

“This Isn’t a Sentence in a History Book”: How Power-Relations Take Shape for
Students with Historically Marginalized Identities in History Classrooms

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For Henry and Lily Oto, their unwavering support made this possible

Abstract

This post-intentional phenomenological study explores the problem of students with historically marginalized identities in terms of race, gender, and sexuality, being able to exist as they identify within the history classroom. The research question is as follows: How do power-relations take shape within history classrooms through the lived experiences of students with historically marginalized identities? Interviews with three students that self-identified with historically marginalized groups were conducted using post-intentional phenomenological methods. Applying theory from Foucault (1977, 1980, 1990a, 1990b), Omi and Winant (2015), and the author's self-reflexive position, the interviews were analyzed and narratives constructed. The results suggest that the students live postcolonial lives that are challenged by normative forces from their relations to societal institutions of school and content. Students attempted to affirm and protect their identity projects by creating homeplaces. The author concludes by considering the importance that students' identity projects play in the development of classroom safety.

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Introduction

The clock reads a quarter past three and the classroom bustles with energy. Two students feverishly erase the notes that still litter the board. We sit at the Harkness table, a pedagogical tool used to facilitate the seminar style discussions that characterize humanities courses at Independent City School, but we aren’t gathered for academic pursuits. This is an affinity group for students of color. While the room is mostly young people, a few adults sit amongst them - we are the few faculty of color at the institution.

The meeting begins with a check-in. One at a time, students go around the table and detail what is on their minds. The veteran students share their recent encounters with racism, sexism, homophobia, and bigotry inside the walls of the school and away from it. The topics are filled with emotion and tension as evidenced by several students holding back tears. Amid such intense feeling, the room remains calm and warm with the comfort knowing that empathy comes from everyone present. This is a safe space for everyone to be who they are in the most authentic way. I have been attending these meetings since I started my job at Independent City School and continue to do so. They are cathartic escapes, providing space to take inventory of myself and the way I understand my sense of Self, specifically my own racial identity, as I try to navigate the ways that my identity shapes daily interactions with colleagues, students, friends, and family.

After a year, I realized something that weighed on me heavily and now seems obvious: These students were not the same people I saw in class or the halls during the

school day. Their voices filled with something I hadn't heard before. Their bodies seemed less tired. They were themselves. Maybe it was my own personal processing that led me to try to see this phenomenon more clearly. My childhood was one of predominantly white rural Midwestern towns. My own ability to think about race rarely surfaced - but these students seemed vibrant in a manner that I yearned to know more about and to become. Over the course of the year my relationships with these students grew and transformed from passive empathic adult to advocate for change. I've always felt passionate about the need to improve the ways that educational institutions conducted business for all students. I am driven by bitterness left by the irony of mission statements claiming to make every effort to ensure all students achieve, but not seeing tangible efforts made to transform student experience in the daily life of the school.

Becoming a part of this community within the school allowed me to see these transformations in my own classrooms. I recalled teaching a 10th grade world history class and discussing the modern effects of the Colombian Exchange, when a young girl raised her hand feverishly and when called on asks intently, "But how did the potatoes get to Russia? My dad's side of the family eats potatoes all the time!" Meanwhile, another student's head falls victim to gravity, finding its way comfortably onto the table the class sits around. In a 12th grade history elective, a debate about illegal immigration stirs a student who typically does not participate in discussions to dominate the conversation. "You don't know what it is like to try and find a better life and be told you can't! That's something my mother has had to go through and you just don't get it," she proclaims to contradict a comment made by a peer. When one of the other students is

asked their position on the issue, the response is simply, “I don’t really know. It isn’t something that affects me.”

Each of these moments reflects the phenomenon I came to know in the affinity group: Within history classrooms, students search for, fight for, or give up on aspects of their identities within the course of the school day. Specifically in history classrooms, it seems as if students leverage their study of the past to better understand, and perhaps validate, their own present identity. Naturally, this observation might suggest that experiences in history classrooms ought to guide curriculum design. Perhaps history classes should be taught with students’ interests as the guiding force of content since it may lead to more effective individual development and sense of being. However, this reasoning belies the complex nature of history classrooms and identity development within shared spaces. Likewise, such claims permit researchers to disengage the problem of understanding student experiences and focus on teacher-centered issues, such as curriculum building or pedagogical practices. How identity might influence a student’s experience comes with analysis of the classroom context. This means understanding the impact of teachers as “gatekeepers” (Thornton, 1989, p. 5) of curriculum.

The term “gatekeepers” describes the power and autonomy teachers have in classrooms shaping curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy (Thornton, 1989, p. 5). This immense agency allows educators the freedom to change assessments, assignments, or curricula that contradict their personal beliefs. As such, teachers face close scrutiny by researchers, administrators, and policy leaders to understand and ensure the impact on young people to be positive and productive. This line of inquiry about social studies

teachers is critically important since their gatekeeping directly affects the classroom contexts that shape students' beliefs and ideas about the past, citizenship, and the world.

Additionally, understanding the world of students' interpretations of the past is essential to addressing how this phenomenon of heightened inquiry arises in history classrooms. While most history education literature examines students' cognitive processing skills (Evans, 1988) and how they learn valuable skills to think like an historian (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein 2009; Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat, & Duncan, 2007), a dearth of research exists examining how and why students' interest in history appears to shift relative to their own understanding of themselves (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein, 2000, 2009; VanSledright, 2008). Therefore, research that addresses the changing nature of student engagement and understanding of the past is imperative to unpacking the complex dynamics at play in history classrooms. More specifically, further inquiry into students' experiences in history classes will illuminate how these shared spaces serve as literal and metaphorical common grounds for students to understand themselves in the present through the use of the past.

In this paper, I seek to answer the question: How do relations of power within the history classroom take shape through the experiences of students with historically marginalized identities? Additionally, I aim to address the following supporting inquiries:

- 1) What power-relations might take shape in a history classroom? I will be looking at the ways in which relations of power emerge between the student, the space, the content, their peers, the teacher, and the school. 2) What role do these power-relations play in shaping the identity of the student? In other

words, while an exploration of power-relations brings forward the phenomenon, the consequences of these relations are equally material. 3) How does student consciousness of their own identity impact the power-relations at play in their racial projects? Students' awareness of their own identities, presently and historically, is critical to responding to these questions.

At the heart of this question lies my desire to better see a phenomenon that appears influenced by power. I first present a synthesis of work on teachers' beliefs about history and how this translates into classroom practice and student experience. The literature trend shows that classroom practices differ greatly, in turn affecting the gatekeeping of content. This pattern carries significant weight for history teacher praxis as the narratives privileged in classroom spaces entangle students with historically marginalized identities. I therefore advance the argument that the relatively unknown territory on how students internalize their ability to interpret history must be explored, with particular emphasis on historically marginalized identities, in classroom spaces.

Literature Review

The heart of this study is phenomenological. Thus, I assume a phenomenological attitude. Of the three most commonly implemented forms of phenomenology (descriptive, hermeneutic, and post-intentional), this study will employ a post-intentional approach as it best suits the complex dynamics at play. More specifically, post-intentional phenomenology sets out that reality exists in multiple and tentative manners that lack stability. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe this idea as "rhizomatic," suggesting that like biologic rhizomes, truth and reality emerge and pass on with great frequency while

the beginnings and endings remain unclear (p. 8). This idea liberates scholars from traditional fixation on fitting data to a theoretical frame. In its place, they provide a theory of multiple truths, wherein no one idea carries more meaning than another. Because these meanings are tentative, the phenomenon exists in multiple forms with shifting meanings, which suggests that a phenomenon, such as student experience of history classrooms, can exist in multiple forms with multiple meanings simultaneously. A phenomenological attitude toward scholarship, whereby findings and truths are varied and tentative, suggests that the literature review ought to also be considered tentative and fleeting. Thus, the following literature review is, and will always be, partial, tentative, and fleeting in its understanding of the phenomenon of student experience in history classrooms.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The intersection between teaching history and a teacher's personal beliefs about the subject is fundamental to understanding and improving the quality of a student's classroom experience (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein, 2009; Wineburg, Mosborg, Porat, & Duncan, 2007). Teachers' philosophies are the driving forces behind the way history classrooms function, since these beliefs inform gatekeeping. Recently, scholars trying to better understand the application of history educators' beliefs have examined the ways in which teachers interpret their own content knowledge (Harris, 2014) and what they find important in teaching history (Barton & Levstik, 2003, 2004; Hartzler-Miller, 2001). In Harris's (2014) analysis of how pre-service and in-service history teachers make connections between the content they teach to their classroom practice, she

concluded that teachers tend to speak proudly and passionately of their philosophical groundings, but tend toward practices that do not reflect their beliefs. Likewise, the studies of Hartzler-Miller (2001) and Barton and Levstik (2003, 2004) indicate that despite strongly held beliefs that history is active and participatory, history teachers teach with more passive-learning strategies that help them fit into the school community or keep control of their classroom.

Barton and Levstik's work raises a serious tension in pedagogy—that control and fitting in take precedent over the critical inquiry central to history as a discipline. Particularly when thinking about gatekeeping curriculum, the intersection of such control and what is taught raises many questions about who is included and who is left out (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Based on a synthesis of theorization about culturally responsive teaching, Ladson-Billings suggests that while much of theory describes good teaching, she wonders “Why does so little of it seem to occur in classrooms populated by African-American students?” (p. 484). Thus, as the United States continues to become more demographically diverse, investigating how history teachers think about race and ethnicity is increasingly important to the well-being of students (Branch, 2004; Chikkatur, 2013; Howard, 2004; Levy, 2016; Martell, 2013; Peck, 2010; Urietta, 2004). Current research trends about culturally relevant pedagogy suggest that teachers can act as informed and powerful advocates for students to develop understanding of their identities (Branch, 2004; Levy, 2016; Martell, 2013; Howard, 2004) or be silently complicit in the relegation of identity to the margins of classroom life (Chikkatur, 2013; Levy, 2016; Howard, 2004; Urietta, 2004).

