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Introduction: Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions

We contend that the goal of education is personal and political empowerment both of teachers and of their students. June Jordan (1987) speaks of this empowerment through language, "If we lived in a democratic state our language would have to hurtle, fly, curse, and sing, in all the common American names, all the undeniable and representative participating voices of everybody here" (30). Thus, we began this teacher interview study with the following question in mind: Is the ability to deconstruct personal experience, both actual and metaphorical, through both personal literacy and literacy instruction what makes teachers sensitive to and able to empower children?

We, as does Lorenz (Gleick, 1987), believe that by paying attention to the sensitive dependence on initial conditions—in this case teachers' reading—we can learn from the teachers with whom we collaborated in this study. Our methods for this research study involved autobiographical cultural criticism. Through autobiographical cultural criticism, this study explores critical issues in teaching—specifically the influence of reading upon the lives of teachers who are sensitive to diversity. We investigated the effects of this reading on teachers' lives and explore how reading affects our becoming effective authors of our own lives. This study emulates a new academic genre which integrates two modes of discourse usually kept sharply separate: the autobiographical and the theoretical.

Resisting readers and thinkers have always interpreted text based on their own experience. An example of this is Jamaica Kinkaid's (1990) Lucy who was made, by her English schoolteachers, to memorize and recite "Daffodils": "I was then at the height of my two-facedness: that is, outside I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true. And so I made pleasant little noises that showed both modesty and appreciation, but inside I was making a vow to erase from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem" (1990, 19).

We, the authors, are teacher-researchers with our own stories and our own experiences, both metaphorical from literature and actual from life experiences, woven together making us who we are as teachers. In this research, as we looked into our collaborating teachers' stories, we became aware of the influence of reading in their development of personal metaphors for life which, in turn, influences their teaching in many ways. We have used various methods to "listen to" the stories of teachers. We listened to teachers' family histories—to find the origins of the stories—in the interviews and for underlying metaphor as a continuing pervasive influence on teachers' work.

As we interviewed, we, as did Rogers (1993), realized that we hope to change not only the voice of research through teachers' voices, but also its practice. Through this process, we expanded our initial question to include the following dimensions: Is it teachers who personally experience power of fantasy in their own lives who are able to respect the importance of fantasy in the development of young children? Is it the relationship between literacy and art that helps us get at the complexities of life? Does the fact that metaphorical experience involved in art, including cultural traditions and ceremonies, has been tied to action as a concrete expression of itself relate to teacher development? What are the metaphors constructed by resisting readers? What are their metaphors for teaching? How do they personally deconstruct culture in relation to their own experience? How do teachers get nourishment for the soul?

Theoretical Framework

> She's was always there when I went outside . flashes of yellow on purple as she flew in and out of the bougainvillea blossoms. Her name was Juliana. I remember going to the rooftop of the tiny pink house overlooking the village when I was happy and she seemed to be hopping around reflecting my spirits. I remember when I was sad or upset and I wanted to hide in the vines and plants in the courtyard, she hovered near as if to say "I'm here with you." She first joined me in Chapala, a small village in Mexico and followed my uprooted family to San Antonio, Texas and then finally to Florida. At some point in this journey, she was joined by her friend, a white butterfly named Juanita. My fantasy world and spiritual world were alive in these two butterflies. I still think of them today when I see a yellow or white butterfly.
>
> —Elizabeth Quintero

In connection with our study, we thought of these yellow and white butterfly companions when we looked at the design for our

study. We had been influenced by the work of Lorenz (Gleick, 1987) and his study of chaos theory, a theory that has become an elaborate study of natural phenomena. Lorenz elucidated the principles of that theory with the Lorenz attractor which reflects the pattern on butterflies' wings and around the eyes of the owl and other designs in nature. Lorenz's perceptive ability to see order in apparent randomness and "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" (Gleick, 1987, 29) left him open to new ways of intellectual processing. We felt inspired by his risk-taking and have used as our metaphor for research his figure, "Lorenz attractor" sometimes labeled the "Lorenz butterfly," described here:

> This magical image, resembling an owl's mask or butterfly's wings, became an emblem for the early explorers of chaos. It revealed the fine structure hidden within a disorderly stream of data To show the changing relationships among three variables required a different technique. At any instant in time, the three variables fix the location of a point in three-dimensional space; as the system changes, the motion of the point represents the continuously changing variables . . . Because the system never exactly repeats itself, the trajectory never intersects itself. Instead it loops around and around forever. (Gleick, 1987, 29)

Our choice of the Lorenz butterfly as our metaphor, borrowed from chaos theory, is in part due to its vivid illustration of overlaps of phenomena—overlaps, not intersections. After interviewing the teachers, we saw, as Lorenz (Gleick, 1987) saw, order in apparent experiential randomness of the teachers' lives and "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" (Gleick, 1987, 29). We use this metaphor, not as a thoughtless application of one area of science to another, but as a metaphor to structure our conversation about a complex qualitative study.

