Murillo, Jr., E.G. & Villenas, S. (1996). East of Aztlan: Typologies of resistance in North Carolina communities. Unpublished paper, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Naples, Nancy A. (1996). The Outsider Phenomenon. In C.D. Smith & W. Kornblum (eds.), *In the Field: Readings on the Field Research Experience.* Westport, CT & London: Praeger, second edition, pp. 139-149.

Narayan, Kirin. (1989). *Storytellers, Saints, and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

NCPS. (November 1997). North Carolina Public Sphere Project by Baca, G., Bartlett, L., Frederick, M., Guldbrandsen, T., Holland, D., Lutz, C., Nonini, D., & Murillo, Jr., E.G. The Cultural Production of Exclusion: Dramas of Contestation and the Public Sphere in the American South. Panel Discussion at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C. Forthcoming book.

Noblit, G.W. & Engel, J.D. (February 1991). The Holistic Injunction: An Ideal and a Moral Imperative for Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research,* Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 123-130.

Patton, Michael P. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Quintana, Alvina E. (1990). Women: Prisoners of the Word. In *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender.* Colorado Springs, CO: National Association for Chicano Studies.

Rocco, Raymond. (October 1990). The theoretical construction of the 'Other' in postmodernist thought: Latinos in the new urban political economy. In A.C. Chabram & R.L Fregoso, assisted by L. Grossberg (eds.), Special Issue: *Cultural Studies,* Vol. 4 No. 3, pp. 203-341.

Rodríguez, Néstor P. (1997). The Social Construction of the U.S.-Mexico Border. In J.F. Perea (ed.), *Immigrants OUT!: The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States.* New York and London: New York University Press.

Rosaldo, Renato. (1989). *Culture and Truth.* Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Rouse, Roger. (1996). Mexican Migration and the Social Space of Postmodernism. In D.G. Gutiérrez, *Between Worlds: Mexican Immigrants in the United States,* pp. 247-263. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press, *Diaspora* 1, No. 1: 8-23, 1991.

Saldívar, Ramón. (1990). *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference.* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Shattering the Silences. (1997). PBS Video Documentary.

Trinh T. Minh-ha. (1989). *Woman, Native Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Vargas, Lucila. (November 1996). When the "Other" is the Teacher: Implications of Teacher Diversity in Higher Education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, Montreal, Canada.

Villenas, Sofia. (Winter 1996). The Colonizer/Colonized Chicana Ethnographer: Identity, Marginalization and Co-optation in the Field. *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 66, No. 4.

Wagner, R. (1980). *The Invention of Culture.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Weiler, Kathleen. (1988). *Women Teaching for Change: Gender, Class & Power.* New York, Westport, London: Bergin & Garvey Publishers.

Winant, Howard. (May 1993). Racial Dualism at Century's End. Paper presented at the Race Matters Conference at Princeton University, Princeton, NJ.

Winant, Howard. (1994). *Racial Conditions.* Second Edition. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Critical Research and Narrative Omniscience:
Looking for Researcher Voice in the Crisis of Objectification

By Brian McCadden, Van Dempsey, & Amee Adkins

Brian McCadden is an assistant professor of education at Rhode Island College, Providence, Rhode Island; Van Dempsey is an associate professor in the College of Education at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia; and Amee Adkins is an assistant professor in the School of Education at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. An earlier version of this article was presented at the American Educational Studies Association annual meeting, November 1997, in San Antonio, Texas.

Introduction

Critical ethnographers use their work to aid in the effort to, as Kincheloe and McLaren state, "confront the injustice of a particular society or a sphere within the society" and "as a first step toward forms of political action that can redress the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself" (1994, p. 140). This, in our estimation, is a valuable pursuit. We admire the sense of urgency and moral passion embedded in critical ethnography and consider ourselves to be researchers who work for social justice as well. The focus of our article, then, is not so much to critique critical ethnography in relation to its claim to epistemological or methodological *legitimacy,* but to critique it in relation to its forms of epistemological and methodological ex-

pression. By this we mean that we assume that critical ethnography is a "valid" research approach, but wish to argue with some of the ways in which the approach is actualized through field relations and data reporting.