Teachers' silence on issues of race and ethnic identity in the classroom has dangerous implications for children's perceptions of their racial and ethnic identities. (Branch, 2004; Chikkatur, 2013; Howard, 2004; Urietta 2004). Howard's qualitative study of one 8th grade social studies classroom in Washington investigated discussions of race and racism. He found that students, particularly students of color, saw teachers as "out of touch" because they either ignored or refused to discuss matters of race and racism within the classroom (p. 498). Likewise, Chikkatur found in an ethnographic study of a required African American history class that "the course failed to give students the framework to understand the ongoing impact of historical and current race-based discrimination" (p. 530). Chikkatur suggests that the teacher's lack of preparation to teach the course, the absence of support by the district for professional development and curricular development, and the teacher's own "hesitations about talking about race" (p. 530) were the main reasons this course did not live up to what had been originally envisioned by the district and the teacher. Levy (2016) notes in an interview study with Hmong, Chinese, and Jewish students, parents, and their teachers that teachers must be willing to reflexively and reflectively challenge what historical narratives are being privileged in classrooms. Specifically, Levy points out that historical distance of topics decreases for students with shared racial and ethnic identities to the topics and people studied. Thus, Levy encourages teachers to consider the fluid nature of one's connection to the past when making gatekeeping decisions about curriculum.

Urietta's (2004) anthropological investigation demonstrates the psychological effects of silence on topics of racial and ethnic identity in history classrooms. Urietta

invited 24 Chicana/o people who were teachers, teacher educators, graduate students in education, and preservice teachers to share their experience with seeing Chicana/o identity in their K-12 social studies curriculum. Three themes emerged: 1) Chicana/o identity was made invisible by never being discussed; 2) Chicana/o identity was addressed uncritically, thereby reifying stereotyped portrayals; 3) Chicana/o identity was brought up negatively, leading to implicit and explicit messaging that being Chicana/o was undesirable. These three themes led to the same outcomes for interviewees: Apathetic and hostile self-imaging of their ethnic identity as a Chicana/o person. Urietta notes the implications such experiences might have on young people's conceptualization of U.S. citizenship, saying, "It is an appropriate time to question the current narrow model of citizenship in the U.S. as an oppressive white supremacist, colonialist, paradigm that excludes an ever-growing number of people" (p. 451).

While acts of silence oppress students and aspects of their identities, teachers can also have profoundly positive impacts on their students' identity development. Howard's (2004) work highlights how students' consciousness about race in their learning was due, in large part, to their teacher, Ms. Washington and her efforts to bring absent narratives from the traditional U.S. historical narrative into the classroom. Martell (2013) examined his own teaching through practitioner research, specifically examining his whiteness as a social studies teacher. Martell found that practicing culturally responsive pedagogy allowed him to understand, within the context of his classroom, how his whiteness implicated him within systems of privilege and power. This consciousness led him to see that such self-reflexivity made him a better teacher for students of color. Levy (2016)

notes that teachers who are able to see the value of ethnic and racial identities in teaching heritage histories of their students can cultivate opportunities for students to see the value of their own racial and ethnic identities.

Literature on culturally relevant pedagogy in social studies also suggests ways that teachers can become better practitioners by incorporating more discussions about race and ethnicity within social studies classrooms. Branch (2004) and Howard (2004) both found that teachers' personal experiences with racial and ethnic identity development provided them the experiences to introduce and discuss productively issues of race and ethnicity within their classroom. This corroborates Martell's (2013) finding that teachers who think about their own racial and ethnic identity become more effective at discussing race and ethnicity meaningfully in the classroom. Levy (2016) challenges teachers to see their gatekeeping of curriculum and content with historical distance and identity in mind, which Chikkatur (2013) supports by challenging teachers "go 'beyond' the mandated curriculum to consider which voices are heard, which ones are not heard, and why that matters to our understandings of American history" (p. 529). Peck (2010) and Martell (2013) suggest that culturally relevant pedagogy allows students to deepen their understanding of history as an interpretive discipline that privileges certain narratives for reasons that yearn for investigation. Urietta (2004) calls for more willingness to discuss controversial topics and role playing and simulations based on culturally relevant contexts within each school as a means to break down colonial systems of othering and oppression.

Student Experiences with Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Much of this literature also suggests that when students engage in discourse about race and ethnicity in social studies classes they feel connected to the classroom community and content, feel affirmed in their sense of racial and ethnic self, and validated in their own conception of who they are in the classroom (Branch, 2004; Chikkatur, 2013; Levy, 2016; Martell, 2013; Peck, 2010). Chikkatur notes that engaging in difficult conversations about race and history helps students connect the racism of contemporary society to the historical nature of racism in the United States. This is something that is deeply needed to shift the rhetoric of colorblindness and political correctness in the United States to a more productive space of empathy and mutual respect.

Epstein's (2000, 2009) research underscores Chikkatur's observation of the role that a student's racial identity plays in historical interpretation. In Epstein's (2000) sociocultural study, five African American and five European American students were observed in their United States history class and asked to construct the U.S. historical narrative by choosing the 20 (out of 58) people, documents, or events that had the greatest influence of the shaping of the United States. Epstein found that African American students' historical constructions and interpretations of events differed from what they had been taught in class. Epstein notes that the African American students thought their teacher "had included more African American history than other teachers, [but] believed that [their teacher] primarily taught 'white people's history'" (p. 204). Epstein (2009) reaffirmed her previous findings between students of color and their white counterparts in an ethnographic study of students, teachers, and parents of a U.S. history

class. Worth noting is that students of color turned to friends, family, and their communities outside of school to fill in the incomplete historical narratives they perceived being taught to them in their classrooms. Thus, Epstein concludes that history “is more than just an academic subject; it is the reference point—an aspect of identity—from which people derive a sense of themselves, their communities, and their place in the world” (p. xvii).

Barton and Levstik (2004) concur with Epstein in their sociocultural analysis to breakdown history curricula. Examining the complex spaces in which students learn history, Barton and Levstik suggest that different interpretations of the past are associated with non-classroom factors, but essential historical skills of analyzing, identifying, exhibiting, and responding morally still occur in “street history” spaces such as their homes and at community gatherings (p. 19). The authors conclude that learning in all spaces ought to be valued to create a sense of historical empathy and inquiry and that current pedagogical trends suggest a privileging of “school history” over “street history.” Rather than give credence to one form of historical learning over another, Barton and Levstik place importance on the learning of history broadly to promote and preserve democracy.

Barton (2012) says succinctly what the literature up to this point implies, that “schools are not irrelevant in the formation of students’ historical identities” (p. 105). Furthermore, Barton states that:

History provides *resources* for students as they develop historically grounded identities...and these suggest some of the range of groups which

they may consider themselves part...[g]iven this relationship educators should seek to expand rather than constrict the range of identity resources available to students. (p. 103)

In other words, history teachers ought to be doing more to leverage the school history experience in developing richer and more positive identities. Barton highlights that it is evident student identity is being shaped, for better and worse, by the work conducted within the spaces of history classrooms. Recent work out of Stanford University's Graduate School of Education (SGSE) (Donald, 2016) highlights the value of such reform movements. In a study of one school's efforts to institutionalize racial and ethnic identity in curriculum, SGSE found that having courses specifically about ethnic and racial identity in social studies curriculum increased attendance and GPAs of students most at risk of dropping out of high school. So while evidence grows to suggest the value of culturally relevant pedagogy, more work demonstrating the urgency for similar reforms is needed. The phenomenon central to this study—what might the history classroom experience be like for a student with a historically marginalized identity—seeks to do exactly this. The aim is to directly address the impact that clashes between student history beliefs, their identities, and those of their teachers have on young people as they try to develop a sense of Self. Ultimately, this work will serve to address my concerns over how students experience classroom spaces, what forces of power might be at play, and what this might show about the way we could improve the experience for all students in history classes.

Method

Methodology

As Vagle (2014) notes, all high amplitude phenomenologists, those engaging in the crafting of the philosophical underpinnings of phenomenology, do so as a means to continue the discourse that grounds phenomenology methodologically. The implementation of philosophy as a rigorous form of inquiry to address phenomenon is not new and its application to the social sciences was originally taken up by Edmund Husserl. Widely considered the father of phenomenology for his work to shift philosophy's discourse surrounding epistemological matters, Husserl provides a wonderful point of entry into the world of phenomenology (Moran & Mooney, 2002; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2014).

For Husserl (1965), *Weltanschauung* (the lifeworld) was not aptly explored and the scientific method was not the form that could appropriately examine the complexities that reside within it. Specifically, Husserl asserted that philosophy might be able to do the work to examine *Weltanschauung* in ways that science was limited. Husserl provided the example of psychology as an attempt that science tried to make sense of the phenomenon within *Weltanschauung*. Husserl argued that psychology was unsuccessful due to the historicism that natural sciences rely on to explore the world. More specifically, the previous scholarship, experiments, perspectives and biases that prejudiced and ultimately prevented psychologists seeing of phenomena. Their understanding of consciousness took on a reflective state, due to historicism, thereby definitively altering *Weltanschauung* from its originally pre-reflective position and preventing these natural scientists from seeing what *Weltanschauung* in its authentic form.

