

The Right to Write:

Preservice Teachers' Evolving Understandings of Authenticity and Aesthetic Heat in Multicultural Literature



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This study begins with the following question: Can an author authentically represent a culture of which s/he is not a part? Some advocates believe that "insiders" are better able to write a culturally specific story that captures the themes, languages, and tropes—essentially the social worlds—that groups claim as their own. In opposition, others argue that what matters is not a question of perfect parallels between author and culture but what exists in the imaginative gifts—or aesthetic heat—of the author. Although these controversies have been debated in academic journals and textbooks, the issues were quite new to the preservice teachers enrolled in a year-long children's literature course in a state research university. Thus, the question of the right to write surrounds our more focused research query: Given multiple opportunities to explore issues of authenticity and aesthetic heat, what kinds of shifts, if any, will occur in preservice teachers' understandings of the right to write? In this article, two of the participants in the study, Darcy and Lisa, joined Shelby, the course professor, in chronicling the journey that 10 preservice teachers made in understanding these complex issues. The data came from two central sources: (a) an assignment in which the preservice teachers analyzed a multicultural text and (b) interview questions that focused on the right to write. The results show that as the preservice teachers learned more and more about the current debate through class readings and discussions, they moved from fairly straightforward statements to hesitations over the hard issues raised. These issues included their emphasis on the need to examine texts critically and to consider the complex social and political ramifications of the ways insiders and outsiders tell stories.

In 1995, award-winning illustrator Tom Feelings completed a picture book entitled *The Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo*, a book that took nearly twenty years to make. In the forward to his text, Feelings explained that his

journey began with his first trip to Africa and with a question from a friend. He wrote:

One night while speaking with a Ghanaian friend, he asked quite unexpectedly, "What happened to all of you when you

were taken away from here?" I knew instantly that he meant "what happened to all our people who were forcefully taken from Africa, enslaved, and scattered throughout the 'New World'?" . . . He was referring to this crossing called the Middle Passage.

Historically, his friend's seemingly straightforward question—"What happened?"—would result in myriad answers that reverberate across the complexity of centuries. And the pain of this passage is far from over. Feelings himself is an African American illustrator who has had to fight hard to have his work celebrated in the predominantly White world of children's book publishing (Larrick, 1965). Yet for the purposes of this article, we must shift the question slightly and ask, Who gets to tell what happened? Who has the right to write the stories of this and other journeys, the stories of this and other lives?

In her groundbreaking work on African Americans, Sims [Bishop] (1982) states that "belief in the power of literature to change the world underlies most of the controversies in the field of children's literature" (p. 1). Today, this belief is most strongly felt in disagreements over the right to write: Can an author authentically represent a group of which s/he is not a part? Some advocates believe that insiders are better able to write stories that capture the themes, languages, and tropes—essentially the social worlds—that groups claim as their own. Rather than an issue of political correctness, it is one of political consciousness, especially in light of social inequities that are reflected not only in historical racism but

in a publishing industry more interested in producing a book that will *sell* than a book that *celebrates* voices rarely heard in the canon of literature. In opposition, others argue that what matters is not a question of perfect parallels between author and the represented characters but what Henry James called the *aesthetic heat* (cited in Lasky, 1996, p. 7) of the creator: the power of the author and/or illustrator to shape language and art to engage the reader's mind and heart. As Lasky argues, "A writer can have all the right credentials in terms of ethnic background and culture but can still fail if he or she does not have the aesthetic heat. Such a heat is not the product of ethnicity. It transcends ethnicity. It is within the realm of the artist" (p. 7).

Although these controversies have been debated among academics, the issues were quite new to the preservice teachers Shelby (the course professor) taught in a year-long children's literature course in a state research university in the southwest. Predominantly Anglo and female, they initially viewed children's literature as relatively unproblematic and certainly apolitical. They tended to perceive classic children's books like *The Five Chinese Brothers* (Bishop, 1938) and *The Indian in the Cupboard* (Banks, 1981) as charming for all children and were often unaware of how reviled these texts were to the groups they professed to portray (e.g., Schwartz, 1978). However, over the course of the year together, which included work with both children and texts, the preservice teachers' views of such literature as innocuous shifted to

more complex views that existed not in the authentic or aesthetic camps but in reflection on and criticism of both arguments.

Thus, the question of the right to write surrounds our more focused research query: Given multiple opportunities to explore issues of authenticity and aesthetic heat, what kinds of shifts, if any, will occur in preservice teachers' understandings of the right to write? Here, two participants in the study, Darcy and Lisa, join Shelby in chronicling the journey that 10 preservice teachers made in understanding these complex issues. We begin by describing the right to write argument as it exists both within and beyond the academic world. Next, we turn to the need for dialogic curricula at the preservice teacher level in order to investigate the tension between *telling* our preservice teachers what to think and *showing* them the arguments so they can take individual responsibility for their own conceptual change. We then move to the results as they are revealed through two major sources of data: (a) a class assignment in which preservice teachers analyzed multicultural books and (b) end-of-the-year interview questions with the preservice teachers that focused explicitly on the right to write. We conclude with some final reflections on dialogic teaching and the need for authors to write with both head and heart.

Conceptual Arguments

The issues we bring to bear on our work stem from two current as well as difficult arguments—one about the

right to write and one about methods of teaching for conceptual change. In this section, we will provide a background on the somewhat dichotomous nature of both these arguments as well as search for a middle ground that will, we hope, follow Elbow's (1986) advice about the intellectual as well as emotional efficacy of embracing contraries.

The Right to Write

While the question of the right to write seems fairly straightforward, it is not. Instead, it zigzags with dizzying complexity and stretches far beyond university walls. Contemporary articles on the latest in film, for example, compare and contrast the use of stereotypes in movies like Warren Beatty's *Bulworth* and Sherman Alexie's *Smoke Signals*. In a review of the latter film, Durbin (1998) argues,

It is crucial for people to be able to take charge of their own narratives: women describing women's lives, blacks describing black experience. At the same time, if that's all that happens, then as a culture we are well lost, to one another and to ourselves. Sherman Alexie wouldn't agree. . . . A member of the Spokane tribe . . . Mr. Alexie is vocal in his disdain for whites whose work he sees as simplifying and romanticizing Indian life. (p. 22)

Indeed, in another article on *Smoke Signals* (Sterngold, 1998), Alexie explains "that one of his primary goals was to take away from so-called white experts the responsibility for describing contemporary Indian culture. His aim, he notes, is not to avoid criticism of Indian society but to make sure that it is Indians doing the criticizing and interpreting" (p. 13). His words are echoed

by Dorris (1992) who berated the "Never-Never land of glib stereotypes and caricature" where Native Americans are either "presented as marauding, blood-thirsty savages" or as "preconcupiscent angels, pure of heart, mindlessly ecological, brave and true" (p. 27).

Arguments and counter-arguments over the right to write are especially rife in the children's book world. Indeed, children's authors (e.g., Dorris, 1994a) write passionately about the misrepresentation of their cultural groups when outsiders take up the pen. When asked in an online interview (Ramirez, 1998) how teachers could find books about the Mexican American experience "honestly and without sentimentality," Gary Soto answered, "Find out whether the author is from the Mexican-American culture. If not, be wary. It can't be done from the outside—it's too hard to get it right."

Authors, academics, and editors are all willing to discuss how to get it right, voicing their opinions and offering examples from both statistical evidence and personal experience. Bishop (1996a) and Lasky (1996) volley ideas as well as emotions back and forth in recent issues of *The New Advocate*. The *Journal of Children's Literature* hosted another discussion among Shannon (1994), Bishop (1994a), and Harris (1994), which was later taken up by Schwartz (1997) in the *Harvard Educational Review*. And *The Horn Book Magazine* has hosted two debates of particular note. The first was begun by senior editors Parravano and Adams (1996) who argued that the leading contender for the prestigious Newbery award—

Cushman's (1995) *The Midwife's Apprentice*—might not match up to the more culturally diverse possibilities.

This editorial brought tough criticism in later letters to the editor. Sid Fleischman (1996), an author who has won his own Newbery, accused the editors of an "attempt to lead the [Newbery] committee by the nose . . . [and] counsel them on how to vote" (p. 132). *The Horn Book Magazine* responded with an editorial by editor-in-chief Roger Sutton (1996), who stated that: "While the Newbery deliberations are and should remain confidential, the committee members should be all ears, open to what their fellow professionals are saying. The Medal is a focus for literary debate, not a trial by jury, and the last thing the committee should be is sequestered" (p. 261).

The debate was clearly out in the open in an article entitled, "Who can tell my story?" by author Jacqueline Woodson (1998a). In this piece she explains how often she is asked "The Question":

Although it is phrased differently, it always comes. At every conference, at every adult speaking engagement, at my breakfast table at the Coretta Scott King Awards, at my dinner table at the Newbery/Caldecott, even at book signings. *How do you feel about people writing outside of their own experiences? How do you feel about white people writing about people of color?* . . . When I asked my white writer friends how they answer this question, I was less than surprised to find that none of them had been asked. Why was it then that white people (because I have never been asked this by someone who was recognizably a person of color) felt a need to ask this of me? What was it, is it, people are seeking in the asking? (p. 35) (emphasis in original)

Woodson went on to detail what drives her own writing, explaining that authors must have lived at least a part of the *experience* of the characters they place on the page. She is critical of those who tell others' stories without participating in the experience, or worse, without being changed.

The rebuttal to Woodson's argument was swift. Two issues later, Nikola-Lisa (1998) writes of several personal experiences "seared into [his] mind" where he became aware of his own prejudices:

In my reading of the "authenticity" debate, it seems to hinge primarily on . . . sitting around the table and coming to understand firsthand another's perspective before writing about it. But there is a different type of experience that can also lend grist to the mill: those raw, sometimes awkward, sometimes painful cultural experiences that, once faced, bring long-held, unconscious negative attitudes and behaviors sharply into relief. (p. 317)

Yet bringing "unconscious negative attitudes . . . sharply into relief" must be more than a little ironic to people who live *consciously* with such sharpness every day. Well beyond the "sometimes painful cultural experiences," they must face events of prejudice not once, but myriad times in their lives.

Dorris (1991), for example, writes eloquently of harmful portrayals of Native Americans:

Consider for a moment the underlying meanings of some of the supposedly innocuous linguistic stand-bys: "Indian givers" take back what they have sneakily bestowed in much the same way that "Indian summer" deceives the gullible flower bud. Unruly children are termed "wild Indians" and

a local bank is named "Indian Head" (would you open an account at a "Jew's hand," "Negro ear" or "Italian toe" branch?). Ordinary citizens rarely walk "Indian file" when about their business, yet countless athletic teams, when seeking emblems of savagery and bloodthirstiness, see fit to title themselves "warriors," "braves," "redskins," and the like. (p. 13)

The opportunities for painful misrepresentation are particularly true for Native American children's literature. Reese and Caldwell-Wood (1997) offer statistics on the current state of affairs. For example, even though there are "over 500 different tribal groups . . . only 31 out of 70 books about Native Americans published during 1994 actually specify an Indian nation" (p. 157). The numbers grew worse in 1995, with only 32 of 83 books depicting a specific nation. Even more disturbing was the fact that "in 1995, 98 1/2 percent of the books written about Native Americans published by mainstream publishers were written by non-Native authors" (p. 158). Indeed, Reese and Caldwell-Wood decry the fact that "throughout the history of children's literature about Native Americans, most of the writers who have gained profit by writing Indian stories have been non-Native" (p. 162).

The fact that the majority of Native American texts have been written by outsiders is most likely the reason that the literature seems trapped in the past; rare is the children's book that brings Native peoples into the 20th century (Reese, 1998). Assigning a group of people, or for that matter, 500 groups of people, to the world of folktales allows modern day children to continue to envision Indians in stereo-

typical terms. These visions also place most Native American children's literature hovering between two categories of multicultural literature as described by Cai and Bishop (1994).

Their first category is *world literature* and includes fiction from "non-Western countries or other underrepresented groups outside the United States. . . . Many educators . . . still include folklore and other literature from what might be considered the 'root cultures' of those groups" (Cai & Bishop, 1994, pp. 62-63). Thus, educators might include African folktales in their studies of African American literature. Although Native American children's literature could not fall easily into this category because it is a literature of underrepresented groups *inside* the U.S., the fact that so many of the stories are folktales—stories of the root cultures rather than more modern tales—makes it a feasible fit to this classification.

An equally viable category for most Native American children's literature would be *cross-cultural literature*, Cai and Bishop's (1994) second category. This classification includes two subcategories: "(1) literary works explicitly about interrelations among people of different cultures, without apparent focus on the unique experience of any one culture or cultural group, and (2) those about people from a given cultural group by a writer from another cultural group" (p. 63). This category is problematic because "authors often betray their alien perspective in small details, the representation of which requires a native's (often unconscious)

sensibility more than acquired knowledge" (p. 65).

In problematizing the second category, Cai and Bishop (1994) are not alone (see Bishop, 1994b; Day, 1997; Kruse, Horning, & Schliesman, 1997). Harris (1993a, 1997) has edited two volumes of articles whose authors make similar arguments. For example, in her first volume (which the preservice teachers in the study read in its entirety), Barrera, Liguori, and Salas (1993) make a powerful statement about Mexican American children's literature and the right to write:

One of the salient characteristics of the traditional literature on the Mexican American is that it has been written and illustrated largely by non-Chicanos. . . . We are not creating cultural pigeonholes here by saying that only Chicanos can write about Chicano life and culture, and non-Chicanos cannot. Nor are we saying that Chicanos should write only about Chicano life and culture. We are saying, however, that to write with authenticity about the Mexican-American experience requires a particular perspective on the world . . . that only comes from having lived that experience or having learned about it in depth. (p. 213)

Notwithstanding their comments on pigeonholes, the authors make it clear that writing outside one's cultural experience rarely offers more than limited flight.

To attain full wingspread, an author would most likely have to be writing within the third category of Cai and Bishop's (1994) system. *Parallel culture literature* is written by authors from a corresponding cultural group [e.g., African Americans writing African American literature] to

represent the experience, consciousness, and self-image developed as a result of being acculturated and socialized within those groups. Like language and art, literature is an essential part of a people's heritage. In this sense, parallel culture literature is the literature of a cultural group. . . . the literature of a parallel culture opens the group's heart to the reading public, showing their joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and despair, expectations and frustrations, and perhaps most importantly, the effects of living in a racist society. Voices from the heart, once heard, can change other hearts. (pp. 66-68, emphasis in original)

But changing hearts is no simple matter because, as Cai and Bishop point out, voices have to be *heard*. And if preservice teachers, who have the potential to maintain the status quo, are to learn to hear, what kind of pedagogy will be conducive to such listening? The following section thus turns to how university instructors often approach controversial issues to help their students heed new calls.