Much current and "classic" critical ethnographic work in education appears to us to be "long on theory and short on data" (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Fine, 1991; and Levinson, et al., 1996). In the critical ethnographic dance between structure and agency, we argue, theory not only insists on leading, it also steps on the data's toes in the process. The result is over-theorized ethnographic texts in which the participants' voices either drop out of the tale or are appropriated to serve the purposes of critique. This is not so much a criticism of the method's practitioners as it is a criticism of the method itself. If one wishes to practice the genre of critical ethnographic representation, one must adhere to the rules of a particular form of writing which privileges theorizing and stems from a tradition of structuration, despite acknowledgments of the instability of the signified/signifier relationship. The style of writing that emerges from such a tradition takes a tone of narrative omniscience, of a "god's eye view" of the field setting. Critical ethnographic writing, as a genre, has a tendency toward reifying the researcher's voice (as omniscient narrator) at the expense of the participants' voices. The critical ethnographer, as narrator, can see who is oppressor and who is oppressed, can understand the historical and social contexts that lead to such situations, can determine who is in false consciousness and who isn't, and understands the course of action that would serve to reduce injustices and liberate the oppressed. Efforts by critical researchers to situate themselves within the research, instead of reducing a sense of omniscience, serve to free the researcher to appropriate the research setting for his or her own ends (see, for example, Lather, 1997).

Our effort here is to counter the tendency towards narrative omniscience in critical ethnography by reexamining researcher voice in the ethnographic text. The bulk of this article is a reproduction of a presentation, based on email exchanges, we made at the 1997 American Educational Studies Association annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. The aim of this presentation was to reclaim a sense of open dialogue within critical ethnographic work, and to convey a sense of the temporality and tentativeness of living that may be missing from the critical genre. Along with the other authors in this issue of *Educational Foundations*, we engaged the concept of a "post" critical ethnography and focused on what Marcus and Fischer (1986) describe as a crisis of representation. To them the crisis stems from "uncertainty about adequate means of describing social reality" (p. 8). To us, the crisis is one of objectification. As related to critical ethnographic forms of describing social reality, it stems from uncertainty about adequate means of balancing researcher and participant voice, of balancing ethnographic tentativeness and theoretical surety. By this we mean that critical ethnographic writing needs to keep working toward finding a way to adhere to its historical structuration and genre while at the same time moving toward a style of representation that is

more authentically emic, dialogic, and uncertain; that seeks the participants' perspective and is willing to value that perspective over theoretical structure; that produces a style of representation that is critical but does not objectify the field setting. Further, this "crisis of objectification" extends beyond the writing of ethnography and into the theorizing of ethnography as well. Theorizing post critical ethnography of education should be represented in the same tone as its writing—balancing tentativeness and surety and evoking a sense of temporality. To us, this post critical ethnography would in effect make for a stronger critical ethnography, one that is truly both "critical" *and* "ethnographic." Let us offer one example.

Our Presentation

Brian: Hey, Van! I just got the AESA program, and I see we're on it. That's great! I just went and looked back at the paper we proposed, and I haven't a clue as to what its about (well, I do have a clue, but this idea really needs some developing).

Are you ready?

Van: Ready to go to AESA? Yes. Ready to do a paper. No. I'll have to go back and revisit my notes, but I think I'll be able to ship you something by midway of the scheduled time period. (By the way, when are we scheduled?)

I'm playing with an idea of changing Marcus and Fischer's (1986) idea of the crisis of representation into the "crisis of objectification." I'll tell you more when I know more.

I'll be in touch reallllllllllll soon.

Van: I spoke with one of George's grad students and asked that she send me a copy of the Post Critter proposal. It has been accepted and we do have a paper to write. I have just noticed that Kathy is also on the panel. Jane Van Galen is the discussant, so I guess we have to get a paper out to her at some point before the conference.

Yesterday I sent a bizarre message about "crisis of objectification." It may be an idea we can play with relative to the "crisis of representation." I'll work this out in fuller text ASAP, but the idea is that the crisis of representation born out of anthropology is a response to a crisis of objectification. I think we can exploit the idea of objectification in the research sense as the technicalization of "coming to know" the world, or in our case a cultural context. Maybe we can argue that the imposition of a critique external to context is a different form of objectification (reification to be consistent with the proposal), and therefore the technical application of ideology to ethnography. Ethnographic critique then

becomes a correspondence to an ideologically fixed meaning structure rather than the everyday life of people in a social and cultural context.

Make any sense?????

I think we are on the verge of writing a paper on email.