Instead, Husserl (1965) theorized that philosophy provided a flexible and adaptive set of mechanics that could readily handle the implicit dangers of historicism that limited the natural sciences. While Husserl's transcendental phenomenology called for a "bracketing," or acknowledgement and then removal of historicism by researchers from their work, the shifting discourse around the nature of *Weltanschauung* throughout the 20th century suggests that perhaps even Husserl was unable to remove himself from historicism. An examination of the shift in discourse around intentionality demonstrates this point. Husserl viewed intentionality of subjects and objects as one-directional, the subject to the object. This was the view of prominent philosophers before Husserl, such as Descartes, Kant, and Hegel (Van Manen, 2014). Husserl, clearly influenced by the positions of his predecessors, fell victim to the very historicism he works to removed from the analytics of the philosophic mind. This point is not intended to quash the work of Husserl, he pioneered this work and a critique is neither relevant to this study nor productive to moving advancing this project. Instead, it is to demonstrate the need to continue Husserl's mission to use and refine philosophy as a tool that might adapt to the historicism the natural sciences cannot overcome. Thus, philosophy must question intentionality again. The post-structuralism that philosophers of the late 20th century, such as Deleuze and Guittari and Foucault, challenges the very assumptions that alter our perception of *Weltanschauung*. As such, post-structuralism used in conjunction with phenomenology allows for the rigorous exposition of phenomenological inquiry and growth of ideas, thereby continuing the work Husserl started.

Foucault, power, and re-examining history classrooms. Foucault's ideas help evaluate history classrooms and the development of student identity in terms of the power and power-relations providing one way to answer the call to action Barton sets forth. Marshall (1990) further elaborates on the role of Foucault in educational research, stating that

Schools enter as exemplifications of the exercise of power and the emergence of modern power. Yet they are not merely exemplifications of modern power because the school was an important site in which techniques and strategies of power were developed and refined. Perhaps what is needed is a study entitled 'Discipline and punish: the birth of the school'. (p. 23)

While this study will not seek to create an analogous Foucauldian archeology of schools, its aim is to grapple with the concept of power and its implications for student identity development.

To begin understanding the way Foucault understood power is to think about it in multiplicities. Foucault (1990a) describes further:

The multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another...and as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or

institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of law, in the various social hegemonies. (p. 93)

Thus, for Foucault, power is everywhere and it manifests deeply within the multitude of relations that might exist in the worlds we inhabit. Power cannot be reduced to one place because of these multiplicities and requires then an openness to the shapes and forms it may emerge in.

As such, Foucault (1990a) emphasized that power “must not be sought in the primary existence of a central point...it is a moving substrate of force relations...that are always local and unstable” (p. 93). Therefore, the spaces of power might emerge more readily on the fringes of relations as they solidify, breakdown, coalesce, and combat. The obviously problematic dilemma facing an analysis of power is then being able to locate such manifestations.

In order to understand the complexity of the multiplicity of power, we must put to work Foucault’s theorization concretely within the context of schools. Foucault’s work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (referred to from now on as *D&P*) serves as excellent entry point for inquiring into the mechanisms of power at play within schools. While *D&P* concerns itself primarily with prisons, the findings nonetheless apply to schools, as Marshall (1990) alluded to earlier. Foucault (1980) addresses the analogous nature of schools and prisons, stating that “the prison was meant to be an instrument, comparable with—and no less perfect than—the school...acting with precision upon its individual subjects” (p. 40). This statement suggests ubiquity in both the form, as an instrument of power, and the function, as acting precisely and

intentionally, of schools and prisons. These qualities can be more specifically defined as Foucault's panopticism and his conceptual construction of delinquency.

Foucault (1977) describes that schools were built to be "an apparatus for observation" (p. 172), thus embodying the nature of the panopticon. He further describes the minute details where disciplinary power played out: "rooms [are] distributed along a corridor like a series of small cells" (p. 173). While this may seem mere coincidence, Foucault reminds that "these mechanisms can only be seen as unimportant if one forgets the role of this instrumentation...in the progressive objectification and the ever more subtle partitioning of individual behavior" (p. 173). Therefore, schools are analogous in form and function to prisons so the components of the panopticon present in educational settings introduce and reinforce normalcy through disciplinary power.

Recognizing the panoptic nature of schools serves as foundation to understanding the normalizing effects of disciplinary power on marginalized students. The link between the panopticon and the individual is intimate and speaks directly to the result of discipline's efforts to normalize. Again, the omnipresence of surveillance cannot be overstated: its intention is to categorize "bodies...in a network of relations" (Foucault, 1977, p. 146), so that normalizing forces can be implemented specifically and directly. The effect of this panopticism is an inversion of individuals from people into knowable objects that may be defined "scientifically" (p. 254).

These new objects of knowledge then fit precisely into known quantities as either *offenders* or *delinquents*. Foucault (1977) describes an *offender* as someone who may commit a crime, but the disciplinary power within the offender (instilled in them by the

panoptic nature of society), creates a need to reform and normalize. A *delinquent* does not reform and at first it may seem like their inertia to disciplinary power is a part of them. But Foucault argues it is much more complex; delinquency is intentionally crafted by the panoptic system as an alternative normalizing force. He observes that “the delinquent is an institutional product” (p. 301) and panoptic societies create them purposefully and mechanistically to preserve their status as delinquents for use as “agents for the illegality of the dominant groups” (p. 279). This implies that marginalization is created “under insistent surveillance, by an accumulation of disciplinary coercion” (p. 301). In other words, the delinquent is a person that is othered from normality for the purposes of objectification.

It is this marginalization, this delinquency, and the disciplinary power that belies its development that needs closer inspection to locate and explain the powers influencing the development of identity. Foucault (1990a) suggests that such scientific constructions “in the name of biology and historical urgency...justified the racisms of the state...it grounded them in truth” (p. 54). What might the production of such delinquency look like in schools? What purpose does thickening or thinning the marginalized identities of students within classrooms serve to the school or society? Exploring these questions can help expand the horizons of the literature that attempt to grapple with the intersection of identity development and history content and classrooms. Thus, an investigation of how panoptics create disciplinary power and in turn, delinquency in history classrooms can help shift the discussion of identity appropriately to a conversation about the power dynamics of the space and their implications.

Racial projects: Entry points into power-relations. The challenge is to find a form that delinquency can be observed and discussed that permit for the emergence of power-relations that lay hidden in normalization. Fortunately, racial formation and racial project theorization by Omi and Winant (2015) provide a concrete way into such a labyrinth of power. They propose that race is a category unto itself, echoing the analytic critique of previous theories on race, describing it as a “fundamental concept that has profoundly shaped, and continues to shape, the history, polity, economic structure, and culture of the United States” (p. 106). This assessment offers an interesting perspective on race as both a category that situates people while simultaneously serving as a social, cultural, economic, and political technology of power.

Moving forward with their fluid conceptualization of racial formation, Omi and Winant (2015) define race analogously as “a concept that signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies” (p. 110). While this appears at first to be too broad and philosophical to precisely define race, this definition acknowledges the socially constructed nature of racialization while also accommodating the real consequences of social categorization that manifest in large and small scale ways. It provides space in the theorization of race to see the agency of the state, society, and individuals in crafting and reinforcing categories and the consequences of those actions to co-exist. In turn, Omi and Winant (2015) define racialization as “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group” (p. 111). In other words, the large and small scale acts within American society come together to construct the meaning of race.

This brings the theory to the topic of racial projects. For Omi and Winant (2015), these serve many purposes and take many forms. They are defined as “simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial identities and meanings, and an effort to organize and distribute resources along particular racial lines” (p. 125). Another way to think about racial projects is how Omi and Winant describe them as “both a reflection of and response to the broader patterning of race in the overall social system. In turn, every racial project attempts to reproduce, extend, subvert, or directly challenge that system” (p. 125). Thus, racial projects wield the capacity to support the normalizing forces of the dominant racial hegemony and resisting those same societal expectations. This demonstrates the role race plays in America as a societal, political, cultural, and economic technology as previously mentioned. Racial projects are used simultaneously to institutionalize while also battle the very categorizations that they produce.

Such philosophical underpinnings on race are strikingly similar to that of the post-structural philosopher Michel Foucault. For Foucault (1977, 1980, 1990a, 1990b), power exists within people. Ergo, the relationships people share between one another, their community, and the state are exercises in power. People are trained, Foucault suggests, to see these relationships wherever they may be and will behave according to the norms that the individual, community, and state have set forth. This process of normalizing power internally is what Foucault suggests is the evolution of power-relations through society. To Omi and Winant (2015), this power “cannot be reified as a thing that some possess and others do not; instead it constitutes a relational field” (p. 130). This interpretation suggests that through relationships to each other, power seemingly shape-shifts to fit the

dynamics of the human relation. In concert with one another, Foucault and Omi and Winant illuminate the need to focus on the shifting dynamic of power-relations as they ebb and flow through racial projects. Since so much of racialization historically has played out at the heart of civil society, the spotlight ought to be placed on the fringes of these very systems, where the state meets society, to grapple with the spaces that racial project power-relations take shape.

History classes serve as excellent spaces for such investigations of power and identity because they are spaces where society and the state meet. Thus, focusing on the theoretical nature of power-relations of student racial projects within history classrooms become the starting point. Specifically, this investigation seeks to explore the phenomenon of how power-relations in the history classroom shape the experiences of students with historically marginalized identities. To support this inquiry and methodological approach, I address three supporting inquiries. First, what power-relations take shape in a history classroom? This question aims to stay open to the multiplicity that Foucault emphasizes is the nature of power and power-relations. I will be looking at the ways in which power-relations emerge between the student, the space, the content, their peers, the teacher, and the school. Second, what role do these power-relations play in shaping the identity of the student? In other words, while explorations of power-relations bring forward the phenomenon, the consequences of these relations are equally material. Third, how does student consciousness of their own identity impact the power-relations at play in their racial projects? The notion that students carry with them

awareness of who they are and the historical implications are material to the aforementioned questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

The methods used to gather data on the phenomenon followed Vagle's (2014) outline of how to conduct post-intentional phenomenological studies. With the desire to present *Weltanschauung* in a manner that was authentic to the students' lived experiences, and inspired by the work of Barton and Levstik (2004), I made the purposeful choice for my data sources to be narrowed down to only two: unstructured interviews (see Appendix for outline of questions) of the students and myself as a part of the school and an advocate for their positions within the institution. I consider this to be an analytic move to make the writing I do more authentic to their experience. I recognize that including myself as a data source might initially appear problematic, but my reflexive positionality will, in fact, serve to maintain the subjective integrity of students' lived experiences, I discuss this in greater detail in the coming section. Likewise, I acknowledge that I am an active agent in their *Weltanschauung* and so throughout the unstructured interviews I ask for their analysis to complement my own.