The point of our research is that effective teaching is a continuum. There is never one finding as a result of this research about effective teachers; there is never one pedagogy; there is never one teaching style that is right. Effective teaching is the interrelationship of life and teaching in a continuum looping around forever. This is what makes these teachers "artisans" as described by Casey, implying the possibility of changing the world through work. These teacher artisans create curricula which weave their knowledge with the needs and interests of their students. Their commitment to students is part of the fabric of their total lives.

We see through the teachers' experience a fine structure which shows the changing relationships among our three variables (theoreti-

cal perspectives). And as in the Lorenz butterfly, the system (the data) never exactly repeats itself, the trajectory never intersects itself. Instead it loops around and around forever and illustrates information we can learn from our informants' lives. The three fixed points are for us the three theoretical perspectives through which we view the data. The system that changes is the interaction of the four themes changing constantly according to the individuals and the contexts. In other words, theory changes in light of different teachers and contexts.

We use as our theoretical/philosophical framework critical theory (Freire, 1973), feminist theory (Rogers, 1993), and relational, social theory (Rogers, 1993). The first variable in our "butterfly" metaphor of research and teaching is critical theory. Critical theory is embraced as it applies to the process of conscientization as Freire (1985) envisioned for adults and as it applies to children. Freire (1985) defines conscientization (based on the Brazilian conscientização), as "the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act" (106). He goes on to say that "conscientization thus involves a constant clarification of that which remains hidden within us while we move about in the world, though we are not necessarily regarding the world as the object of our critical reflection" (Freire, 1985, 107).

> A critical pedagogy can only be correctly discussed from within a particular "point of practice"; from within a specific time and place and within a particular theme. This means doing critical pedagogy is a strategic, practical task not a scientific one. It arises not against a background of psychological, sociological, or anthropological universals as does much educational theory related to pedagogy—but from such questions as: *"how is human possibility being diminished here?"* (Simon, 1988, 2)

Giroux (1988) and other advocates of critical pedagogy (Freire and Macedo, 1987; Shor, 1987) advocate the fruition of "teacher as intellectual." Giroux (1988) states, "I want to argue that one way to rethink and restructure the nature of teacher work, is to view teachers as transformative intellectuals" (25). Giroux (1988) maintains that this quest of the intellectual is helpful for three reasons. First, it defines teachers' work as an intellectual endeavor as opposed to a mere technical one. Second, it brings to light the conditions necessary for teachers to combine ideological and practical issues. Third, it legitimizes teachers' roles in combining political, economic, and social interests through daily pedagogy. We maintain that the most effective teachers are in fact intellectuals who not only combine political, economic and social issues in daily pedag-

ogy, but who also are critical theorists in the sense of "resisting readers." In some cases, we feel our data indicate that these teachers are born as resisting readers; in other cases, it seems that the teachers' journey through life has caused them to develop into resisting readers. Resisting reader/teachers, it seems from our research, make critically based decisions, not only in terms of classroom context, but also in terms of curriculum choices. Trueba (1989) writes that one of the dilemmas teachers typically face in schools is "whether to abide by curriculum requirements or simply to decide on their own what is best for students" (111). They often are forced to make the painful choice of abiding by the constraints set on them even though they recognize that what they are being asked to do in the classroom is not the best for their children.

Feminist epistemology, the second variable in our research metaphor, which is theory about the nature of knowledge, has challenged many tenets of traditional knowledge as it is male defined and practiced in Western patriarchal cultures. Feminist methodology is "a set of guidelines about how to conduct research in the face of disbelief in such" (Rogers, 1993, 266) forms of knowledge. It is through this feminist methodology that the researcher seeks to include, rather than exclude, the researcher in the research and interpretation. As Shannon (1993) points out, "Feminist theory looks not for what has been excluded, but for what has been silenced" (124). We use feminist literary theory in order to provide a framework to document risk taking and ask, as ethnographer Behar (1993) did: "Ultimately, Esperanza's transgressions against patriarchal ideology are tied up in paradoxes . . . Of course, the question remains: From whose perspective, whose absolute scale of feminist perfection, are her attitudes and actions being measured? (296–97).

