No matter what.’

Denver picked at her fingernails. ‘If it’s still there, waiting, that must mean that nothing ever dies.’

Sethe looked right in Denver’s face. ‘Nothing ever does,’ she said (Morrison, 2004; pp. 43-44).

I am interested in the idea that “rememory” is different, perhaps richer, than memory.

Rememory is both generative and traumatic. For instance, the “whole farm” that Sethe refers to in the quote above is Sweet Home, the plantation that was a site of Sethe’s enslavement. In this case, rememory is clearly the site of trauma. In the context of this study, I am interested in the ways in which some memories are so powerful, so definitive, that they do not remain in the past, the location of memory. Rather, these “past events” are so definitive that they enter into the present, both defining and co-existing with it.

In *Beloved*, Morrison suggests that “rememories” become physical objects that exist independent of the people that experienced them. This is why Sethe warns her daughter that she must never return to the former site of Sweet Home, which Sethe claims “..will be there for you,

waiting for you.” Sethe’s implication is that, should Denver return to the site of Sweet Home, she will somehow become ensnared by, perhaps even destroyed by, the past.

The concept of “rememory” has two sites of interest for the dissertation: 1) It is interesting to consider the American racial project as a site of rememory. Over centuries, the experiences and perceptions of millions of people in the Americas have built “rememory” that has ultimately coalesced into the American racial project. These “rememories” have solidified into social rules and laws that have become “race” in the United States. Because the creation of racial ideas in the United States has relied on oppression, genocide, and war, I place this past-present rememory of race in the context of collective trauma in the United States.

Understanding the racial idea as a central element of the American racial project and of American identity is a shared construct with critical race theory, discussed in the Theoretical Framework section of this chapter. Rememory is a bridge between Critical Race Theory, Critical Mixed Race Studies, literature, and the interviews that I discuss in this dissertation. Rememory, understood in this way, can serve as an analytic for making sense of the the centrality of race in the American experience and in the lives of the educators that I interviewed.

2) Rememory is a site of importance for the Multiracial educators that I interviewed. Evangeline, William, Daiana, and Chris each identify moments that are especially significant to how they conceptualize their racial identities. These moments live for and are points of reference for the teachers, who describe and engage with them at various points in the interviews. “Rememories” were generally referred to more than once and were considered foundational by the educators. I want to be careful not to describe “racial awakening” as necessarily traumatic. Rememory is a site of power: it is the site at which a moment or a time of our lives is particularly alive. Rememories become fundamental and central to identity.

Key Concept II: The Racial Imaginary: Phenotype and Identity

As indicated by the theoretical framework, the concept of race is central to this dissertation. The participants' experiences as racialized beings are essential to building understanding of their experiences as both teachers and students. In addition to discussing the educators' description and discussion of their racialized experiences, two characters from *The English Patient* inform my discussion of race: the mysterious "English Patient", and Kip, the Sikh sapper, who becomes, in his marginality, the central character of the novel.

As discussed previously, the questions of phenotype, and often of ethnic ambiguity, are significant in the lived experience of Mixed Race people. Of course, not all Multiracial people are "ethnically ambiguous." Many Multiracial people have features that are typically associated with a "race," whether or not the racialized person feels an affinity with that race, ethnicity, or nationality.

The character of the English Patient provides an interesting entry-point for the discussion of phenotype. The question of the English Patient's identity is central to the novel. The English Patient claims not to remember his identity. He has been taken in by an Allied war hospital. He is cared for by a White Canadian nurse, Hana. The English Patient has been horribly burned in a plane fire in the desert. This fire, which the Patient barely survived, has burned away all markers of what the Patient looked like prior to the fire, with the exception of his grey eyes.

This "absence" of a phenotype renders the English Patient unknowable to the other people in the villa San Girolamo. Because the English Patient cannot be physically identified, and because he himself claims not to remember his identity, he becomes a canvas of the imaginings of the people in the villa. Hana adores the English Patient. Indeed, Caravaggio accuses her of falling in love with her idea of who the English Patient might be. Caravaggio himself is obsessed with the mysterious patient, determined to discover whether he is involved with a spy operation that resulted in Caravaggio's torture. Only Kip, the Sikh sapper, seems able to freely interact with the English

Patient without slipping into a world of imagined identity. However, it may be that the English Patient is imagining Kip. On pp. 176-177, the English Patient says,

Kip and I are both international bastards-born in one place and choosing to live elsewhere. Fighting to get back to or get away from our homelands all our lives. Though Kip doesn't recognize that yet That's why we get on so well together.

The English Patient seems caught in a world of his own imagining, as he re-tells his story from notes and segments that he has put in the pages of a text of Herodotus. And Herodotus, as the English Patient would tell us, is a liar.

Much as phenotype forms the landscape of society's collective imaginings about race, the English Patient's body becomes the imagined landscape of the residents of the villa. The English Patient's lack of identifiability renders him a landscape of the imagination in a way that he would not be if he were physically recognizable. The architecture of the imagination is equally significant for how the reader understands Kip, Hana's "warrior saint:"

She imagines all of Asia through the gestures of this one man. The way he lazily moves, his quiet civilization. He speaks of warrior saints and she now feels he is one, stern and visionary, pausing only in these rare times of sunlight to be godless, informal, his head back again on the table so the sun can dry his spread hair like grain in a fan-shaped straw basket (p. 217).

This is an interesting metaphor for the stories of phenotype and the imagination that are shared in this dissertation.

The character Kip in *The English Patient* provides us with an additional canvas for considering an aspect of the experiences of Multiracial people: marginality and centrality. As conceptualized by Critical Race Theory, the racialized "other" in American society are People of Color. While being marginalized as "other," People of Color are also central to the American racial project. The Multiracial people that I interviewed demonstrated a heightened awareness of this

marginality. They had thought closely about what it means to have, or perhaps adopt, a racial identity. Because Multiracial people often lack a simple “ascribed identity,” they have done more close thinking about the nature and meaning of their identities from a younger age than many monoracial people.

Finally, in Kip we have the opportunity to change perspectives: from the perspective to the *seen*, the imagined, to that of the *seer*, or one who regards. Rather than being the person who is regarded, we have the opportunity to hear Kip’s own voice. He is no longer the warrior saint, or one who is spoken for. When he hears his voice, he is no longer Kip, the Sikh sapper. In these moments, he has become Kirpal Singh, the son, the younger brother. In these moments, he has become a subject, no longer an object. His marginal voice has become central. Thus, we can begin to understand his voice, as the voices of the Multiracial educators that I have interviewed can begin to speak to us through the conceptual framework of this dissertation.

He was accustomed to his invisibility. In England he was ignored in the various barracks, and he came to prefer that. The self-sufficiency and privacy Hana saw in him later were caused not just by his being a sapper in the Italian campaign. It was much a result of being the anonymous member of another race, a part of the invisible world. He had built up defences of character against all that, trusting only those who befriended him. But that night in Erith he knew he was capable of having wires attached to him that influenced all around him who did not have his specific talent”(Ondaatje, 1992; pp. 196-197).

Also as another example of this is Kip the milk over Kip’s arm incident: having one’s “otherness” be emphasized by a loved one, in this case, Hana. It is interesting that, in this passage, Kip is situated as the other: it is Hana, his White lover, who emphasizes Kip’s brownness by pouring milk over his arm at the dinner table.

Finally is the issue of naming. Naming is essential to the ongoing questions of marginality and centrality in this text. The English Patient, our man of the erased phenotype, is nameless for

much of the book. In some ways, he has no identity, or no named identity, beyond the fragmentary stories that he writes down and places in the pages of Herodotus. Kip, who represents the marginal made central in this discussion, does have a name. However, the name that he carries for much of the text is itself a form of marginalization: “Kip” is not the sapper’s true name. Rather, “Kip” is a nickname give to him by the British soldiers. Kip’s true name is Kirpal Singh. “And he does not know what he is doing here.”

Relevance of the Conceptual Framework for the Study

The English Patient and *Beloved* are central to my analysis of the stories that the educators in this study have shared with me. As I read and re-read the interviews, I found intersections with the ideas in the novels. Evangeline, William, Chris, and Daiana remembered deeply, recalling conversations and moments from their pasts that have become essential to their racial conceptualizations of self and to how they think about education and their teaching practice. Their ideas about identity and race are also central to how and what they teach. Therefore their imaginations of what they can know-and not know- about their students are important, much as the imaginings of the residents of the villa are essential to their interactions with each other. Likewise, Sethe’s imaginings about Beloved’s “true” identity and her feelings of guilt for killing her “crawling-already?” daughter inform her treatment of the young woman who arrives to her house. The shape that we give ourselves and others through the power of our personal and collective imaginings determines our actions in personal and professional arenas. The novels are as much a part of the process of this dissertation as the interviews, which constitute a form of “what really happened.” However, what “really happened” is also a product of shared memory and shared experience. It constitutes a “true fiction” (Clifford, 1986). By bringing fiction into contact with empirical evidence, I seek to make this process transparent to the reader.

Chapter Three: Methods

The research questions posed in this dissertation required two methods of data collection: interviews with Multiracial educators, which provided empirical data, and analysis of works of fiction that could illuminate themes from the interviews. The methods employed called for two kinds of intellectual work: analysis and interpretation.

Wolcott (1990) writes,

Analysis... follows standard procedures for observing, measuring, and communicating with others about the nature of what is ‘there,’ the reality of the everyday world as we experience it. Data subjected to analysis are examined and reported through procedures generally understood and accepted in that everyday world, among social and not-so-social scientists (p. 33, original emphasis).

I used analysis in Wolcott’s sense to make sense of the empirical data of the interviews in ways that are discussed in detail below. Of interpretation, he writes, “*Interpretation*, by contrast, is not derived from rigorous, agreed upon, carefully specified procedures, but from our efforts at sense-making, a human activity that includes intuition, past experience, emotion-personal attributes of human researchers that can be argued endlessly but neither proved nor disproved to the satisfaction of all. Interpretation invites the examination, the ‘pondering,’ of data in terms of what people make of it” (p. 33, original emphasis). It is interpretation that I used most closely for the integration of the concepts, images, and characters of novels into the discussion of the themes that arose during the interviews. While I disagree with Wolcott’s implication that interpretation lacks rigor, the interpretation of the novels, and the ways in which they connect with the interviews, has required a distinct process from the analysis of the interviews.

The methods that I used in the dissertation each addressed one of the research questions. The following discussion of the methods is organized by research question.

1. What narratives do Multiracial educators construct about their lives and racial identities? How are these constructions represented in their educational practice?

Rationale for a Qualitative Approach:

A qualitative design was essential for providing a lens to examine the participants' identity stories and teaching practice. I rely on narrative analysis to explore the data. Narrative research suggests that peoples' sense of self is largely constructed from the narratives that we are told by others and that we construct about ourselves. Merriam (2009) writes, "Stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and through which we understand the world around us" (p. 32). Johnson and Golombek (2002) further propose that the development of a narrative of experience can be particularly significant for teachers, providing us with an opportunity to reflect on the origins of our beliefs and practices.

Johnson and Golombek (2002) argue that, in addition to being a form of reflection and self-discovery, teacher narratives can provide opportunities for personal and professional transformation. Transformation was not an explicit goal of this research; thinking about the shape and meaning of stories was. However, I do share the orientation that narrative sharing can be transformative. To some extent, the interviews became discourse and story-telling events, rather than simply what Mischler (1986) refers to as "informational interviews."

During the conversations, which ranged from one to two and a half hours, I encouraged the participants to engage in deep story-telling as they shared their experiences and perceptions. The use of the word "conversations" is deliberate; the narrative approach that I employed during these interviews sometimes approached a conversational tone as much as a formal interview. The interviews became a space in which life stories and experiences with race could be shared, rather than simply told.

While I am interested in the positionality of the researcher in studies, I was initially uncertain about the extent to which I would share my own stories during the interviews. This was decided for me during the first conversation with Chris, a Black/White history teacher who was the first person that I interviewed. Twice during the initial interview, he asked me questions that were relevant to the topics that he was discussing. The first time, we were discussing family structure. Chris asked me: “Is that similar for you? Like...Or did you grow up with both parents...at home?” (Chris interview 1, p. 23). Minutes later, while discussing the language that he uses to discuss his racial identity, Chris asked me, “Do *you* use one over the other? Or can I ask that...in the interview?” (Chris interview 1, p. 29).

My decision to answer Chris’ queries with my own stories had significance beyond our interviews, extending to my approach to the study as a whole. Because Chris’ and my rapport broadened after I responded to his questions about my life, I decided to adopt this open position for all of the interviews, viewing them as a co-constructed process.² This opened up a space between us that, I believe, led to a more open “storytelling” environment. It created a mutually affirming space that contributed to, as described by Delgado (1989) psychic preservation and lessening of subordination.

During the initial interview with the study participants, I invited them to ask me questions should they wish. Some chose to ask questions about my experience, while others did not. My primary concern was to be mindful of and responsive to the desires of the participants. When I observed that a participant preferred that I limit myself to fact checks, clarifications, and new questions, I focused on these types of responses. Sometimes this varied across interviews with the same person; there would be a great deal of shared story-telling during one interview and primarily a question and response format in another.

² My understanding of the concept of the co-construction of conversation and openness to the other has been influenced by Gadamer’s (2004) discussion of “I/Thou” relationships.

Settings, Participants, and Sampling decisions

There were two key criteria for participation in the study: racial self-identification and teaching experience. Because the study explores how Mixed Race teachers make meaning about their identities and professional practice, I sought educators who identify as bi-or Multiracial, with the requirement that their parents belong to two different racial groups as defined in the United States. The requirement of a Multiracial identification was included because many Mixed Race people adopt a mono-racial, rather than a bi-racial, identity (Chiong, 1998). Therefore, simply having parents from different races was not sufficient. This is not to suggest that there is not much to learn from Multiracial teachers who have a mono-racial identification. However, because I am interested in the development of Multiracial narratives and teacher practice, a Multiracial identification was a necessity for the study participants.

Questions of ethnicity sometimes troubled those of race in this study. While all of the study participants identify as Mixed Race, other elements of their identities were extremely important to them, ultimately making a single racial (or multi-racial) identification difficult. Additionally, the study participants have fluid racial identities, at times identifying as monoracial, at others as Multiracial. Ethnicity was valued as much by some of the study participants as race. Each of the participants made references to both during the interviews, situating themselves as both *racial* and *ethnic* beings.