Brian: The scary part is that this does make sense. This trail leads us back to envisioning a post-critical ethnography as one which doesn't "go beyond", but rather "returns back"—returns back to what ethnography was before critical theorists crowd appropriated it. So is this post critical effort then an effort aimed at "reinscribing" and/or "reclaiming" ethnography? Or is it an effort aimed at saying the critical approach is OK, but ethnography is more than critical-theory-turned-research-method and has no necessary (essential) relationship with critical theory? If we're looking at a crisis of objectification, how do we get beyond that? If you look at the literature it's moving toward an objectification-fest—there's lots of "narratives about being kept down by an unjust system for too long and now claiming voice." In other words people seem to be responding to objectification, but in doing so they may be "reproducing" that objectification—not moving past it, but incorporating it into their identity. It becomes the frame for how they see and explain themselves. So, a good question would be "What would an ethnography look like that acknowledges the objectification, but does not reproduce it?" Answering this might take us to post-criticalness.

What do you think?

Van: I'll have to start keeping beer in my office if we're going to write this over email.

Not only are there people out there who are responding to the objectification, they are, as you said with identity, identifying themselves by it. There is a redeeming element too in that identity is coming to some degree from struggle, an important part of the history of marginalized groups in our culture. It does raise the question of whether the critical ethnographer is gaining voice at the expense of the participant. If so, then it is a further exploitation of the marginalized, or marginalizing itself. Do we make the context our lens to ourselves rather than us the lens to the context? If the answer is yes, then we have made the process and the objective world the instruments of research, and wouldn't Bacon be proud. I like "reinscribing" as far as it takes us, and I like "reclaiming" because it takes us even further. I believe we also need to work in reciprocity in lenses as well as participation and research product, because it seems to me that in the critical strategy, we are privileging our lenses over the cultural contexts we are seeking to understand through our lens. In an auto-ethnographic sense I think that's important, but we risk

making research more about us than others.

(This is fun. Oh no.)

Brian: I'm sorry, but I assumed from the complexity of your messages that you were as drunk as I am...it's too bad you have to supply your own beer—our chair stocks our office refrigerator, having realized that it is the only way to get consensus at staff meetings.

This is good—there is alliteration developing here; reinscribing, reclaiming, reciprocity, reproduction (I'm surprised you didn't mention that last one in your message). You're starting to get at some fundamental issues here. Asking whether the critical ethnographer gains voice at the expense of the participants is key in that it starts to get at the question of "why do we want to go post/past critical ethnography?" Going post/past it implies that critical ethnography hasn't quite got it right (it also implies that we are knowledge producers who *have* to go post/past to keep our jobs). But from a normative point of view—"getting it right"—one of the problems with critical ethnography is that the participants serve the researcher or better yet the researcher's ideology. This is not really what ethnography is supposed to be about—and you're right, Bacon is smiling. You made some good points about objectification being at some level necessary for identity of marginalized peoples and about the auto-ethnographic positives. That last one is key—how do we do ethnography that acknowledges and includes our own lenses/histories/ideologies, but does not let those elements dominate so that the ethnography becomes narcissistic? Is the aim of post-critical ethnography contained in the answer to this question?

Van: Objectification is certainly necessary as those who have been marginalized have been identified by the dominant culture. To the extent that identities can be oppositional identities, objectification is a double whammy for identity in the margin.

It would seem that a critical ethnography requires an ideological imposition on interpretation. If it doesn't, then what is critical ethnography, or any ideologically driven critique for that matter? To the extent that objectification and reification are epistemological pen pals, then it would seem the critical ethnographer is having her/his epistemological cake and eating it too. They/we "go to the well" of meaning making in everyday life to legitimate the objectification of everyday meaning. It sounds like positivism from the back door. Can the emic voice be synthesized to sing an etic tune?

One concern I have about the title of "Post." "Post" critical ethnography, as we are developing it here seems to suggest a continuation of ontological debate about objectivity. Do we want to jump the track and

have some kind of "Para" idea versus a Post one. Or do we just say we got lost and turn around and go back? Of course, to continue on a lost path without asking directions would imply a chauvinistic lens, thus further entrenching us in a traditional mindset. (i.e., is the pursuit of the post just continuing down the wrong road, or are we collectively asking each other as a field for directions?

Brian: I've gone and drawn Amee Adkins into this mess. I'm forwarding her message to you. She seems to think we're on the right track, which is more than I ever thought! I think we should write this whole damn thing on email, or better yet get Amee to write it for us on email.