The Right to Teach

Just as with the right to write, the right to teach for conceptual change is filled with dichotomous arguments, but the stakes are increasingly high if one considers the needs of a diverse society. In 1969 the National Institute for Advanced Study in Teaching Disadvantaged Youth published a task-force report in which they decry the inability of teacher education to prepare preservice teachers for working with diverse youth: "Racial, class, and ethnic bias can be found in every aspect of current teacher preparation programs The program content reflects current prejudices; the methods of

instruction coincide with learning styles of the dominant group" (Smith, 1969, p. 2). Thirty years later, little has changed (Grant & Secada, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Zeichner (1993) maintains that "'culturally encapsulated' cohorts of prospective teachers continue to be prepared by programs in our colleges and universities for mythical culturally homogeneous school settings" (p. 4).

So how does one go about making substantive change in the ways teachers see, hear, and feel with their hearts? How can one convince new teachers of their responsibilities for including all students in their pedagogical philosophies? Studies (e.g., Borko & Putnam, 1996) demonstrate novice teachers' resistance in shifting from the ways they have been taught to new theories of effective practice, particularly for diverse children (Melnick & Zeichner, 1997; Willis & Harris, 1997). Indeed, Agee (1998) argues that "One of the problems in initiating change is that preservice teachers often bring with them conceptions of teaching that conflict with those espoused by their professors and course readings" (p. 86). Yet challenging preservice teachers to shift their teaching philosophies often comes with strong political stands that tend to polarize pedagogical theorists. For example, Hairston (1992, cited in Anderson, 1997), worries that political platforms "can indoctrinate students or intimidate them into parroting" their professors (p. 197). Others, like Bizzell (1992), suggest that teaching is always a political act and that to abandon one's platform will ultimately serve to "silence . . . questions of grave importance

to common security" (p. 283). Because preservice teachers tend to be ill-informed about the gifts and needs of a diverse society, Goodwin (1997) argues that "multicultural teacher education may need to concentrate on disturbing the beliefs or initial dispositions that student teachers bring with them" (p. 16).

Still, disturbing beliefs comes with its own dangers. If the political or pedagogical stance is too strong, allowing little room for alternative arguments, the preservice teachers may turn away, rejecting the more positive points of the argument because of the presentation. If they feel they have no voice themselves, how will they come to acknowledge those who have been historically voiceless? For if professors stand in their university classrooms and lay out the black and white of the arguments, lauding one and despising the other, they could diminish the complexity of the issues. Thus, in an effort to avoid either/or dichotomies, there is an advantage to disturbing beliefs and initial dispositions through an emphasis on a combination of tones that does not underestimate complexity; instead, it embraces it.

Elbow (1986) uses the phrase *embracing contraries* to weigh the balance between teachers' responsibilities to students and their obligations to knowledge. Although his discussion centers more on how teachers might learn to nurture students while simultaneously holding them to high standards, his central points can be applied to how university instructors might approach issues of the right to write. Elbow

argues, "opposite mentalities or processes can enhance each other rather than interfere with each other if we engage in them in the right spirit" (p. 152). And this spirit often involves an instructor's revealing her or his own ambiguous feelings about controversial topics:

Rather than try to be perfectly fair and perfectly in command of what we teach . . . we should reveal our own position, particularly our doubts, ambivalences, and biases. We should show we are still learning, still willing to look at things in new ways, still sometimes uncertain or even stuck, still willing to ask naive questions, still engaged in the interminable process of working out the relationship between what we teach and the rest of our lives. Even though we are not wholly peer with our students, we can still be peer in this crucial sense of also being engaged in learning, seeking, and being incomplete. Significant learning requires change, inner readjustments, willingness to let go. We can increase the chances of our students being willing to undergo the necessary anxiety involved in change if they see we are also willing to undergo it. (pp. 149-150)

Still, Elbow does not mean an instructor's stance should be so ambiguous as to be indiscernible, for a commitment to knowledge and society cannot be overshadowed by an allegiance to help students feel comfortable. If anything, new knowledge is *uncomfortable*; it takes assumptions, biases, and understandings and changes them, making learners face what they have not seen before.

Even advocates for literature by people of parallel cultures have publicly discussed their revelations about groups other than their own. For example, Bishop (1997) generally lauds *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman, 1991), the story of a

girl of Afro-Caribbean descent who enjoys dressing up as literary characters. However, the story was tarnished by the image of Grace playing Hiawatha, wearing a large feather headdress and sitting cross legged with her arms folded high. Bishop (1997) wrote: "The Hiawatha picture is problematic. If the book is to be used, that portrait needs to be confronted. At best it offers a chance to discuss the practice of stereotyping and its possible effects; at worst, it can serve to reinforce some of the very ideas multicultural literature is meant to change" (p. 12). Apparently Harris came to similar conclusions. In an article on Native American literature, Reese and Caldwell-Wood (1997) recount how "after long and careful reflection about *Amazing Grace*, [Harris] decided to 'give it up' as a favorite because she believes it wrong to celebrate one culture at the expense of another" (p. 161). This reconsideration of texts does not demonstrate waffling on the part of these scholars; rather, it shows their willingness to rethink issues even if it means changing previous stands and revealing their own vulnerabilities. There is a quality of forthright honesty in their revelations that echoes Elbow's (1986) advice about how teachers should divulge their own doubts, hesitations, and ambivalences.

Arguments over the right to write are inextricably bound to discussions over the right to teach. Presenting difficult material that reveals the complexity rather than dichotomies, yet simultaneously encourages a change in preservice teacher thinking about the need for diverse voices is a delicate

pedagogical balancing act. It requires assignments and activities that are open-ended enough to allow for multiple perspectives but clear enough to communicate central issues in the field. It requires that a teacher see virtue in students' voices without abandoning allegiance to knowledge and the needs of society. Most important, it requires that university professors create an "intellectual ecology that fosters change rather than resistance" (Agee, 1998, p. 88).

But what does intellectual ecology look like? Cochran-Smith (1995), who argues that teaching is both political and intellectual, recommends that instructors work toward "constructing uncertainty" (p. 542). In her own analysis of race and teaching, she likens the process to "building a new boat while sitting in the old one, surrounded by rising waters" (p. 553). She continues:

If this metaphor works at all, it should be clear that the students' construction of the issues was punctuated with uncertainty—with an unending string of such comments as "Yes, but then what about this or that?" . . . Constructing uncertain knowledge about race and teaching meant feeling doubtful, confused, angry, and surprised (or "blown away" as some students liked to say) by new realizations. These are psychic conditions that are difficult and very different from the conditions successful students are used to feeling in school where the point, as we know, is often to get the right answer, summarize the major points, or, in some college classrooms, restate the teacher's point of view. (p. 553)

Still, Cochran-Smith is not blind to the fact of her own influence or that of other professors of critical pedagogy, suggesting that "we use professional

status and personal charisma to persuade [students] of the perspectives we believe will support their efforts for social justice" (p. 562). In other words, university instructors working for conceptual change imply that the boats where students are initially sitting are old or inadequate and make direct requests for new boats "through the orchestration of readings, written assignments, discussion topics, and school experiences" (p. 562).

Yet the construction of new boats should not come with precise blueprints—detailed, reproducible formulas for conceptual change. Even though each teacher is given specific tools and materials, they must struggle with these supplies in order to construct their own craft. Indeed, if blueprints were offered, who could say that the preservice teachers would fully understand the implications for the voyage to come?

Method

In this next section we look more closely at the construction of conceptual change as we follow 10 preservice teachers over the course of their year-long class in children's literature. Here we describe the preservice teachers themselves, provide a brief description of the class, and then discuss the methods we used to document the complexity of their shifts in thinking about the right to write.

The Preservice Teachers

It is late August and the air is hot and dry. University students in shorts and T-shirts enter the wide classroom. Awaiting the start of class, some settle down

to read the newspaper, while others begin small talk with peers. A typical mix of undergraduates and post-baccalaureates, the class followed the general statistics for preservice educators that indicate that they are "European American (92%), female (75%), and middle class (80%)" (Willis & Harris, 1997, p. 460).

As the university professor, Shelby selected the 10 preservice teachers for the study on the first day of class. The selection process was not random, but designed to represent the larger class of 60 students, taught in two sections of 30 students apiece. Of the ten preservice teachers selected, there were eight females and two males. Two female members of the group were of Japanese/European descent while the others students were European American. Six of the students were post-baccalaureates, while four were undergraduates—numbers that varied from the larger class but were still not unrepresentative, for our undergraduates are usually Liberal Arts degree students and come to the School of Education for licensure in elementary education.

At the end of the year-long course, Shelby asked two of the preservice teachers, Darcy and Lisa, to join her in the analysis and write up of the work, following a pattern she had established in her earlier work on preservice teachers (Wolf, Carey, & Mieras, 1996a, 1996b; Wolf, Mieras, & Carey, 1996). Because of the potential biases that come into play when researching one's own teaching, Shelby felt that working with participants/colleagues would help keep her as well as the analysis honest.

In addition, while there is much writing about educating preservice teachers, it is rare to see preservice teachers offer their own opinions. They speak through the researcher, rather than having more direct access to the audience. They are spoken for, rather than speaking for themselves. Finally, Shelby chose both Darcy and Lisa because they chose her. She put out the offer to all 10 of the preservice teachers to see if they were interested in working on the study beyond their participation. Lisa and Darcy not only volunteered immediately but persisted in their enthusiasm for the analysis and write up of the data.

Context of the Course

Before we proceed to a discussion of our methods, however, it is important to describe the context of the course. Here we will briefly describe what Shelby, Darcy, Lisa, and their preservice teacher colleagues said and heard to give a sense of a course designed to help teachers generate their own responses to current issues in children's literature, particularly the right to write.

The first semester of the class was heavily devoted to issues of diversity. The class textbook (Harris, 1993a) emphasizes that much of the literature written by outsiders often misses the subtle aspects of particular groups and, at its worst, upholds harmful stereotypes. Conversely, the textbook as well as the assigned trade books (e.g., Dorris, 1994b; Soto, 1990) provide multiple examples of literature predominantly written by insiders and lauded for authenticity as well as the craft of authorship. Beyond the reading assign-

ments, the class sessions were designed to provide gentle challenges as well as tough questions about what makes an authentic and well-crafted text.

For example, in a class focused on African American children's literature, Shelby began by reading the book *Amazing Grace* (Hoffman, 1991) aloud. Briefly, the story is of a young child, Grace, who wants to play the part of Peter Pan in the school play but is told by fellow classmates that she cannot because she is a girl and she is Black. Inspired by her grandmother who tells her, "You can be anything you want," Grace goes on to win the part as well as provide a stunning performance. The book is charming, and during the story the preservice teachers smiled, nodded, and at the end emitted some well-satisfied "Ahs!"—a state of Grace that Shelby let them hold to briefly before she began to compare the relative ease of this happily-ever-after ending with that of their assigned trade book text, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* (Taylor, 1976).

In this second story Cassie, the protagonist, has even stronger family support, but it is a family that well understands the workings of the real world. In a critical section of the book, Cassie, too, comes to comprehend the hard facts of her 1930's southern community where a White man could push a Black child and then expect an apology from the child. The fact that Cassie's grandmother feels compelled to make her apologize is a far cry from Grace's grandmother telling her "you can be anything you want." The idealism of Grace's story comes in direct

contrast with the realism of Cassie's, and the point Shelby was trying to make in her comparison was that children today live in a world much more akin to Cassie's. She was also trying to demonstrate the idea that Grace's story was the work of a White author, whose good intentions in this case may have misfired in an attempt to make an uneven world smooth. She pointed out the "Hiawatha" picture and asked why Grace played many more characters from classic Eurocentric texts (e.g., Joan of Arc, Mogli from Kipling's *Jungle Book*) in comparison to the one nod to Afrocentric texts in her portrayal of Anansi the spider.

In this class Shelby first introduced the question, "Do you have to be of the culture to write of the culture?" and the resulting debate was one the class continued throughout the year. Some preservice teachers thought the author's background did not and could not matter. After all, E. B. White (1952) wrote about fantasy worlds of talking spiders and pigs that he could never have experienced. Others brought up issues of historical fiction—whether readers were of the culture or not, they certainly did not literally live through the events. Thus, much writing had a touch of the vicarious—and the examples ranged from science fiction to men writing about women—though the question of men's writing about women seemed to trigger an alternative argument with many of the women in the class.

The topic then turned to possibilities for "getting it wrong": how authors who do not live close to the experience

often miss the subtleties necessary to carefully capture the realities. In addition to the tradebooks, the class read a chapter by Harris (1993b) on African American children's authors and one by Bishop (1993) on how to make informed choices for multicultural children's literature. In the latter Bishop not only delineates different types of multicultural literature (culturally specific, generic, and neutral), but lays out the argument over the right to write.

In this class the preservice teachers debated back and forth, raising examples and exceptions. Several argued that while it was not impossible to write outside one's life experience, if authors chose to do it, they needed to walk carefully, lest they tread on or too far outside an accurate representation. Then again, other students countered, how could an author who was not African American possibly capture what Taylor (1976) had done in *Roll of Thunder, Hear my Cry*? How could an outsider have understood Taylor's intense motivation to write the kind of story she had heard again and again in the oral tales of her family but never seen in school? They were influenced by what Shelby had read them from Taylor's (1986) Newbery acceptance speech where she said, "There was obviously a terrible contradiction between what the books said and what I had learned from my family, and at no time did I feel the contradiction more than when I had to sit in a class which, without me, would have been all white, and relive that prideless history year after year" (p. 25).

Yet Taylor's (1990) writing provided an additional curve in the argu-

ment, for Shelby closed the class by reading from another story Taylor had written about Cassie and the Logan family, *Mississippi Bridge*. This tale is also one of discrimination, but unlike her earlier work, it is not told through Cassie's eyes. Instead, the protagonist and narrator is Jeremy, a White boy who tries to befriend the Logan children against all odds. The fact that Taylor would chose to write a story from a White child's point of view caused the preservice teachers to focus not on a simplistic nature of the argument, but on the complexity of a middle ground. Here was a distinguished African American author who consciously chose to verbalize her view of the world through the voice of a White child, and class members felt that she did it with both authenticity and aesthetic heat.

The pattern of this conversation was not unique to this one day. Issues of the right to relate stories came up again and again during the first semester. When studying Latino literature, we read Gary Soto (1990) as well as selected poetry from *Cool Salsa* (Carlson, 1994) and also discussed bilingual issues. When studying Asian Pacific American literature, we read a chapter by Aoki (1993) on the narrative structure of Japanese stories, and we searched current Asian Pacific American trade books in vain for something other than the sequential pattern of beginning, middle, and end that typifies one Western narrative tradition.