While American constructs of race impacted all of the participants' public identities, Evangeline, who grew up in Hawai'i, held her ethnic identities most dear. Evangeline described herself as "Dutch-German-Filipino," rather than "White" and "Asian." She stated that she never used the term "Multiracial" to describe herself until she moved to the continental United States as an adult. Evangeline described feeling dissatisfied with the US mainland racial system, stating that, "...it renders me invisible."

For Evangeline, it is ethnicity, rather than race, that is storied and most central to her identity. She stated that,

So whenever I refer to myself...I have never referred to myself as a racial being...I've never used racial terms, until I moved to the continental United States as an adult....'cause in Hawai'i we ask each other all the time, 'What are you?' And, we name out all of our ethnicities. And, so, 'Filipino-Dutch-German-Irish.'... I always say, 'The more ethnicities that you can name, the more beautiful you're considered.'

Evangeline described her decision to identify as Multiracial on the mainland United States as a political act that builds solidarity with People of Color. Her decision to adopt the term "Multiracial" though the label feels uncomfortable was unique among the people that I interviewed.

There were four participants in the empirical element of the study. The small number of participants provided the opportunity to deeply engage with the voices of people who have markedly differing phenotypes, racial mixes, and life experiences. Two of the study participants are male: Chris is a Black/White Biracial man in his 30s. He teaches history. William, who is also in his 30s, teaches English and History. His heritage is Mexican and Chinese. During the interview process, he occasionally referred to himself as "Mexanese." While Chris had been teaching for about 10 years at the time of the interviews, William had been a classroom teacher for about three years. Two of the study participants are female: Daiana is a Black/White elementary school teacher at an independent school in a metropolitan area in the Western United States. She has over two decades of teaching experience. Evangeline, who is Filipino and White, is an administrator at an independent school in the Western United States. She began her career as a Spanish teacher, moving into administration after several years of classroom teaching.

Research Strategy: Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

The empirical data for the dissertation comes from interviews that I conducted between 2012-2014. Each participant was interviewed from two to five times, for a total of 12 separate interviews that averaged 1.5 to 2 hours. The shortest interview lasted 40 minutes, and the longest lasted 2 hours, 40 minutes. I recorded the interviews with recording devices, transcribed, took field notes, and analyzed the data. I observed in the classroom of each of the participants for between 2 and 7 hours. The primary focus of analysis was the interviews, rather than the observations. I conducted the observations with the intent of developing insight into the educators' descriptions of their work and gaining a sense of their practice and relationship with students.

Study participants were identified through a convenience sample. I sought to identify participants in a non-invasive way. Because I wanted to find Biracial and/or Multiracial educators in a way that was likely to build trust and long-term relationships, I struggled with the question of how to identify them without asking "What are you?" One way to achieve this was through my network of personal and professional contacts. I contacted the potential participants by email and we had an initial conversation, after which they decided whether to participate in the study. I conducted initial conversations with other potential participants, contacted through similar methods, who chose not to participate.

During the interview process and analysis, I was mindful that I was also a subject in the interviews. Behar's work (1996) provides an example of a scholar who situates herself within her work by exploring how experiences in her life are relevant for themes that she takes up in her research. I viewed my comments and the relationship that emerged between the study participants and me as part of the empirical data of the study, and I analyzed it as such.

As I organized and conducted interviews, I was interested in questions of shared positionality and was attentive to assumptions of shared experience and/or difference. I had a common element of professional experience with each of the study participants; like them, I am an

educator. I shared a White/Black racial mix with two of the study participants. With another, I shared a family background in Hawai'i. I share a gender: female-with 2 of the participants. Like all of the study participants, I am Multiracial. Like all of the study participants, I have a Master's degree.

Data Set: 2012

The 2012 data set is composed of a series of six interviews that I conducted in 2012 with two teachers: Chris and William. Each of them was referred to me through a shared professional contact. I invited a third teacher to participate in the study who declined to participate.

Each of the 2012 interviews focused on a different set of topics: the first on early-childhood experiences with race and the emergence of racial awareness; the second on schooling (K-12) experiences; the third addressed the teachers' educational practices. During the interviews, I was interested in pedagogical approaches and/or curricula employed by the teachers. The three interviews took place over the course of a month. Length of time between interviews varied between one day and three weeks. The time between interviews was dependent on participant and interviewer availability. The interview length ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours. I tape-recorded and took notes during the interviews.

After conclusion of the interviews, I conducted a classroom observation of each of the participants. The classroom observation lasted for one hour and 50 minutes in each of the 2012 study participants' classrooms. During the observation I noted the layout of the room, posters and images, and which, if any, books were evident and whether they were demonstrative of complex identities/Mixed Race identity. I requested a copy of the day's handouts in order to facilitate my understanding of the day's lesson. I was curious about whether identity was mentioned in the lesson. I was attentive to the climate and tone of the classroom.

Data Set: 2014

I conducted the second set of interviews in 2014. The 2012 interviews were fruitful, with the teachers describing personal and professional experiences that illuminated beliefs, experiences, and professional practices that were relevant to Mixed Race identity. Because of this, I decided to learn how more teachers responded to the same set of questions.

I identified the 2014 participants in two ways: one was through previous professional contact: four of the people that I approached were known to me through my work in the field of education. Of the former personal contacts, two people elected to participate in the study. Additionally, three people were referred to me through other personal and professional contacts. Of these three, one person declined to participate in the study and two were non-responsive. There were two participants who completed the interview and observation process in the 2014 group: Daiana and Evangeline.

The content of the 2014 interviews closely aligned with the 2012 interviews. As was the case in the pilot study, the interviews for the second data set were semi-structured and based on my interview protocols. I conducted 2 interviews with Evangeline and 4 with Daiana. There was 1 month between interviews with Evangeline, and 2 months between interviews with Daiana. As with the 2012 interviews, I completed one workplace observation.

Data analysis: Interviews and observations

I transcribed and analyzed the interviews, utilizing open coding to identify recurring themes and ideas across participants and interviews. In addition to identifying themes and motifs in the interviews, I was attentive to the frequency and length of my participation. I also paid attention to shared experiences and understandings that may have impacted the direction and outcomes of the interviews. I considered themes, such as racial border patrolling (Dalmage, 2003), that appear in educational research, Critical Race Theory, Mixed Race identity research and Critical Mixed Race

Studies. When analyzing the interviews, I also reviewed the content of my observation notes, diagrams, and photos. I found these artifacts to be particularly productive for deepening my understanding of how the educators develop and support their curricula.

2. How can works of literature illuminate themes that appear in Multiracial educators' narratives and professional practice?

Works of fiction are productive for a discussion of several of the themes in the interviews. Feelings of difference, thoughts about the role of phenotype in personal experience, and the impact of identity on teaching practices were discussed by each of the participants. The teachers' commentaries integrated rich use of metaphor and a narrative structure to convey their experiences. Huberman (2014) writes, "The people we study use metaphors constantly as a way of making sense of their experience. We do the same thing as we examine our data. The issue, perhaps, is not *whether* to use metaphor as an analysis tactic, but to be *aware* of how we-and the people we study-use it" (p. 250). As the listener and questioner during the interviews, I was invited to interact with these narratives, metaphors, and the people who developed them, much as a reader is invited to interact with the narrative structure of a novel.

Novels as an Analytical Construct in Qualitative Research:

My interest in exploring this topic stems from my years as a student of literature at Amherst College and of teaching literature to middle and high school students. Among the texts that I have taught are *Beloved* (1987, 2004) and *The English Patient* (1992), the two novels that I am accessing most extensively in this dissertation. My discussions with students about these texts have influenced my understandings of the novels. My thoughts about Morrison's concept of "rememory," discussed in the conceptual framework, and Ondaatje's character Kip as the marginal/central evolved through my work with students. My belief that fiction can inform how people make sense of the world is linked to my work with students and is central to this dissertation.

This thinking has been influenced by many of the texts that I have read. Novels are sources of inspiration, questioning, and deep thought for me. I was interested in moving novels from the field of the conceptual research, where they are used for interpretation and analysis (Allen, 2004; Roland Martin, 2007; Greene, 1995). I was curious to see what would happen if I included novels, which are essential to the ways that I make meaning, in the process of coding and interpreting empirical data. The use of fiction as a central construct of the dissertation invites the possibility of broadening its use as a valid interpretive tool in empirical social science research.

Selection Criteria and Process: Novels

I sought texts that were linguistically and conceptually rich in ways that were relevant to and highlighted the themes of the interviews. I sought 2-3 novels that had direct relevance to the theme of identity. I limited the number of novels so that the educators' ideas and experiences would remain the focus of the dissertation.

Initially, I had a preference for novels that had Biracial or Multiracial protagonists. I also considered limiting the selection criteria to novels that were written by Multiracial authors, as I believed that Multiracial authors would be particularly sensitive to issues of identity. Novels that I considered in this early stage were *Caucasia* (Senna, 1998), *The Girl Who Fell From the Sky* (Darrow; 2010) and *Half-blood Blues* (Edugyan; 2011). However, when I focused on texts with Multiracial protagonists, my attention veered to an analysis of the images and tropes in the representation of Multiracial characters. I found myself struggling with the question of the extent to which the author was interacting with the stereotype of the "tragic mulatto," rather than focusing on the images and concepts that highlighted the study participants' thinking. Ironically, novels with a tight focus on Multiracial identity left me with less space to explore the ways in which the themes in the novels interacted with the interviews.

The novels that provided opportunities to link with the themes in the interviews were conceptually open and conceptually rigorous. By “conceptually open,” I mean that they contained a wealth of images and ideas that could be used to interact with and consider the ideas in the interviews. By “conceptually rigorous,” I mean that the concepts presented in the novels were challenging, layered, and deep. I wanted for the texts to demand something of me as a reader, much as the interviews required something of me as the interviewer. I did not want easy answers or pre-decided responses in the fiction that I selected.

The texts that I ultimately selected for their rich imagery and concepts were the Booker-prize winning novel *The English Patient* (1992), by Sri Lankan-Canadian author Michael Ondaatje, and Pulitzer-Prize winning *Beloved* (1988), by African American author Toni Morrison. Each of these novels contained the openness and rigor that were essential to the study.

Data Interpretation and Analysis: Novels

The relevance of the novels for sense-making of the interviews has in some ways been structural: the metaphors and concepts in the novels provide an illuminating structure of imagery and motif that I could use to interact with the interviews. Some of what the study participants shared brought the novels to mind, and vice-versa.

Data analysis of the novels took place in three phases:

1. Repeated reading familiarized me with these texts, much as I was familiarized with the experience of Biracial people prior to beginning the study. I had read *The English Patient* and *Beloved* independently and had taught them in my high school classes prior to beginning the study.
2. Note-taking, writing down quotes, and writing memos about themes, images, and characters helped me to identify connections within and across the texts. I read and annotated each of the

novels closely, wrote summaries of each chapter, and created a log of quotes that were particularly evocative and/or linguistically rich. These quotes had the conceptual spaces that could be especially relevant or effective for an interpretation of the interviews. This included direct reference to race and other aspects of identity as well as imagery and/or concepts such as Morrison's (2004) "rememory."

3. Making connections between the texts and the interviews. After initial coding of the interviews, I began to include references to the novels in the interview memos, and vice versa. I tracked connections between the interviews and the novels. In some circumstances, this was direct, such as tracking the motif of mirrors in *The English Patient* and in Daiana's discussion of the development of racial awareness. In others, the connection was suggestive, as a commentary in one of the interviews could call an image from one of the novels to mind. Over time, I began to stitch together the two analyses: novels and narrative interviews.

Subjectivity and Bias:

Much of what influences my biases is integrated into other parts of this dissertation. My Biracial identity is central to the way that I shaped this work. It is integral to my interest in this topic and to how I interacted with the study participants. My sense of what it means to be Biracial affected the interviews and the analysis because I designed the questions and was the sole interviewer. As stated previously, because of the depth of my personal engagement with this topic, I also see myself as a participant in these interviews, and I integrate this understanding into the interpretive process, analysis, and writing.

One could argue that my personal engagement with this topic is a limitation of the study. I agree with this observation. However, I see the limitation as positive, because it facilitated the participants' exploration of feelings about racial identity and how that influences us. Another

limitation could be the integration of literature into a dissertation that is written in the field of education but is not focused on English teaching methods. This approach, though it is used in some conceptual work in education, is uncommon elsewhere in educational research. However, I hope that this dissertation will contribute to insights into intersections between educators' narratives and those in the shaped world of fiction.

Links between the Methods and the Theoretical Framework

In his discussion of Critical Race Theory, Leonardo (2013) writes, "Storytelling is not valued so much for its *truth content* as its *truth effects*, its ability to affect our actions and orientation to the Other" (p, 20). CRT employs counter-storytelling as a way of accessing what Zeus Leonardo (2013) describes as "truth effects" by using fact and story to activate both intellectual and empathic understanding. The method that I employ in this dissertation is not counter-storytelling, as it does not construct a story. However, like Critical Race Theory scholars, I seek to access "truth effects" by employing elements of "story" and "fact" to construct and explore meaning.

The links between the methods of this dissertation and Critical Race Theory are also evident in the focus on narrative and intersectionality. Delgado's (1989) description of voice and narrative as forms of psychological preservation is central to my interpretation of the interviews and texts. As Mixed Race people in conversation about our experience with race in the United States and the influence of those experiences on teaching practice, the study participants and I discussed, and sometimes mutually confirmed, our experiences. This provided an experience of psychic self-preservation and of mutual recognition with is frequently lacking for Multiracial people, especially in the contiguous United States. Because of CRT's emphasis on structural racism and the growing body of scholarship around CRT in education, a CRT-grounded discussion of the experiences of Multiracial teachers is salient.

Chapter Four: The Shape of the Narrative: Motif, Race, and Identity in the Construction of Multiracial Educators' Narratives

Critical race theorists claim that the narrative process is central to building understanding and compassion (Delgado, 1989). In this chapter, I examine the ways that narrative functions in Multiracial experiences. I focus this discussion on two aspects of Multiracial narratives: the Multiracial body in narrative and the role of motif in making sense of narrative. Finally, I examine how exploring and sharing Multiracial narratives has led to liberatory curriculum and teaching practices in Daiana's classroom. In this section, I discuss *The English Patient* and *Beloved*.