Brian: OK, Amee, I'll bite: where is post-crit trying to go? Van and I seem to be getting caught up in the linearity implied by the word "post." We don't see post crit as going beyond crit to the next level, but going back and re-grounding critical ethnography. That is, in continuing to do critical ethnography, but to listen more closely to the participants, rather than knee-jerkedly fitting all experiences into some boilerplate oppression/structure outline. This is just doing it as intended, we think, rather than doing it unreflectively. What do you think?

Amee: Try letting "post" not be linear but recursive, that is, going back behind what Bill Johnston calls the "shrill" voice of the critic, and taking back the project of critique. So yes, exactly right, doing it as intended—reflectively, flexibly. It entails "post" because of (hee, hee, I just love it) the "hegemony" of critical theory that "structures" what critical ethnographies can study and know. "Post" is a way to mark the recognition of said hegemony and structuring.

How's that?

Van: I think the email postings are already working out to be a pretty interesting paper. I thought we might consider each doing a conclusion that goes back and gives a deeper explanation of some of the points we've raised and our reactions to them. We might also want to plug in some legitimation cites to keep the guild happy. But I think we should stick as close to possible to the dialogical strategy as makes sense for a conference presentation. Besides, time limits us to only a little more narrative than we already have. I also thought that we might deliver the paper as if we were reading our email, and let Amee pop in where her contributions come up.

Brian: Van, as per our phone conversation, I'm putting down some thoughts before they slip away from me (it is Friday, you know). I think performing the presentation is a good idea, although now I feel a sense of self

awareness about the whole thing that makes writing email messages feel a bit contrived—before I was writing in a stream of consciousness way and now an audience lurks in the back of my mind and I feel self-editing creeping in.... Anyway, regarding performing the paper as email exchanges, it makes sense on the level that it symbolizes the sense of tentativeness that I see some critical ethnographic texts lacking. There is a sense of surety or finality in the analysis that I don't think belongs in any ethnographic representation. I think it might be the tendency towards structuration that does it. By performing our presentation in this way we can demonstrate the tentativeness, the unsurety, the discursive aspect of ethnography that's missing. Marcus (1994) talks about "messy texts" as showing how the noise of lived experience makes neat categorical interpretations of field data an unrealistic thing to strive for, and actually a misrepresentation of the field setting. By presenting our paper this way we can in a sense parallel that sentiment. Here, I'm thinking of post-critical as post-structural, I guess.

Brian: My condolences on the passing of John Denver. I imagine it was a sad day in West Virginia.

Just some final thoughts here before wrapping up the critter paper. Following up on the audience awareness idea from my last message, I think it's kind of obvious that worrying about how an audience will receive or expect your work impacts how you write. If you're writing to/for a theoretically inclined audience, you might try to fit you're argumentation into a critical structure/history. If you're writing to/for a community or local audience you might not care so much about larger epistemological or legitimation issues, or about critical structure. Maybe post-crit is like post-feminism. I remember someone once telling me, or reading somewhere, that *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* was a post-feminist movie because the female characters in it took for granted some of the things that feminism fights for, such as equal access to jobs, women as sexual pursuers as well as the pursued, etc. In drawing the analogy, perhaps post-critical ethnog simply takes for granted the epistemological premises, assumes the battle for legitimization is won, and gets on with it. Much of the theorizing about critical ethnography (see Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) still assumes a need for legitimation/justificatory pose, and is moving in the direction of splitting theoretical hairs and battling over what counts/what doesn't count as critical ethnog. The remaining question, I guess, is what does post-critical ethnography, an ethnography that takes for granted the power/knowledge basis of critical work, look like?

Van: I'm finalizing my comments for the paper. I have the following ideas to

flesh out: (1) The extent to which ethnographers and ethnography falls into a power game like all other social constructions; (2) the notion of ethnography as the voice of a context versus the "ethnographic echo" of the researcher; and (3) the possible problem in any ethnographer's life of imposing a counterfeit neutrality, which seems to be the opposite problem of (consciously imposed ideology).

Other than trying to tie the title back in because it's easier than coming up with a new one, this will do it for me (with some references to be added).

You're right. Almost heaven, West Virginia ain't so almost heaven without John Denver.

Van: In my last message I sent my final thoughts before wrapping this up for presentation purposes. The first of these was the extent to which ethnographers and ethnography fall into a power game as in all other social constructions. In essence it's the negotiation game, and the role of cultural moves that can and do go on not just for those in the context being studied, but for the researcher as well. Both the researched and the researcher come to the setting with forms of power that shift, float, and change texture. Neither side, particularly those native to the context, are "powerless" in this sense. If there were no power in their knowledge, there would be no need to do ethnography in the first place, and certainly a reduced fear of "going native." But there is certainly an important question about the silenced-ness of the participants both within and outside their own cultural contexts, and that silence cannot be trivialized or overlooked.