Since the need to examine the contexts of power-relations and consciousness of their racial projects is paramount to the study, I chose three students that publicly recognized themselves as people with historically marginalized identities (see Table) through senior speeches given to the entire high school. These students also had strong understandings of historical and contemporary issues of social justice and as such, might speak passionately, honestly, and candidly to the marginalized aspects of their identities

and their experiences. I interviewed each student at the school during the summer after their senior year at the Independent City School in the summer of 2015. The interviews lasted no more than one hour and were recorded so attention could be paid to the lived experiences shared students. This data was transcribed later that year.

To further grapple with the partial and multiple forms that the phenomenon might take, I also draw on my personal journal, where I recorded my reflexive experiences since the start of theorizing this project. Importantly, these ideas and wonderings are not static—they illustrate the ways in which my nature as a researcher, educator, diversity practitioner, and person of this world with my own story of marginalization change and hold. It serves as a valuable source of information to draw upon that “presses us to question our understandings, the traditions we are operating within, and the history we are launching from—while carefully examining the participants’ experiences” (Vagle, 2014, p. 132).

Table 1

Descriptions of Participants’ Self-identified Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Participant	Race	Gender	Sexual orientation
Nina	multiracial	female	unspecified
Noelia	multiracial - Latina	female	homosexual
Michelle	multiracial - native	female	unspecified

My data analysis occurs in two spaces. First is the reading of the interviews and my self-reflexion. This was coded and analyzed initially using Vagle’s (2014) “whole-

part-whole” analysis characteristic of post-intentional phenomenology (p. 98). This meant that I coded the interviews as themes of resistance, marginalization, and oppression appeared. I then analyzed the parts as individual units, crafting out of context analysis, and followed this by re-contextualizing them with one another.

The second component of my data analysis works through what Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) describe as “writing as a method of inquiry” (p. 960). More specifically, this analytic mode aims to write more authentically by allowing the process of writing to become another equally meaningful way to engage the experiences of the students and also to permit the phenomenon to move forward through another form. Vagle concurs that the way we read and write through our data is vital to producing high-quality post-intentional phenomenological findings. Vagle (2014) suggests after using “whole-part-whole” analysis to then “deconstruct these wholes” (p. 134). Often, using theory in qualitative research such as this follows what Jackson and Mazzei (2012) describe as “plugging in” (p. 1). To them, plugging in is a “process of making and unmaking” with the aim of “making something new” so that the emphasis of the research is placed on the construction and deconstruction acts rather than the product (p. 1).

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) have informed much of my thinking methodologically; this effort to “plug in” fits nicely with the effort to see these experiences as momentary, partial, and fleeting. However, as I thought through the data I gathered, the deconstruction that plays such a central part in early poststructural philosophy did not seem to fit at a visceral level. The stories these young people shared

and opened to me do not need deconstruction, rather they need to be made whole. As such, I propose a new analytic method: the braid.

This analytic move has two parts: First, the braiding of the philosophical underpinnings (Foucault, racial formations theory, and phenomenology) to craft something new; and the second part is adding tension with my reflexivity by using writing as a method to combat a commonality in qualitative research termed the “god trick” by Donna Haraway (1988). This occurs during the construction of a text when researchers depict the subject of the study while not identifying themselves, appearing to speak from a place of higher authority. This is a form of othering, and in an effort to maintain the lived experience of those people interviewed, I attempt to situate myself throughout the analysis per the phrase “working the hyphen” (Fine, 1998, p.135). This means seeing how I am “in relation with the contexts [I] study and with [my] informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations (Fine, 1998, p. 135). Thus, this text may seem unconventional, as I include my own lived experience at the school and the writing process alongside the lived experiences of those interviewed.

Braiding still adheres to the tenets set forth by Jackson and Mazzei (2012) in the need to call forth transgressive voices from our data and evade normative categorization, but it does so in a way that emphasizes the multiplicity of intentionalities within *Weltanschauung* that are often difficult to distinguish. The coming together of stories, experiences, and theories mirrors the nature of relationships in the world: ever-changing and beautiful. While my hope is to share the stories of those gracious enough to open their experiences to me, this ought not be considered definitive in any capacity. The

following constructions of student experiences are impartial and fleeting while simultaneously authentic to myself and those people interviewed. They are moments that attempt to make sense of the ways that power-relations, resistance, and racial projects intersect, work together, and come into conflict.

Results

Nina: Experiencing Objectification, Resistance, and Creating Homeplaces

Nina was one of the first students I met in the people of color affinity group. She is one of the student co-presidents of that group and is actively involved in race-consciousness projects outside of school, such as a prominent social justice theatre company and the local Black Lives Matter organization.

Nina identifies herself as multiracial, though notes that “most people say [I am] black I recently learned...so I’ve been dealing with that but I know I’m Indian.” She identifies herself as multiracial while simultaneously thinking of herself “in general how people relate to [her].” However, Nina also recognizes that people don’t always see her the way she wants to be seen and she embraces such acts (e.g., being seen as exclusively black):

Just because I don’t like it doesn’t mean it’s a negative thing, but it’s something that somebody is taking from me and I have to realize that and then deal with that and not necessarily like invalidate it or like throw it away; like oh that’s what you think then I have to deal with the perception. (Nina, 05:22)

Emerging in her racial project are the simultaneous acts of affirming how she sees herself and how she perceives she is seen. She acknowledges that people “take from” her agency

over her racial being, suggesting a power-relation where she becomes objectified and othered. Nina also recognizes the need to “deal with the perception,” a dialogic moment that foreshadows her consciousness and desire to resist such acts of othering and objectification. One such moment happened when thinking about how to fill out the demographic information for the SAT:

I’m strategic about it...I once called the SAT or my dad called the SAT to be like can we check two and they were like nah...so, ok it's fine now, and if it's a sort of like situation where I can elaborate I do, but I don't really mind it anymore. (Nina, 11:54)

This effort signifies a moment of resistance against the College Board and its efforts to categorize. Disrupting the traditional power-relations between demographic data collection and her Self might best be described as an effort to reclaim her body from the categorization imposed upon her. While she might not “mind it anymore,” such a message reinforces the disciplinary power found within from the institutions that seek to label her: acceptance of the world as is rather than pursuing her resistance for her sense of Self. Equally likely, it might mean that she recognizes such acts have no bearing on her racial project because she decides the terms of her identity.

While Nina described her Self and experiences with respect to her racial project, gender also loomed largely in classroom settings:

I mean as far as like the participation in gender balance that's no matter what...I was in [a class] second semester and...it was mostly women in that class we were talking about I think it was like birth control rights and all of that stuff and I was

like why do we have three guys in this class and why are they talking the entire time? It doesn't matter what the topic is, it is around all the time. (Nina, 23:51)

Throughout her lived experience at school, her identity projects of race and gender take shape together. Spaces that have more women than men might still be perceived as unsafe and challenge the form that Nina wants her identity projects to take. This might result in a tension that manifests within the power-relations between her and male peers, leading to her sense of marginality heightening as the universality of this challenge drones on alongside her efforts to affirm her sense of multiracialness. In other words, Nina's racial project might compound challenges to her gender project and vice versa. Ultimately, Nina's consciousness of the situation yields another othering scenario wherein even surrounded by women, she does not seem to perceive a sense of ability to destabilize the male-is-norm ideology of the space (Trinh, 1989).

Nina's experiences in history classrooms present more dramatic forms of the tension between her identity projects and othering. When asked about her time in a history classroom, she pointed out that "it really depends on what we're learning," yet could not come up with a time that she felt connected to the content, leading her to ask sardonically, "Is that bad?" (Nina, 28:35). This became the central challenge Nina faced throughout her history class experiences. In another example that highlights the complexity of her experience, she lamented, "I don't want to write about the French Revolution but I'm being forced to and I'm going to get a mediocre grade on it because I didn't care" (Nina, 32:03).

An assumption might be made that not all of history can support her racial and gender projects, and perhaps that might be true for some, but what Nina's experience speaks to more meaningfully is the way that power-relations between her sense of Self and the content take shape. The underlying dynamic shows a lack of representation that might not allow her to work *within/through* her own identity projects. The awareness of her own apathy as well as the consequences of her actions speak to a fixed identity she assumes is due to this power-relation. The "mediocre grade" disciplines from within her and resigns her to seemingly accept the situation as what will happen rather than seeking agency over her lived experience.

Supporting the importance of the role that Nina's relation to content plays is her own thinking about learning history:

I really like history it's one of my favorite classes, I like going to history class but there was like two years where I was like I just don't I just cannot (pause) get into this it's not gonna happen...and that doesn't mean that like I was like actively not applying myself it's just like this is very hard for me to wrap my brain around... and like my dad is a history teacher so I would have to go to him after class every single day and be like can you reteach me this? and then like something about like the way he explained it to me I was like oh! that's that they were talking about this whole time? That's super helpful and then like when my mom moved away even then I would have to call her in Iowa and be like can you explain this? and she'd say well I don't know a lot about it but da da da da and I was just like you just explained more to me than anybody could earlier today. (Nina, 34:17)

Her thinking reveals the power-relation to the content within the context of the school versus that of family. Initially, Nina's claims that learning history in class was "just not gonna happen" and that it was "very hard for me to wrap my brain around" allude to the presence and strength of the disciplinary power of the content and school to fix her into the aforementioned position. Yet, when she asks her father and mother, people with whom she has starkly a different power-relation, that of shared racial identity and love, she comes to know the content with ease. Such duality of learning speaks to the significant role that the power-relations between Nina and the content play in learning history. The othering nature of the content and the school lead her to accept her position as delinquent within the school. Meanwhile, through power-relations that allow her more agency call forward her ability to resist the disciplinary power of the history classroom and engage the material.