Discussion about the right to write became even more critical in the second semester because Shelby asked the preservice teachers to work in partners

and present a "Multicultural Book Talk" on a recently published book. In this assignment she advised them to follow the advice of their Harris (1993a) textbook and concentrate on "those who are most excluded and marginalized, people of color" (p. xvi). Their task was to create a handout for their colleagues that included at least two critical reviews of the book that attested to or questioned its authentic voice and accurate details. In addition, the preservice teachers needed to read the book to a small group of children and include insights, comments, and/or questions from the children.

Shelby presented a model handout that she had created on Jane Yolen's (1992) *Encounter*, emphasizing the kudos and the criticisms of this controversial text. Published in the quincentennial year of Columbus's first Atlantic crossing, it tells the story of Columbus's landfall on San Salvador from the point of view of a young Taino boy who lived there. The book is well researched, but Yolen—the White author who wrote the story—was criticized for missing some important points (see Juhnke, 1993). As soon as Shelby presented one point, she countered or asked the preservice teachers to counter with an opposite point of view. She expressed her own confusions about the right to write, voicing her long admiration of Yolen's work, but also her worry that an author of Yolen's stature would be easily published, while Native American authors had little access.

Thus, Shelby provided complex readings as well as class lectures that emphasized contradictions and assigned

in-depth work with both children and texts, hoping that the preservice teachers would come to thoughtful conclusions about authenticity and aesthetic heat. Though she definitely leaned toward the work of insiders—people of parallel cultures—she showed her own hesitations and confusions. She also talked about successful exceptions, outsiders who participated in the experiences of other lives and were changed enough to effectively write of groups other than their own. But how did Shelby's pedagogy affect the members of the class? How did they *experience* the right to write argument? For that, we turn to the data collection and analysis to demonstrate how we documented the ways in which the preservice teachers did and did not change.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection for the larger study consisted of three formal interviews, notes on telephone and office hour conversations, copies of email conversations, and all completed assignments. However, for the purposes of this study, here we look closely at two main sources of data: (a) the multicultural book handouts the 10 preservice teachers created with their partners, and (b) final interview questions about authenticity that focused on their opinions about the right to write and whether their opinions had changed over time.

For our data analysis we entered the written work of the handouts as well as complete transcripts of the two interview questions into the qualitative data analysis program NUD*IST. The transcripts, though rarely more than

three pages long, were coded to capture every pause, hesitation, and/or repetition of speech because in listening over and over to the complete audiotapes, we felt that students seemed to hesitate, back up, restate, pause, and ponder when they were asked questions about diversity. After reviewing the transcripts and the book talks numerous times, our team developed individual coding systems for each of the data types that we will address in the two sections below.

Multicultural Book Talk Analysis

Our first analytic system was relatively straightforward, for the data consisted of the two page handouts created by the preservice teachers to analyze a single text. The assignment required students to read and discuss their text with children, research critical reviews of the text, and, based on the responses of both professional reviewers and children, analyze the book in terms of its authenticity and aesthetic heat. This was a particularly interesting assignment to consider, for it was the first time Shelby had used it in her work with preservice teachers. At this point in the year, the preservice teachers had finished reading their Harris (1993a) text and were about to begin reading a more traditional text on children's literature by Lukens (1995). Although Shelby admired Lukens' text, she felt that the focus on multicultural literature was weak, and she did not want her students to forget the things they had learned from Harris (1993a) and her colleagues. Therefore, at the semester break, she replaced an assignment she had used the previous year where the preservice

teachers created rather conventional learning centers on literary elements with the multicultural book talks.

Many of the codes we established for these data were easily aligned to the requirements of the assignment as well as the recommended guidelines for evaluating multicultural literature that were revealed in our research review of the right to write (e.g., Bishop, 1993). Briefly we coded for (a) details and unique qualities of the represented group such as the use of language and historical accuracy, (b) literary elements such as character, setting, plot, or theme, (c) the nature of the illustrations (i.e., if the pictures were an authentic and aesthetic match with the represented group as well as the text), (d) the author's and illustrator's background, with an emphasis on his/her match to the text in terms of race, ethnicity, and/or life experience, (e) the children's responses to the text, including their level of engagement in the literary discussion, and (f) the preservice teachers' compliments, criticism, and emotional reaction to the text. Table 1 identifies the preservice teachers and provides information on the trade books they selected for the assignment.

To help us in our analysis we read the nine trade books presented by the 10 preservice teachers and their partners (Sohne and Varla were partners). Reflecting on the trade books also allowed us to think about our findings in relationship to literary writing. Although it is still somewhat rare to see academic writing take on much of a narrative flair, we have been inspired by Richardson's (1994) advice that re-

search writing should "deploy literary devices to re-create lived experience and evoke emotional responses" (p. 512). The trade books the preservice teachers analyzed were not only considered for teachers' views of their authenticity but in terms of teachers' perceptions of their aesthetic heat. Their favorable responses to these books were shared by reviewers for children's literature journals who gave them high acclaim. Thus, in our writing, we have worked to bring not just the character development and plot lines to the page, but the emotion that drives characters to action, for it was often this emotion that drove the preservice teachers to new thinking.

Interview Analysis

Our second analytic system focused on specific questions about the right to write in the end-of-the-year interview with the preservice teachers. This choice was an unusual one because rather than look only at post-instruction interviews, most studies use a pre/post design. However, our choice was one of necessity. In the original design of the research, Shelby did not realize the potential impact of these issues on the preservice teachers. Indeed, the central focus of the research was on the preservice teachers' interactions with children of color and/or poverty in a first semester assignment called the "Child as Teacher" project (Wolf, Hill, & Ballentine, in press). It was only in her preparation for the second semester that she began to worry about losing the foundation established and, as a result, created the multicultural book

TABLE 1
Preservice Teachers' Selected Trade Books with Author/Illustrator Information

PRESERVICE TEACHERS' BACKGROUND	BOOK TITLE & PUBLICATION DATE	AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND	ILLUSTRATOR'S BACKGROUND
Lisa (Female European American)	<i>A Girl Named Disaster</i> (1996)	Nancy Farmer (Female European American)	—
Clara (Female European American)	<i>I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This</i> (1994)	Jacqueline Woodson (Female African American)	—
Crystal Female Japanese/ European American	<i>Sees Behind Trees</i> (1996)	Michael Dorris (Male Modoc)	—
Darcy (Female European American)	<i>The Block</i> (1995)	Langston Hughes (Male African American)	Romare Bearden (Male African American)
Emma (Female European American)	<i>Muskrat Will Be Swimming</i> (1996)	Cheryl Savageau (Female Abenaki & French Canadian)	Robert Hynes (Male European American)
Luke (Male European American)	<i>The Middle Passage</i> (1995)	Tom Feelings (Male African American)	Tom Feelings (Male African American)
Seiko (Female Japanese/ European American)	<i>From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun</i> (1995a)	Jacqueline Woodson (Female African American)	—
Sohne & Varla (Female European Americans)	<i>The Great Change</i> (1992)	White Deer of Autumn (Male Wampanoag)	Carol Grigg (Female Cherokee)
Spike (Male European American)	<i>Maniac Magee</i> (1990)	Jerry Spinelli (Male European American)	—

talk assignment. This shift in assignment resulted in a different kind of data than what Shelby had originally expected to collect. Thus, while a more traditional

design would have included a balance of before and after questions on the right to write, our focus on the post-instruction interviews allowed us to

explore the impact of a course whose direction shifted.

In creating codes for analyzing this interview (see Appendix), we tried to align our work with the themes revealed in the literature review of the right to teach. Just as Cochran-Smith (1995) argues that teaching is a process of constructing uncertainty and Elbow (1986) advocates embracing contraries, we wondered how to capture and code the uncertainty and contraries expressed by the preservice teachers in our study. Thus, the first category addressed the preservice teachers' hesitations (which included repetition, broken speech, mental state verbs of hesitancy, and linguistic contraries). The second category dealt with the central arguments they presented which were often marked by contrary information. For example, they often alternated between the values of authenticity and aesthetic heat and they used conflicting counterarguments to make their points. Antonyms such as black/white and idealism/realism laced their speech as they discussed the subtleties of culture and the realities of the current publishing industry.

Our third category had to do with the evidence they supplied to support their arguments. Some used critical reviews of trade books while others suggested the need for long term immersion in the culture. Still others referred to the assignments they had experienced in class, including the work they did for the multicultural book talks. Some suggested that interviews with insiders were necessary while others referred to their own

personal life experience. The fourth category dealt with their perceived change in understanding the issues since the beginning of the class, and these were marked by mental state verbs of change (e.g., "I never realized . . .") as well as references to their childhood literary experience. Many spoke of change in the futuristic sense, suggesting that they still had more to learn. Our fifth category dealt with instruction and curriculum as the teachers discussed their hopes and fears of effectively teaching diverse literature and diverse children.

Once these codes were established, the interviews were coded line-by-line by all three authors. However, we soon realized that such detailed coding sometimes missed the forest for the trees. While we had detailed information on *how* the preservice teachers were talking, the line-by-line coding sometimes missed *what* they were saying. Thus, we returned to the coding and looked beyond the individual lines to the central arguments the preservice teachers were making. We re-coded all the data to capture the essence of the arguments, while still attending to the line differences. The Appendix shows an example from Clara to illustrate the layered nature of the coding.

The example demonstrates the importance of looking at the content of the response as well as the linguistic speech patterns. For example, as Clara closed her discussion about the subtle nature of capturing a culture in words (beginning on line 15), she stated her position on the side of authenticity, but her speech is marked by a number of

mental state verbs of hesitation including, "I don't know," "I'm not so sure," and "I mean I guess. . . ." In addition, her entire argument was about change—what she used to think and what she thinks now, especially in terms of the subtle characteristics of culture. Thus, coding the subject matter as well as the broken speech helped indicate where the major hesitations were occurring or if the pauses and backtracking were simply part of the speaker's normal speech patterns. For the most part, the nuances of speech in the interviews occurred as the preservice teachers struggled to articulate their opinions about complex arguments of diversity.

Constraints and Collaboration

Still, before we turn to the results, it is important to provide a brief explanation of certain aspects of our own analytic processes to reveal some of the constraints under which the research operated, as well as the perplexing, if not downright tricky issues that were raised as Shelby, Lisa, and Darcy worked to get past unequal status and widely-varying experience to create a collaborative research team. One could easily assume that if the results of this project reflected positive conceptual change on the part of the preservice teachers, they were merely the consequence of teacher-pleasing behavior. Indeed, one could extend these assumptions to the participation of Darcy and Lisa. What role did they *really* play in the analysis of this work? Did they serve merely to confirm Shelby's opinions, or were their contributions more substantive?

For the first issue, that of teacher-pleasing responses for the preservice teachers in general, we need to explain the conditions placed on the research by the university's Human Research Committee. The committee was skeptical that a university professor could study her students while simultaneously maintaining responsibility for their grades and therefore set a variety of stipulations regarding the project. In the first semester of the course, Shelby personally mentored the preservice teachers selected for the research, including Darcy and Lisa, while her university colleagues mentored the other three-fourths of the students. Because this mentoring position meant that Shelby was responsible for over half of their total grade, she was not allowed to officially invite the preservice teachers to be a part of the study. She was given permission to audiorecord an initial interview with them but was instructed to suggest that at the semester break they *might* be invited to participate in the study. In addition, Shelby was to assure them that their choice about participation would in no way affect their grade. Finally, she was required to explain that the audiotapes of the first interview would remain unheard, untranscribed, and in the possession of our school's Human Research Committee representative until the semester grades were submitted.

At that point she invited the students into the study and conducted a second interview, but she was not allowed to continue her mentoring relationship with these students. Instead,

another university colleague, Kathryn Davinroy, mentored the students and took on responsibility for the majority of their grade. Yet because Shelby would still have influence over their grade, though greatly diminished, she continued to be restricted from access to the interview data. In addition, she was not allowed to conduct the third and final interview or collect the preservice teachers' signed permission forms until the final grades were submitted at the end of the year. While these stipulations did not eliminate the possibility of teacher-pleasing responses, we feel that they certainly helped to reduce any potential coercion that the preservice teachers might have felt.

Turning to the more intense participation of Darcy and Lisa, both felt the awkwardness of entering into a research project for the first time. They were unsure about their roles, what they could say and when they could say it. Because they had initially been *participants* in the research, taking on the new role of *researchers* was an odd transition at best. Yet, as Darcy most recently explained:

We both felt anxious during the first interviews and initial meetings with Shelby. Wanting to leave her with an impression of our brilliance, wanting rubies and diamonds to fall from our mouths, rather than let her see all the toads. But as we grew more comfortable with each other and learned that Shelby did not have all of the answers herself, we came to an understanding that we were a team of colleagues who supported each other. . . . Shelby was still the teacher when it comes to showing us the research process, but the actual data analysis was strictly a team effort. This was especially true when I took over the responsibility for en-

tering our coding into NUD*IST. Shelby's inexperience with this software forced me to take the lead and teach her different aspects of the program. (3/15/99)

The precarious balance of feeling anxious while trying to look brilliant is hard to maintain. Indeed, when looking hard at our own process we see that Darcy's image reminds us of how Marianne Moore (1935; cited in Bukovinsky, 1994) described the necessity for looking at poetry for what it is—to "present for inspection, 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them'" (Bukovinsky, p. 86). Our analytic work was no imaginary garden, nor were our worst ideas toad-like, but as we present our research for inspection here, we feel comfortable in saying that all of us contributed expertise. Darcy's allusion to her role in learning the intricacies of NUD*IST software, for example, provides only one of the many ways in which her expertise took the lead.

A second important point is the length of time we spent on this analysis: a year of weekly meetings spent on coding and three-quarters of a year in the write up and revision of this piece. While it is perhaps easy to maintain a brilliant facade for a short time, we believe that we would have been hard-pressed to sustain it over the course of almost two years. Lisa explained:

In the beginning of our study, I felt unsure of my answers and was more likely not to speak up with a contradiction when hearing Shelby's opinion. But this is just a common occurrence for me when building any kind of close working relationship with another individual. We began meeting on a weekly basis at Shelby's home. We shared personal information as well as research. As

Shelby, Darcy and I got to know one another, the ice was broken (so to speak). And I felt more comfortable as I acquired knowledge of the data. I felt no pressure to adhere to one opinion or the other, and when I expressed my thoughts, they were received with respect and consideration. (3/17/99)

Still, we are well aware of the possibility that our collaboration could be seen with some skepticism. Shelby's invitation into the deeper processes of the research came with the hopeful promise of publication and presentations at national conferences, as well as funding for Darcy and Lisa through grants they wrote together. Thus, the atmosphere certainly had the potential to be heady and even intimidating, but we would argue that over time the awkwardness of our initial meetings gave way to authentic exchange.