In the novel *In the Skin of a Lion* Ondaatje (1987) writes, "The first sentence of every novel should be: 'Trust me, this will take time but there is order here, very faint, very human.' Meander if you want to get to town" (p. 146). This sentence, while it is written in a particular novel, applies to every novel and to every text, including the texts of these interviews. As I coded the interviews, I found that there were themes present both in the interviews and in the participants' exploration and expression of their ideas. There was a sort of linguistic "meandering" in the interviews that represented patterns of thought and meaning. Through circling back, repetition, and reiteration, this meandering gave weight and meaning to specific moments. Some were "rememories:" events that had such importance for the storyteller that they influenced their actions and thoughts. Storytelling is a way of making meaning as much as it is a way of conveying information, seeking connection, or providing pleasure. As Delgado (1989) points out, this process can provide pleasure and meaning to both the storyteller and the listener. In some cases, it provides clarity to a previously explored issue.

As I analyzed the interviews with Daiana, I found that both internal linguistic structure and rememory are present in her stories. From the first interview, she uses the motif of mirrors to describe the development of her racial awareness. This motif also appears in a foundational

“rememory” that is part of her racial awakening in college: being invited onto a stage by a presenter who led her to identify herself as Black for the first time.

In this chapter, I am interested in the ways that Daiana constructs narratives about teaching and how her experiences with race and identity influence her professional practice. This is an exploration of question one of the dissertation:

1. *What narratives do Multiracial educators construct about their lives and racial identities?*

Critical Race Theorists position both the spoken and the written narrative as important elements of their work. They argue that narrative has liberatory and unifying effects for people of color (Delgado, 1989). They employ counter-storytelling as a way of sharing truths about race, experience, and identity that supersede the “facts” of chronology, geography, and social position. Thus, the author of a counter-story may construct a direct conversation between individuals who have never met and who lived during different time periods, but whose interaction can communicate something about racial realities to the reader.

Fiction readers often seek out fiction narrative for entertainment. However, novelist and literary critic Toni Morrison (2008) conceptualizes a more comprehensive and challenging function for narrative. She writes, “...the crucial distinction for me is not the difference between fact and fiction, but the distinction between fact and truth. Because facts can exist without human intelligence, but truth cannot” (p. 72). In this quote, Morrison positions narrative, even “fictional” narrative, as a way of encountering and expressing truth. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Morrison writes, “As a writer reading, I came to realize the obvious: the subject of the dream is the dreamer” (Morrison, 1993, p. 17). With this statement, Morrison indicates that narratives in literature can both reveal truths about the stories being told *and* about the story-teller. Hence, two narratives emerge: one deliberately formed and concrete, the other just as real, but ephemeral.

Three types of narrative are at work in this dissertation:

- 1) The liberatory spoken narrative. This narrative helps people of color to free themselves from oppression.
- 2) The written, shaped narrative. As shaped, published “stories,” the novels used in the dissertation constitute a narrative. Though these are fictionalized works, they do, as Morrison indicates, constitute a kind of truth.
- 3) The personal narrative. Morrison’s statement that “the subject of the dream is the dreamer” indicates there is another shape emerging in the dissertation: mine. In this third narrative, I emerge as a significant figure in shaping the descriptions of the work, interviews, and research outcomes.

Because of the interplay between these elements, the *form* and the *content* of narratives are essential to the research findings in this dissertation.

In this chapter, I focus on the interviews with one of the study participants: Daiana. This provides the opportunity to engage closely with the images and motifs of her interviews. I pay particular attention to her use of the motif of mirrors throughout our conversations.

Finding Mirrors in the Written World

Ondaatje (1992) writes, “A novel is a mirror walking down a road” (p. 91). While literary mirrors of identity are highly available for some people in the United States, for others, such as Multiracial people or Pidgin speakers, they are far more rare. In this absence there is a denial of experience that is troubling. And conversely, encountering one’s identity in the “mirror” of fiction is affirming, particularly for those who have grown up without a racially or culturally similar peer group. During the interview process, Daiana, William, Chris and Evangeline reported the significance of moments when they found reflections of their lives in fiction. These reflections provided affirmation of identity and supported the participants’ confidence in educational contexts.

In some cases, experiences with encountering the self in text provided a starting point for how the study participants construct their classrooms in the present. This was particularly true of Daiana, whose first experience with encountering a Biracial character in an undergraduate class was so revelatory that she interrupted her children's literature class, calling out "This is about me!" She goes on to say,

I was a big reader when I was a kid too. I was an only child; I was always with my nose in a book. And I never read any book that ever had anybody who even remotely seemed like me, but I always felt like the characters, I felt like Nancy Drew, I felt like...so, my imaginings of myself were White, really. Do you know what I mean? Like, I know I was not. I wasn't crazy. But I *felt* like those characters. And how...not so good is that, if you're always feeling like a character that you would look *nothing* like. You know? (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

It is telling that Daiana had to wait until college before she encountered a Multiracial character in a fictional text. Though she was a voracious reader during her childhood, she never encountered a character who looked like her or had a life experience like hers. This absence of "mirrors" may have contributed to her lack of racial awareness prior to college.

Like Daiana, other study participants found reflections of themselves in fiction. In contrast to Daiana, Evangeline grew up in Hawai'i, surrounded by people who looked like her and by expressions of Multiracial identity. She says,

I grew up with this positive mirror of myself reflected in leaders, reflected in family members, reflected in my teachers, my mentors. I never once questioned my racial background as being something negative. And I now know that that is a privilege that not every person that has grown up in the United States has had (personal communication, March 11, 2014).

Even growing up as a member of a Multiracial majority, Evangeline did not find reflections of herself in the K-12 curriculum. In high school, did not seriously consider attending college; the only reason that she applied was that she was required to do so for one of her high school classes. It was not until college, when Evangeline studied a text in Pidgin for a course called “Literature of Resistance,” that she began to feel that she belonged in educational settings. In the passage below, she discusses encountering Pidgin, the language that she had grown up speaking at home, in an course text:

And, the poems were super powerful, and they were written in Pidgin. And, it was so-to me, I chuckled inside. To see these White American girls, I remember a couple of girls that were *so* angry that they had to read something that they didn’t understand. They were just like, frustrated with the material, didn’t understand, and I’m just reading it like, ‘This is what she meant, this is blah blah blah blah blah.’ And, connecting to the material in a way I’ve never connected to material before. And feeling super competent in offering up my contributions, and my opinions.

And I remember the paper that I wrote about that particular book of poems. I feel like for myself, it was one of the best papers that I had written, in terms of incorporating these very...high order skills of critical thinking, and, analytical writing-about a book that’s written in fucking Pidgin! Right? A vernacular that people [gave] no educational credibility or credence to... And my parents? I mean, that’s all they speak is Pidgin. And so, it was being studied in this high level academic class. And I was the one that could connect to it. And these White girls were the ones that were struggling. (Evangeline laughing) You know! It was, kind of satisfying, right!?! (personal communication, March 11, 2014).

For Evangeline, this was a moment in which her experience as a Pidgin-speaker was validated, and which positively affected her sense of agency in the classroom. The encounter with poetry written in Pidgin influenced Evangeline’s decision to pursue a career in education. At the time that

Evangeline took the “Literature of Resistance” course, she was planning to major in business. The experience of encountering an aspect of her linguistic identity in an academic setting was transformational. Evangeline says, “I think that, that class, that English class really changed my educational trajectory, of feeling like I could do, like I could do something...greater. Than just kind of going through the motions” (personal communication, March 11, 2014).

It is significant that Evangeline and Daiana found reflections of their identities in an educational setting, particularly since they ultimately chose careers as educators. Several of the study participants discussed how they felt cut off from school curriculum because they did not find representations of themselves in school. For instance, Chris stated that “racism disfigured my education,” while Daiana discussed knowing “in my heart” that she was not represented in her school curriculum. The teachers who participated in this study have found ways to include the curriculum that was missing in their schooling experiences. Daiana designs class projects and provides resources that enable students to reflect on their identities. Chris has developed a unit on the social construction of race in the United States in his U.S. history course. Evangeline taught the novel that was written in Pidgin in classes at the University of Hawai‘i.

Evangeline and Daiana’s experiences of encountering themselves in text provided an inspiration for what they could bring to their classrooms, thus providing a more meaningful and representative experience for their students. By reflecting on their own educational experiences and identity development, each of these teachers provides culturally relevant course material that empowers and engages students, enabling them to be critical members of society. This is an example of Banks’ (2006) transformation approach to education, in which students are learning concepts and skills that enable them to consider issues from multiple points of view. Daiana and Evangeline’s work with students also includes elements of the social action approach, as students are engaged with defining and taking action on social issues.

Daiana: Using Mirrors and Reflections to Explore Meaning

One important aspect of narrative is the act of sharing a story, of presenting an experience in speech or in writing. The *shape* of the story is just as important as the events that it describes. By emphasizing particular images, words, and concepts, the reader-or listener-comes to a deeper understanding of the narrative. Ondaatje (1992) writes,

Hana was carrying a long mirror in front of her down the hall. She would pause because of the weight of it and then move forward, the mirror reflecting the old dark pink of the passageway. The Englishman had wanted to see himself. Before she stepped into the room she carefully turned the reflection upon herself, not wanting the light to bounce indirectly from the window onto his face (pp. 99-100).

This quote represents a motif of mirrors that spans throughout *The English Patient*. I include it here because mirrors are also a key motif in Daiana's narrative, as I describe in this chapter. In this passage, the mirror first faces away from Hana as she carries it to the English Patient, and later towards her, as she tries to protect his eyes from the reflection of light. The contrast of reflecting first the outer world, and later, the self, is quite interesting here. It is noteworthy that, in the moment that Hana turns the mirror towards herself, she is attempting to protect someone else. She switches the image in the mirror from the destruction of the villa and the ruin of the English Patient's own body to herself. Throughout this transition, Hana does not look at herself and her actions seem motivated by necessity. There are some similarities between the way that Hana carries the mirror and how Daiana integrates the motif of mirrors into her narrative. During her childhood, Daiana uses the motif of mirrors to discuss how she catches glimpses that remind her of herself. It is only when she is in college that the mirror is turned towards Daiana in a moment that is definitive in how she constructs her racialized identity.

Daiana's story is particularly rich for considering the structure of narrative. The motif of "mirrors" was woven throughout Daiana's interviews. She uses the words "mirror" and "reflection"

to describe her early experiences with race and to describe the construction of her curriculum. She uses the motif of mirrors to describe her development from being a “nice White girl” to being a fully present, Biracial woman who loves and is passionate about people.

Daiana has a cohesive educational practice that knits together resources, practices, and her life story. In addition to teaching elementary school full-time, Daiana is a teacher educator who is known as a committed innovator and leader in diversity-related curriculum and training. She discusses the use of story, such as “People Studies,” as part of how she helps students to express and think about their social and personal worlds. She is a teacher-activist who works closely with educators, parents, and students to promote understanding and equity in the school. She describes her work as absolutely being about social justice.

When describing herself, Daiana says,

I feel like I just get more and more complex and belong to more and more groups, as I’m sure we all do as we get older. But, um, I’m a person of color, I’m a Biracial woman, a mother of two amazing young women, on their own gender journeys. I am...a teacher, and a lover of people. I am...a wife. I am active, I am someone who does not believe you need to sleep much, ‘cause there’s so much to do. Um, I am a community member, I’m a cheerleader, I am a daughter of a German immigrant. An incredible woman. And, of a father who seems more and more understandable to me. Like, more and more like...like my mother. I think I thought of them as opposites, but they’re actually quite similar. Um, and, my gosh...and I guess I’ll say again, a lover of people” (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

For Daiana, there are few distinctions between “self” and “practice.” Where some people might find the unity of “personal” and “professional” exhausting, Daiana seems to find it energizing, as made evident in her statement that, “I’m someone who does not believe that you need to sleep much...”

She is passionate about education in addition to being actively involved in issues such as food justice in her home community.

Daiana's mother is a White German woman who emigrated to the United States when she was a young woman. Her father is African American. Daiana grew up in a large city in the Eastern United States, and she currently lives in a major metropolitan area in the Western United States. From 4th to 12th grades, Daiana attended a Waldorf school. She describes her years in a Waldorf School, which integrates a focus on the arts and skills such as "handwork" into the curriculum, as central to how she designs her educational practice. Daiana is an elementary school teacher, as she has been for more than 20 years. Throughout her career, she has taught in independent schools.

Daiana began to use the motif of mirrors and reflections during our first interview. She developed it when talking about her parents: her mother, with whom she lived during her childhood and who was very present in her daily life, and her father, who she saw more rarely. Of her mother, Daiana says,

She for sure raised me in that, that tradition, of those 60's and 70's in...the colorblind...tradition. So I often say I grew up a nice White girl on the Upper West Side, because as far as I was concerned, she was my reflection, and she was me. I mean, I just assumed, that I was like her, and although I knew that I had brown skin, it didn't mean anything to me, I...my mother was it, she was *it* for me (personal communication, February 17, 2014).

With the description of her mother as her "reflection," Daiana initiates a motif that lasted throughout our several interviews. Mirrors are an inherently visual medium. The use of a visual descriptor can be understood as a link to phenotype. Though Daiana states that she was fully aware of her brown skin in her childhood, she also indicates that what she saw in her mother was something with which she deeply associated, so much so that she states, "she was me." However,

Daiana also is expressing a quality that extends much deeper than phenotype. The reflection of her mother told Daiana *who she was* in her childhood years.

As the interview progresses, Daiana continues to employ the motif of mirrors in her description of her father's visits. Daiana's African American father was not a regular presence in her life. She describes how he would unexpectedly visit, bringing gifts of groceries:

But I do remember when he would come to the door, there'd be a face that looked like a reminder, of something about me that I didn't usually see. And I remember being struck by, something similar about our faces, our height, I mean...when you see us together it's very clear that we are father and daughter. And when you see my mother and I together, it is not very clear" (personal communication, February 17, 2014).

While this quote does not contain an explicit reference to mirrors, the visual quality of the description is, again, a clear connection to her parents. Daiana's description of her father's face as "a reminder, of something about me that I didn't usually see" provides a link to her father and demonstrates that, though she may have thought of herself as "a nice White girl on the Upper West Side," Daiana's physical appearance did not match this jokingly offered description.

