ONE WRITER'S CONSTRUCTION OF TEXT AND SELF: THE ROLE OF VOICE

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Language is crucial in constructing one's identity, value orientations, and material practices in the world. We use language to express power, solidarity, and resistance (e.g., Brown & Gilman, 1960; Gee, 1990; Sola & Bennett, 1985). We seldom create this language anew, however. Rather, we use the language of other individuals and groups with whom we wish to be affiliated, have power over, or resist. With respect to solidarity, much of the sociolinguistic work on regional dialects and vernaculars of various sorts has shown that the cohesion of social groups is accomplished largely through shared forms of discourse. With respect to resistance and power, Labov (1982) and others have shown that the language of African-American and Puerto Rican adolescents in inner-city American schools have institutionalized resistance to the norms, the ideologies, and the practices of school systems through particular forms of language use. This resistance seems to be rooted in a cultural and political conflict between the vernacular speakers and the school authorities, and the linguistic behavior of peer group members is a reflection and a symbol of this conflict.

Inherent in the notion of competing ways of using language is the fact that language is never neutral (Bakhtin, 1981; Volosinov, 1973). Language always embodies ideologies, thus "[imposing] point[s] of view not only about the world to which it refers but toward the use of mind in respect of this world" (Bruner, 1986, p. 121). Bakhtin has referred to these ideologies as "voices," arguing that the content and style of any linguistic utterance constitutes a "voice" or a social/political stance toward both the language used and the real-world referents of the language. He has gone on to assert that we all borrow and transform others' voices in order to construct our own.

Based on this notion of voice, recent theorists of intertextuality have also argued that all speakers and writers borrow and adapt the language of others in the process of constructing their own texts (e.g., Bloome, 1989; Kamberelis, 1986; Lemke, 1988). Thus, all texts are imbued with structural features, ideological perspectives, power relations, and social alignments that index or react to those same features in previous texts with which the speaker or writer is familiar. Additionally, all writers and all texts anticipate responses from future writers and future texts. From this perspective,

any given communicative exchange is the product of reciprocal relationships among speakers and listeners, readers and writers. It is this reciprocity that regulates and orders the communication, structuring otherwise uncoordinated, solipsistic monologues.

Given such a view of "lived" discourse, no text is *ever* simply the product of a single speaker or writer. All texts show traces of past discourses, juxtaposed and interwoven in mutually affirming or contentious ways. Texts are therefore sites for affiliation and struggle. As such, they are sites for the linguistic, social, and cultural development of individuals. They are also sites for social and cultural change. Since language is shot through and through with social and cultural meanings, as individual language users manipulate the linguistic code, they likewise challenge and transform those meanings.

In this paper, we present an argument for viewing the development of voice in children's writing as an intertextual, social, and political process, and we illustrate this argument through an analysis of the interplay of voices within the text of one child. More specifically, we argue that children's texts reflect and refract many voices common to the discourse communities in which they participate, as well as the children's own imaginative resources for transforming and integrating the "ways with words" characteristic of those discourse communities. Thus, studying the development of voice in children's texts provides insights not only into children's abilities to construct textual meaning and structure, but also into how writers *construct themselves in the process of constructing their texts* (Kamberelis, 1986; McGinley & Kamberelis, 1992). Such insights have important implications for language arts instruction in an ever growing multicultural society.

RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Perspectives on Voice

Many theories of voice have equated voice with rhetorical purposes or categories. In Britton's scheme, for example, three primary types of voice were posited: expressive, transactional, and poetic (Britton, Burgess, McLeod, Martin, & Rosen, 1975). From Britton's perspective, voice is the product of the intentional activity of an individual consciousness. Moreover, voice ultimately resides in texts which, on their own, accomplish particular rhetorical functions. Such a view renders voice relatively devoid of social, cultural, or political influence, negotiation, or struggle.

Within much of traditional literary theory, as well as within the writing process movement, voice has been construed as "the imprint of [the self] in [the] writing. It is that part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process" (Graves, 1983, p. 227). From this point of view, voice is construed as somehow inherent in the individual, and finding one's singular voice is seen as the fundamental task of the writer. Voice is not considered to be constitutive of social or cultural experiences or political positionings; nor is the intermingling of various voices within texts generally encouraged, unless explicitly signalled in some way.