Results

In the following sections we present the results from the preservice teachers' multicultural book talks as well as their responses to interview questions focused on the right to write. The book talks show how critical reviews and children's opinions helped to shape the preservice teachers' analysis of the authenticity and aesthetic heat of their selected texts. Because the assignment culminated in a written handout, the preservice teachers made careful arguments about their texts backed by evidence from their reading. On the other hand, their responses to the interview questions demonstrate the influence of their previous life experience combined with the impact of the year-long class. These responses were

oral, not written, and reveal the hesitations they felt over the hard issues raised in the questions.

Authenticity and Aesthetic Heat in Multicultural Book Talks

During the first months of class, the 10 preservice teachers seemed fairly confident of their stand on the right to write. Although the question was new to them, in class discussions they were quick to claim that authors should be able to write what they wanted. They felt that writing outside one's group was not very different from writing outside one's time (as in historical fiction) or realistic life experience (as in fantasy). While insiders most likely had an edge on authenticity, outsiders could write effectively as long as they conducted careful research or confirmed their ideas with insiders. In addition, they felt that insiders came with automatic authenticity, and they seemed to let this automaticity leak over into issues of aesthetic heat. Essentially they presumed that if an insider wrote the literature, it had to be good. Yet, as the year progressed, and they read more of their Harris (1993a) textbook and debated the issues in class, their easy assumptions began to shift to more complex thinking. This shift was best represented in the second semester of the class when the preservice teachers presented a multicultural book talk and accompanying handout for their classmates. As they began to explore their selected texts more intensely, they were forced to weigh the complex balance between authenticity and aesthetic heat.

Authenticity

A central goal of the multicultural book talk assignment was to present an analysis of a recently published book in terms of the texts' authenticity. Of the nine texts presented, four of the preservice teachers focused on African or African American stories and three on Native American tales. Two preservice teachers selected texts centered on the relationship between black and white children, though one text had a European American protagonist and the other text's narrator was African American. Here, we will present the 10 preservice teachers' views about the authenticity of their texts in three ways: (a) their emphasis on authors and illustrators of parallel cultures; (b) their justifications for authors who crossed cultural boundaries in their writing; and (c) their interpretations of how the authors and illustrators (no matter their match or mismatch) were able to capture the unique qualities of the group they were attempting to portray. This section closes with a case comparison of Luke's and Spike's handouts to explore how the general findings specifically played out in the work of two.

Although it was not a requirement of the assignment, seven of the nine preservice teachers selected multicultural texts by authors of color. In their writing they implied a sense of reassurance when the author was of a parallel culture. In writing about her Native American text, Crystal commended her book because of the author's parallel status: "Dorris is part of the Native American culture, and succeeds in authentically representing the culture of

the time" (3/17/97). Similarly, Clara wrote of her selection: "Another factor that strengthens the cultural authenticity of this book is that Woodson [1994] writes from an 'insider's perspective' (Harris, 1993a). Woodson is an African American woman who has experienced the realities of what she writes" (4/7/97). Readings in their class textbooks were particularly influential; of these seven preservice teachers five directly referenced their Harris or Takaki (1993) texts to support their claims.

Two of the preservice teachers, Lisa and Spike, chose texts by White authors, and both felt that their texts had to be justified in some way. For example, Lisa analyzed Farmer's (1996) *A Girl Named Disaster*, a modern novel of Africa that explores Shona belief systems through the adventures of a young girl, Nhamo. The author of this text is not African but spent 17 years in remote sections of Mozambique and Zimbabwe doing scientific work with plant and insect life. In her handout Lisa explained that although Farmer was not an insider, she felt the book was authentic because of the "glossary and informative cultural background provided at the end of the book" (3/17/97). Spike's justification did not stem from his author's careful research; instead, his stand was based on Spinelli's (1990) childhood experiences with African Americans, especially times when he saw his childhood friends denied equal rights. Thus, preservice teachers who chose texts by European American authors tended to defend their selections by carefully pointing to an author's long-term immersion with the representative group or with the

author's emotional response to an inequitable world.

Whether the author was writing parallel, cross cultural, or world literature (Cai & Bishop, 1994), all 10 of the preservice teachers focused on how their authors effectively portrayed the subtle and unique qualities of culture. Some concentrated on language, such as the African American vernacular English used in Woodson's (1994, 1995a) stories or on the careful interweaving of words from the Shona language in Farmer's (1996) text. Others focused on historical accuracy, such as the precise portrayal of the triangular slave system in Feelings's (1995) *The Middle Passage*. Still others looked at the more subtle qualities of culture. Crystal, for example, wrote that because her text was historical fiction (Dorris, 1996), one might assume that an outsider "could easily write this story." However, she argued that more "abstract perceptions . . . [are], as Bishop [1993] . . . states, 'not casually understood by outsiders'" (p. 41). Crystal went on to argue some of the subtleties Bishop alluded to—such as religious beliefs and family relationships—were effectively portrayed in her text. Clara, too, leaned on Bishop to talk about some of the subtleties in her text:

In analyzing the authenticity of this book, we asked ourselves the following questions that Bishop (1993) poses, "Analyze the way people of color are characterized. Are they presented as unique individuals, rather than as representatives of a group? Are main characters well-rounded and fully developed? Are stereotypes avoided?" (p. 50). Woodson excels in all of the areas addressed in the above questions. She thoroughly de-

velops the characters by giving them unique characteristics. (4/7/97)

Other teachers used chapters from their Harris (1993a) textbook to criticize the authenticity of their text. Sohne and Varla, for example, questioned the fact that the Native American characters in their text were not identified by their tribal affiliation. They wrote that this choice "may signal to some the continued practice of making all Native American peoples into 'one' generic people. In MacCann (1993) it is noted, 'Native peoples are typically amalgamated into one generalized Indian'" (4/7/97). Still, they went on to use another quote from this same chapter to laud places where their text did address unique Native Americans qualities: "James E. Connolly (1985, cited in MacCann, 1993) [said] 'with their differences understood (the differences between tribes), we can contemplate what these stories and their storytellers had in common: keen observation of nature, desire to teach virtues, and respect for all living things'" (p. 154).

How the preservice teachers contemplated the effectiveness of stories and storytellers is best seen in a case comparison of the handouts created by Luke and Spike and their partners, for these preservice teachers represent quite different ways of interpreting authenticity. At almost opposite ends of the continuum, Luke's handout on *The Middle Passage* (Feelings, 1995) implied that writing outside one's culture was nearly impossible, while Spike's handout on *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) suggested that an author's life did not have to be parallel if he or she had some

experience with the represented group. The two texts and the authors' experiences were strikingly different. Feelings is African American; Spinelli is European American. Feelings' book is on the harsh reality of the slave trade, while Spinelli's text is an idealistic fable of utopian race relations. Feelings' text is wordless (other than the foreword); his message is delivered in illustrations. Spinelli unveils his text in prose. Feelings did not literally experience the Middle Passage, but he lived in its painful wake. Spinelli did not live his fantasy text either, but his childhood experiences with African Americans impacted his work.

Luke and his partner were most deeply impacted by the visual aspects of *The Middle Passage* (Feelings, 1995). Even though they wrote that it was "very difficult to verbalize" their response, and that "language cannot describe the horror and pain that [Feelings] captures in his art," they used a quote from Bishop (1996b) to move the images into their handout: "Once on the ship, we witness the branding and the beatings, the rats and the rapes, the suffering and the suicides, the expiring of the weak and the executing of the rebellious. We watch the crew dumping . . . [bodies] overboard and the sharks waiting to feast on their remains" (p. 437). By using this quote their handout was filled with visual vocabulary—"we witness" and "we watch"—indicating the feeling that the reader/viewer is there, seeing and feeling the horror. Indeed, the quote ups the ante on the experience by using painful alliteration—"branding/beatings," "rats/rapes,"

"suffering/suicides," and "expiring/executing," before breaking the pattern to stress the significance of the waiting sharks.

Their emphasis on painful word choice reflected their stance on the authenticity of the illustrations. In particular they stressed how the horror portrayed in Feelings' illustrations was "not intended to entertain the reader, but to give insight and breathe reality into the plight of African Americans." They also quoted from their literature textbook to distinguish *sensationalism* from Feelings' use of violence: "Any action may be made sensational, but important and even violent events can be described with accuracy and sensitivity" (Lukens, 1995, p. 79).

The accent on historical and visual accuracy was reiterated in the response of the people with whom Luke and his partner shared the text. Indeed, they wrote, "without a doubt, everyone that read the book found it very powerful and authentic." Of the four people they interviewed, all said they'd never seen the book before. Jessica, a 13-year-old African American, said that the book should be shared with children because "People need to know what happened to prevent it from happening again." Her mother disagreed and closed the book, handing it back to Luke, explaining, "I don't want to look at this. It makes me sick." The two college students interviewed *did* want to look. Sheila, the African American student, said,

It is very, very aesthetically pleasing, but it's—it's *painful*! It is a whole history. He didn't leave out anything. . . . That's not what they teach US (and she pointed to herself).

. . . Look at these slaves . . . jumping overboard. ANYTHING to defy the degradation, this horrible, horrible subtraction from everything that is positive and wonderful in our lives. (2/17/97)

Mike, the European American student, also focused on aspects of missing history suggesting,

I find it kind of amazing that I was taught the Golden Triangle. You learn that is slaves from Africa to the Caribbean, then sugar up to the North, and then rum back to Africa. That is all that you learn [about] slaves: "Hey, guys, do you want to take a trip?" I feel cheated in my school career that I haven't been exposed to anything. (2/17/97)

The question of exposure became a key issue for Luke when he tried to share the book with an elementary class and was refused:

When I asked a 2nd grade teacher in [a local school] if she wanted to use the book during a unit on Africa and great African American heroes, she didn't think the book was appropriate because of the violent content. I observed a lesson that was being taught about the Middle Passage, [and] issues that dealt with violence or abuse were dusted over completely. Most of the people that we interviewed about this book felt that it was important to show the African American perspective. Because of the extreme emotional material presented, others were unwilling to discuss it or even look at it. As Takaki (1993) states, "By allowing us to see events from the viewpoints of different groups, a multicultural curriculum enables us to reach toward a more comprehensive understanding of American History" (p. 4). When one ignores the pain and violence of the African American culture one ignores the true history of an entire race of people. (2/17/97)

The argument above is a particularly revealing one. First, Luke's use of Takaki

demonstrated the impact of the class readings on his thinking. But even more important, he had to deal with the shock of a teacher's refusal, who not only rejected the text but "dusted over" the historical reality of the middle passage "completely." Although we had talked in class again and again about how rarely classroom teachers used authentic multicultural literature, witnessing the rejection of such a powerful text as well as observing the lightness of the teacher's lesson seemed to bring our talk to life.

Finally, Luke and his partner were influenced by the critical reviews of the text that were uniformly positive. Of one, they wrote, "Rudine Sims Bishop [1996b] concludes her review by stating that 'the long-awaited [response to the] question of what happened to the captives who were taken away from the African continent is a singular achievement', and that 'it deserves a place among the major texts of American history'" (p. 442). Indeed, reiterating Bishop's description of the book as "a triumph of survival" (p. 438), they concluded their handout with this statement: "It is amazing that a book in such high [critical] regard is not embraced by teachers of multicultural literature" (2/17/97).

How different then, was Spike's handout on the Newbery award-winning novel *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990), which is often taught in elementary school classrooms and depends on idealistic prose rather than realistic illustrations. The protagonist, Maniac, is a timeless heroic figure who accomplishes great feats in sports. His most

definitive characteristic, however, is that he's a child who can't see color. His lack of vision is not meant to be taken literally; instead, it's a metaphor for his inability to understand why the color of someone's skin would make a difference. When Spike read the text to a group of children, they were initially stumped by Maniac's lack of vision:

Several children we read the book to were at first confused by Maniac's inability to see things. For example, one student said, "Maniac seems to be able to see just fine." As we read further, the very same student later commented, "Oh, I understand now. Maniac couldn't see why people were doing the things they were doing. He didn't think that people disliked him." Others said, "They didn't like him because he was a different color and that's why they treated him badly." (3/17/97)

In terms of authenticity, Spike and his partner used a large section of their handout to explore the experiences in Spinelli's life that influenced the writing of this book. They discussed the fact that in growing up, "Spinelli's mother had an African American dentist, who would kindly sit Spinelli into his dentist chair, pretending to examine his mouth. This playful dentist later became the inspiration for Mrs. Beale, whose fingers Maniac would lick cake frosting off of." They talked about Spinelli's boyhood friend who "had no idea that being black was any different than anything else until one fateful day, he wasn't permitted to enter a swimming pool." They argued, "Through these examples and countless others, Spinelli puts a different, yet unique twist to multicultural authenticity [which occurs when] an author of the same

culture ... or one who has had extensive experiences with that particular culture (Harris, 1993a) writes."

Thus, Spike and his partner used their Harris textbook to argue for the authenticity of this text, ignoring the cautions that many of the authors in Harris provided, and they had a similar reaction to a negative review that appeared in the *School Library Journal* (1990) which they quoted at length:

Warning: This interesting book is a mythical story about racism. It should not be read as reality. In the final disjointed section of the book, Maniac confronts the hatred that perpetuates ignorance. ... In the feel-good ending ... Maniac gets a home and there is hope for at least improved racial relations. Unreal? Yes. ... It's a cop-out for Spinelli to have framed this story as a legend—it frees him from having to make it real or even possible. Nevertheless, the book will stimulate thinking about racism, and it might help educate those readers who, like so many students, have no first hand knowledge of people of other races. (p. 184)

Despite the reviewer's harsh terms—"disjointed," "feel-good ending," and "cop-out"—Spike and his partner focused on the last sentence of the review. They felt strongly that the book was something that could help children talk about sensitive racial issues, and they remained steadfast in their admiration of Maniac, the idealistic boy who travels with ease between Black and White worlds and the racism that often divides them in reality. In the closing statement of their handout, Spike lauded the book because Maniac "love[s] people just for being people. ... Our world would be a much better place if we could learn to love one another with an unconditional and even blind love" (3/17/97).