We use feminist theory as a way to pay attention to varied perspectives in teaching. We are guided by feminist theory in action through the work of notable women writers. Maxine Greene (1992b) mentors us in our work, "Think of American culture as a conversation among different voices. . The purpose of education is to recognize the voices" (13). She speaks of her personal metaphorical development: "If it weren't for Jo March in *Little Women,* I wouldn't be where I am today" (Greene, 1995, 91).

Likewise, Maxine Hong Kingston tells of personal historical influences: "When my second grade class did a play, the whole class went to the auditorium except the Chinese girls . . . our voices were too soft or nonexistent" (Hong Kingston, 1989, 167).

Thus, we come to the third variable in our framework, the relational, voice-centered approach of autobiography. As previously stated,

we, the authors, are a subjective presence in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of research stories. Bloch (1991) explains that this type of symbolic science "focuses on intersubjectivities that are created through interactions between people, their discourse, and the interpretations of meaning within specific contexts" (97). This relational theory uses experience as central to theorizing and to understanding practice and, as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) maintain, "For us, keeping experience in foreground comes about by periodic returns to the works of Dewey (1916, 1934, 1938). For Dewey, education, experience, and life are inextricably intertwined" (5).

> Situation, the central term in Dewey's theory of experience, is specified by two criteria, interaction and continuity. Interaction refers to the intersection of internal and existential conditions. . . . Continuity refers to the temporal positioning of every situation. Situations don't just happen; they are historical and temporally directional according to the intentionality of the organism undergoing experience. (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994, 6)

We have seen through the process and content of our research that in the construction of narratives of experience, there is a relationship between living a life story and telling a life story. This telling a life story often is made in the language of metaphor. Clandinin (1986) found that verbal imagery of teachers often clusters around metaphors such as *planting a seed* or *making a home* and that these metaphors reveal the "complex coalescence of personal and professional experience and of theory and practice. In an exploration of the relationships between teachers' reading histories, the historical context in which they move and the broader patterns which release our educational imaginations, metaphor takes on central importance. Metaphor often provides the possibility of communicating what cannot be expressed literally. We make the world familiar with metaphor, Maxine Greene (1992b) says, "We feel less powerless when we can name and explain." This empowerment is the essence of critical transformation.

Methodology

As we asked teachers to participate in this study, we used Casey's (1993) concept of teacher as 'artisan' implying the possibility of changing the world through work. These teacher artisans create curricula which weave their knowledge with the needs and interests of their students. Their commitment to students is part of the fabric of their total

lives. In most cases, they create or participate in organizations which impact larger systems of school or society. We included teachers from a wide spectrum of racial, class, and gender backgrounds who teach in a variety of contexts.

Autobiographical criticism is used by Pegano (1990) to think differently about experience without repudiating it. The objective of this study, like Pegano's, is not to "desert the old neighborhood," but to revisit old neighborhoods to remember personal experiences of learning to speak and read and write, in order to think differently about how these skills are taught in America's schools where we have been students or teachers.

With previous studies on gender and reading as background, we interviewed teachers at various grade levels and sites to explore what they read as children and how reading relates to their perceptions of their place in society and what they read now as adults. Insights from Gilligan's (1982) interviewing strategies and a combination of strategies described by Patton (1987) as "interview guide" and "informal conversational interviewing" techniques gave our informants' voice in order to relate how reading has affected their values and their decision making. Depth interviewing such as this consists of asking questions, recording the informants' answers, and then following up with more relevant questions. In the interview guide approach, topics and questions to address are decided in advance and documented in outline form. The interviewer decides on the order of questions and specific wording as the interview progresses. In informal conversational interviewing, the questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the normal course of events, such as a visit in the teacher-informant's classroom. As Patton (1987) states, "The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the other person's perspective" (109).