Becoming an Other: Rememory and Transformation

The motif of mirrors powerfully reappears in my second interview with Daiana, when she describes gaining an awareness of herself as Black. During her junior year of college, Daiana and a friend went to hear a guest speaker who had been invited to speak about race. The advertisement for the event was provocative, with posters that made claims such as "all White people are racist." Daiana was offended by the advertisements, feeling that they were untrue and stereotypical. In response, she and a Biracial friend decided to attend the event, where they had decided that "we're gonna express outrage, and then we're gonna leave" (personal communication, February 19, 2014). However, rather than expressing outrage and leaving, Daiana was drawn into the presentation. The

guest speaker asked the audience if they were dying in a desert and saw two houses, one with a Black woman and one with a White woman on the porch, who they would approach for assistance. Daiana found this question profoundly troubling. Ultimately she raised her hand to express her confusion, saying,

Oh my god, where would I go?” And, I had this big, like, “I don’t know where I would go,” and I started...kind of like freaking out. And uh, sooo...I just shot up my hand. And he called on me, and he said, “Uh, ‘what’s your name?’ I said ‘Daiana.’ He said, ‘What’s going on?’ I said, ‘I’m really confused, because I...I don’t...my Mom is White, I grew up with her, and my dad is Black, and I don’t really know where I would go, and I don’t know what that means...’ And this is the first time I ever said any of this out loud (personal communication, February 18, 2014).

The speaker asked Daiana whether he could pose another question to the audience. After she agreed, he engaged the audience in Daiana’s dilemma:

“He said, ‘Who here..sees that Daiana is a Black woman?’ And you know how like you feel, before you see, I *felt* the hands, like, I was in the front seat. I turned around, and, everybody’s hand was up. Everybody. And I, it was like, I was looking in the mirror for the very first time. And I saw, how other people saw me. And that *other*, was me. And he saw that I was shaken, and he said, ‘You know, I don’t usually invite Black people up on the stage, but if you would like to come up here with me, you know, you’re more than welcome.’” And he took, he took my hand, I walked up there with him, I held his hand, he said, ‘Come here with me,’ he took my hand, we stood there, looking at everybody...and he said, “Look out there...at all of your Black brothers and sisters”...and I’m looking at them, and they’re looking at me, and he said, “Tell all your Black brothers and sisters, “I am a Black woman.”” And I said, “I am a Black woman.” And then, they’re looking at me, I’m looking at

them, we start crying. So like, I'm crying, they're crying, then he says, "Now look out there, look into the audience, and look at all your White brothers and sisters, and tell them, "I am a Black woman." And I, "I am a Black woman," and it was, it was the most...it was crazy. And I don't remember what happened after that, but I kind of...something that...it went on. I did not go anywhere to study. And at the end, I walked up, I don't even remember my friend, I don't even remember what happened with her, it was all faded away. Except for I remember, at the end, I had to go, all the stairs to the top, and when I got to the top, all those Black family members were waiting for me, and they all started hugging me. And it was the first time that I had been like, I was One. Of. *Them*."

In this passage, the motif of mirrors takes an interesting turn. The first two times that she uses the motif, Daiana is describing ways that she see herself reflected in her family members. The third, the mirror has been reversed. In this instance, the mirror is turned *towards* Daiana, much as the mirror is turned towards Hana in the Ondaatje quote in the previous section. However, rather than Daiana turning the mirror towards herself, the mirror has been turned towards her by the speaker. The mirror exposes Daiana to the way that others see her: as a racialized, Black woman.

Years later, Daiana describes this moment as one of awakening. It is, for her, a "rememory" that is particularly powerful in her narrative of racial identity. Rememory is different than, and possibly stronger than memory. A memory takes place in, and remains in, the past. Conversely, a *re-*memory exists in both the past and the present. It is the embodiment of a past event. While talking with her daughter about rememory, Sethe, the protagonist of *Beloved*, states, "What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened" (p. 43). Rememory is often associated with trauma. However, Daiana does not seem to remember her college encounter as a traumatic experience. It is simply a memory that "will be there for you,

waiting for you” (Morrison, 2004; p. 44). During my interviews with Daiana, her memory of “the amazing moment” remained a point of reference for her understanding of her racial identity.

Daiana’s rememory has taken on life for me. It is, in Morrison’s words, “still out there.” I do find this moment troubling. When the speaker took Daiana to the stage and told her to say, “I am a Black woman,” he instructed her to adopt a racialized identity that she, at least at that point, did not herself feel. The question “Who here sees Daiana as a Black woman?” encouraged the audience to reify conceptualizations of race by applying the one-drop rule and stereotypes about phenotype. In this moment, monoracial constructions of race were imposed on a Multiracial person.

This moment, which the speaker may have intended, and Daiana may have experienced, as a moment of racial support, includes some aspects of identity coercion. This is because the speaker conveyed that his and society’s ideas about Daiana’s identity should and would supersede her own. This was an extremely powerful, perhaps life-changing, event for Daiana, and she referred to it repeatedly during the interviews. I must remember that my emotional response to this rememory are the result of me bumping “into a rememory that belongs to somebody else” (Morrison, 2004; p. 43). The experience, and its value to her, belong to Daiana, not to me. This is a moment in the interviews when her interpretation and mine diverge; there is more than one competing narrative present.

Daiana: Reflections and Educational Practice

The motif of reflections, which begins with Daiana’s description of her awakening to race, extends to her work with children. When she was taking a children’s literature class in college, Daiana reports hearing a professor read from Arnold Adoff’s (1982) *All the Colors of the Race*, a collection of poems that is written from the perspective of a Biracial girl. Upon hearing the poems she interrupted the class, calling out “This is about me!” (personal communication, April 6, 2014). This is a moment of deep recognition for Daiana, as she says, “I *never* knew there were people like me in books, I never knew there were people like *me*.”

This memory of this moment ultimately became a bridge between personal experience and instruction for Daiana. The memory of seeing herself reflected in a university course curriculum and learning that there were people like her in books influences how Daiana organizes her elementary school classroom. She began to develop ways for children to see and explore their identities in her class. She says, “I wanted that so bad for kids! And it often came through books...”

Daiana emphasizes books and reading in her teaching. Again, she returns to the motif of mirrors and reflections. A core element of her teaching practice is what she calls “People Studies,” which reflect identities and social issues in her classroom. One element of the People Studies is a set of identities that reflect the personalities and families in the classroom. She creates dolls that have a range of biographical stories that match her classroom. She uses the dolls to tell stories that reflect issues in her classroom. Daiana reports that she

put a lot of thought into knowing the students in my classroom, and creating mirrors for some of the students that need mirrors of background stories, you know. Making sure that the students, my “doll” students, were a diverse group. um, Somebody had two moms, somebody Biracial, you know. I had a lot of different back stories about different kids. And the kids totally took to them.

In this quote, Daiana has created a mirror for her students. This time, like Hana, she has turned the mirror in service of another person. Identity reflections are visually apparent in and outside of Daiana’s classroom through student projects that she posts on the classroom walls. There is a naming project, in which students reflect in writing on the meaning of their own names and on each other’s names. Daiana describes how the naming project has its roots in the fact that one of her students was frustrated when his classmates did not pronounce his name correctly. In response to the student’s feelings of frustration, she created the project as a way for the students to build awareness and explore names and naming. She also developed a skin color project, in which students reflect on the color of their skins This skin color project is a reflection of the interest in and

significance of phenotype in discussions about identity, even at a young age. In Daiana's class, there are books about a variety of different kinds of people, experiences, and family structures in baskets throughout the room.

Identity work is one of Daiana's deepest instructional goals. She sees "providing mirrors," known more formally in the field of education as as culturally relevant instruction, as part of her educational mission (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Daiana says,

I realized that my whole existence in an independent school is *very, absolutely*, all about diversity work, multicultural work. Bringing to young people, multiple perspectives. Like it is about nothing else. All the other stuff is...is just fluff. Or whatever, reading, writing, math...it's all what you do. But I would not be doing it in an independent school, if it weren't for bringing awareness around identity and perspective to young people. Because I feel like that's where the change is gonna happen" (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Daiana's description of her teaching practice as being "all about diversity work" is essential to the content and shape of her narrative. It links the motif of mirrors and rememory to her pedagogy. An understanding of the value that Daiana places on diversity work is visible in the resources, particularly books and projects, that she situates in her classroom. It clarifies the significance that she places on engaging in multicultural education with students at a young age. Psychological studies that expose internalized racism, such as Kenneth and Mamie Clark's "Doll Study" (K.B. Clark and M.P. Clark 1940) demonstrate that Daiana's belief that elementary school is "where the change is gonna happen" is likely correct. Though elementary school is not the *only* place where multicultural education can take place, it is certainly an essential site for prejudice reduction work.

Conclusion: The Shape of the Narrative

Why is the shape of the narrative so important? In novels and story-telling, structure is central to the cohesion of the story and to the key ideas that the storyteller seeks to express. “Rememories” have particular significance in personal and professional narratives, providing structure and meaning that can deepen understanding of how educators construct the relationship between their educational experiences and their current professional practice. In a Critical Race Theory context, the use of narrative develops empathy, provides a structure for counter-narrative, and provides the listener or reader access to new truths (Delgado, 1989; Delgado and Stefancic, 2012; Leonardo, 2013). As the listener to Daiana, William, Evangeline, and Chris, I found that my interpretation of rememory was not always the same as theirs. This contributed to the life of the narrative, serving as a reminder that narrative can be contested. It need not be uniform to have value.

The narratives that Daiana shared provide a rich context for understanding her racial situatedness and her professional practice while also challenging my ideas about identity development and belonging. The images and concepts in *Beloved* and *The English Patient* provide a generative framework through which to discuss the narrative that she and the other study participants constructed. Daiana and Evangeline’s references to fictional texts that they encountered in their studies demonstrated ways that access to fictional narratives-or lack thereof-can be foundational for the construction of a sense of belonging in educational and social contexts. In this way, narrative can provide both a structure for understanding and a way of situating oneself in the world.

Chapter Five: Marginality and Centrality in Identity and Professional Practice

In this chapter, I examine how Multiracial teachers give “voice” to complex expressions of identity in their classrooms. In order to facilitate discussion of this topic, I examine the concepts of marginality and centrality amongst Multiracials.

Race is both “imagined” and “real.” It is *imagined* because it is not rooted in any true biological difference between people. It is *real* because racial constructs have consequences in the United States as well as in most other nations (Omi and Winant, 2015). Multiracial people are poised at the intersection of the pseudo-biological and the consequential aspects of the racial idea. Multiracials are romanticized, vilified, and ignored for being the product of an encounter between people who were not meant to be together according to the United States’ myth of racial purity. Discussions of this position are available in literature, film, television, and comics, and in scholarship that is being produced in the field of Critical Mixed Race Studies (Dagbovie-Mullins, 2013; Elam, 2011; Joseph, 2013; Ibrahim, 2012, Senna, 1998).

By discussing the intersection of Multiracial people and the racial imaginary, I present two central ideas. In the first part of the chapter, I explore how the “racial ambiguity” that is part of the phenotype of many Multiracial people is responded to in society. In the second part of the chapter, I explore the topic of “voicing” Multiracial identity. I argue that by voicing their identities in the classroom Chris, Daiana, Evangeline, and William have moved from a marginal to a more central subject position. I explore this intersection of racial imaginary and lived experience as they appear in the interviews with Multiracial educators and in *The English Patient*. The discussion of experiences of marginality and centrality is facilitated by a parallel discussion of marginality and centrality in the character of Kip/Kirpal Singh, the Sikh sapper in *The English Patient*.

Situating Multiracial identity at the center of the U.S. racial narrative is a political act that refutes acceptance of the American racial story by replacing the central, “normalizing” racial construct, White, with a more complex account that includes a variety of stories, echoes, and motifs.

It displaces the myth of “Monoraciality” with a more complete set of stories and voices. These stories, while seemingly messier and more chaotic than the Monoracial story, to some extent release the fetters of the myth of American racial purity and the oppression that accompanies it.

Situating the Body in Narrative: How Multiracial Educators’ Phenotypes Affect Experience

Omi and Winant (2015) discuss the relevance of phenotype for racialized systems in the following quote:

Despite the problematic nature of racial categorization, it should be apparent that there is a crucial and non-reducible *visual dimension* to the definition and understanding of racial categories. Bodies are visually read and narrated in ways that draw upon an ensemble of symbolic meanings and associations. Corporeal distinctions are common: they become essentialized. Perceived differences in skin color, physical build, hair texture, the structure of cheek bones, the shape of the nose, or the presence/absence of an epicanthic fold are understood as the manifestations of more profound differences that are situated *within* racially identified persons; differences in such qualities as intelligence, athletic ability, temperament, and sexuality, among other traits (p. 111).

They contend that this process, which they describe as racialization, is essential to the ways that people extend “*racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group*” (p.111). The process of racialization is integral to the racial hierarchy of the United States. Any person who threatens to disrupt racialized understandings because of challenges in or to the process of visual classification presents a threat to this system.

Omi and Winant also state that,

One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about *who* a person is. This fact is

made painfully obvious when we encounter someone who we cannot conventionally racially categorize—someone who is, for example, racially ‘mixed’ or of an ethnic/racial group with which we are not familiar. Such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning (p.126).

The discomfort that Omi and Winant describe is made manifest in several ways in the lives of Multiracial people, most often through the question “What are you?” This question is often accompanied by a number of guesses about the Multiracial person’s possible racial identity. This moment of tension-between the question and the answer of identity-is particularly interesting. It opens a space for the “racial imaginary,” in which the Multiracial person becomes objectified. She is no longer herself, but is rather an object of the imagination. I am particularly interested to see how the teachers place themselves in the subject position through their instruction. However, in order to do this, I first want to expand the examination of how the “racial imaginary” appears in in *The English Patient*.

The English Patient includes two characters who are part of a “racialized imaginary” due to their phenotypes: the English Patient, who is so badly burned that his former physical appearance is unknowable, and Kip, a racialized “other” from India. In the text, repeated references are made to how Kip and the English Patient are imagined by the other members of the villa. Caravaggio obsessively attempts to discover the English Patient’s “true” identity, believing him to be a former spy for the German army. Hana conceptualizes both Kip and the English Patient as holy men, saints who will protect and watch over her and the other members of the villa. Hana also is fascinated by Kip’s brownness and his physical difference from her, a White woman from Canada. She highlights this difference through such acts as pouring milk over his brown skin at a meal and by thinking of him as a “saint,” somehow different from her.