Making the world a better place is a critical feature of multicultural literature, yet the two books explored in this section were opposites. One book worked through its illustrations to stress the reality and harsh history of enslaved peoples. The other book worked through words to create an idealistic potential world where racism might not exist. The first book was denied entry into an elementary school classroom while the second was welcomed. The first was uniformly praised. The second, though criticized, received the highest award in children's literature, the Newbery. Pictures, words, realism, idealism, denial, acceptance, praise, and criticism were all a part of the worlds created by these two texts, as were issues of parallel and cross cultural literature. Yet to the preservice teachers who studied them, Luke and Spike, each was authentic. Luke felt that the authenticity of his text could not be questioned, while Spike argued that his book provided a "unique twist" to the argument, and both used class readings to back up their claims. And while the first was considered "aesthetically pleasing, but painful," the other's beauty was more soothingly revealed. Thus, authenticity was integrated with the aesthetic quality of the texts, an issue that we turn to in the next section.

Aesthetic Heat

The second goal of the multicultural book talk assignment was for the preservice teachers to analyze the aesthetic heat of their selected texts. Here, we will present the 10 preservice teachers' views about the heat of their books

in three ways: (a) their emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of their written texts and/or illustrations; (b) the impact of critical reviews on their perceptions; and (c) the influence of children's responses on their ultimate interpretations. This section closes with a case comparison of Emma's and Darcy's multicultural handouts to explore how the general trends across the preservice teachers were captured in the work of two.

In the second semester of the class, the preservice teachers read Lukens' (1995) text on the literary qualities of children's literature. They studied the elements of narrative (e.g., character, setting, plot, theme, style), and Shelby had provided them with multiple examples of how these elements work together in an effective story. In addition we talked extensively about the art of illustration, discussing Sendak's (1988) notion of how illustrations serve to *quicken* the life of a text as well as Nodelman's (1988) explanation of the integral relationship between the story and the illustrations. As a result, the preservice teachers were prepared to critique their texts along literary as well as illustrative lines—analyzing characters, discussing the effectiveness of stylistic techniques, and investigating the impact of illustrations.

In terms of the language of their books, many preservice teachers stressed the ability of their text to capture their attention. Spike wrote that *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) was a "wonderful book" and explained that "Once you pick up the book, you can't put it down. You always want to know what happens next" (3/17/97). The ability to capture

and hold the reader's attention was often a factor of the author's careful characterization. For example, in discussing *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* (Woodson, 1994), Clara focused on the impact of incest on one of the story's characters: "Woodson is not graphic in her depiction of the incest, yet the author's powerful descriptions of Lena's behavior and appearance (e.g., her nervous laughter, vacant stares, daydreaming, and unkempt appearance) provide the reader with a vivid image of the trauma she experiences" (4/7/97). The ability of the author to evoke vivid images was also evident in Crystal's analysis of *Sees Behind Trees* (Dorris, 1996) when she wrote, "Through imagery that is unique to Dorris' style, we get a strong sense of setting with his dynamic ability to paint pictures with words" (3/17/97). Still, the admiration that the preservice teachers felt for their authors did not prevent them from some critical statements. Crystal, for example, felt that some of Dorris' "abstract imagery ... was hard to follow," and Lisa felt that her text had parts "that seemed to drag out a bit" (3/17/97).

In terms of the illustrations, the preservice teachers who analyzed picture books stressed the artist's ability to match the tone of the story. Sohne and Varla, for example, complimented the "gentle watercolor illustrations [of the] world-renowned Native American artist" Carol Grigg, whose art well complemented the text (*White Deer of Autumn*, 1992). Because *The Middle Passage* (Feelings, 1995) is a wordless picture book, Luke spent considerable space analyzing the power of the illus-

trations, citing evidence from critical reviews to trace the artist's evolution from art that was more "muted, monochromatic, and somber" to illustration, which after Feelings' experience in Africa, seemed to "glow" (2/17/97).

As a requirement of the assignment, all 10 of the preservice teachers included at least two published reviews of their text, and with Spike as the only exception, all were persuaded by the professional critics' views. On the positive side, books that were highly lauded often garnered similar reviews from the preservice teachers themselves. They listed the kudos and awards for books and then went on to echo the claims. Lisa cited *School Library Journal* which "called *A Girl Named Disaster* [Farmer, 1996] humorous and heartwrenching, complex and multilayered." In her own assessment Lisa summed up the text as "a tale of courage that skillfully incorporates suspense and humor" (3/17/97). If the reviews were more cautious, the preservice teachers similarly followed suit. For example, in discussing the "contradictory reviews" for *The Great Change* (White Deer of Autumn, 1992), Sohne and Varla warned their colleagues to "Review it before you teach it!" (4/7/97).

While the critics' opinions were a powerful influence on the preservice teachers, they were even more persuaded by the children's reactions. When the children were enthusiastic, the preservice teachers were as well. Lisa and her partner read several chapters of *A Girl Named Disaster* (Farmer, 1996) to a class of children and wrote:

The students were full of excitement and fear as they anticipated Nhamo's search into the deserted Portuguese house. Many of the children made comments to one another about what she would find. A few of the students were even holding hands and shutting their eyes. When we had to discontinue reading, the children yelled to hear more. (3/17/97).

Like the children, Lisa later wrote, "[My partner] and I enjoyed the colorful narrative and found ourselves a part of the adventure" (3/17/97).

If the children's reviews were more critical, the preservice teachers reiterated their points. When Crystal and her partner read *See Behind Trees* (Dorris, 1996), the children asked many questions that seemed to support places where the preservice teachers themselves felt confused: "The children ... were captivated with the story. However, numerous responses evidenced their confusion about some of the details. These responses were very similar to ours and were summed up best by [the child] who stated, 'I liked it, but it was kinda hard to understand'" (3/17/97).

The children's reactions to the social issues introduced in some books were particularly important to the preservice teachers' overall critique. Seiko and her partner received permission from a local classroom teacher to read parts of *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun* (Woodson, 1995a), which tells the story of an African American boy whose mother reveals that she is in love with a White woman. He initially reacted in anger and refused to face the issues before him. Seiko and her partner discovered that their students' reactions were equally visceral. As one student

shared, "I'd be weirded out if my dad told me he was gay." Because of the reaction of the children, both fictional and real, Seiko felt that the book was essential to elementary teaching. She spoke with passion to the small group of classmates as she presented the text and told me after class that she felt strongly that she would teach the text in her future classrooms. Later, Seiko wrote to me about the implications of teaching this particular novel: "I think I would have to first talk to my principal about it. But I would approach him or her with reasons why I would use the book. I think these kinds of books are important because I think schools should not only teach academics, but about life as well" (6/22/97).

Another Woodson (1994) text, analyzed by Clara and her partner, brought about a similar determination to use the book in their future classrooms despite the potential danger involved in making such a choice. When they sought permission to read some of the passages on incest in *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, the classroom teacher refused. As a result, they wrote:

We decided to read the students the chapters of the book that discussed Marie's struggle in deciding whether or not she would befriend Lena. When reading about Marie's discussion with her father about the new white girl at school, one student asked, "Why would an adult call someone 'trash'?" Similarly, another student asked, "Why did the dad say it was easier to say 'white trash'?" These comments provoked a discussion about racial slurs. Another student asked, "Why did Marie's dad say 'White people hate us, and we go on hating them right back'? I'm white and I don't hate black people." The conversation that followed the reading

centered on the children's feelings and perceptions about race relations. (4/7/97)

For Clara, these kinds of conversations were emblematic of the aesthetic heat of the novel, which came not only through the power of the words but in the issues raised. Citing a passage from Woodson (1995b) herself about her goal to "keep writing books that transcend the lines," Clara wrote, "Although the book discusses the volatile subject of incest, the more salient idea of the novel is subverting the more commonly held stereotypes of classism and racism." In addition, Clara and her partner felt that incest was a topic that they would tackle as classroom teachers. They admired Woodson's "daring," and explained, "We thought she was successful in taking on this subject because of her *subtle* explanations surrounding Lena's situation. We see this book as a vehicle that could lead to an open forum for discussion of this and other controversial issues" (4/7/97).

Thus, how preservice teachers determined the success of their selected literature depended on their discussions with children, the reviews from published critiques, and the author's and/or illustrator's ability to engage the heart and mind of the reader. In the following section we will elaborate on the influence of these three features on Emma and Darcy and their partners as they discuss how their selected texts created aesthetic heat or somehow failed to ignite.

Emma and her partner felt that their Native American story *Muskrat Will Be Swimming* (Savageau, 1996) was

highly successful in integrating words and pictures. They wrote, "The illustrations complement the text; the cover design foreshadows and invites; the writer's craft creates graceful transitions in time and place, between present and remembered events, between other texts and dreamtimes and into the moment the reader shares this book" (2/17/97). They also cited from a review of the book that discussed the illustrator himself: "Robert Hynes, whose specialty lies in natural history art and who does quite a bit of work with National Geographic, 'is equally adept at capturing human emotions and the beauty of nature' (Murphy, 1996)." And the children they shared the book with agreed. As one first grader commented, "The pictures were pretty . . . I like where she [the protagonist, Jeannie] lives, . . . [but] the kids at school were sure mean to her."

The meanness exists in the fact that the children at school tell Jeannie she's a "Lake Rat" and that her home by the lake is a "shanty town," but the pictures defy their words. The illustrations of Jeannie's home with its trailers and old cottages are done in soft watercolors, partially hidden by the wild reeds of the lake. The homes look snug in the background, and the beauty of the lake is at the fore, marked by a solitary loon afloat, the rings of his movement circling outward.

Emma and her partner quoted Jeannie's comparison of her home to those of the kids in town:

Sometimes, out running errands with my father, we drive past the big white houses

uptown. The yards there are clean and clipped. None of them have prickly black raspberry bushes sprawling over the backyard. None of them have old cars to play in, or stacks of cement blocks someone might use someday, and none of the kids have clothes passed down from two sets of cousins. All their clothes are brand-new clean, not clean from hundreds of washings, faded and soft like mine. Sometimes I feel bad about the clothes. But I wouldn't want to live in their houses. Not if I'd have to live so far from the lake. (n.p.)

The picture of the "big white houses" is taken from an aerial view, and the houses, including a small white church, look admirably clean and neat. But, Emma and her partner were quick to look on the scene through Jeannie's eyes, explaining:

This passage challenges stereotypes by presenting them as admirably sensible (the clothes, the concrete blocks) from Jeannie's point of view, complemented throughout the book by a large number of unquestionably positive images which some of Jeannie's acquaintances foolishly don't appreciate. The positive images reflect traditional Native American cultural ties to the pulse and variety of life in the natural world. (2/17/97)

Both Emma and her partner were impressed by the story within a story, the tale Jeannie's grandfather tells to transform a "Lake Rat" into the powerful Muskrat, who according to tradition "brought earth up from the bottom of the water, and put it on Turtle's back" (Savageau, 1996). In the story Jeannie later dreams that she is Muskrat, and after telling her grandfather the dream, she too dives to the lake bottom and brings up a ball of wet earth. The experience exemplifies who she is and

how she feels about her heritage: "So I don't worry anymore when kids call me a Lake Rat. I know who I am, and I know about the lake, that we're part of it, and it's part of us. Grampa let the mud dry out and put it in a leather pouch for me so I can keep it always." Of this scene, Emma wrote:

[Jeannie's] somewhat spontaneous ritual making as she dives out of the canoe to grab a handful of earth from the bottom of the lake (as did Muskrat) to restate and solidify her perspective on a problem is appropriate to her character. The skill of author and illustrator give believability to the moment, and the clump of hardened earth, which her grandfather puts in a pouch is extended to the reader in one of the final illustrations . . . in a gesture which summarizes a tangible connection between a traditional tale and contemporary life. (2/17/97)

Because the author and illustrator work in such synchronized movement, Jeannie's gesture, holding her pouch of earth out to the reader, also makes a tangible connection between authenticity and aesthetic heat. Indeed, Emma's closing to her handout demonstrates how the central theme of the story links to the need for authentic Native American literature:

The real treasure of this book is its authenticity and sense of reality that all children can relate to and learn from. There is a desperate shortage of contemporary work depicting Native Americans dealing with everyday problems. The bonus in this book is the message that the reader can take with them; that you need to be proud of who you are and respect who others are. (2/17/97)

Emma's selection demonstrated the successful partnership of author and

illustrator as they worked together to create their text. How different, then, was the book that Darcy and her partner analyzed. Instead of one text, it was originally two: poetry by Langston Hughes and a six panel collage by Romare Bearden that were joined together by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The title of this combination text was taken from the name of Bearden's collage—*The Block* (Hughes, 1995)—that the Museum holds in its collection, and the foreword was written by Bill Cosby.

When initially looking at the text and researching the author and illustrator, Darcy and her partner were impressed. It was only later, when they read a critical review that questioned the combination of the two texts, that they began to question it themselves. As Darcy later said,

Coming from my position, who am I to criticize this book? I don't know the Harlem Renaissance. I'm not Black. I'm 23 years old. I'm the farthest thing from an artist. It's bogus to criticize. Especially when someone like Bill Cosby writes the foreword. I think so much of him. I felt like my original opinion was more favorable towards the book. (6/6/98)

Still, Darcy and her partner were given license to alter their view by a critical review which they quoted at length:

"Since most children need books that teach lessons a bit more directly, it's hard to be sanguine about the ability of either of these [text or illustrations] to ignite the flames of curiosity in quite a way they seem to be intended to" (Goldberger, 1996). Although the book attempts to allow the reader to see Bearden's work in parts, Goldberger contin-

ues to explain, "the effect is not to elevate Bearden, but to trivialize him." Goldberger is angered by the format of the book, feeling Bearden's work with intense colors, rhythm of buildings and street life, "deserves to be seen as all of a piece, not as a set of images to be art and matched up with poems by Langston Hughes." His points are well stated. (3/3/97)

The layout of the book is a sequential display of the six panels of the original collage with sections taken out and highlighted for emphasis. For example, the first panel depicts a corner of the city block and a stylized apartment building done in blocks of gold and magenta. Looking out from one of the windows is a Cubist collage of African American boys, seemingly cut from a newspaper and off to the side another man sits staring down at his hands. This panel is matched with Hughes's poem entitled, "Projection." On the next page Bearden's sitting man is pulled out and placed in a smaller square surrounded totally by black space. The accompanying poem is "Late Last Night" and tells of a lover with a broken heart. In discussing this last poem, Darcy and her partner wrote:

Logically, when we see two pieces of information together in this way we assume they complement each other. We look to the images for meaning in the text, and similarly look to the text for the meaning of the imagery. . . . [But] in reality the image is pulled from a larger body of work, and does not necessarily have anything to do with the words. The poem becomes a guideline for the image, allowing no other interpretation to be obtained. (3/3/97)

This insight was made even clearer when they shared the poem with a seven-year-old child. After reading

through the text, she "pointed to the various people and explained their role. When she came to the man on the steps, she said, 'This man is sad because his girlfriend left him.'" Darcy and her partner continued: "Her first reaction . . . referred back to Hughes' poem. Not only did the poem influence her reaction to the picture, but the picture influenced the poem. The child felt the narrator was a man. [Yet] the poem, when read, gives no indication of who is breaking up with whom."