The power-relations Nina experiences in her history classes also include that of peers. This story from Nina's U.S. history class demonstrates this point:

We had like a role playing debate and it was like ok someone take the side of pro slavery and it was like why are we doing this?! Some people got like really into it and it was like this is terrifying I do not want to be- and some people refused to participate but some people were like way too eager to be on the side of defending slavery this is a weird activity why are we doing this? (Nina, 24:40)

The space confirmed her delinquency as perceived black by her peers. She senses this and the immediacy of her mind appears to shift toward the othering that is occurring. As Fanon (1952) suggests, this gaze of Nina's peers fixes her identity to her ancestors and

makes her an object of the present in the same manner that the students other the human experiences of the past. She is terrified, but not of the content, of the relations that *her peers have with the content*. It seems to then invoke a sense of concern for her relation to the class as she questions the activity's merits all together.

The narrative constructed thus far might suggest to some that Nina fell victim to a system of oppression as old as the United States. However, this essentializes her experiences because she also actively resisted and engaged her racial project through "choosing [her] people." Nina explains an instance of how this worked:

So the other day I was in the senior lounge and somebody said oh I want a light skin boyfriend and a dark skin side ho and I'm like (laughter) I could get into this...or I could sit here with my book and tell my trusted friend later that this happened...even now months later I'm like oh my god I can't believe that happened, do not regret saying anything though because like there was nobody there to defend me I would have been the crazy person in the room like I was alone in there with no like backup and like the amount of times that happens is like infinitely more than the times I have backup. (Nina, 17:02)

While this is an instance of Nina in an unsafe situation outside of the history classroom, it demonstrates the way that choosing people provides safety. In what bell hooks (1990) refers to as "homeplace," Nina is not able to engage this situation because of how threatening it is to her racial project and being. The othering nature of this situation, (along with the perplexing complications of sexualized rhetoric) does not make this an experience that Nina can engage in and she opts out of the moment entirely. She retreats

to her homeplace, with her people to confer, find solace, and as hooks says, “confront the issue of humanization, where one *could* resist” (p. 42, italics added). Nina describes what such homeplaces are like for her:

When people understand oh I can have a conversation with her, she’s not terrifying, that made everywhere an okay space once it got out that Nina is ok to talk to...I think I got to a point by the end of school where people knew enough of me where nothing surprised them anymore so...I made it a place where there was no not-safe space for me but...I know that the entire school is not a safe space so like it's really about like choosing your people or it's really about like being educated...and then realizing what an unsafe space something might be cause part of it like knowing more about like issues of diversity makes things less safe.

(Nina, 13:55)

Thus, safety within the school, her people, and herself are not unknown quantities to Nina; yet none of Nina’s lived experiences within history classrooms spoke of such moments. From this glimpse into Nina’s life, power-relations surge forward as impactful mechanisms of discipline and resistance depending on the situation. Likewise, Nina’s experience shows the nuanced manner that these relations take shape. Through her racial project, she must negotiate moments of conflict with peers and content, objectification from institutions and classroom spaces, while also affirming her sense of Self with “her people” in her constructed homeplaces.

Noelia: Entangling Identity Projects and the Power of the Margin

Noelia identifies herself as “Latina, queer, [and] woman.” For Noelia, race is a slippery topic, as she notes about her experience filling out demographic information on standardized tests:

Sometimes if they say I can check more than one, I usually check white and Latina. But if you can only check one I check Latina. And if it asks to check latina or hispanic and then check another race I check latina and then leave the race one blank cause I don’t know what to put for it. (Noelia, 01:03)

Here, Noelia reveals a preference to identify as latin@ in all cases, though this is complicated by her identifying as white and also being unsure of what to categorize herself as when faced with the challenge of being offered latin@ as an ethnicity instead of a racial category. When asked to say what being latin@ meant, Noelia explained:

People write it as shared history of colonization but I think there are-- some people just identify with their country or whatever but my mom has a lot of Latina friends who are from a lot of different places and they all just speak Spanish and they have fun together. (Noelia, 5:06)

Noelia’s sense of Latina demonstrates the importance of shared experience, be it colonization, language, or friendships. These power-relations of mutuality also speak to a sense of constructing homeplaces (hooks, 1990). The ambivalence that Noelia feels about defining herself in racial terms as latin@ seems to take on more historio-cultural tones of shared history and belonging. Delving deeper into her experience of identifying her racial identity, Noelia elaborated on the complexity her racial project faces:

I don't know what to put because sometimes you can only put one and I don't want to just put white...you can turn out looking any way in Latin America and some people are just white and some people only identify as black and a ton of other people are just like huge mixes cause there was just like-- unless you do like a test it's like you can tell what your family's features look like and stuff but it's really hard to tell what er which three things and it's all mixed together so it's hard to I dunno. (Noelia, 7:00)

For Noelia being latin@ carries a multiplicity of meanings by cutting across races. Still, Noelia resists identifying as white and seems to work toward affirming her own latin@ identity by invoking the biology of race. This contradicts greatly with the theorization of race Omi and Winant (2015) set forth and feeds into the observation that hegemonic forces categorize and define the bodies of people as a means to reproduce the disciplinary power of the institutions of the center (Fanon, 1952; Foucault, 1977, 1980, 1990a, 1990b; hooks, 1990).

While subtle, Noelia's comment that she doesn't want to put "just white" suggests that Noelia's understanding of whiteness emerges as a challenge to the racial project she seeks to affirm. The quietness demands investigation for what the experience of whiteness of Noelia might be like. In thinking about her white racial identity, Noelia notes feeling uncomfortable about how she relates to it:

I dunno sometimes I feel weird not checking the white box my dad really-- my dad says always check the white box for everything and if I asked him about it he'd be like [inflection lowers] well duh *laughter* [inflection returns to

conversational tone] like last night he was saying that he was reading [an article] that was like about social justice as a religion and I was like that's so stupid because for some people it's just their lives and stuff and he was like [inflection lowers] well not for you you're so privileged or whatever [inflection returns to conversational tone] and it's like what are you talking about I mean I don't know if he-- I mean he's so oblivious and I feel like it's so obvious that I'm not straight and he doesn't realize it and he thinks that I'm white and he doesn't think that women have it that bad anymore and he really just doesn't think of me as [trails off] I don't know uh but sometimes I like pause and it makes me a bit uncomfortable so I'm ok just leaving it unchecked and not having to do anything with it but it makes me feel really weird to just leave it. (Noelia, 10:02)

In this lived experience, Noelia's relationship with her father shines light on the entanglement of her racial project, gender project, and sexual identity project. The power-relations with her father offer a way to see that these projects might weave together and thereby make one indistinguishable from another. Noelia suggesting that her father sees her as white challenges her sense of racial being explicitly while simultaneously threatening her sexuality and gender projects, that she also perceives as being marginal, through the implicit privilege of whiteness.

Noelia's relationship with her father also shows a reproduction of colonial white-male-is-norm ideology that Trinh (1989) speaks of:

One time he told me he didn't want me to put—what'd he say he's like this is really bad—he thinks that like Europeans are being like lost or whatever you

know and he thinks that you're supposed to like identify with it cause everybody else is taking everything over he like didn't want me to like have Ramirez in my name and stuff I dunno its like important to him. (Noelia, 10:11)

Noelia highlights a moment where her father takes, what Omi and Winant (2015) would describe as, a neoconservative stance on race. Her interjection that “this is really bad” underscores her awareness of how problematic this is for her racial project and her power-relations with her father. Noelia draws the connection from this moment to another experience where her father advises against taking a non-European/white last name to reinforce the problematic nature of the power-relation she has with her father and her own sense of Self. While Noelia recognizes that this might be a part of her father's own racial project, since this “stuff” is “important to him,” given Noelia's self-identification, this deeply contradicts her sense of positionality on the margin of society racially, sexually, and gender-wise.

However, Noelia continues to find moments to resist and affirm her own identity projects in spite of this complex relationship with her father:

I know the checkmarks aren't a super big deal but I still like checking them like before I never really checked them like before I always checked white when I was really little and I didn't really think about myself as Cuban or Latina or anything and so it feels kind of good to check them. (Noelia, 10:58)

While the categorization is something that society imposes upon her as a standard, the evolution of her racial identity and consciousness gives her a sense of control that she did not have when she was younger. She must constantly navigate power-relations with

people in her life and also stabilize her sense of Self. She feels affirmed in categorizing herself while also confused about how race is defined in being latin@. Her gender and sexuality become intimately tied to her sense of racial being through her self-identified position on the margin. While that might create tension in the relations she has with her father, her marginality defies conventional wisdom and more aptly fits the description that “margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance” (hooks, 1990, p. 151). She embraces her marginality proudly, fully accepting that she loses privileges in a larger societal context. It is something to embrace and nurture; rather than disentangle the multiple strands of her identity to avoid delinquency, Noelia leans into the complicated nuances of her being. Such acts seem to perform the self-affirmation she needs in her identity project. While this plays into her delinquent status, the power-relations she has with those around her seem to shift because of her own appreciation for her marginality. She has agency within the relations, in spite of the oppressive form they conventionally appear in.