She imagines all of Asia through the gestures of this one man. The way he lazily moves, his quiet civilization. He speaks of warrior saints and she now feels he is one,

stern and visionary, pausing only in these rare times of sunlight to to be godless, informal, his head back again on the table so the sun can dry his spread hair like grain in a fan-shaped straw basket (p. 217).

A focus on Kip's "difference," and the realm of the imagination that becomes available due to the English Patient's burned, and therefore imaginable, body, can tell us more about imaginations of Hana and Caravaggio than they can about Kip and the English Patient. Ultimately it is the landscapes of Hana and Caravaggio's imaginations, rather than Kip and the English Patient's racial and emotional realities, that are most revealed. As is the case with the English Patient and Kip, it may be possible to learn more about race hierarchies in the United States than it is about Multiracial people in the realm of the racial imaginary.

Marginality and Centrality

Several years ago, I was teaching *The English Patient* in a 10th grade literature class. During a discussion, I wondered: what if Kip, the Sikh sapper, were the central protagonist of the novel? In my previous readings of the text, I had situated the English Patient and Hana, the nurse, at the center of the narrative. However, during this reading, I wondered aloud to the class whether Kip was in fact the novel's *main* character? What if the qualities that seem to be marginal, such as Kip's physical position outside of the villa and his racial difference from the other characters, in fact make him central to the narrative?

What do I mean by "marginality?" And what do I mean by "centrality?" When I use the words "marginal" or "marginality," I refer to the ways that people are (or perceive themselves to be) situated outside of the "norm" of society. Most relevant to this dissertation are how race, in particular ascribed or self-selected racial identifications as "not-White" situate one in a marginal position in American society. Those who hold this positionality are subject to race-based oppression and physical, psychological, and emotional coercion.

The term “centrality” refers to the ways in which people position themselves or are positioned as central in society and/or in their communities. When one is “central,” one is less subject to domination, not because attempts to dominate disappear, but because the adoption of a “central” position makes one less likely to accept and or acquiesce to attempts to dominate oneself. In this chapter, I am interested in exploring how Multiracial educators respond to American society’s marginalization of them as people of color and in whether the educators believe themselves to be marginalized. I explore William, Evangeline, Chris and Daiana use language and naming to centralize their experience and their identities in direct response to the linguistic marginalization that is assumed to be “normal” in American society. I ground this exploration in a discussion of Kip/Kirpal Singh and the topic of naming in *The English Patient*.

However, there is subtlety that must be addressed in these ideas; there is neither “true” marginality, not “true” centrality in experience (Aanerud, personal communication). A person may be marginal in some ways and/or situations, and centered in others. This idea is present in Kip’s reflection in *The English Patient*:

He found another, similar title. Pierre, or the ambiguities. He turned and caught the woman’s eyes on him again. He felt as guilty as if he had put the book in his pocket She had probably never seen a turban before. The English! They expect you to fight for them but won’t talk to you. Singh. And the ambiguities (p. 188).

This quote has interesting implications for a chapter that focuses on the questions of marginality and centrality in Multiracial identity. The idea of Multiracial - as opposed to Monoracial -identity is rooted in ambiguity, particularly so-called “racial ambiguity.” The idea of racial ambiguity relies on the idea of “race,” which does not biologically exist. Because of this, it cannot meaningfully be linked to the ideas of ambiguity. Something that does not truly exist cannot be ambiguous, though it *can* be imagined.

In the above quote, the “ambiguities” faced by Kip are multiple. They involve the ambiguities of fighting a war for England, a country that colonized India, and the ambiguities of living in a country where “they expect you to fight for them but won’t talk to you.” More important, however, might be the ambiguities in Singh’s own character. These ambiguities led Kip to volunteer to leave India to fight in the British army, which was a colonizing force in India. They lead him to attach himself to a specialized sapper unit, believing that this would increase his chances for survival. Finally, they lead him to feel vaguely guilty for the way that he felt he was perceived, leaving him with feelings of responsibility for how he was being stereotyped.

One of the most interesting aspects of Kip’s personality is how he exercises agency. He defies family expectations that he become a doctor, instead choosing to join the military, which was the expectation placed upon Kip’s older brother, although his brother refused to fulfill it because of Britain’s oppression of India and of Sikhs. Upon enrolling in the military, Kip joins a sapper unit for defusing mines and bombs, knowing that sappers typically have a life expectancy of only weeks. After the death of Lord Suffolk, Kip elects to leave the specialized sapper unit. At the Villa San Girolamo, Kip becomes Hana’s lover. Late in the novel, after the bombing of Hiroshima, Kip rages against the decision of the “West” to release a cataclysmic atomic bomb in Japan. After this event, Kip adopts the racial identifier of “Asian,” which he had not previously done. The reader learns in a flashback at the end of the novel that, upon his return to India, Kip ultimately becomes a doctor and fulfills his family’s expectation of him. Kip’s moves are completed with little justification or explanation. Kirpal Singh remains ambiguous. He also is the most beloved and most unifying member of the small group in the Villa San Girolamo.

The ambiguity at the heart of Kip’s/Singh’s character provides interesting possibilities for considering ambiguities that lay at the heart of Multiracial experience. If Multiracials are neither precisely marginal nor precisely centered, where are the ambiguities in our positions? Where and

how do we exercise agency? How do Multiracial educators use their agency to respond to the ambiguities that are present in their racialized positions?

Naming and the Sikh Sapper in *The English Patient*: Becoming Central

This discussion will focus on Kip/Kirpal Singh and the links between naming and identity. It explores how the use of his nickname, bestowed upon him in the British military, marginalizes him, perhaps even distancing him from himself. In addition to the use of a nickname, physical markers of Kip's difference include his brown skin, his refusal to live in the villa, and his refusal to eat the same food as the other residents, instead preferring to eat food that he forages for himself. These physical markers of marginality are matched by his central position in the minds of the residents of the villa.

The Absence of a Comma: A Return to the Self

The introduction of the sapper's true name, Kirpal Singh, has a centralizing effect. The use of his given name reveals aspects of "who he is," including his family history and his early membership in the elite sapper squad, when he was still known as "Singh," his given name. At the time that Singh decides to leave his life at the villa, he deserts the name "Kip." He is again referred to as Kirpal Singh in the novel. The sapper's departure from the villa is linked to his identity through the omission of a comma.

After learning that the Allies have dropped an atomic bomb in Japan, Kip flies into a despairing rage. He re-centralizes race in his identity, situating himself as Asian. He threatens to shoot the English Patient, instead ultimately choosing to leave the Villa without speaking to Hana or Caravaggio. It is the English Patient, the other "imagined" person in the villa, who the sapper accuses and to whom Singh chooses to speak. As he brandishes a gun, Singh says,

I grew up with traditions from my country, but later, more often, from *your* country. Your fragile White island that with customs and manners and books and prefects and reason somehow converted the rest of the world...

You and then the Americans converted us. With your missionary rules. And Indian soldiers wasted their lives as heroes so they could be *pukkah*. You had wars like cricket How did you fool us into this? (Ondaatje, 1992; p. 283).

In this statement, the Indian sapper positions himself, and all peoples whose nations have been colonized, both within and outside of Western culture. Western references, such as waging war “like cricket,” a quintessentially British game, are essential to Kip’s externalized, marginal identity, in which he and other men in his country give their lives for a people, and a culture, that invaded and colonized his own. Kip, who loves a White Canadian woman, condensed milk, and the English patient, is reminded with the bombing in Japan that he is also Asian and, as such, dispensable to Westerners.

After he learns about the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Kip’s Asian identity becomes most central. The man who has been known as “Kip” throughout the text is now situated differently by the narrator, instead becoming nameless, stripped of all except that which is most essential in his character. He is referred to only by his profession, “sapper.” At this point in the novel, he makes the decision to leave the villa and his role in the inhabitants’ lives behind. Ondaatje writes, “The sapper walks out of the room, leaving Caravaggio and Hana by the bed. He has left the three of them to their world, is no longer their sentinel” (p. 286).

After the decision to leave the villa, the omission of a comma most clearly marks Singh’s lived experience in his identity. Additionally, the use of his birth name has a centering effect. “His name is Kirpal Singh and he does not know what he is doing here” (p. 287). There is another, more grammatically correct way to write this sentence: “His name is Kirpal Singh, and he does not know

what he is doing here.” The lack of a comma links identity: “Kirpal Singh,” to understanding: “he does not know what he is doing here.”

A comma between the words “Singh” and “and” would change the idea of the sentence, keeping the sapper’s identity, “Kirpal Singh,” and his thoughts about being at the villa as separate aspects of experience. Because there is no comma in the sentence, Kirpal Singh’s identity and his lack of comprehension of “what he is doing here” are bound together. Kirpal Singh does not know what he is doing there *because of who he is*. The use of the sapper’s true name, Kirpal Singh, rather than Kip, the nickname that he is given in the British military, further reinforces his centered position in the text, solidifying his transition from margin to center.

Chris and Alain: Naming and Being Multiracial:

Naming is central to identity constructions. Each person has her or his “own name,” by which she is known and identified. This name does not remain external: it becomes part of how we think of ourselves. Naming is also important for *group* identification. By naming and claiming group membership, a person takes a position by associating herself with a particular history, position, and social experience. In the mainland United States, this “group naming” includes race.

The desire to establish racial group affiliation and social position is part of the driving motivation for the question, “What are you?” In this section of the chapter, I discuss the ways that some of the Multiracial educators “name” themselves. I position this naming as a form of empowerment that has a centering effect for the educators. The educator interviews allowed for the co-creation of “multi-racial spaces” in which some common experiences were shared, some understandings were assumed, and racial tensions could be discussed freely. The shared storytelling in this part of an interview with Chris focuses on naming our Black/White Biracial selves. The exchange that we had, quoted below, contributed to a friendly atmosphere between us. CRT scholar Richard Delgado (1989) writes,

For stories create their own bonds, represent cohesion, shared understandings, and meanings. The cohesiveness the stories bring is part of the strength of the outgroup. An outgroup creates its own stories, which circulate within the group as a kind of counter-reality (p. 2412).

I believe that Chris' and my shared experience of Black Mixed Race identity created a sense of common understanding. Rather than *explaining* identity, Chris and I were able to share stories and interpretations that reflected our experiences.

In the excerpt below, Chris and I discuss racial identifiers, in particular the names that we use to think about and identify ourselves as racial beings. This conversation was facilitated by the fact that we have the same racial mix (African American/White), and therefore some of the same racial terms are relevant for us:

Chris: Let me see. I guess umm, yeah, I've used that [Multiracial] also. I guess I've just seen and heard them all used, and...haven't really developed a thought on...why I would use one over the other. Ummm, so I just use'em...yeah, I guess I haven't heard an argument about...a big difference between them, so...yeah. I guess...I wouldn't use "Mulatto," but (C laughs)

Alain: No, neither would I. But, but people do! Like, every once in a while, I hear somebody throwing it around, and I'm like, "Listen," (C laughing)

Chris: Yeah, no, (C and A laughing) not cool.

Alain: No, you can't use that!

Chris: No. And I'm not a Negro, either.

Alain: (A laughing) Right!

Chris: So let's just get that out of the way.

Alain: Ha! So we've got "No" to Mulatto, Yeah. Umm, oh man, I (A starts laughing again), That made me laugh, and now my synapses are not firing the same way they were a second ago.

Chris: Mm hmm.

Alain: (long pause) Dang it!

Chris: Do you use one over the other? Or can I ask that...in the interview?

Alain: Of course you can! Umm...of the Mixed terms?

Chris: Yeah.

Alain: The one that feels..."It depends on who's asking!" the one that feels...most comfortable to me is "Mixed," because it just feels like a warmer word. Like, "Biracial," and "Multiracial," I'll use those in sort of, in interview contexts, or like, when I'm writing, like sort of official language, but to me, "Mixed," it feels like "Black."

Chris: Yeah.

Alain: Like it feels like, "That fits," like...you know, "African American," is actually, you know, accurate, like if you're talking about different populations of Black people, then it makes sense to use that term, but it also feels like a more clinical term. And to me, that's...

Chris: Yeah

Alain: the way I feel about Biracial or Multiracial, like it's Yes! Those are correct, and they're acceptable, and they're good, and they're not offensive, which is good. Like, "we like that!"

Chris: Right. (A and C laugh) That's on the plus side.

This conversation, and the assumption of shared experience that underlies it, were partly responsible for the friendly relationship that developed between Chris and I during the three

interviews. Even the interjections, such as “Right!” and “mmm mm,” indicate affirmation and shared experience. Chris and I were talking about terms that could, indeed, at times *have* been, applied to us. In this case, the “Mixed space” created was one of mutuality and shared experience. We were discussing a way in which we’re “Mixed the same.”

We began the conversation by discussing language that we found undesirable, such as “Mulatto” and “Negro.” Chris’ “let’s just get that out of the way” dismisses both of these terms, and my laughing commentary indicates my agreement with his dismissal. While both “Mulatto” and “Negro” were considered to be a polite way to address Black and Multiracial people in past decades, Chris and I now consider them to be negative. Though we do not use this language to describe our ideas, our responses indicate that the words have a marginalizing effect for us in today’s society. It is interesting that Chris and I are laughing and affirming each other’s ideas during this exchange. This portion of the conversation, which could have been marginalizing in some circumstances, instead has an opposite effect.

As suggested by Delgado’s (1989) claim that “stories create their own bonds” (p. 2412), Chris responds to our exchange about racial labeling and racial self-identification by requesting a story. He asks, “Do you use one over the other?” So, in the second part of the exchange above, the emphasized speaker changes. It begins with a longer statement by Chris, followed by shorter statements between the two of us: an exchange in which each of us participates equally. The exchange ends with Chris asking me about my experience and my extended response to his question. Interestingly, in my final statement, “We like that,” I have changed to the first person plural, making a collective statement about the positive use of language. The exchange ends with laughter and an affirmation from Chris: “That’s on the plus side.”