In response to the child's reaction, Darcy and her partner cited several other reviews that criticized the mismatch of Bearden's collage (which was never meant to be an illustration) and Hughes's poetry. For example, they discussed a review that appeared in *Publisher's Weekly* (1995) lauding Bearden's art work for "unmistakably captur[ing] the energy and pulsing rhythms of the street" but discrediting the poems which were "not always Hughes's best" (p. 60).

Although much influenced by the reviews they read, Darcy and her partner's criticism did not diminish the individual value of the two artists. In their handout on *The Block*, they had researched both Bearden and Hughes, and detailed their deep connections to city life in Harlem. They wrote, "Because Bearden was actively involved in the scenes he depicted, the authenticity of his work shines." As for Hughes they wrote, "His love for this spiritual home [in Harlem] is evident through his poems." Thus, their criticism was not directed toward the artists themselves, but toward the less effective combination of their work. In their final analysis

Darcy and her partner wrote, "When the two are placed together in a book, the artists become marginalized and their messages blurred."

Darcy's own message, however, was quite clear and in many ways represented brave analytic work. Throughout the year she and her partner had read, heard, and talked about arguments for the need for more work by parallel cultures. They knew from their reading of Bishop (1993) that both authenticity and aesthetic heat were necessary for good literature. As Bishop cautions, "In their eagerness to include multicultural literature in the curriculum, many well-intentioned professionals, finding a very limited selection of books available, become indiscriminate in their choices" (p. 47). *The Block* (Hughes, 1995) was a text where the authenticity in relation to artist and author and what they were painting and writing could not be questioned. Yet the questions arose in the combination of the two artists. Ultimately their work provided an effective case where the authenticity was in perfect alignment, but the aesthetic heat only lukewarm.

Hesitations and Hard Arguments in the Interviews

The discussion over the right to write continued throughout the second semester. The preservice teachers not only prepared their individual multicultural book talks, they also listened to the multiple presentations by their colleagues. In addition, they worked for several weeks in small groups to prepare literacy/social studies units. For example, Seiko, Lisa, and Clara teamed to

create a unit on the Harlem Renaissance that enabled them to become even more familiar with myriad multicultural texts and arguments about texts. The work of these assignments served to influence their understandings, which they expressed in the end-of-the-year interview. Among other queries Shelby asked two questions that focused directly on the right to write: (a) "In writing children's literature, do you think an author can authentically represent a culture of which s/he is not a part?" and (b) "Think back to how you perceived these issues at the beginning of the year. Do you think you've changed in your understandings since that time? If so, how?" The response to the first question, unlike queries about less controversial topics, were marked by both hesitations and hard arguments about the right to write, while the second question yielded a more definitive response. And it is to these interview questions and responses that we now turn.

Hesitations Over the Right to Write

Over the course of the three interviews, Shelby asked the preservice teachers several questions dealing with their background, their experience in the program, their understandings of literature and literacy, and their insights into the right to write. When asked about this, as opposed to other questions, their speech patterns abruptly altered and they shifted in their seats before speaking. Their speech was marked by constructions that indicated their ideas

were in flux: "Well," "I think," "But then again," and so on. They hesitated, presenting alternative arguments, reversing their stances in mid-sentence. The pattern was notable just in listening to the audiotapes, but when we transcribed our final interview questions on the right to write, the disrupted structure of their speech stood out. Rose (1998), however, reminded us that,

While fluid speech is usually considered advantageous in spontaneous human communication, it is, in fact, rare. Human speech . . . is punctuated with and interrupted by a wide variety of seemingly meaningless words (uh, um, well, like, you know), as well as false starts ("I said, uh . . . She said . . ."), restarts ("When did you . . . uh when did you go?"), [and] silent pauses ("I went there . . . yesterday.")

Still, in the course of three interviews of approximately an hour each in length, what Rose called "hesitation phenomena" were more than apparent.

Rose explained that some linguists have argued that speakers tend to pause when the concepts being discussed are more abstract than concrete, while others have worried about such claims because of the challenge of reliably "estimating and quantifying task difficulty." We, too, are concerned about these claims, wondering how we could assess the relative difficulty of our questions. Still, without trying to overstate our own claims, our counts of hesitations demonstrated the preservice teachers' tendency to stumble linguistically when dealing with more abstract questions. For example, Lisa approached the question of the right to write in this way:

Hmmm. [Long pause] I would say, "No" from the standpoint that they are not a part of the culture, so they do not— They're not authentically— They don't know the culture. They don't know— I mean, I guess if they were raised in, you know the customs, or religion, or just parts, *language* then they cannot— I mean, I guess I would say, "No, they can't write." If you're coming from that standpoint. If you're trying to be black and white about it. No, they can't represent the culture. But, I think though, that's not to say that they shouldn't write. (6/23/97)

Lisa's speech is marked by several of the categories of hesitation—she paused, holding the floor with long nonlexical utterances ("hmmm") as well as silence. She qualified her speech with the conditional, using "I would say. . . ." twice in lieu of a more direct statement. In addition, she used "If" twice to set up conditional stipulations for her argument. She also used mental state verbs of hesitancy repeating "I mean, I guess," demonstrating the difficulty of expression. Most important, she reversed her argument four times—beginning with "No" they can't, switching to "Yes" if authors "know the customs or religion," cutting back again to "No" with a definitive statement that "they can't represent the culture," and finally switchbacking to "Yes" using a linguistic contrary beginning with "but" to state "that's not to say that they shouldn't write." Moving back and forth between arguments brought Lisa to an analysis of what she as well as other preservice teachers termed the "black and white" of the argument. By moving rapidly between polar opposites, Lisa ultimately found herself in the gray of the discussion.

Looking closely at the talk of the preservice teachers discussing the right to write as well as their changes over the course of the year as they received more information—reading textbooks and trade books as well as participating in class discussions—the hesitations of all but one of the teachers were heavily clustered around the more abstract argument of authenticity. Only Spike had few hesitations, and his hesitations were more evenly distributed than centered on particular topics. Still, Spike spoke directly of the "gray" area where he felt the argument needed to be:

The way I see it, with politics there's a left and there's a right. Doesn't seem like there's a middle ground. With social issues and problems there's a black and there's a white side of things. I don't mean racially. It's either this way or that way. There's no middle ground. And the more I think about it, that's the way a lot of things seem to be. That's what you hear about in the media, and the news, and stuff. But when you really dissect a problem everything becomes gray and fuzzy. (6/16/97)

Similarly, the preservice teachers' talk was "gray and fuzzy": filled with pauses, "maybe's," repetitions, broken speech, and linguistic contraries that shifted direction (e.g., "but then again"). They even expressed dismay over the difficulty of the question. Luke exclaimed, "Man, this is tough." Darcy echoed his words: "That's a tough one." And Lisa ruminated, "This is a hard question for me too because I don't know. I feel like I should be trying to find a right answer in that 'What is better for the student?'" Five of the preservice teachers used the words "tough" and/or "hard" in charac-

terizing the question, and two reiterated this point at least twice. Sohne, for example, repeated, "It's tough. It's such a tough issue." Her repetition suggests the difficulty she had with the query.

In addition, long "hmmmm's" began their replies and later broke up their talk, splitting their arguments into alternate presentations. Emma, for example, talked at length about how if authors attempted to write outside their experiential base, they would run into trouble:

Well, there's a lot of underlying, you know— Hmmm. [long pause] Little— You know, little nuances in culture that I think are really hard to pick up unless they're bred in you. And I think *those* may not come through as clearly as if they were written by— some of the authors who have done really beautiful jobs with their cultures and with their languages. You know, obviously that's from being born and bred in it. So I think there are just some nuances that would be missed. But, it would be very hard unless you took them side by side with [a cross cultural] author to say, "Oh, this one has a little more authentic feel to it." (6/24/97)

Within a short segment Emma "hmmmed" and paused, and her speech had a vague air of indecision. She used "you know" twice, trying to convince Shelby of her point of view, but her argument was still in process. She used the word "hard" twice as well, first noting how "really hard" it would be to note the nuances of culture.

Still, the preservice teachers' hesitations over the difficulty of the topic seemed to disappear when Shelby asked whether their perceptions of the right to write had changed since the begin-

ning of the year. Indeed, the majority emphatically said, "Yes." Luke stated, "I wasn't even thinking about literature that was authentic. Coming into the class, I mean I had no idea. I wasn't even thinking, 'Oh, well, this person wasn't in the culture. . . . Why are they writing this?'" (6/9/97). Emma replied, "Oh, absolutely. I didn't think about it before. [Laughs] It didn't dawn on me. . . . So, it's just opened up a whole world for me in that regard" (6/24/97). For Crystal, that new world included television advertising and she laughed about how she was now constantly pointing out stereotypes to her boyfriend on TV: "It's so funny . . . and it's gotta be from your class just looking critically at things. And I do that about everything now. . . . I think I've grown a lot in that area" (6/16/97). Although they were clear about their change over time, the preservice teachers still hesitated over the hard issues associated with the right to write, issues we explore in the next section.

Hard Issues in the Right to Write

Although there were a number of hard issues raised in the interview discussions of the right to write, they seemed to cluster around three central topics: (a) the subtleties of culture, (b) censorship, and (c) the realities of the publishing industry. In addressing the first, there were a number of ways in which the preservice teachers talked about the subtleties of culture. Clara said, "It's just part of your makeup almost," while Varla suggested that "everybody's grown up differently." Luke's response to this question was quite typical of the teachers in general:

I think that there's too many like subtleties that— that even if you live in a culture for a cou— I mean, maybe you could write about a culture— Like if you're writing a children's literature story like as someone *looking on* a different culture. If you made that apparent. But I think that there's too many subtleties within a culture to pick up on anything. (6/9/97)

Luke called on his own personal experience living abroad in Germany. Though he spoke the language, he felt as if there were "subtle things, that I never would have picked up like emotional things, feeling things . . . because I've never been raised that way."

Since Luke had indicated that he had changed his mind over the course of the year on the right to write question, I asked him what he felt was the motivating factor. He responded:

Probably those multicultural book talks. And like interviewing different people that we did. We interviewed like African American people as opposed to Caucasian people and it was definitely very different responses. You know. And I don't think that— Like in *The Middle Passage* (Feelings, 1995) I don't think like— I think a white or Caucasian person could have done it, but I think there would have been things missing in it that you couldn't have— I don't know. I think it would be just really different. I don't think it would be authentic.

Although he did not mention it, Luke could have been influenced by the fact that he had seen *Feelings* receive a special citation from the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards at our local library. *Feelings* made an impassioned speech about the long journey he had undertaken in the creation of the text and related his own mother's reaction to the text once it was completed—

slowly turning the pages and rhythmically beating her fist against her heart. Darcy, who attended the same session, said that hearing him "made that much more of an impact" on her in terms of the power of the text.

But the power of a text was sometimes too subtle for the preservice teachers to understand. Crystal, for example, expressed some difficulty in her multicultural handout for *Sees Behind Trees* (Dorris, 1996), and she reiterated her confusion in her interview: "It was a little hard for us to understand and we thought maybe it had something to do with him being in that culture. There's things there that he's more in tuned to that we aren't. Things like visions and mystical kinds of things" (6/16/97). Still, she blamed her confusion on her own inexperience, rather than suggest that the author was at fault for not making his writing clearer to a more mainstream audience.

Perhaps because of her admiration for Dorris, in her interview Crystal said that she originally felt strongly that an author had to be of a parallel culture. But when working on another class assignment—developing a literacy/social studies unit on Native Americans—she and her team (including Darcy, Spike, and Varla) learned about an author that somewhat upended her thinking:

We pondered this quite a bit because we did our [unit] on Native Americans and a lot of it was written by non Native American people so we had to think well— So when we picked books, I think initially we asked, "Is it authentic because this person is white that wrote this book?" . . . And we kind of

thought like "No." They really— We didn't think that they were able to authentically represent that culture. But then we came across . . . Paul Goble (e.g., 1991) and Spike knew a lot about him. [Goble's] white— Correct? and . . . [Spike] said he was like an honorary member of the tribe so we kind of felt like his connection with the tribe and I'm sure he's had a lot— He's lived with the culture. He knows a lot about them so we felt like maybe, you know, maybe he could. But then again, he's criticized for that also, at the same time. So, I don't really know. (6/16/97)

Crystal's wavering was, in some ways, similar to those of Native American critics. Slapin and Seale's (1992) collection of critiques of Native American literature, which was a recommended textbook in our class, included reviews of three of Goble's books. On the positive side they said in one review that "as usual, Goble treats the material with great respect" (p. 161), and in another review they commented, "as always, Goble has honored the history of the People" (p. 162). However, in a critique of the third text, the reviewer cautioned, "The illustrations are lovely as usual, although I am always a little bothered that Goble's people never have real faces" (p. 163).

In the search for the real faces of Native American literature, Crystal's team had read much of the Slapin and Seale (1992) text as well as other reviews that convinced them that it was possible to write outside of one's culture if great respect were involved. In fact, in her interview Darcy specifically mentioned how helpful the text had been: "Through *Indian Eyes* definitely helped. . . . What it takes to be authentic and books that I normally never would

have assumed to have been offending or offensive to a group. Like it actually opened my eyes" (6/9/97).

Another factor that helped to convince the group of Goble's authenticity was the fact that he had spent much time with Native American people, and he was "adopted by the Sioux and Yakima tribes" (Silvey, 1995, p. 275). Thus, long-term immersion in a cultural group became critical as well. And a part of this immersion was the ability to have extensive interviews with insiders. As Darcy explained, "I think you definitely need to talk to the group, to members of the culture that you're representing 'cause after all it's up to them, it's about them, it *is* them."

The rights of the group members, however, had to be balanced with the rights of authors, for the preservice teachers worried that denying an author the opportunity to write outside his or her cultural experience bordered on censorship. Lisa raised the issue in her interview:

LISA: I'm not sure— But I don't think they should not write about it though. That's where I have a problem 'cause I don't think that people should *not* be able to write about things unless—

SHELBY: Why not?

LISA: 'Cause I think that that kind of goes against writing? [Laughs] Kind of goes against *freedom of speech*. [Laughs] Freedom— Yeah, I mean, everything in our society that we're all about and we represent. We need bad literature, and good literature, and we need all

these things to kind of— I don't know. To propel us forward in learning. I don't know. I think that you kind of need all the different parts to create a balance in literature. (6/23/97)

Although Lisa laughed as she explained her point of view, her argument was dead serious. Issues surrounding the right to write cannot be taken lightly; instead, as Lisa points out, they represent the society we live in as well as the ability to move forward in one's learning. She suggested that if certain authors are denied access to other cultures' stories, then as a society we cross the thin line into censorship.