Secondly, the notion of ethnography as the voice of a context versus/ and the voice of the researcher should always raise questions for us. I think it is important to keep it in a versus/and picture, because it is (almost?) always some of both. The critical question (no pun intended) on our end is knowing when the voice is that of those whom we seek to understand through our work versus an "ethnographic echo" of our own researcher voice, bouncing back to us off the landscape of the lived experiences of others.

The third, and final point, is a concern about understanding our own power as ethnographers, and keeping it conscious. I think as ideology becomes imposed as a taken-for-granted reality, the ideology can be imposed as a "counterfeit neutrality" (Barber, 1994, p. 103). Barber says, "They [1960s radicals] also saw how easy it was for the values of those in power to vanish into the background that produced them, allowing their advocates to assume a counterfeit neutrality." He continues, "Such values seem neutral only because they are invisible—black cows grazing

in a black forest in the middle of the night who moo complacently, 'There are no cows anywhere to be seen!'" While it is admittedly questionable that there is usually a "researcher diabolicalness" behind ideology imposition, there is possible exploitation of people's lives as real as any power negotiation we as ethnographers would criticize at the drop of a hat. In a nutshell, there would seem to be a possible problem in any ethnographer's life of imposing a counterfeit neutrality, which seems to be the parallel problem of consciously imposed ideology.

Conclusion

The above constitutes a variation of what Marcus (1994) calls a "messy text." It aims to represent ethnographic writing and theorizing in real time, complete with all the starts and stops, wrong turns, unedited thoughts, collaborative tangents, and playfulness that imbue "living the ethnographic life." It is our belief that a post critical ethnographic form of writing and theorizing needs to be more akin to our sense of "real-time tentative dialogue" than to the traditional critical ethnographic sense of "objectified totalization." The above example illustrates that one element of addressing the crisis of objectification may be audiencing. Theorizing and writing as much as possible without the self-editing that a sense of audience commands may aid in producing ethnography that can retain its moral passion and historicity while moving away from structuration toward a sense of discourse between researcher/participant, theory/data, and researcher/field. We think that this is ethnography that can be considered to be "post" critical. What do *you* think?

Bibliography

Anderson, G.L. (1989). Critical ethnography in education: Origins, current status, and new directions. *Review of Educational Research*, 59:3, 249-270.

Anyon, J. (1980). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education*, 162, 67-92.

Barber, B. R. (1992). *An aristocracy of everyone: the politics of education and the future of America*. New York: Ballentine.

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts: Notes on the politics of an urban public high school*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Kincheloe, J.L., & McLaren, P.L. (1994). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Levinson, B.A., Foley, D.E., & Holland, D.C. (Eds.). (1996). *The cultural production of the educated person: Critical ethnographies of schooling and local practice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Lather, P. (1997). Creating a multilayered text: Women, AIDS, and angels. In W.G. Tierney & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Representation and the text: Re-framing the narrative*

voice. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Marcus, G. (1994). What comes (just) after "post"? In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Marcus, G., & Fischer, M. (1986). *Anthropology as cultural critique: An experimental moment in the human sciences*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Quantz, R.A. (1992). On critical ethnography (with some postmodern considerations). In M.D. LeCompte, W.L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Writing Self within the Text:
The Impact of an Educational Narrative in the Life of the Researcher

By Gretchen Givens

Gretchen Givens is an assistant professor in the College of Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia. An earlier version of this article was presented at the American Educational Studies Association annual meeting, November 1997, in San Antonio, Texas.

How we view the world has changed, and as Yvonna S. Lincoln writes, "so too, have changed the kinds of texts we hope to represent us to ourselves" (37). The postmodern analysis of texts challenges the modernist claim of objectivity, focusing instead on the limited perspectives that each text offers (Lincoln, 1997). Lincoln asserts that texts, as written accounts of experiences, offer "partial perspectives" (Lincoln, 37). She continues,

If all texts are only partial, historically and culturally situated and highly gendered, then it is but a small leap to conclude that the multiple understandings which come from any ethnographic project have only a limited chance of being presented in a single text. If texts are necessarily partial and situated, then it is a type of realist pretense to hope that any given text can tell the "whole story." Multiple stories feed into any text;