This exchange is important because it indicates a movement from marginal to central. Initially we are discussing externally imposed labels, which I am associating with being marginalized. We begin with a discussion of labels used by others to describe *us*. In the end, however, we are

centralized, sharing stories about how “we” think of ourselves, the language that we choose to *self*-identify. Each of us is having this conversation with a person who could also share and identify with these terms. This discussion, though it does include “externally created” terms, such as “Multiracial,” also includes a reference to the way that language makes me *feel*. This includes my stated preference for the word “Mixed,” which I state “just feels like a warmer word.” In this case, I am taking labels, which can have a particularly marginalizing effect, and weighing them according to the positive or negative feelings that they create.

William: Creating New Names

The attempt at racial naming can also take another shape: creating new language to describe oneself. During one interview, William jokingly referred to his childhood attempt to create a word that included all parts of his identity:

I remember looking at the data that the registrar had to send to...you know the reporting of the ethnic breakdown of the student body. And I remember, ‘cause-at the time, for many years, I refused to mark, because I was always so upset that I couldn’t mark both. And um, and so I usually would not report. Because I didn’t want to just choose one. And so, the rule is, of course, that whoever that person is, in this case the registrar, has to visually identify what it is-and it was, it was, ummm, Hispanic. And I remember being really upset with that, not saying anything, but just being really upset, because, y’know, it’s like I’m reduced to down to just one...So I...in my adolescence and adulthood, I’ve been very upset with having to choose one, even though like, I joke, and I think there’s some huge truth to it, that like, ‘I’m Mexican this week,’ or ‘I’m Chinese this week’...And so it’s really been, I’d say within the last year, that I’ve accepted, and really want to explore, I think just on an intellectual level, not on a practical or like-I’m not waking up in the morning and like, “I think I’m gonna try my hybrid identity today”...you know. But I’ve been really, it’s almost

like, reading his work [Robert Chao Romero's (2012) book *The Chinese in Mexico, 1882-1940*] validated to me, that it's okay, that I'm kind of my own identity.... That, it's not just Mexican, it's not just Chinese, but I am truly Me-what I've jokingly always said is, "Mexanese."

William's development of language to refer to his identity is a centralizing act. Interestingly, this memory is situated alongside a marginalizing experience: being classified according to phenotype by a school authority. However, this marginalizing experience is contrasted with William's "centralizing" acts: seeking out information about the ethnic and racial groups to which he belongs and creating his "own" language of self-identification. This action does contain some echoes of the golfer Tiger Woods' infamous description of himself as "Cablinasian." The term 'Cablinasian,' while it was mocked and reviled by some, is reflective of a complex sense of identity and an attempt to center one's own experience in language. Likewise, this appears to be the effect sought by William. William did not often refer to himself as "Mexanese" during the interviews, instead highlighting moments and contexts in which he felt "more Mexican" or "more Chinese." However, the term "Mexanese" does reflect a linguistic move to express various elements of his identity with a single word: an attempt to situate his identity at the center.

Evangeline and Choosing "Multiracial:" Marginality as an Act of Solidarity

During her upbringing in Hawai'i, Evangeline was taught to celebrate her multiple heritages. Rather thinking of herself as a racial being, she described herself in terms of her ethnicities: "Filipino-Dutch-German-Irish." It is not until after moving to the mainland United States that Evangeline describes becoming aware of being a *racialized* person. In the continental United States, Evangeline began to integrate "racial" identity into her thinking. It seems clear, however, that the "racialized" labels that are widely used in the United States are not a meaningful part of how Evangeline thinks of her identity. When Evangeline uses racial terms, such as "Multiracial," to

describe herself, it is a reflection of solidarity with People of Color on the mainland. This decision, consistent with Evangeline's focus on community, is a way of expressing solidarity with a Multiracial subject position that is marginalized on the mainland.

Perhaps in part because she grew up in a different cultural context than the other study participants, Evangeline outlines the source of these feelings with particular clarity. She discusses the privilege of growing up in an environment in which most people look like her. This demonstrates an interesting connection between phenotype, experience, and feelings of marginality and/or centrality. In the quote below, Evangeline discusses her first experience with selecting an affinity group meeting to attend at a professional conference. This was a complex process for Evangeline, who had not previously thought of her identity in terms of race. The process of selecting an affinity group took over a year for Evangeline to navigate: The first year that Evangeline attended the conference, she attended the Asian identity group. In consecutive years, she participated in, and eventually became a facilitator for, the Multiracial affinity group. Evangeline discusses this process:

Evangeline: Because, in Hawai'i there is such a strong Asian culture. Super strong. Like, you know, from celebrating Chinese New Year, to Von dances, to taking your shoes off when you go into...the house, to the food...cause I never thought of myself, like I said this, not in terms of race, but in terms of culture...So I thought, well shit, "I'll have more in common with Asians than I would with...any other group, that's what I thought. And, I think Asian-Pacific islander was part of that group too, right? Growing up in Hawai'i, culturally, I'll probably connect. Culturally, culturally, I will connect more with um, with the Asian affinity group.

Alain: Right....What happened when you got there?

Evangeline: Did not feel like...just didn't have a ...did not feel like I belonged there...I can't even articulate why, I just didn't...I didn't feel a sense of connection, to the people there. And, um, definitely not a shared experience. ... And then I was just too, kind of angry...about...'what is this?' And 'aren't I supposed to feel good?'

During this segment of the interview, Evangeline is expressing a memory of feelings of marginality and "out-of-place-ness." These feelings were particularly jarring because they emerged in a racial affinity group, "Asian," in which she anticipated feeling comfortable. She responded to this alienation by deciding to participate in the Multiracial affinity group a year later. In the quote below, Evangeline discusses the transition from the Asian affinity group to the Multiracial affinity group:

Evangeline: So I was grappling with my racial identity. I am not...so I, I thought...that I would connect, I would connect with...the A-because I am Asian. So I could have gone. That could have been a space for me...And culturally, I would say that that would be where I would connect, because I never thought of, like 'White American' was not something that was... I was not Haole. I'm Hapa Haole, I'm certainly not...Haole, I'm not White American. So...man, was my world, kind of turned upside down about, my own racial identity. And so it wasn't until the second year, um, that I tried the Multiracial group.

Alain: So what was it like for you, going to the Multiracial affinity group?

Evangeline: Oh my god, like, I found my people...First of all, not everyone looked the same. It was just...what I was used to. You know, people that go to affinity group, the majority, have...you know in my experience have said that's the first time they've been in a room with so many Multiracial people...Well that was the norm, for me. So, I was...um, truly like, 'Oh, here are my people.'

For Evangeline, the process of attempting to meaningfully name race, and especially to place herself in a racial “category” was problematic, even traumatic. During our conversations, it became clear that racial (rather than ethnic) naming remains troubling for her. She has taken ownership of a process that she finds inherently alienating-racial naming- and has given it a centralizing effect by using the word “Multiracial” to create a place for herself in the mainland United States.

Evangeline’s unerring focus on community throughout the interviews indicates that she places particular importance on community action and solidarity. Her adoption of the term “Multiracial” to describe herself on the mainland is indicative of both individual and group interests. Evangeline takes a marginalizing experience, selecting a racial term by which to identify herself in order to participate in an affinity group, and makes it centralizing by using the term Multiracial to situate herself in a community of peers. By volunteering to serve as a Multiracial affinity group leader in her third year at the conference, Evangeline took action on her commitment to group solidarity and action. When reflecting on the decision to use the term “Multiracial” as an act of solidarity, Evangeline says, “And so while that [the mainland U.S. racialized construct] doesn’t mean something to me personally in terms of how I was socialized, it *certainly* means something to other people. And so I respect that” (personal communication, March 11, 2014). Evangeline’s grounded sense of self as a Hawai‘ian woman gives her a rootedness that she uses to construct a place in a community that leaves her with the sense that, “Oh, here are my people.”

The English Patient: Questioning the Center

There is a way in which even centrality can feel marginal. Although the reader ultimately learns the English Patient’s “real” name: Count Ladislaus Almásy, The English Patient remains an enigma to the reader. Rather than becoming clearer to the reader, Almásy's identity, his “true self,”

remains elusive. The most reliable expression of the English Patient's voice is cradled in the pages of Herodotus' *The Histories*, where he writes his thoughts and memories.

Of The English Patient's use of the *The Histories*, Ondaatje writes,

His only connection with the world of cities was Herodotus, his guidebook, ancient and modern, of supposed lies. When he discovered the truth to what had seemed a lie, he brought out his glue pot and pasted in a map or news clipping or used a blank space in the book to sketch men in skirts with faded unknown animals alongside them (p. 246).

It is in the pages of the book that The English Patient's truest self is evident. This is where we can find The English Patient's equivalent of a world without commas: a place in which his memories are cradled within the book that he values most.

The English Patient's way of expressing his identity is through the erasure of names and nationality. Unlike Kip, who ultimately places himself in a context of race in which which identity and action are linked, the English Patient attempts to avoid national entanglements, what he calls "teams" (p. 168). The English Patient says, "We were German, English, Hungarian, African-all of us insignificant to them. Gradually we became nationless. I came to hate nations. We are deformed by nation-states" (p. 138).

It is possible to read the above speech by the English Patient as profoundly reflective of privilege. Rather than grounding himself in his identity, in his names, both given and national, the English Patient seeks to refute the significance of either. Rather than forming a new name for himself, such as William's "Mexanese," or identifying a set of meaningful identifiers, such as Evangeline's "Filipino-Dutch-German-Irish," the English Patient seeks to avoid naming and names altogether. This is more erasure than centering. It is still a way of placing himself at the center of his experience, as the attempted erasure of names reflects agency. However, the English Patient's preference for defining and identifying himself indicates a sort of absence. He identifies himself more by the shape of what surrounds him - the desert, and his companions - than by national or

ethnic identity. The English Patient's approach to identity construction is in direct contrast with the approach to naming adopted by the study participants.

The English Patient's attempt to establish identity through-not-naming provides the opportunity to examine an idea that has become popular in U.S. society: that the United States is becoming a *post-racial* society. In this construction, there is no need to name race, ethnicity, or nationality because they no longer have significance in American society. While the English Patient, a privileged, White European aristocrat might approve of this construct, Kip, the racialized Sikh sapper who suffers after the bombing of Japan, would not. Likewise, the racialized positions adopted by Chris, Daiana, William and Evangeline indicate that they also do not consider the United States to be "postracial." Rather, they utilize the racial constructions of the United States to develop a racialized identity that they find meaningful and representative of their experience.

Evangeline and Alain: Building "Center" Through Discourse

In this section, I examine an exchange between me and Evangeline. Similar to the conversation about racial naming that I had with Chris, this passage demonstrates an occasion on which Evangeline and I co-construct meaning about Multiracial identity. Though Evangeline and I have different racial mixes from each other, in this passage we are talking about a shared standpoint that we have developed as a result of our racial positioning.

Alain: And I had this realization, which was that when I look at family pictures, not of my family but of other people's families, that do *not* have people that look different from each other in them, I think, "God, how do they *do* that?" And I read this article which said that the sort of...single race character of most American families, or I guess we could say most mainland families, is actually just evidence of segregation. Like of how deep segregation goes in the United States. And that the fact that it's taken for

granted, like it's totally normal...like for everyone in the family to be of the same racial or ethnic...

Alain & Evangeline: background,

Alain: is...and it's *abnormal* for that not to be represented? And I guess, I don't know, if I was thinking about that before...But when I looked at it, when I *do* look at pictures, and like-or people...people and their friends. And like when everybody

Alain & Evangeline: Looks the same

Alain: And I'm like, "how the hell?!?" (C laughing) "Do you meet all those people that're like *you*?" (A laughing) I don't know how you...*do* that.-Because I feel like I, even in my like, rarified...independent school world, I felt like I always sought out people who were different from me.

In this passage, I am the one who is describing my experiences with difference. However, this passage represents a shared construction of center. This is because of how Evangeline interacts with me as I speak. She joins her voice to mine, and we state a sentiment together. In this way, I am not alone. Evangeline does not *support* my thought...rather, she *expresses the same thought* through choral speech. This shared speech is both *evidence of and contributes* to a shared sense of meaning. It also demonstrates a way that Evangeline demonstrates her solidarity and sense of community.

William and Chris: Centering Multiracial Identity in School

The study participants' choices around *naming* their identities through language and story centralizes them and demonstrates their agency in the production of their racial identities. It removes them from the realm of "imagined" identity that is present in *The English Patient*, instead making William, Daiana, Chris, and Evangeline's identities "real" and managed by them. This centralizing effect is significant in the educational practice of the educators that I interviewed. Two

of them, Chris and William, talk directly with their students about their racial identities early in the academic year.

William describes integrating his racial identity into his introduction to students during the first days of school. He says:

It's the first thing that I do, when I introduce myself to my kids. I have a powerpoint, and I talk about my family lineages, because I think it's important. It affects who I am, it affects my lens, and, I...I never had that as a kid. I never had a Chinese, you know, American teacher...I had two Latino teachers in a Latino community!

William links his discussion of racial identity to his positive relationship with students. He describes being the teacher sponsor for the Chinese culture club. He attributes his strong "Pan Asian identity" with helping him to form strong relationships with Asian students, many of whom are Vietnamese and members of other Asian groups. When describing his relationships with Asian students, William says:

The interesting thing is, my Asian students? Who are predominantly Vietnamese, or like Chinese Vietnamese, they like, they claim me as Chinese. Like, I was asked to be the Chinese culture club advisor, and, and that's been great. And so like my kids do definitely accept me as Chinese. And like I have to...say the caveat is that they're more like Americanized Chinese kids? Y'know, even though like many of them do speak either. It's just-that's been really cool. Um, and I think part of that is because I've been so open about...my identity."

William's reference to his "lineages," rather than a single lineage, indicates that his standpoint is multiple and shifts according to context. The same may be true of relationships with students. Based on William's accounts, it does appear that William's openness about his identity had a positive influence on the relationships that he built with students. William's "Pan Asian identity" appears to be more significant to his relationships with students than his ethnic Chinese or Mexican identities.

As William describes in the quotes above, he rarely had Latino or Asian teachers during his K-12 education. It is interesting to consider whether his specific ethnic identities of Mexican and Chinese would have been more salient in a school in which more teachers of color were present.

Chris: Reintroducing Multiracial Identity to the American Narrative

While William achieves much of his identity work with students through his mentorship of clubs, Chris integrates information about Multiracial identity into his course curriculum. He contests the uncritical acceptance of racial structure and hierarchies in his classroom by using the content of the US history class to explore the social construction of race. Chris spoke at length about the social construction of race during our conversations, describing it as essential to the maintenance of social hierarchies in American society.