Lisa was much influenced by the work she and her partner did with Farmer's (1996) *A Girl Named Disaster*, especially with the fact that the author had spent 17 years in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. For Lisa, the text had a particular draw. As an undergraduate, she had spent a semester in Kenya, living with families of the Samburu and Masai tribes. While in Africa Lisa became familiar with cultural traditions and beliefs that extended throughout many of the Southeastern countries in Africa. Because of her African experience, Lisa was enthusiastic about Farmer's text. Although her time in Africa was much shorter, Lisa felt a common link with Farmer as a European American woman motivated by an intense desire to learn more about African culture. Thus, Farmer's unique combination of dialect and mystical prose created a tale to which Lisa could well relate: "Her writing seemed au-

thentic, in ways. To me it did. And I guess it brings in the question of how long you have to live there to be a part of that culture to qualify as authentic. Or do you have to be born into that culture to be authentic and nothing else counts?" (6/23/97).

Lisa questioned how much of an experience an author must have in order to have a viable connection to and effectively write about a culture. Because Farmer is not African, should she be restricted in sharing her knowledge and experience regarding Shona culture? Lisa thought not. In fact, she felt that censoring Farmer's writing would go against the democratic values of our society and what, as she said, "propels us forward in learning."

Lisa's personal stance on the possible dangers of limiting the right to write was somewhat similar to that of another preservice teacher, Sohne. She, too, used her own personal experience, although hers involved tennis rather than tribes. Sohne was an accomplished tennis player. Prior to returning to the university she had been the recreation director of several established tennis resorts. When she answered interview questions, she often played off her life experience in tennis to help make her arguments. Thus, when asked about the right to write, she immediately began to compare the ownership of tennis to owning stories. She said that she had been watching a tennis game on television when a sports commentator said something that really startled her:

[A male commentator] on television the other day said, "A woman should *never*

commentate a man's tennis match." And I went, "What?! Wait— Wait a minute. *What?! I don't understand.*" He goes, "There's no way she could know how he feels on the tennis court. It's a *man's* situation out there." (6/9/97)

Sohne was incredulous, exclaiming "What?!" twice in response to the commentator's sexist remarks. She strongly believed that the discussion of tennis should not involve the issue of men versus women but simply focus on the game itself. She emphasized her disapproval regarding the comment that a woman should *never* have the right to comment, and equated this comment to saying "there's no way" someone not of the culture could understand the feelings of one who is an insider. In Sohne's view, it was not just an *insider's* situation; others should be free to comment. No one had ownership of the game, nor could anyone claim ownership to stories.

However, she continued to argue, authors did have to proclaim their relationship to the story: "To me it's really talking about ownership. . . . you have some prior understanding . . . and I think that when writers write stories they need to be honest. You know, 'This is where my experience is coming from.' And then write about it." Sohne believed that authors, "don't have to be *born* out of it!", but beyond the literal birthrights of story tellers, she felt that authors did have to make their experiences clear: "I think you really have to work it. You have to have research. You have to go talk to those people. You have to understand their culture. Un-

derstand their things? You know, not represent what you *think* they are. But get *from them* what it is."

Like Lisa, Sohne questioned how many years constituted adequate long term immersion and another preservice teacher, Spike, struggled with the same question: "You have to have touched that culture in one form or another and it can't be just a brief experience. It has to be a *long* ongoing thing. It can't be like, 'Oh, I lived with the Hmong for a year. Or six months. Or two years.' That doesn't quite count in my book" (6/16/97). Spike spoke with a confident tone and yet revealed hesitation in his words. He zigzagged back and forth naming inadequate amounts of time—a year, six months, two years. Still, although these times did not *count* in his book, he did not tabulate what might be an appropriate time frame for authenticity.

Thus, preservice teachers were puzzled by issues involved with long-term immersion and the right to write. They were ambiguous about the necessary time frame for experiencing a culture in order to warrant an author's ability to achieve authenticity. And this ambiguity not only brought up issues of censorship but considerations regarding the pre-existing shortage of multicultural literature.

During an interview with another preservice teacher, Shelby mentioned how some book reviewers tended to be more critical of trade books written by outsiders and provided recent examples from African American literature. Emma was quick to respond:

EMMA: That's kind of cutting off the nose to spite the face a bit, don't you think?

SHELBY: That's what I'm trying to figure out—

EMMA: Well, and not to mention the fact that there's such a shortage of multicultural literature and if you're gonna cut off who can write it, you're really limiting your— the number of books people—

SHELBY: But the argument that people would make . . . to what you just said, is, "But then we need to open up the publishing doors to more authors of color. We need to seek them out. We need to work harder at it *because* the publishing industry is *predominantly* monopolized by Anglo voices."

EMMA: I see. And so then what happens is it's just going— The— The Black writers just aren't going to get the opportunity because the Anglos are— I see. That's probably a legitimate argument that needs to be addressed at the publishing level. (6/24/98)

Emma began her "cutting off the nose to spite the face" argument by suggesting that limiting the already existing shortage would only reduce the possibilities of producing more multicultural literature. And in many ways she is right: There is an alarming shortage of multicultural literature. However, Shelby's counter-argument about the propensity of the mainstream publishing industry to publish Anglo authors rather than writers of color got her thinking in an alternate direction.

She responded, "I see" and repeated the phrase to mark her new insight, though she hedged her willingness to agree by suggesting that it was "*probably* a legitimate argument."

Other preservice teachers also realized the impact of supply and demand upon the freedom to write multicultural literature. Without any prompting from Shelby, Sohne ruminated: "It's all about money in the long run. You know, publishers? What they want. What they think will sell. By whom. So it all goes back to supply and demand and money" (6/9/97). Like Sohne, many of the preservice teachers looked beyond issues of the author's life experience or lack thereof to the realities of current day publishing. As Sohne later revealed, "I was stunned when I found out how few texts were by authors of color. I thought it had to be better than this."

Over time, the preservice teachers were learning to see a different kind of censorship, one that blocked authors of color from publication. Even though there were certainly no *laws* prohibiting the publication of work by authors of color, the *reality* made the limited publication opportunities clear. They were learning that censorship can be created through capitalism, and if the demand for authors of color went up, so too would the supply.

Despite the realities many teachers shied away from censoring outsiders themselves and often gave credit to authors who not only did research on cultures other than their own, but who were considerate of the insiders' experiences. As Sohne said: "[As an outsider] can I not be sympathetic? Empathetic?"

Can I not give you strength? Teach? You know? I don't know. I can't not say that I couldn't learn from someone that didn't have that experience." Although Sohne was fairly firm in her opinions, her use of questions combined with the quadruple negatives in her last sentence belied her claim and offered linguistic evidence of the continuing complexity of the argument.

Thus most preservice teachers struggled with the balance between experience and empathy, between censorship and publishing realities, between getting it right and the potential for getting it wrong. Many discussed the subtleties of culture, and some, like Luke, felt it was just too difficult to write cross-cultural literature. Lisa raised the issue of freedom of speech and questioned what constituted authenticity in an author. Spike emphasized the need for long-term immersion but provided no specific time frame from which to gauge authenticity. Sohne volleyed back and forth between tennis and literature and ultimately addressed the issue of supply and demand and how this directly impacts censorship of multicultural literature. Indeed, Sohne, who strongly believed in a woman's ability to comment on a man's tennis game, was hesitant to say that an outsider couldn't write an insider's story. When I asked her whether she'd changed in her opinion of the issues, she responded, "I don't think so. I think that it's— You know, maybe I've thought about them deeper. Given 'em more validity" (6/9/97). Similarly, Varla said, "I think I've always pretty much had the same ideas . . . , [but it's] good

to get another point of view" (6/16/97).

Varla's overall opinion echoed Lisa's ideas about freedom of speech: "I mean, I understand the political issues and I don't think they're not justified. I think they completely are. At the same time, I think you sort of lose something if you say, 'You're not a member of this group. You can't have anything to do with it.'" Still, as she reflected on her own Jewish heritage as well as her experiences with people of other religions, colors, and cultures, she talked about how she *had* changed over the course of the year. She said that writing outside one's culture had potential as an "intellectual idea," but then she provided her own caveat: "And I recognized that, you know, no matter what your intellectual opinion is, there are feelings involved here. And people. It's really important to them considering their background and how they've been treated. And so that's a really big issue."

The really big issues that the preservice teachers explored in our interview conversations suggest the complexity of the argument. Spike explained that "when you really dissect a problem everything becomes gray and fuzzy," and then he switched to a different metaphor: "You're like at the top of the fence. You're not in your neighbor's yard and you're not in your yard. You know? You see both sides. And you wonder how they can come together. How they can see each other's side. And that's the way I think things are" (6/9/97). Traditionally, the phrase "on the fence" means undecided, but that is not where this preservice teacher

was standing. Instead, he advocated a higher position that allowed him to get on top of the issues and see both sides. Rather than leap into his neighbor's yard or back into his own, his view from the top allowed him to create a blended opinion.

Shelby asked him to connect the right to write question with the teaching of the class, and wondered whether he thought the class allowed him to come to his own conclusions on the issues:

SHELBY: When you think across the whole Block [of Literacy/ Social Studies classes], especially when you think of issues of diversity or authenticity in [my class on] children's literature— Do you think that the topic was presented to you either from me or from other people with a focus on the gray? Or do you think we had an agenda that was just black or white? [Shifting to an emphatic tone.] "We want you to believe X!" [Returning to her normal speaking voice.] How do you think we fit in that gray area?

SPIKE: I think it's gray and fuzzy. I think you left it up for us to decide what was okay.

SHELBY: And do you think just as far as a sort of pedagogical or teaching principal, if I wanted to introduce something difficult for people to think about— Do you think it's better to have done what you're saying that I did— to stay within the gray. Or do you think it would be better for me to say, "This is

how it is. This is what you should do."

SPIKE: No. It's better to stay within the gray. That way people can formulate their own opinions. If you tell them it's "this way," they're automatically gonna take the other side. . . . So I think it's best to let people formulate their own opinions. (6/9/97)

In thinking about Spike's quote, Darcy later told Shelby that she agreed,

I'm glad you didn't give me your opinion because then I would've been, "You're right" and it would've been my opinion. I would rather you take an issue and then develop it, show me some examples, and then leave it as food for thought. Then later, show me another issue using other examples. That way I could digest all of the information and then sort out what I felt was important, and what did and didn't work. (7/28/98)

Sohne, however, said that she wanted to hear Shelby's opinions voiced more strongly: "You know, for me, I would have rather heard your agenda. That's just me. I wanta feel it inside of you completely, 'cause that's where I get powered up. So, I wish I could have heard more" (6/9/97). She spoke of a professor she had had in geology who always voiced his opinion, and she admired his straightforward stance. Still, in reflecting on Shelby's teaching she said,

I felt you were very balanced and gave us very much of an opportunity to make our own opinions. But I think I still feel that also you gave us— You opened up the door to understanding what literature is not represented. And to be careful. Some is not

authentic at all! And be critical of the books that you're reading. Don't just read them and stick with the same old easy ones. So I think you challenged us, and I think that I felt that.

Thus, the question of the right to write circles back and links to questions of the right to teach, deciding when to push forward with straightforward opinions and when to hold back and let students work it out for themselves. The hard issues with which the preservice teachers tangled—the subtleties of culture, censorship, and the realities of publishing—made them hesitate, pause, and ponder in their interview responses as well as reflect on the teaching and learning environment in which they'd shifted their response. Their written assignments, especially the multicultural book handouts, as well as all of the reading they had done for class, particularly the Harris (1993a) textbook, made a strong impact on their own stance, and where they stood in the initial month of the class was not their position almost a year later. They had moved from their early, relatively easy answers to the difficulty of discussing hard issues. And even though the words sometimes caught in their throats, their final expressions revealed the complexity rather than the simplicity of ideas.

Discussion

In the closing of the review section of their multicultural handout, Clara and her partner quoted at length from Jacqueline Woodson (1995b) as she discussed her motivation as a writer:

In *I hadn't meant to tell you this*, Marie and Lena, two motherless twelve-year-old girls—one black, one white; one rich, the other poor—find a common ground across lines of color and class and ignore the world beyond this ground. What they learn from each other will be passed on somehow; maybe readers will challenge their own and their parents' racism and classism. Maybe they'll find new ways of speaking, of telling their stories. Maybe marginal people will realize they don't have to be silent, that everyone has a story to tell. My plan is to keep writing books that transcend the lines. . . . The rest of my life is committed to changing the way the world thinks, one reader at a time. (p. 711)

Changing the way the world thinks, one preservice teacher at a time, is a complex undertaking, and certainly full of maybes. The issues range from the right to write, with its emphasis on authenticity and aesthetic heat, to issues of the right to teach, questioning the efficacy of black/white statements over the need to value multiple views of the argument. Still, in this final discussion, we would like to address two central issues that our conversations with preservice teachers, our reading of literature, and our understanding of academic debates have highlighted: the need for engaged dialogue in teaching and the necessity of both head and heart in literature.

When thinking about the first issue, it is important to lean on a concept that Edmiston (1998) calls "swimming in discourses. . . that our discourses are as integral to our opinions and interactions as the water is to the fish" (p. 62). Although he is talking about work in drama—where students

are given opportunities to try on discourses quite different from their own—there are parallels to the kinds of discourses that occurred in the assignments and discussions of the preservice teachers in this study. Indeed, the stance that Edmiston advocates is one that we embrace:

It is part of a teacher's responsibility to challenge discourses respectfully—to make them more dialogic. We do so when we debate topics or discuss books—we raise questions, draw attention to inconsistencies, and highlight implications. James Banks (1993) argues that it is the teacher's responsibility to question discourses that promote inequitable views—to rework mainstream knowledge so that it becomes "transformative." . . . Yet in questioning positions we need to remain respectful and not tell students that their initial views are wrong. We also need to remain open to having our own discourses unsettled by students' views. (p. 63)

In our year-long dialogue on the right to write, it was important to respectfully challenge the current canonical discourse that allows *de facto* rather than *de jure* censorship to exist. And for the preservice teachers, who were young in their knowledge of issues in multicultural children's literature, this distinction was critical. There are no laws on the books that say that authors of color cannot publish with mainstream publishers. Nor could there be. Still, the fact of the matter is that few authors of color are allowed in. Though there have been times of hope and upward swings, the downward shift seems to be sadly inevitable. As Myers (1986) writes: "the quality of the books written by blacks in the 70's was so outstanding that I actually thought we would revo-

lutionize the industry, bring to it a quality and dimension that would raise the standard for all children's books. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong" (cited in Harris, 1996, p. 108). And as Harris explains, "The limited number of books published in the early 1980s was not enough to sustain the 'revolutionary' intentions of Myers . . . and others" (p. 108).