We then designed a listening guide that illustrates the relationships among literacy, metaphor, nurturance, family history, and risk-taking in the form of being a resisting reader and teacher. The listening guide was used as we listened to the taped interviews and also as we analyzed information from the transcribed interviews. The listening guide consists of four stages. First, we listened to the teachers' comments in terms of what factual information was being related regarding both personal reading history and familial and relationship history. Second, we listened to voice, which often resonated with realities of race, class, and gender embedded in what the person was saying. Third, we attended to the ways teachers talked about literacy and relationships. Fourth, we listened again to the whole voice with attempts to

adhere to guidance from feminist literary critics who have contributed to what Rich (1979) calls "revision . . the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old test from a new critical direction" (35).

After interviewing thirteen teachers, as Lorenz (Gleick, 1987) saw, we saw order in apparent experiential randomness of the teachers' lives and "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" (29). We saw through the teachers' experience a fine structure which shows the changing relationships among our three variables (theoretical perspectives). And as in the Lorenz butterfly, the system (the data) never exactly repeats itself, the trajectory never intersects itself. Instead, it loops around and around forever and illustrates information we can learn from our informants' lives.

The teachers' stories point to expected and unexpected information. In the category of "Metaphor and Art as Frameworks for Living," we see that the life metaphors described are related in that through reading the teachers used those metaphors to open up wider worlds outside their experience. Teachers in this study actively engage in some art form as a part of their lives. This is clearly a part of these teachers' self-nurturance, which again shows the interrelated nature of our theoretical model and our findings. Reading is a source of ongoing nurturance connecting both personal and professional lives. "Family History" shows a combination of the importance of sociocultural context and images of place in childhood. There was often no bedtime story, but newspapers, mystery novels, and romance novels were important in the lives of family members in most cases. We have found that the resisting reader is a reader and thinker who deconstructs text based on personal experience. All asked critical questions as child readers, and they, through reading, gained confidence and knowledge to take the risks necessary to be critical teachers. Reading these interviews leads us to realize that the lives of teachers are like the lives of artists or spiritual leaders—every moment is a commitment in a recurring pattern of action and interaction.

In order to reflect on the wisdom shown by these teachers, we look at issues related to the four themes. Yet, in light of our belief in the continuum, the stories and the interaction of all themes in different ways in all cases, the reader sees overlapping patterns. For example, in the story of Vicki, we see family history in the passing down of stories from grandmother to mother to daughter. As she tells the story, there is overwhelming evidence of the metaphor of literacy as circle, which through nurturance expands her literacy connections from family to classroom to community. Then we see her classroom built on the syn-

ergistic combination of all these forces giving her the strength and creativity to resist financial and bureaucratic barriers to providing positive literacy experiences for the children. Similarly, in Raúl's story, we see the themes overlapping and interacting to synergistically propel an "artisan" teacher. Raúl points out the strengths he felt in his large, farmworker family as they migrated during his childhood. Through the strengths, he could see the holes in stereotypical, mainstream curriculum, and as early as high school he became an activist demanding to study heros from his own background. His illuminated vision and persistence carry over to his activist work with the Migrant Education programs in Minnesota and help him see the strengths in the Hmong students he now teaches in St. Paul. The strengths he is able to see inform him about providing learning experiences that support the students.

This relationship of the themes is not an intersection of categories, but is akin to a grativational field in which the themes interact. For Vicki, as well as the other teachers, metaphor, nurturance, family history, and resistance are present in the other three categories of themes. By looking at the teachers' stories through the lenses of the four themes, we are informed about the most dynamic issues relating to literacy development. The apparent randomness in the variables is predictable when viewed using a metaphorical framework borrowed from chaos theory and can inform teacher education.

In part 1, we participate as informants by relating glimpses of our stories, perspectives, and dreams for our research and our work. As Lather (1994) suggests, we, the researchers, move beyond referential naivete in a way that does not simply collapse the referent, that does not elide what Cornell West (1990) terms "a reality *that one cannot not know*" (20). We do our research in a Gramscian "historical laboratory" that continually reminds us of our metaphor of the Lorenz butterfly with the combined information from ourselves and our informants looping around forever.

In our presentation of the information from the interviews of the teachers, we intentionally present the words of the informants in their own voice, with limited commentary on our part. As Lather (1994) again guides us, we aim "to grasp both specificity and discontinuity, deploy the space of dispersion . to make use of drama, artistry, literary practices" (3). We believe that the complexity, contradiction, ambiguity, and tension which the reader will see in each teacher's story form the vitality of the research findings we have collected. While the teachers' information falls into the four themes, the different life experiences do not repeat themselves, but yield information about teachers'

variations on the four themes. Using our visual metaphor of the butterfly's wings, each teacher's story paints different patterns of color on the design of the picture which informs us.