Noelia continued to find and build spaces for her to work through her racial/gender/sexuality project in school. She often found empty classrooms after school with “certain friends to talk about race a lot which was just like nice.” She noted specifically that interactions with a friend that identified as Latino “always felt really good...anytime he’d talk about anything about being Latino it always felt really good to talk to him about it.” However, this space was occupied by more than race - it also housed the sexuality projects of Noelia and her friends as she describes:

At some point I think we all turned out to be gay and nobody knew and no one said anything about it and then at some point I think like in the middle of the year we all found out and so then we started being able to talk about that and that was nice. (Noelia, 12:34)

This space was one of comfort and shared experience of engaging in her own racial project, seeing how her friends navigated theirs, and having the safety for her sexuality project to emerge as well. Perhaps it was the space that afforded such an opportunity; the marginality and co-construction of a shared homeplace allowed Noelia and her friends to engage one another's existences honestly and authentically in such a manner that the fullest versions of who they perceived themselves to be burst forth. In this space, the power-relations emerge as mutual love and understanding; not of exactness, but of seeing one another as people processing through their identity projects.

Noelia notes that a key factor in the after-school construction of this safe space with her friends was because "all the teachers left" (Noelia, 14:42). While she doesn't blame teachers individually for not being able to co-construct spaces in the same way, saying that "it's probably just the nature of schools but [teachers] didn't know they didn't know" (Noelia, 15:43). Here, Noelia alludes to the dilemma of delinquency. Her consciousness allows her to see the machinery of discipline within the school for what it does—reproduce the powers of discipline that push her to the margins. Yet, her consciousness also makes others of teachers, turning them into outsiders to her relationship with her Self. hooks (1990) suggests that those on the margins need not be

taught how to exist in the center, yet it adds a meaningful layer of complication to the construction of homeplaces. They resist and repress simultaneously.

In classrooms, Noelia often found herself defending her identity projects, specifically that of her racial Self. Tensions between peers she identified as “white,” when issues such as affirmative action or reverse racism would be discussed, were particularly difficult challenges that led Noelia to feel “super uncomfortable...really mad...[and] frustrated.” Adding onto this was the silence of her teachers, which she perceived as a significant contributing factor to the conflicts she found herself in, stating, “I feel like teachers really need to [not be silent], all the bad situations I’ve been in are teachers not getting it or not realizing.” The silence Noelia feels from teachers emerges more dangerously than that of her relationships with her peers over issues of identity, particularly her racial project. While Noelia appears confident in her ability to engage peers that undermine this project, the silence teachers add to these situations seems to substantiate an othering of Noelia. Her efforts to affirm her sense of Self are diminished by the vacuum of support. As a result, unlike the homeplaces Noelia co-constructs after school, time in the classroom unfolds in radically dangerous ways to her sense of identity.

In history courses, the tension Noelia experienced with peers seemed to take shape more with the content than with peers and teachers. Throughout our conversation, Noelia found it difficult to remember any specifics of the content she remembered or even felt connected with. She recalled learning about Latin American history, but said she felt like she “should’ve been connecting to it but [I] didn’t at all...like I remember like random shit on the board like (inflection change) bananas and yeah that’s all I

remember and it felt like we should've been learning more" (Noelia, 47:05). While Noelia's notion of what was learned is blunt, her feeling of wanting to learn more speaks to the lack of relation to the content she had. That lack of connection seemed to reinforce itself throughout her high school career as she tried to recall a time she felt connected and instead shared a story about another student's negative experience with a teacher learning about drug wars in the United States during the 1980s. Similar to her own moments in history classes, Noelia's disinterest in the subject matter was noted in her U.S. history class during a role playing activity:

We did so many role plays that were like pretend you're a white farmer
(laughter) and how do you feel or whatever and then you'd have to write about
that felt like a waste of time when there were other things we could talk about.
(Noelia, 45:18)

Whereas the silence of teachers undermined and repressed her racial project in other areas of the school, the activity in her history classes appeared to do the silencing. It brought forward apathy and a desire to "do more" or talk about other topics. This implies a desire, perhaps even a yearning, to explore content closer to her identity; that Noelia wanted to feel connected, but had come to see classrooms and the history content as unilaterally anti her identity. As such, she retreated into what the center expected her to do: Be apathetic in the space.

Noelia's lived experiences demonstrate deep entanglement of her racial, gender, and sexual identities and her working through these projects. Yet, the power of silence in

classrooms and the content make her appear one-dimensional as she, too, is aware. Noelia describes that she

Was ok talking about race but I never brought up especially in history class I never brought up anything about LGBTQ people I just I don't know I just never did that you didn't see me I don't know may once I did but um but I really I didn't do that very much. (Noelia, 49:46)

The ambivalence to talk about sexuality in the classroom complements the notion of apathy about the content. This is a part of Noelia that emerges readily with her racial project when around her father and her friends, yet does not move forward in the experience of history class. The one-dimensional nature of Noelia's identity in the history classroom is contrary to so much of her lived experience; it is vexing why the power-relation within the classroom would take shape this way.

Michelle: Making Wholeness from Incompleteness

Michelle was an active member of the school community in efforts to raise awareness on issues of racial and cultural equity. As a senior, she helped the school bring in representatives of her Dakota community to celebrate Native people and their significance in U.S. society and history. Michelle identifies as "Native Dakota...and being a woman," and also notes that "I am mixed, my mom's white and my dad's Native" (Michelle, 01:24). While Michelle's racial project carries multiple dimensions, she suggests that she more strongly identifies with her Native side:

I never identify as white I think just because I don't um you know that's not my culture that's not where I think of myself as from in a history class um I identify

much more with Native people than any white historical figures. (Michelle, 01:49)

The choice to “never identify as white” suggests that Michelle embraces her place on the margin and also that she closely ties her identity to cultural and historical forces. Her consciousness of what leads her to think about her racial project implies that Michelle’s racial project is a confluence of race, culture, and history. When thinking about her sense of Self in terms of the demographic questions asked by standardized tests, Michelle confidently responded, “I for sure check Native...it’s funny I can’t remember (laughter) I can’t even remember if I do check mixed or if I check white I think I might but for sure Native” (Michelle, 02:49). Thus, for Michelle although she recognizes her racial project, including whiteness, as a “mixed” person, she makes the choice to identify as Native and in fact, finds it comical that she can’t remember if she has ever checked mixed or white on such standardized tools. As she says, “I self identify pretty easily” (03:07).

Yet, Michelle’s relation with such societal categorizing mechanisms is complicated by the lack of agency she has over how the information she provides is interpreted. Michelle notes that the issue of blood quantum and enrollment as a person that identifies as Native is a challenge she grapples within these experiences:

It felt most weird for me...when I was doing college apps and when I was doing the common app because the question that comes along with that is are you enrolled and I’m not enrolled because of blood quantum so then that’s kind of a weird thing too um cause it feels like another step of identification I wish I could check...I know I’m Native and I know I identify as Native and I’m very involved

in that but I think enrolling is a step of validation so when people hear you're enrolled ok she's really Native and not just oh she's 1/16th Cherokee. (Michelle, 03:53)

The complicated nature of formally verifying Michelle's self-identification highlights the challenging interplay between agency and acceptance in her identity project. She adamantly affirms her identity as Native through the demographic information and the work she does in her community, but she cannot claim "enrolled" status. It creates tension within the power-relation between Michelle, her sense of Self, and the institution (in this case the U.S. government). In spite of identifying as Native, in the eyes of the U.S. government, Michelle realizes that she may not be perceived the way that she perceives herself. Such ocular power, as Foucault suggests, seems to resituate Michelle's sense of Self as an object of categorization—of discipline.

Perhaps it is this dilemma that takes shape through the tension that Michelle feels between her sense of Self and enrollment. The weirdness that Michelle feels could be caused by what enrollment represents as a categorical power crafted through the identity of Native. Tension emerges as she so clearly sees herself as Native, yet lacks control over the determining factors of blood quantum and enrollment that might make her identity project an object of categorization. The weirdness she feels in these experiences would potentially serve as growing resistance to such objectification.

Michelle's identity project found affirmation within the school through the power-relations she had with teachers, particularly teachers of color. Michelle says that she felt most comfortable in who she was in the classrooms of two teachers that

Very much encouraged to um be very outloud with um your identity specifically as a person of color and I think although in the rest of the school it's not discouraged and may even be encouraged it's in those spaces that um I felt the most safe because the teachers themselves were doing it you know...so I felt very comfortable. (Michelle, 05:22)

Teachers engaging in their own racial projects as people of color created affirming and positive power-relations with Michelle that facilitated the construction of safe space for her racial project. Delving further into this experience, Michelle highlights that this space allowed her to be perceived by people the way she wanted to be:

I think um from day one...saw that I was a Native person and that was a big part of my identity whereas on the other hand you know I'd say for the first two years of high school you know my freshman and sophomore years I didn't present myself that way um and so then around my peers and other teachers that just it didn't seem like a huge part of my identity to them. (Michelle, 07:29)

Being seen the way she wants to be seen, as a Native person, speaks to the power-relations of shared understanding. While Michelle notes the importance of peers and teachers to see her for who she is, it seems that the perceptions do not take on the nature of an othering gaze, and instead affirming "outloud" her identity.