Yet how is it possible to persuade preservice teachers to enter into dialogue with authors, illustrators, and scholars of multicultural children's literature? How can they be encouraged to swim in the multiple discourses that surround questions of the right to write? And how will this experience meet Edmiston's (1998) call to rework mainstream knowledge so that it becomes transformative? The answers, though limited, seem to lie in the kinds of readings assigned to preservice teachers and the kinds of activities in which they participate.

In terms of reading, Shelby selected academic textbooks and articles (e.g., Harris, 1993; Takaki, 1993) as well as multicultural children's literature (e.g., Curtis, 1995; Dorris, 1994) to emphasize cultural diversity. According to Brunner (1994) academic texts define problems and state solutions while literature works to illuminate possibilities (p. 7). For example, reading about Mexican Americans in their textbooks (e.g., Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993) offers a foundation for understanding, but analyzing Soto's (1990) stories of Mexican American urban children encourages preservice teachers to bring the very human ideas to life.

Participation in Shelby's class occurred both in and out of class. In class she gave lectures on the current state of multicultural literature, building off their textbook and tradebook reading to provide statistics, examples, and counter examples. In addition, the preservice teachers engaged in activities and small group work to discuss the ideas. Outside class, particularly through assignments like researching texts for their multicultural book talks, the preservice teachers discovered for themselves how the statistics and examples discussed in class played out in the real world.

For example, Emma knew from class that of the books published *about* Native Americans, few were written *by* Native Americans. She also knew that books that portrayed Native Americans in modern times were rare, but only when she and her partner set out to find such a story, finally discovering *Muskrat Will Be Swimming* (Savageau, 1996), did the statistics become a reality. The preservice teachers knew from class that texts by authors of color were rarely published by major publishers. But they understood the point more emphatically when Emma, Crystal, Sohne, and Varla discovered that from their three Native American books, only *Sees Behind Trees* was offered by a major publisher, most likely because the author was Michael Dorris (1996) who was well established in the field. Both Luke and Clara knew from their reading that their selected books dealt with the harsh realities of racism, classism, and sexual abuse, realities that classroom teachers often avoid, but the point was driven home when their

requests to read their stories to local elementary classes were either refused or much curtailed. Finally, what of the reactions of children to these books? When Luke read *The Middle Passage* (Feelings, 1995) to a 13-year-old *outside* school, she reminded him of the necessity of such literature: "People need to know what happened to prevent it from happening again." And when Clara read passages on racism rather than sexual abuse from Woodson's (1994) *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, the children responded with serious insights. For Luke and Clara the children's questions and comments convinced them of the absolute need for such texts.

But what other kinds of assignments could Shelby have given that would have made the points even clearer? What kinds of topics for discussion could she have raised to up the ante on the conversation? What could she have said and done to convince the preservice teachers that, following the advice of a child, they needed to know what was happening to prevent it from happening again?

Perhaps she could have introduced the idea of a different kind of *de facto* censorship, one that would limit outsider voices, at least for a period of time. Lisa expressed this notion best, suggesting that "Perhaps censoring an outsider's ability to write about a particular ethnic group of which they are not a member needs to occur to balance the already unbalanced world of children's literature. It could equalize multicultural authors within an industry dominated by white authors" (7/30/98). While the

idea seems a dangerous choice, it has deep connections to the choices that teachers make every day. What books to teach? How to teach them? What are the messages—subtle or stereotypical, radiant or routine—that are delivered in the stories read? All teachers select texts within frames of deeply-held beliefs, and they must make these choices within their community contexts. Whether the conversation is about censorship or choice, it could serve as a wake-up call to preservice teachers, calling on them to consider the impact of their own selections on the children they will teach. As Marshall (1998) stated, "ironically, the things that we are most interested in changing are the things that are most complicated and conflicted and unresolved in students' minds, and thus the things that they most need to talk openly about" (pp. 4-5).

The kind of open talk we are advocating brings us to the critical second issue that our study highlights—the need for both head and heart in literature. As Darcy reflected on her own growth and change in the two years since this project began, she wrote,

Several issues arise for me when thinking about authentic literature. I feel like experience is key. Someone has to live what they are writing about if they intend to teach others. How my mom made pancakes, eating dinner together around the table, growing up with an older sister and younger brother, being a white female in a predominantly white middle class community, having parents that are still married. All of these experiences I'm an expert on because I've lived them. (6/15/98)

Darcy's argument is more than a little

reminiscent of a recent article by Jacqueline Woodson (1998a) who said that to tell her story one would have to be a part of the "tears and the laughter and the language in [her] grandmother's house, hav[ing] first sat down at the table with us and dipped the bread of their own experiences into our stew" (p.38).

While Darcy was emphatic that "just as with everything else, you have to KNOW your subject," she and her colleagues did not lose the dual focus on the aesthetic heat of the piece. Rather than see these two things as opposites, as one or the other, the preservice teachers learned that heat often rises in the authenticity, or what they later came to see as the subtle nuances of culture. Still, they grew in their understanding that such heat did not *automatically* come with authenticity. Otherwise, how could Darcy and her partner have felt comfortable questioning a book of such perfect alignment as *The Block* (Hughes, 1995)? Nor was there an implication that heat *had* to come in chemical combination with an author of a parallel culture, for otherwise how could Spike have sustained his admiration for *Muniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990) or Lisa for *A Girl Named Disaster* (Farmer, 1996)?

However, in class Shelby took a strong stand on how often combustion occurred when the light of authenticity and heat of aesthetic endeavor combined. The assigned trade books and textbooks, her class lectures and handouts, and certainly the class assignments served as a constant reminder to the preservice teachers to look carefully

and critically at the books they planned to teach. Whose point of view was represented? Whose feelings might be celebrated or exploited? She reiterated powerful quotes about the potential for misrepresentation:

From the standpoint of multicultural education, authenticity of content and images in children's literature is essential because inauthentic representation subverts the very cultural awareness and understanding that such literature can build. Literary license cannot be invoked as justification for the misrepresentation of other cultures, not even in works of fiction. Makers of the literature have a social responsibility to portray cultural groups authentically; anything less is ignorance at best, or racism, at worst. (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993, pp. 212-213)

In short, Shelby tried to give her students room to do their own thinking, but she also held them accountable to tough counter arguments. She was inspired by Elbow's (1986) concept of embracing contraries, knowing that while "there cannot be only *one* right way to learn and teach . . . the issue cannot also be hopelessly relative: there must be *principles* that we must satisfy to produce good learning and teaching—however diverse the ways in which people satisfy them" (p. x). Here, the principles we stand by are backed by numbers (the shocking statistics that continue to prevail; see Barrera & Garza de Cortes, 1997; Reese & Caldwell-Wood, 1997; Yamate, 1997) as well as by the need for authors to work not only from intellect, but from heart. For as Varla reminds us, writing outside one's culture has potential as an "intellectual idea . . . but no matter what your

intellectual opinion is, there are feelings involved here and people."

Indeed, perhaps the most important people to consider are those that have been largely invisible in this piece—the children these preservice teachers will eventually teach. Will these children be given opportunities to join in the debate, see themselves pictured, contest the slanders, celebrate the accuracies, look closely at the language, analyze the art, and thus argue the aesthetic and authentic aspects of literature? The language patterns of hesitations in the preservice teachers' speech attest to their complex thinking over the right to write. In addition, their definitive statements of change seem to indicate that their classes will be places where children can learn to be critical of the books they're reading. Still, there is not yet evidence to demonstrate if and how that change will hold when the preservice teachers have their own classrooms. The best hope is that they will continue to be critical of the books they select, yet they could easily revert to earlier thinking and forge ahead with the canon as it stands. As Marshall (1998) argues, "Our measures are far too weak to register any but the most frail verbal shifts in attitudes" (p. 3).

Still, however fragile or changeable these attitudes are, here we have provided a written portrait of the year-long journey the preservice teachers, including Darcy and Lisa, took together. In class, Shelby emphasized a critical stand that encouraged preservice teachers to look closely at literature and ask substantive questions about authenticity and aesthetic heat. If anything,

here we have tried to do the same, weaving among arguments, presenting evidence and then a counter example. Darcy, in fact, stressed the necessity of presenting our material in this way to allow the reader to feel some of the back and forth motion that the preservice teachers themselves felt throughout the year.

In stressing reflection and criticism and the ebb and flow in the swim of discourses (Edmiston, 1998), we have worked to create an atmosphere of inquiry into issues, asking you, the reader, to question, to challenge, to look underneath the idealistic and charming patina of some children's literature to the realistic interior lives of peoples who have not been well represented. We have asked you to listen hard to the publishing statistics (Barrera & Garza

de Cortes, 1997; Reese & Caldwell-Wood, 1997; Yamate, 1997) and the statements made and questions raised by young teachers, in the hopes that you too will hesitate, pause, and ponder the way in which you think about the right to write. In short, we have asked you to build a new boat while standing in the old (Cochran-Smith, 1995), hoping you will feel some of the awkwardness and certainly the necessity of change in the rising waters and shifting conditions of children, teachers, and books in America today. Thus, this piece, a tale of multicultural literature, Maniacs, and Middle Passages, shows some of the difficulties of such a journey, especially when the issues are not simply intellectual ideas but passages with real people and emotions on board.

Author Note

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APPENDIX: RIGHT TO WRITE INTERVIEW ANALYTIC CATEGORIES AND CODING EXAMPLE

- 1 Hesitations
 - 1.1 Repetition/broken speech
 - 1.2 Mental state verbs of hesitancy
 - 1.3 Long pause
 - 1.4 Linguistic markers
- 2 Arguments
 - 2.1 Separation of mind/body, feeling/emotion
 - 2.2 Idealism/realism
 - 2.3 Authenticity & aesthetic heat
 - 2.4 Subtleties
 - 2.5 Publishing realities
- 3 Using evidence
 - 3.1 Critical reviews
 - 3.2 Long term immersion in the culture
 - 3.3 Research on culture/children
 - 3.4 Interviews with insiders
 - 3.5 Class discussion, lectures, textbook, assignments
 - 3.6 Personal experience/point of view
- 4 Change
 - 4.1 Mental state
 - 4.2 Literary references to youth/childhood
 - 4.3 Still more to learn
- 5 Focus on Instruction and Curriculum
 - 5.1 Impact on children
 - 5.2 Creating a balanced curriculum with multicultural literature
 - 5.3 Fear of making a mistake in curriculum & instruction

George Hillocks, Jr.
University of Chicago

Rosalind Horowitz
University of Texas at San Antonio

Russell Hunt
St. Thomas University, Canada

Dale Jacobs
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Elizabeth Kahn
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Angela Terpstra
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William Vande Kopple
Calvin College

Geoff Williams
University of Sydney, Australia

Shelby Wolf
University of Colorado at Boulder

1999 Promising Researcher Winners Named

Dr. Nell K. Duke, Michigan State University; Dr. Su-Yueh Wu, University of Georgia; and Dr. Chandra Adkins, University of Georgia, have been named the 1999 NCTE Promising Researchers, an award for articles based on dissertation, thesis, or initial independent study after the dissertation. In commemoration of Bernard O'Donnell, the Promising Researcher Awards are sponsored by the NCTE Standing Committee on Research. Duke's research is entitled "3.6 Minutes Per Day: The Scarcity of Informational Texts in First Grade." Wu's research is entitled "The Influence of Collectivism and Individualism on Argumentative Writing by Chinese and North Americans." Adkins' research is entitled "Challenging the Pluralism of Our Past: Presentism and the Selective Tradition in Historical Fiction for Young People."

1999 Grants Funded by NCTE Research Foundation

The NCTE Research Foundation received 63 research proposals requesting funding for the 1999-2000 academic year. Twenty-one of those proposals were funded. Six proposals were selected from the Teacher Researcher category and fifteen from the Regular Grant in Aid category.

Teacher Researcher Grants: Cathleen Banister-Marx, Mary Styslinger, Kathleen Shannon, Elizabeth Ackerman, Beth Yeager, and Kellie Abbott.

Grants in Aid: Steve Fishman, Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, Jeane Copenhaver, Elizabeth Spalding, Teresa Redd, Yetta Goodman, Pamela Takayoshi, Lara Apol/Kara Lycke, Margaret Finders/Jonathan Bush, Patricia Enciso, Zhihui Fang, Christine Pappas/Maria Varelas, Prisca Martens, Jamal Cooks, and Carol Lee.

Memberships Available in the NCTE Committee on Public Doublespeak

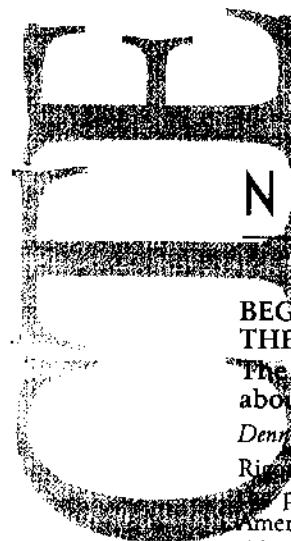
A limited number of memberships in the newly reconstituted Committee on Public Doublespeak will be available to interested members of the Council. Major functions of the committee will be to create a series of concrete classroom exercises (lesson plans, discussion outlines) calculated to focus student attention on particular uses of language that the committee is prepared to call irresponsible; and alert the profession generally to the forces that in the committee's judgment are misusing the language; government and its military personnel, industry and its advertisers, educators, you and me.

If you would like to be considered for membership in this group, send a one-page letter by October 10, 1999, explaining your specific interest in the committee, relevant background, and your present professional work to: Administrative Assistant to the Secondary Associate Executive Director, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096.

Memberships Available in the NCTE Committee on Instructional Technology

A limited number of memberships in the newly reconstituted Committee on Instructional Technology will be available to interested members of the Council. Major functions of the committee will be to study emerging technologies and their integration into English and language arts curricula and teacher education programs; to identify the effects of such technologies on teachers, students, and educational settings, with attention to minority, disabled, and disadvantaged students; to explore means of disseminating information about such technologies to the NCTE membership; to serve as liaison between NCTE and other groups interested in computer-based education in English and language arts; to maintain liaison with the NCTE Commission on Media and other Council groups concerned with instructional technology.

If you would like to be considered for membership in this group, send a one-page letter by October 10, 1999, explaining your specific interest in the committee, relevant background, and your present professional work to: Administrative Assistant to the Secondary Associate Executive Director, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096.



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