In part 2, the lives of the teachers in this study illuminate many complex issues in education today. Their strength and commitment in diverse contexts provide insight into some difficult questions being asked by those working to meet children's needs through education. In chapter 4, Bill Simpson, a special education teacher in Stillwater, Minnesota, shows how the power of early reading-based metaphor affects both personal life and teaching. Through the language of reading, Bill was able to begin to live adventure and to bring dreams into being for himself and his students. Chapter 5 is the story of Pam Russell, who teaches in Brooklyn, New York. Her early reading nourished a love of art that she continues to use in her literacy-rich classroom. In chapter 6, David Haynes, a middle school teacher who now teaches in Saturn Magnet School in St. Paul, Minnesota, shows us a lively mix of the art of writing, people watching, activism, and teaching. David grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, and is a published writer whose school experiences inform his stories and whose stories help him work with and support his students. In Chapter 7, Lisa Boehlke, a teacher in the St. Paul Public Schools, reveals that her effectiveness is much broader than simply being an expert in English as a Second Language methods. Her global perspectives in a concrete and complex sense, are the twine that bind the academics and affective influences she and her students have on each other. In Chapter 8, Tracy Montero, an elementary teacher in Brooklyn, New York, uses her passion for and training in ethnography to open cultural borders for her students. In Chapter 9, Donn Renee Morson-McKie, an elementary teacher in Brooklyn, New York, uses her art to create community for herself, her family, and her students. In Chapter 10, Wayne Wazouko, speaks as a culturally appointed teacher who came to a teacher education credentialing program to give and to receive information. Chapter 11, Dell Tideman, illustrates the themes of our research as they appear in the life of a teacher brought up in a middle-class, conservative community. She reveals herself as a teacher "artisan" who is able to see embedded artistry in her students and nurture their potential through her reading and her guidance in their reading. Chapter 12 tells the story of Vicki Brathwaite, an elementary teacher in Brooklyn, New York. Vicki nurtures connections involved with literacy among women in the family, teacher mentors such as Lucy Calkins, and peers who meet regularly to share reading and writing. In Chapter 13, Kathryn Mongon speaks of discovering the saving power of literacy as a young child in a traumatic situation and who is commit-

ted to making this power available to her students. In Chapter 14, Raúl Quintanilla exemplifies two themes in particular. As a young reader he asked critical questions of resistance, and from early childhood he had the artist's ability to perceive visual, emotional beauty in simple, ordinary experience. In Chapter 15, Mary Tacheny, a primary teacher in Franklin Magnet School in St. Paul, Minnesota, works with Southeast Asian immigrant children and their families. In Chapter 16, Judith Borer shows reading as a fuse releasing a teacher from a limiting, male-dominated, rural background to become an advocate for female students and for all women.

In part 3, Chapters 17 through 20, the four themes of metaphor, nurturance, family history, and resistance are explored using a composite of all the teachers' contributions.

Another image used for "The Lorenz Attractor" is the owl's mask (Gleick, 1987, 29). We use it, the recurring patterns, as a bridge to the interviews, the unending circles of family history, resistent voices, art, and reflection.

Whose Hands Are These?

1
The onyx bay
gives me back those years
when my boys, up early,
chose cereal in small packages
to eat on the beach.
Then I had to get up at five
to sit on the dock and watch sunfish
breakfast on moths.

The sun walks slowly here.
It first lights the edge of the island
that blocks the view of the channel,
then steps toward the shore.

Last night my sons took the boat alone.
As the channel turned black I listened
for their motor, my eyes pleading
with the distant water.
My hands twisting
became my mother's hands
She braided her fingers in worry
even as she waited to die
her sons returned for the last time.

As I thought about calling the sheriff
the night for me became a knife edge hung
between the bottomless shadows of pines.
Then the boat entered the channel
and the bay the moon the loon cry
were given back to me.

2

Behind me in the woods
an owl lifts from a tree too small to hold it.
I see its shadow first
then I freeze
in an old dream.
Wrapped in dark feathers
ringed eyes
a soft conspiracy.

Sail above me
owl
each moment now
is yours

and I run
like your small prey
through the chaos
that is the pattern of things. (Mary Kay Rummel)

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