Unfortunately, such safety was not present for Michelle in her history classes. The dynamic relationship of power-relations in Michelle's racial project as a Native person within the school led to experiences of dangerous silence, explicit othering, and objectification. Specifically, in her U.S. history class:

I think that my American history class um was one of the hardest classes I had...I just felt a lot of times like I definitely checked a part of myself at the door coming into that class...it felt alienating I think is the best word to use um I felt like when I walked in that class I either had to be very vocal about what I was feeling or not at all. (Michelle, 06:15)

The alienation that Michelle felt in this class was one that presented her with a choice of either fighting to affirm her own sense of Self and her racial project or to shift into a mode of self-preservation. This conflict played out regularly for Michelle:

I felt like um to the other people in the class I had an obligation to be a representative for Native people being the only Native person in the class and then I just didn't really want to take on that role and so then I would just hold back you know I would um just leave that at the door um and so then I'd usually I was a pretty active participant in class but in that one I really kind of consciously chose that I'm just I'm gonna sit back for this one...it kind of feels like all eyes are on you especially when you're talking about the hard subjects...you know the um I guess every time we lose [laughter] which is a lot people feel uncomfortable you know you see the little looks oh how is she doing over there [laughter] like this must suck for her and I'm like yeah it kind of does. (Michelle, 08:41)

The routine gaze of peers cultivates a sense of othering that Michelle struggled to resist as she entered the space of the classroom. Even assuming the best intentions of her peers to sympathize with the strange dynamics of the class and Michelle, the gaze looks on and

categorizes without Michelle's agency in the process. Thus, she and her racial project become objects of the classroom space. Simultaneously, Michelle faced this othering through the content:

It was about the content and it was about how the content was being taught...I don't always want um Native People to be taught as the victims and I think that's something that happens a lot but I think that it's also very important to tell a complete history of what happened to Native People and I felt like in that class none of those are being accomplished...[because] very short descriptions of what was happening was being told...when you're learning about history you're learning about the human factor and so you know being in class and being able to look at just the facts of it and look at the Trail of Tears or look at boarding schools as it was a point in history instead of a history of my family like this is in my family's oral history that we talk about this we remember this—this isn't a sentence in a history book. (Michelle, 12:26)

Her power-relation with the content illustrates the richness within Michelle's racial project. She not only seeks to affirm racial identity for its societal value, she also seeks to remember and reshape the historical identity she sees herself in dialogue with everyday. History for Michelle is alive in her family and acts of remembrance. The content and the way the history classroom engages in the re-telling of stories held so intimately within her identity project seek to dissect and compartmentalize her historical being, rather than keep her identity whole.

I think it's the closeness is the hardest part and it's also hard that people don't— it's hard for them to see the closeness you know when we talk about boarding schools you know my grandma was in boarding school you know it's very close and when we talk about the Dakota 38 my grandma has stories you know her grandma knowing those men and so it's these ideas it's very close and it doesn't feel like history to me and so then the idea that this being taught in a classroom is it's hard because...specifically in Native Tradition or Dakota Tradition when you talk about hard things there's a very specific way you go about doing it...it's a process that is taken very seriously and you only do in specific times and in specific ways and we're just talking about boarding schools as in numbers and you know names of places we're not talking about it in the right way um so I think that's hard um so yeah it's a lot of the detachment is probably the hardest part I also think it's so incomplete I think one of the hardest parts for me there was never really a time where we learned specifically what happened like right here in Minnesota um and so it's weird to you know be on this land and be in this area that has this history and we don't talk about it and it's weird for me to have my peers to not understand you know most of them don't know about the 38 I think we had like one sentence in our history book about it that was very incomplete and um you know it's like well that happened right here that's our history that's all of our histories since we're here right now and the fact that that's not being taught feels very incomplete too...um it feels um (pause) I guess it feels like who I am and who my people are cause again it is our history but it's

also our reality because it has completely shaped the where we are today cause that's the other is you know um there is so much hardship in the Native community and a lot of that can be directly linked to these pieces of history. (Michelle, 21:56)

Thus, the choice between being authentic to her identity project or protecting it from the multi-front assault of the history classroom, from her peers, from the content, and from the seeming invisibility of the teacher make this a false choice; she must self-preserve in order to avoid the internalization of othering that contradicts the wholeness she strives for. This act directly impacted her performance within the class:

I know for sure that I didn't do my best work in that class um um yeah and again that was kind of conscious decision that I just didn't want to dive into those aspects in this setting so a lot of times when we had to write a thesis statement I would specifically not pick a topic related to Native People or a topic that was close to me and that when I was writing papers or doing assignments again I just checked all my personal info at the door and I was just using the info that was given to me which was really hard cause I would write things that I was like this is incomplete this doesn't feel right this isn't the truth um but it's the truth that's being told to me by this textbook...so yeah...I definitely did feel inauthentic a lot of times and um yeah I think really what it came down to [was] that I knew it was a credit I needed and I needed to pass it and I just you know took baby steps to get to the finish line. (Michelle, 17:11)

The consciousness of Michelle's decision demonstrates a purposeful quality to her action. Acknowledging that completing the class for the credit serves an essential role of permitting her to graduate and continue moving forward in her life's endeavors. Simultaneously, she chooses to do so poorly, in effect resisting the disciplinary mechanisms that seek to impose societal normative standards of what identifying as a Native person means. She protects the wholeness of her identity project by making her being in the history class incomplete.

Me: Implicated and Extricated

Undertaking the task Fine (1998) sets forth, "working the hyphen", means I must challenge myself to see how I simultaneously make my Self and am implicated in making the other. I take on many roles throughout my day: teacher, student, researcher, brother, son, friend, and partner. Through it all I recognize the identities I carry with me and the privileges that come with them. Being multiracial, allows me passage into certain circles that others cannot: I see this as a privilege. I have been/am/can be seen as a person of color by people of color. At the school where I teach, this means I am readily identified as an ally in diversity work. In the making of myself in this capacity, I am aware that my allyship with students of color might be reappropriated for the purposes of selling the school to potential families. While I wish this wasn't the case, I stand firmly on the ground that Fanon (1952) lays in the extrication of himself: that change must come in "the most materialist sense" (p. xv). Thus, while my body might be commodified, it is the space the administrators (un)knowingly afford me that matters far more to crafting authentic experiences for students.

This became all I could think about when crafting a proposal for a new course that would delve into the intersections of history and identity. When it was sent back for revisions, I thought little of it and was happy to do it. I felt honored that the school was even considering my proposal and was proud that the school I worked for was willing to consider such a course. So I went to work on the changes; I was left with a proposal as an empty vessel of what I envisioned. The recommendations from the academic committee sterilized the aim of creating a space where consciousness of our identity projects could be safely engaged and more “historical” topics were demanded. Something stirred within me and I could not help but think this move was made purposefully to protect the hegemony of the school. Decoupling the intimacy of one’s Self from the content made it so and it was done so subtly, but the arithmetic of the changes showed their true motivations: fear that students might become conscious of the school they attend and the part it plays in routine othering.

As I write, I want to create space for Trinh, her words echo in my mind resolutely: “Is it not, indeed, always in the name of freedom that My freedom hastens to stamp out those of others?” (p. 13). Trinh reminds me that I must vigilantly see my implicatedness in the act of othering. My privilege as a straight, middle-class, able-bodied, cisgender male surely intersects here in this writing and in my efforts to create a new course. While I take up the fight for racial equity, what am I doing to challenge the othering that occurs in this same moment? How am I complicit in that othering? I recognize my position as one of privilege. In sharing my experience with a teacher I work with, a woman of color, I realize how implicated I am. I find that my story is not new, the wound is merely fresh.

Our realities intersect with this proposal; she offers me advice and support. I listen to the pain in her voice as she reopens her scars to show me the suffering endured at the hands of the institution as she shares her truths; it is a shared reality. Together, we construct a homeplace for the first time, where we work toward disalienation of one another. Here, I find solace and feel whole.

My thinking shifts to focus on what I unwittingly othered: gender, sexuality, class, and ability. Identity will always be a multiplex and so I find myself thinking more about the intersections within my own life and realizing how little I know. It is exciting and simultaneously overwhelming. How am I to be an author? How am I to be a teacher? I have no authority. The authority I “have” is produced by the institutions I am a part of and placed upon me like blinders on a horse. Do what you are told. No more, no less.

This led to the realization that power governs from *within* us. As colonial vestiges of hegemony resurface with different names, such as “political correctness” to not-so-quietly hide the racist/sexist/homophobic/classist tendencies of people, it is othering by a different name, one that does not stir the hearts of people the way overt bigotry does; yet, the outcomes are the same. In my school, I aim to disrupt this silent othering in my classroom and amongst my colleagues. I fight as many of these fights as I can, trying to affirm being by being present in myself, but the line between ally and savior is razor-thin. I am trying to reinvent myself so that that my body does not become a mechanism for Eurocentric hegemony. The disruptions I try to create by challenging sexism with a student or asking a colleague about the role he sees sexuality playing in student lives and discussing for an hour, feel so fleeting that it makes me wonder if I have made any

progress at all. Fanon (1952) provides clarity by asking, “Why not simply...discover each other?” (p. 206). In this moment, I am left with this thought: perhaps it is not the doing of work that matters so much as it is the *becoming* of the work.

Discussion

Throughout this process the most prominent fear I’ve held has been that I might not do justice to these young people who have shared so much of themselves with me. In fact, I know that no matter the revisions I make and the efforts I put forward to construct a narrative to allow their experiences to speak for themselves, it will never quite be what they gave. It is the struggle that Husserl felt the natural sciences would never overcome and what qualitative researchers such as Fine, St. Pierre, Lather, Jackson, Mazzei, and so many more write about and demand attention from those of us who craft such writing. My aim with positioning myself within the text was to place myself within the work so that my voice did not become dominant and to make theirs’ more prominent. This discussion seeks to continue this move.

This project began as a post-intentional phenomenological study into the lived experiences of these young people and how marginalized identities might take shape in history classrooms. As Vagle (2014) suggests, we must allow the phenomenon to speak for themselves and to emerge as they ought. These lived experiences provided an entry point into what might best be characterized as postcolonial *Weltanschauung*. While the purpose of this project was not to find thematic unity or generalizability, their stories are nonetheless familiar. These young women fought for themselves against hegemonic forces socio-historically cultivated to repress their sense of being and other them in the

process. Nina, Noelia, and Michelle refused to bend to the will of the institutional disciplinary mechanisms pervasive in their lives and instead, constructed homeplaces where they could safely affirm their race, gender, and sexuality.