Chris' decision to teach students about the social construction of race is tied to his experiences with feelings of marginalization during his K-12 education. His instruction is tied to his goals for his students as well as to his own educational experiences:

I just think about how many years I spent feeling alienated and isolated from most of what I was learning, and if a student was to leave my class and feel that way, I would feel horrible. So, ummm I think it is important to reach out to Mixed Race students and try to make their identity and their experience visible in the curriculum I teach, and also just reach out to them and share things about my struggles in school.”

By linking his instruction to his educational experiences, Chris is finding a way to center himself in the classroom. He goes so far as to provide his own Mixed Race identity as an example of the social construction of race in the United States. Rather than allowing himself to be marginalized as a racialized “other,” Chris interrogates the nature of race. He attempts to shift his students’

understanding to a new center: the social construction of race and the placement of Multiracials as integral to American identity. Rather than accepting race as a static, biological “reality,” he presents it as part of the American identity. By placing Mixed Race Blackness at the center, Chris presents the possibility that racial hybridity is essential to, and central in, the American story. Thus, for Chris, as for Kip in *The English Patient*, qualities that appear at first to be marginal, “other,” are in fact central to the constructed identity narrative.

In class, Chris uses his racial classification as an example of how race is socially constructed in the United States. He says, “I go through that with the kids in the class, and talk about my racial identity, and how it could be different, depending on different time periods, or different historical settings.” This emphasis on the social construction of race links to Chris’ Biracial identity and the process through which he came to understand race himself. Though Chris does not teach units that are entirely dedicated to Mixed Race identity, he gives his students examples of people who have been historically portrayed as monoracial, but who are, in fact, Mixed Race, such as Crispus Attucks.

The day that I visited Chris’ classroom, he was using a powerpoint to teach his students about slavery in the United States, the social construction of race, and the influence of Bacon’s Rebellion on the creation of racial laws in the South. During the lesson, Chris stated, “When I was growing up, I thought racism had been part of human history. In college I discovered it was created for a specific reason and can be taken out for a specific reason.” This comment is particularly interesting for its reflective qualities. In it, Chris integrates his personal experience, the influence of college on his perceptions, and his motivations for social action. These are elements that Chris highlights in his personal life and are evidence of the integration of his identity into his teaching. Above all, Chris expressed a desire to provide students with the information to understand and respond to the racial and societal environments in which they are situated, an element of Banks’ (2006) social action approach to education.

Chapter Conclusion: Revisiting the Center

As explored in this chapter, “marginal” and “central” are not fixed positions, nor is one necessarily preferable to the other. Rather, one’s social positioning can shift with context. Additionally, a person can voluntarily take on a more “marginal” or “central” position in accordance with one’s beliefs. For instance, Evangeline voluntarily adopted a potentially marginalizing racial position, “Multiracial,” though it did not represent language that she used growing up. By adopting a “marginal” racial identity, she centralized her community-driven value of demonstrating solidarity with People of Color on the mainland United States. By taking this position, Evangeline situated herself within a central, group identity.

Through course content, class introductions, and mentorship, William, Daiana, Chris, and Evangeline centralize identity in their classrooms. This can serve to heighten student awareness about and sensitivity to a range of identity-related topics. By centralizing identity, the educators in this study create a space in which their own Multiracial identities are represented and in which student identities are supported.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

Revisiting the Concept of “Multiracial:”

The question of whether “Multiracial” can constitute a meaningful racial group is raised repeatedly in research and writing in the fields of Multiracial Studies and Critical Mixed Race Studies. While conducting research, I heard insights, such as Evangeline’s description of what it means to be Multiracial and multiethnic in Hawai‘i and William’s thoughts about the White privilege experienced by Multiracial people who have a White parent, that led me to the conclusion that a “one size fits all” Multiracial category is reductionist because it disguises the storied differences that are most meaningful to our identities. While I did encounter similarities of experience, perception, and positionality that united the Multiracial educators, these did not merit a shared racial designation. For me, Black is an integral part of my Mixed Race identity, just as both Mexican and Chinese are essential to William. While I continue to consider myself Multiracial, this research has led me to the conclusion that intersections of historical period, region, race, and ethnicity are an essential part of each individual’s Mixed Race identity, and that these interact in different ways for every individual.

I believe that “Multiracial” is a meaningful category. However, for me it has become a placeholder, an inviting reminder of a much richer story. Mixed Race people’s differences are at least as meaningful to us as our similarities. In spite of this, there do seem to be some qualities of experience shared by the Multiracial educators in this study. Chris, William, Daiana, and Evangeline all had multiple insider identities. They each expressed ties to multiple racial (and in one case, multiple ethnic) groups. They were self-conscious about their racialized identities in a way that indicated that they had considered the topic repeatedly and at length, and that they had done so at relatively frequent intervals throughout their lives. Finally, as described in Chapters 4 and 5, Daiana, Chris, William and Evangeline had each tried to find ways to integrate their racial

identities into their teaching practice in meaningful ways. In doing so, they also encouraged students to consider their own histories and experiences.

While I did find many commonalities, particularly in standpoint, between the study participants, William requested that I avoid attributing these standpoints and individual pedagogical choices, solely to Multiracial identity. During my final interview with William, he shared the following thoughts:

William: I hesitate to say this is something I do in my practice because it's ... because I am a person of color, or this is something I do in my practice because I'm Multiracial. I don't think it's that simple. I think it's like ability, plus experiences, plus knowledge, plus training, plus whatever happened this morning, plus time of day, plus coffee, plus whether I ate this morning, plus, you know. So there are too many factors to say that this is a Multiracial teacher...that this is how they act and this is how they teach and this is who they're more effective with and this is what they do well and this is what, what challenges them. Right? Race plays a role. Culture plays a role. Racism plays a role. Societal factors play a role. But I don't know what makes me different. Because I'm Mexican and Chinese...A lot of people like to tell me that that's what makes me unique. I'm just trying to do me. You know? Am I proud of who I am? Of course I am. But I, I don't know, I don't know if ... Or maybe even I'm afraid of that's what makes me interesting. (laughs) You know? Or that's what makes me good at what I do. I know that it's a factor. You know, I know that just growing up and my experiences, I do bring those to the table. You know. I, I guess I'm afraid to be "essentialized" as a Multiracial teacher. And so those are like my very real, like, concerns with this kind of research. You know?

It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this conversation as I have analyzed the interviews and data for this dissertation. Prior to this exchange, it had not occurred to me that my research could have an essentializing effect for Multiracial teachers, or that it could be meaningfully argued that “all,” or even “most” Multiracial educators employ particular methods or share a certain philosophy of teaching. With his commentary, William reminded me that I must think carefully and closely about the implications of my research. In part because research about Multiracial teacher identity is an emerging field, it is particularly important to be explicit about the depth and range of experiences and practices amongst Mixed Race educators. There is no single way that Multiracial educators “are,” that they “do” education, or that they they build relationships with students.

Where I Encounter Myself: Reflections on Process:

Mohanty (1988) writes about the dangers of scholarship that contains an “implicit referent.” This term refers to “any discourse that sets up its own authorial subjects as the implicit referent, i.e. the yardstick by which to encode and represent cultural ‘Others.’ It is in this move that power is exercised in discourse” (p. 64). While Mohanty’s article refers to the “creation of the Third World Woman” in scholarly discourse, I found that the idea of the implicit referent has interesting implications for my research about Multiracial identity.

I sought to be transparent about my role and biases throughout the research and writing process by reflecting on and analyzing the impact of my personal history and racial identity on the interview process and outcomes. Mohanty’s term provides interesting possibilities for considering ways in which my work may have been transparent, but not entirely self-aware. By positioning myself as a participant in the interview discourse - rather than as a “neutral” collector of stories - I may have transformed myself into the visible (and more insidiously, the *invisible*) “implicit referent” in the interviews, situating my experiences as an example of a “Multiracial norm.” It is possible that this resulted in me privileging and normalizing my understandings and

conceptualizations of Mixed Race identity while conducting interviews and writing the dissertation. Therefore, my decision to be explicit about how my participation in the interviews shaped their direction and outcomes may have had repercussions of which I was not entirely aware.

During an interview with William, he brought it to my attention that I was placing Whiteness as the implicit referent when I spoke about Multiracial identity:

William: Oh yeah, definitely! And I..when-I think it's interesting that when we say "Biracial," people automatically think -

Alain & William: "White."

Alain: You're right, I just did it myself, sorry about that!

William: Nonono! But, ummm, 'cause I'm Biracial!

Alain: No, you sure are!

William also pointed out that Multiracial people who grow up with a White parent do, to some extent, share in White privilege. I am part White, while he is a "double minority," a Mixed Race person who does not have a White parent. William's observation about social privilege was jarring for me, because it highlighted the ways in which I could be viewed as an "other," even in a study that I had designed about a racial group of which I consider myself to be a part. It also demonstrated how William could be an "other" to *me*, an important factor to consider as I engaged in the data analysis process.

As I analyzed the interview data, I became aware of assumptions that I had about race, teachers, and education about which I had been previously unaware. These realizations were sometimes surprising to me, at others, troubling. In the sections below, I discuss some of these assumptions.

Confronting My Assumptions About the "Normality" of Race

Research about race in the United States deepened my understanding about the history and structure of racial constructions in the United States. Additionally, my conversations with

Evangeline made me particularly aware of the ways that I situate racialized thinking as “normal.” Conversations with Evangeline made this particularly clear because she grew up in a culture that does not situate race in the same way as it is structured in the mainland United States. In the quote below, I express some of my ideas about race:

Alain: One of the things I found that I’m really grappling with - has been a privilege of doing this work for me - is first of all the realization that I did grow up in a highly racialized environment. The language and the thought of race is assumed to be, and in some ways is, very natural in the [mainland] United States. It’s like, “this is the air we breathe, and this is...” you know. But the more I go into it, the more I agree that the less meaning it has, and I think that looking at Mixed identities makes it even clearer. You know, because I feel like we [Mixed Race people] don’t really have assumptions in quite the same ways of like...”this is the way things are,” or like, “this is the way everybody is,” or “this is what it means to be Black,” you know?

Conducting this research has given me the opportunity to be more critical about my assumptions about the extent to which U.S. society is organized around racial constructs. While part of my realization was relevant to racial constructions in general, I also learned about the relevance to the language and labels of race, as discussed in the next section.

Interacting With Study Participants About Racial Labels:

During the course of the interviews with Chris, Evangeline, and William, we had moments of conversation about the meanings of racial labels and about how we interpreted each other’s racial identities, such as the conversation that William and I had about Mixed Race Whiteness. There were times that I felt that my use of racialized language was disruptive of the participants’ lived sense of identity. An example of this in conversation with Evangeline follows:

Evangeline: Knowing that I was...Multiracial. Or Biracial. Right? Like I'm Biracial.

Alain: I guess.

Evangeline: Right? Am I Multi, or am I Bi? I don't know.

Alain: Well I guess, technically, Biracial, but it really doesn't fit your thinking about yourself, so it's weird, Multiracial sounds...slightly better (mutual laughter), but um

Evangeline: No, I'm Biracial. I'm half White.

Alain: Right. Half White.

Evangeline: Half Filipino. See? I don't even know what terms to use for myself. It's very confusing.

I continue to find my readings of this exchange to be troubling. In the passage, Evangeline continues to struggle with the language of race and racialization in the United States, a system that is uncomfortable to her. My commentary is focused on repeating and affirming Evangeline's thoughts as she attempts to identify a racial term that feels comfortable to her. As I read and coded this interview, I suspected that the structure of the questions might be reinforcing Evangeline's participation in a racialized system with which she is not comfortable. Evangeline states that she has adopted the term "Multiracial" as an expression of community solidarity on the continental United States. However, my analysis of her questions and comments during the above exchange lead me to think that she has continued to be uncomfortable with racial terminology to an extent that I had not previously understood and that I might be complicit in reifying racial systems and racialization in her experience.

The latter point brings to light the challenges of attempting to discuss race without reifying it. This was made particularly complex by two interacting factors.

- 1) There is an emerging body of scholarship around experiences, representations, and the social positioning of Mixed Race people in the United States. This scholarship is discussed in chapters

One and Two of this dissertation. The positioning of Mixed Race people as both *within* and *outside-of* racialized systems in the United States is extremely complex, in some cases both strengthening and defying current systems of racialization. It brings to light social constructions of race while simultaneously questioning them.

- 2) As I analyzed the interview transcripts, it became apparent that the study participants and I sometimes discussed race in a way that was reifying. This was particularly true of the ways that we talked about Whiteness. In part because of this, it was challenging to conceptualize how to meaningfully represent the intersections of “self identity” and “other identity” that were discussed in the interviews.

The Use of *The English Patient* and *Beloved* as Interpretive Lenses:

The fictional texts that I used in the dissertation provided me with a series of images and metaphors to consider as I analyzed interview themes. My understanding of the interview themes has developed over time. For instance, I developed an understanding of the “racial imaginary” most effectively through repeated analyses of *The English Patient*. As discussed previously, Kip and the English Patient’s “imaginability” stems from their phenotypic difference from the other residents of the villa. The English Patient’s burned skin renders him unrecognizable, and therefore imaginable as any person. Kip’s brown skin and turban render him an exotic “other,” imagined and commented upon by the other villa residents, especially Hana and Caravaggio. Though Hana and Kip become lovers, it is the English Patient and Kip who seem to know each other best. While they are “imagined” by the other villa residents, they seem to “see” each other clearly.

The English Patient provides a lens through which to consider racialized experiences that I explored in the interviews. The use of fiction helped me to see and understand things that I could not see and understand as effectively through the interviews alone. This approach, like any, would not be ideal for all research studies. However, I found it to be extremely useful, especially given the

critical race theory focus of the theoretical framework. Because CRT, which informed my theoretical framework, has a focus on narrative and counter-storytelling, the integration of narrative through the novel was instructive.

Reflections of Literature in the Interviews:

An unanticipated outcome of the dissertation is the extent to which I learned about the reading practices of the study participants. I had planned to use fiction as an analytical and comparative tool throughout the planning, implementation, and analysis of the study. However, I assumed that I would be the only person who would be doing so. I discovered during the interviews that almost all of the participants identified at least one, and sometimes more, novels (and in William's case, a non-fiction text as well) that had a role in affirming - or in some cases even developing - a "Multiracial" identity. None of the study participants identified *The English Patient* as one of their foundational texts. Indeed, it would have been surprising if they had. I found interesting that several of the study participants identified texts that they found important without being asked. This indicates the relevance of texts in general and fiction in particular for helping adults and children to develop a grounded, centralized sense of identity. The use of text as a process of identifying recognition and support for identity indicates that texts are a significant form of information and validation for the any individual, and perhaps particularly for Multiracial people, who have few models in literature.

My Case of Mixed Race Blackness

One of the challenges of this dissertation has been the unsettling position of being both a member of and outside of the group that I am studying. I am a member of the group because like the people that I interviewed and observed, I am Multiracial. I also characterize myself as "outside" of the group because I was positioned as the "questioner" in the study. I designed the study, and

although I participated in the interviews, I formulated the questions in a way that reflected my interest in education. During the interviews I became aware of a bias of which I had previously been unaware: that Bi-and-Multiracial people would identify as People of Color. This realization disturbed me, as it exposed me to reductionist tendencies in my own thinking. I now seek to be more aware of how I think and speak about Mixed Race identity. I have also become increasingly aware of how my thinking can contribute to a reification of racial constructs.

The ways in which I think of myself as a Mixed Race Black person continue to evolve. I have not experienced any dramatic identity-shifts as a result of the research, nor was that my intent. I have become increasingly aware that Mixed Race Blackness is a unique category in the racial hierarchy of the United States because of the legacy of slavery and the ways in which Black people - particularly Black men and boys - continue to be targeted, criminalized, incarcerated, and murdered with impunity in the modern-day United States. I feel that I am a member of a racialized group that is under siege.

My Case of Mixed Race Whiteness

Although I gained new insights into my identity and assumptions as part of the research for this study, I do not feel that much shifted in my sense of being a Mixed Race Black person. My awareness of my relationship with Whiteness, however, did shift as part of this research. While I was raised by my White mother and I grew up having close relationships with both White and Black family members, I never had a sense of Whiteness as part of my identity. In much the same way that Evangeline talks about her ethnicities while simultaneously rejecting the idea of being White American, a “haole,” I felt an affinity for my Polish and Portuguese identities as expressed in my White family’s traditions, but I had no personal identification with Whiteness. This may appear to be a contradiction. However, having grown up with both of my parents telling me that I was Black,

and after a lifetime of racialized “othering” by monoracially-identified people, my lack of White identity did not feel like a contradiction.

Two conversations that I had while conducting the dissertation interviews had a significant effect on my sense of Mixed Race Whiteness. One conversation took place during an interview with William, who discusses his thought that Mixed Race people who have a White parent experience White privilege. The other conversation took place with Daiana who, in describing her love for White people, has led me to consider a new paradigm for thinking about and experiencing Whiteness. William and Daiana expressed ideas that I had never previously considered. These ideas were troubling to me because they presented a demand that I radically re-consider my relationship with myself. What if I were to consider Whiteness as not only part of my racial heritage but also as part of my personal identity? What would it mean to broaden beyond an acceptance of *ethnicity* by including White race in my sense of identity? Could I accept being White?

The excerpt below is taken from a longer discussion that William and I had about White privilege. During our discussion, he stated that people often assume that all Biracial people have one White parent. This led to a discussion of Biracial people and educational privilege:

William: The other thing though, is that, when you’re half-White, and this is just my theory, I mean, I’m obviously not half-White,

Alain: Right, right.

William: But, I think that you have certain privileges,

Alain: I think that’s true

William: that you, that you grow up with.

Alain: yeah

William: And so, that...helps you get through school. School is not as isolating a place, because you are still surrounded by people who do share your culture.

(personal communication, February 18, 2012).

While my verbal participation in that exchange is primarily affirmative, with comments such as “right, right” and “I think that’s true,” the emotional part of the exchange was, for me, quite challenging. I was able to intellectually process and agree with William’s comments, which I felt made sense, particularly for those White Multiracials who are raised by and/or spent extensive time with their White families, as I did. Emotionally however, the brevity of my comments is indicative of a state of emotional discomfort. I had never previously considered that I might be an experiencer and carrier of White privilege. I was disturbed by the idea - ironically, just as many White people are when they learn about and reject the idea of White privilege. I am not, however, phenotypically White.

I continue to consider and grapple with this exchange. On one hand, it seems ridiculous, almost offensive to me that I be “stuck” with the stigma of White privilege when I am not phenotypically White and have been consistently harassed by Monoracially-identified people for looking and being “different.” On the other hand, William’s statement demands more serious consideration. I was raised by my White mother, visiting the homes of White relatives, and I was comfortable and happy doing so. In this context, William’s claim that “School is not as isolating a place, because you are still surrounded by people who do share your culture” is reasonable and makes sense. While I think that William’s expression of what it means to have a White parent is incomplete and essentializing, his observation about Whiteness, and what it might mean for my identity, resonates. I continue to consider his point of view and what it means for my understanding of Whiteness as part of my identity.

Daiana who, like me, has a White mother and a Black father, expresses a very different, yet equally challenging, idea about Whiteness:

And I’m so grateful for my White mother. Because...I don’t know, because the, because...ah...I don’t know. I really value my Whiteness. Uh, the White...I have so much love for White people, even if they’re stupid at moments. If I didn’t have so much love for

them, I wouldn't want to do the work I'm doing, I'd want to quit. I think I'd wanna like, give up sometimes, but I have too much love for them, and I know that's because of my mother. You know, I love, I just love...love my mother. And, you know, and it's the only way the world's gonna change. If we keep loving on each other (personal communication, April 6, 2014).

Daiana's statement that "I really value my Whiteness" was deeply revealing for me. There is a problematic history in the Black community of the value of phenotypic Whiteness, including Black people with light skin being considered more attractive and a history of "passing," in which Black people who "look White" make the decision to "pass" as White in order to gain the privileges of Whiteness and avoid the oppression that accompanies Blackness. However, Daiana is talking about something different here. She is discussing not *looking* White, but *being* White. She loves White people because they are a part of her family and of her life's journey. She loves White people because they are part of who she is. Indeed, she uses the word "love" 7 times in the passage. She ties this feeling to her mother, and to the reasons for her work.

This passage radically changes the possibilities for the placement of Whiteness in my imagination of myself. Rather than thinking of Whiteness as different than me, I can think of it as part of my identity, if I take on elements of her thinking. While Daiana states that "they're stupid at moments," placing White people at a distance from her self, her claims that "I have so much love for White people" and that the world can only change if "we keep loving on each other" reverberate with compassion.

My sense of surprise at Daiana's comment, like my response to William's comment, brings my alienation from Whiteness to my attention. The way that Daiana links her sense of mission to her love for White people also leads me to realize that I have been conceptualizing White people as a group to be educated about race, social justice, and equality, but not particularly as a group to be

loved. I do love many individual White people, of course. However, I hadn't previously considered valuing my Whiteness or loving White people collectively.

These two interactions have opened up new ways of conceptualizing my identity. I am Multiracial, I am a Mixed Race Black person. Is it possible for me to also be a Mixed Race White person? I wonder whether it is viable for me to take on this position, given the racialized system in the United States. I am not yet comfortable with, or certain about, what it might mean to claim a position of Mixed Race Whiteness. This will continue to be part of my thinking and is a possible area for future research.

My Case of Being a Multiracial Educator

In the year that I have been writing this dissertation, I have been teaching English and Theory of Knowledge at an international school in Rome, Italy. My work on the dissertation, and the stories and strategies that William, Evangeline, Daiana, and Chris shared with me have made me more self-conscious about how I engage with students about my identity and experiences. I was interested in William and Chris' decision to talk with their students about their racial identities on the first day of class. This year I experimented with this approach, talking with my students about my racial identity, national identity, and previous experiences living abroad as part of my introduction to them. I was curious about how they would respond to this information. There wasn't much visible student response to this sharing of my positionality. However, it was important to me to engage in the process.

In one of the English classes that I taught, the novels and plays that we studied included *Hamlet*, *Beloved*, and *The English Patient*. During a recent class discussion, one of my students jokingly commented that identity and memory are "the Sykes themes." When she made this statement, I laughed while simultaneously wondering, "Am I that transparent? And if I am, is it bad?" Certainly, my work on the dissertation has caused me to be more deliberate about and aware

of the emphasis that I place on identity in my classroom. The interviews have caused me to think more deeply about creating opportunities for discussion with students about the ways in which they experience and express different aspects of their identities. While some of these conversations have been more successful than others, I have tried to create a safe space in my classroom for students to engage in close literary analysis while being mindful of how their identities affect how they read and write about literature and how they interact with each other in class.

What Happened in School: Encounters with Multiracial identity

While the study participants had varied experiences with schooling, they all had one thing in common: they did not have significant contact with Multiracial teachers while they were students, nor did they experience instances of instruction that was relevant to their ethnic or racial identities until late high school or college. Chris discusses having his first classroom discussion about race in high school. For Evangeline and Daiana, this didn't happen until college. William never discusses encountering reflections of himself in educational settings. Rather, he began to read research that reflected his Chinese-Mexican identity after college. Daiana, William, and Chris could not remember having a single Multiracially-identified teacher throughout their education. Evangeline described having reflections of herself in her teachers, but she doesn't mention any of them as particularly important or foundational in her education. Rather, it was a White mainland American teacher who she describes as telling her that she had the potential to become a teacher.

What would it have meant for each of these educators to find reflections of themselves earlier in their schooling experiences? While Evangeline, Chris, William, and Daiana had "successful" schooling careers that led to graduation, advanced degrees, and teaching, they each spoke about the value that encountering themselves in their own classrooms would have had for them, and that it would have made a difference in their educational experiences.

It was not until my postgraduate studies that I encountered mention of the experiences and realities of Multiracial people in educational settings. Previous to this, I read resources that I had identified, usually by searching bookstore shelves. I began to actively seek out and read research about Multiracial identity in my early 20s. I deeply desired to find some reflection of myself in the word. The only reflections that I had found prior to this were in people to whom I was related and the few Multiracial people I had met. Affirmations of beauty and statements among me and my siblings that, “Sykes’ don’t *do* ugly” and my little brother’s announcement that, “You’re so good looking. You look just like me,” weren’t enough to provide me with a sense of grounding or belonging in the world in which I found myself.

It may be that the roots of this dissertation lay in my early childhood, when my mother and I shared a house with a cross-racial married couple. Their Black/White Biracial daughter and I became best friends. We referred to ourselves as the “Silly Sisters” and created a theme song for ourselves in which we referred to ourselves as “tan.” Perhaps these early experiences created a sense for me that things *could* be different, and that I *could* belong. In middle and high school, I attended a magnet school that had a population that was evenly split between Black and White students. I remember that there were two Korean students and one Puerto Rican student. It is likely that they, too, did not find reflections of their identities in school.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations:

This dissertation research contributes to a growing body of scholarship about the experiences and insights of Mixed Race teachers, students, and administrators in K-12 settings. The educators who participated in this study discussed their educational experiences, their racial and ethnic identities, and how these influence their professional practice. Hearing the stories of Mixed Race educators was engaging, life-affirming, and sometimes challenging. It was a powerful experience to engage with stories that had many professional and experiential similarities to my

own. Some of the educators, such as Daiana and Chris, teach about racial identity in the United States. While some of these lessons were specific to Mixed Race identity, others explored other aspects of identifications, such as family structure and naming. The extent to which the study participants integrated information about race, culture, and identity into their teaching is suggestive of a pedagogy in which discussions of complex identity and social justice are integrated into the curriculum.

The study participants' work beyond the classroom indicates that they place an emphasis on the role of mentorship and extracurricular activities in addition to classroom instruction. With her move to a director of diversity position, Evangeline transitioned from a focus on teaching to an administrative role in which she concentrated on working with students, teachers, and administrators. Evangeline, Chris, William and Daiana all were involved with the mentorship of student affinity groups. Their support for students' racial affinity groups demonstrates the value that they place on supporting a safe space in which students can engage in dialogue about race with peers and mentors. An exploration of teacher involvement in students' affinity groups and how membership in those groups, such as the Black students union, Mixed Race student union, or Chinese student union, affects' students feelings of belonging and academic outcomes could provide an interesting avenue of further research.

This study includes Multiracial educators who grew up during different decades and in different parts of the United States. However, though Evangeline, Chris, Daiana, and William grew up in the East Coast, the west Coast, and Hawai'i, many of their schooling experiences were strikingly similar, particularly with regards to a lack of culturally relevant content in their K-12 educations. A future avenue of research is to explore the experiences that Multiracial people have had during different decades and in different regions of the United States. A similarly interesting project would be a comparative study of conceptualizations of Mixed Race identity and academic content about Mixed Race identity in the K-12 curriculum in two or more countries.

The methods used in the dissertation constitute an area for future research about the use of fiction as an analytical lens for empirical findings. The use of fiction as an analytical lens for interviews, while complex, was highly generative of ideas, insights, and questions. Most often, the fiction informed the research findings, as in the development of the themes of marginality and centrality that emerged from *The English Patient*. I used these themes to inform the organization of findings about teacher practice. However, the study findings about Multiracial teachers' experience and practice also influenced my readings of the novels. For instance, while the concept of "rememory" is clearly associated with trauma in *Beloved*, an examination of the study participants' experiences led me to conclude that rememory need not be associated with trauma. Rather, it could also be used to make sense of other powerful emotions, such as Daiana's overwhelming experience of acceptance upon stating "I am a Black woman" or Evangeline's feelings of pride and delight when she encountered a text written in Pidgin in a college class. It will be interesting to continue to research this analytical method and to develop language and systems that effectively describe the method so that it can be more widely used by scholars.

As the Multiracial population grows in the United States, it is increasingly important for Mixed Race voices to be included in school curricula. While the majority of students and teachers do not identify as Multiracial, the inclusion of this identity in classroom content and culture provides a space in which complex racial identities can be explored and expressed. The acknowledgement of complex identities provides a context in which students can closely examine the American myth of racial purity and its intersections with the related topics of gender, sexual orientation, and social class. This, in turn, can provide teachers and students with the tools and opportunity to examine their subject positions and goals as members of an empowered and reflective school community.

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