Such acts of resistance give hope to a world that is rife with the consequences of the colonial footprint. It speaks to a future that might take shape- that might be around the corner—if, and only if, we all engage in these acts of resistance. Fanon (1952) first poses the question about existence in a postcolonial world: “How do we extricate ourselves?” (p. 10). Before we might be able to free ourselves from the shackles of disciplinary power that have been at work with our psyches and bodies for centuries, we must understand our implicatedness in the system. Asher (2009) artfully addresses this point, stating that “postcolonial educators remain implicated by their participation in systems of education that are rooted in Eurocentric, colonialist, and oppressive traditions” (p. 72).

I accept the role that I have played in this work and it is time to change the course of history that has been set before us. From Nina, Noelia, and Michelle I see the answer taking shape: resist through a cultivation of homeplaces. Consistent throughout their stories was a lack of belonging in the history classrooms because the curriculum itself had no space for their postcolonial identity projects of resistance. Instead, that curriculum prescribed a set of normative categorizations of people as objects of study rather than agents of change. Asher (2009) corroborates this observation noting, “[T]he history of colonization and its effects, including the erasure of such histories from official curriculum, continue to shape relations of power” (p. 73). Thus, educational leaders,

practitioners, and researchers must make every effort to transform the historiography that has for too long governed without contest the forms of secondary school history.

One such example of this is the absence of teachers in these women's history class experiences. While present in the room, their narratives focused on power-relations with peers and content instead of seeing the teacher as the gatekeeper of the classroom experience. In a Foucauldian twist, the panoptic nature of the history classroom is completely paralleled to that of the prison (1977). Being constantly watched by normalizing gazes of peers, content, and the teacher, these women appear to find themselves othered, but never know when and by whom. As a result, they lose track of the entity that operates the daily system: the teacher. This permits normalizing to happen in multiple forms, dislocating it from authority so that marginalization cannot be directly challenged. In turn, teachers become absent. This is raised because as educators we must be consistently aware of our positions as figures of discipline and identity and what consequences that our being has in the identity projects of our students.

Postcolonial theory, along with that of poststructuralism, might afford more opportunities for students and teachers alike to grapple with the important reality that the narratives told to them are constructed for purposes that demand skepticism. Simultaneously, postcolonialism breaks down false barriers to entry into historical discourse so we can engage with our own identities and ancestries in affirming and authentic ways. Ignoring the fact that we are the gatekeepers of the curriculum (Thornton, 1989) or believing in what VanSledright (2008) calls the "freedom-quest narrative," (p.

123) perpetuates the power-relations of colonial hegemony that have persisted through time that make history inaccessible for marginalized people.

This project has shown me this, and as such, I seek to resist and understand the urgency of this project. I have too long been implicated in a system that maintains a status quo that endangers the being of me and my students. In an act of resistance during the writing of this project, I proposed a new history course to afford a homeplace in the curriculum for students and myself. The struggle to approve it was difficult, fraught with challenges from curricular strategists looking to protect the institution's disciplinary mechanisms and from educational leaders whose own upbringing in history did not necessarily see why this class might be relevant to thinking about a society that disrupts the technologies of colonial hegemony. I learned much about myself and the complexity of doing the work that needs to be done and maintaining a sense of ethical integrity. It is difficult to say at this point how I fared, but that seems like a different project unto itself. While this class will by no means be perfect, it is a starting point in resistance. My colleague taught me this as we worked to transform our world history course to focus on absent narratives in the dominant historical narrative. While the work seems to always need improving, I must start somewhere.

While much of the work done at the intersection of identity and history classrooms focuses on the development of national identity, there is still more to understand in terms of the experience of students developing this identity. Barton (2012) makes a call to action, stating "schools are not irrelevant in the formation of students' historical identities...[so] educators need to be conscious of how the curriculum serves as

a resource in students' active construction of identity" (pp. 105-106). Consciousness of how pedagogy and content impact identity development will certainly help alleviate the tensions Barton highlights, but to push forward the importance of identity within the classroom, the power-relations at play must be understood through acts of resistance, self-preservation, and growth. We cannot ask of young people to do what we are unprepared to do as adults.

Implications and Conclusion

Evaluating the lived experiences of Nina, Noelia, and Michelle in the context of culturally relevant pedagogy brings forward the need for safety within social studies curriculum and classrooms. Literature on culturally relevant teaching suggests a myriad of ways this can be accomplished: using critical race theory as a lens to examine U.S. history, supplementing textbooks to incorporate stories of people with non-normative identities, and disrupting the freedom-quest narrative of American history by challenging assumptions about race, gender, sexuality, and class in the classroom (Branch, 2004; Chikkatur, 2013; Howard, 2004; Levy, 2016; Martell, 2013; Urietta, 2004). My findings corroborate this need for educators to work toward cultivating safe environments through culturally responsive teaching.

However, this may be more difficult than the research presents it to be because identity manifests in complex and dynamic ways. The uncomfortable truth is that we are ill-equipped to predict what could trigger feelings of marginalization in any students. Beck (2013) investigated the nature of safety in social studies classrooms with specific attention to the issue of same-sex marriage. He concluded that safety

As imagined as everyone comfortably expressing their opinions, might not be possible...[and that] it might be time to accept the unreliable and unpredictable nature of classroom safety in order to begin recognizing the complexity of the students with whom we work. (p. 24)

In other words, the safety as has been conventionally discussed in educational research and in schools is so elusive that even recommendations from literature may not develop a sense of comfort and belonging for all students. While Beck redirects the discussion toward appreciating student identity over attempting to create safe classrooms, giving up on efforts to make classrooms safe feels too pessimistic. Instead, we ought to re-imagine safety through the interstices of culturally relevant pedagogy and postcolonialism.

By reorienting the relationship between teacher and student to that of colonizer and colonized, teachers will have a new entry point into the “recursive self-reflection” needed to employ culturally relevant praxis (Martell, 2013, p. 73). This shift in perspective might not seem particularly profound at first since these theories overlap in desired outcomes. However, postcolonial theory shows the ways that we, as teachers, are inevitably implicated in marginalizing students by shining light on how our pedagogies and philosophies reproduce the hegemonic racism, sexism, and classism characteristic of colonialism. Postcolonialism may also be a more uniquely concrete way for social studies teachers to re-imagine safety as it is also content that we either teach or have studied. It also provides an alternative for educators who struggle to evaluate themselves as racial beings. As Martell points out about successfully engaging in culturally relevant pedagogy, “it is crucial that white teachers first challenge their own white privilege and

the curriculum that often institutionalizes it” (p. 81). Thus, if this groundwork must be laid to use culturally relevant pedagogy, additional routes need to be constructed to get teachers to a place where they understand and are willing to look inwardly.

Postcolonialism offers a re-entry point for those teachers who might often opt out of such conversations because they see the world in colorblind or post-racial manners.

This research project has its limitations. First, the students’ relationship with me, as an ally in work of racial equity, may have influenced their answers and the ways they reflected on their lived experiences. My presence could have brought forward in their memories challenges they faced specifically about marginalization since much of my work with them during the school year revolved around this. Second, the interviews were limited. In reflecting on this project, I would include follow-up interviews to delve into the phenomenon that arose from the first set of responses. While that was not necessary because the post-intentional phenomenological stance relies on tentative and partial realities, additional discussions would likely have created even greater richness in the narratives. Lastly, this project had a limited set of data. More creative artifacts could have been used to gain a sense of the experiences of these students, such as essays from these courses, the textbooks they used, or even doodles in their notes from the classes they referenced.

The post-intentional phenomenological nature of this study is also worth noting in its importance in social studies research. While literature of student experiences in social studies classrooms is ample (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Epstein, 2000, 2009; Evans, 1988; Voss, 1998; Wineburg et. al, 2007), to my knowledge none of it takes a post-intentional

phenomenological stance. Phenomenology, in all its forms, offers opportunities to resituate central questions within social studies educational research, such as citizenship, participation, democracy, national-identity, and historical memory, within global philosophical discourse. This allows the work we do to become more universal, opening up our findings to interdisciplinary collaboration. Post-intentional phenomenology, in particular, does the important work of destabilizing what we take for granted in the field by considering the experiences we observe and wonder about as tentative and fleeting. As researchers contemplate how to advance fields of qualitative research within social studies research, post-intentional phenomenology provides plausible paths to new knowledge.

In thinking about my own craft as a postcolonial thinker and culturally relevant teacher, I continue to seek ways to find myself implicated and in turn, to liberate myself from systems of marginalization. My hope is to find new spaces and means of hearing student voices to make sense of what safety looks and feels like to them in their learning experiences. Through this process, perhaps learning history can become a way to affirm one's sense of self and lead to redefining citizenship in this nation so that it is based on the richness of identity rather than the categorization of it.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Identity.

- a. When you think about identity and yourself, what comes to mind?
- b. What kind of person do you consider yourself?
- c. On formal tests like the ACT or SAT that ask you to check boxes about
- d. How you identify demographically, what do you check?
- e. How do you feel when you are asked to check the boxes?

2. Identity within the school.

- a. Now I want to shift to the context of identity to the school. Can you tell me about a time or a place in the school you really feel like yourself?
 - i. *Follow-up if necessary: why is that?*
- b. Tell me about a time or space in the school you don't feel like yourself.
 - i. *Follow-up if necessary: why is that?*

3. Identity within history classrooms.

- a. I want to shift the context once more to the History class. Describe for me your overall experience in History classes.
 - i. Tell me about a time taking History classes that really stand out in your memory.
 1. Why does this stand out so much?
- b. Tell me about a time you really felt like you identified with something in History classes.
 - i. Why was that?
- c. Tell me about a time you really felt like you couldn't or had a hard time relating to something in History classes.
 - i. Why was that?

- d. If you had complete control over designing a history class, what would it look like and feel like?
 - i. How, if at all, would the content change?
 - ii. How, if at all, would the way the teacher taught change?

4. Wrap up.

- a. Is there anything you think I should've asked that I didn't?

- b. Is there anything you think would be important for me to know that hasn't been said?

- c. What questions, if any, do you have for me?