In contrast to these widely acknowledged perspectives, Bakhtin (1981, 1984)

developed quite another model of voice that simultaneously involves multiple dimensions. For Bakhtin, voice is a packet of discourse replete with single or multiple ideologies. It is the verbal-ideological perspective(s) expressed within a particular utterance. Voice "is the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre and overtones" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 434). The speaking consciousness referred to here always belongs both to a speech community and to an individual speaker. Importantly, the semantic intention of any voice (or verbal-ideological perspective) is always transformed in some way each time it is used by a new speaker or writer, thus becoming "double-voiced." Finally, since texts are usually composed of multiple utterances, they usually embody multiple voices or ideological perspectives, which enter into various relationships of support, indifference, or competition.

Based on his analyses of discourse among the characters, narrators, and authors in novels, Bakhtin argued that even the expert novelist's *voice* is never unitary, except in its control and exploration of voices that are borrowed from a variety of discursive communities and allowed to intermingle in the novel. Thus, Bakhtin's notion of an individual author is not at all that of an inherent subjectivity but a complex dialectical construction that involves both participation in a variety of discourse communities and the active orchestration of a symphony of voices and social languages.

In relation to more everyday speech and writing, Bakhtin (1986) and Volosinov (1973) emphasized that among the concrete forces that shape individual language users, no force is stronger than the talk that they experience over time in the primary socialization settings of the family, the community, and the school. Indeed, the talk that people experience—their own talk as well as the talk of others—stays with them and fashions them through time. Thus, the utterances of individual people always contain traces of the utterances experienced by those people in the past, as they have interacted with others. These traces breathe life into each new utterance, indexing past experiential histories, social interactions, and ideological perspectives. As individuals experience the language of others through social interaction, they collect words, phrases, styles, and structures and integrate them, forming a new synthetic object which we might call their individuality as language users and social beings. Individuals become laminates of discourse practices, if you will, who are only partially responsible for their own uniqueness. This is so because the process of an individual's formation in discourse practices is psychological-social-cultural-historical in nature. This process occurs within and between individual consciousnesses and across real time and space. It transforms social and cultural experiences, particularly conversational experiences, into traces which live on in individual people, contributing to their being and speaking forth whenever the individuals talk or write.

We find this last theoretical perspective on the notion of voice to be the most intuitively appealing, as well as the most scientifically plausible. From this perspective, voice is construed as intertextual, social, and political. In light of this construal, it becomes a primary developmental task for children to take the raw materials of voice around them and to use these materials in fashioning their own quasi-personal voices. We call these voices quasi-personal because they always remain somewhat polyphonic, reflecting in various ways the many speech communities to which children belong, the social languages of which they are aware, and their political alignments

with these communities and social languages. Moreover, since individual children's voices are constructed in the interaction between language users and the many discourse communities and social languages in which they participate, these voices continue to change as long as the individuals continue to engage in multifarious forms of social and cultural exchange. And as children's voices change, so do their ways of viewing the world, along with their personal and social identities.

In order for an understanding of voice as an intertextual, social, and political process to be useful for research, we need a way to apply the construct of voice to actual texts. In the following section, a partial typology of voice derived from the work of Bakhtin (1981, 1984) and Volosinov (1973) is presented that is helpful in understanding how speakers and writers struggle to create voices of their own, thus actualizing the potential to use particular utterances in artfully double-voiced ways. Under such use, the utterance simultaneously reflects its own social, cultural, and political history and the individual's own ideological intentions.

A Typology of Voice Appropriation and Transformation

Bakhtin (1981, 1984) insisted that virtually all utterances are polyphonic or double-voiced because they result from borrowing another's words marked by another's voice and superimposing on them some new or different meaning(s) or intention(s). Although there are many ways in which another's voice may be appropriated and transformed, Bakhtin emphasized five ways that are particularly relevant to this study: direct quotation, imitation, stylization, parody, and hidden polemic. Each of these forms of voice appropriation and transformation is defined and discussed below.

Direct quotation. This form of re-envoicement of the discourse of others is relatively straightforward. The speaker or writer directly appropriates and explicitly marks someone else's discourse. For example, an individual might mark the discourse of others with dialogue carriers such as John said, "X," or with other more or less explicit cues. Academic papers are filled with direct quotations, which are usually employed because a speaker or writer believes them to be authoritative and thus indispensable to his or her own discourse intentions. Many of the children in our study utilized quotation as a form of voice appropriation. Quoting her mother, one child summed up her reactions to an auto accident she and her family had been in as follows: "My mom said that we all were very lucky that we didn't get hurt and that the car did not tip over and that we did not die."

Imitation. Imitation is the unselfconscious use of someone else's words, syntax, discourse style, and so forth. In this usage, the language user takes the adopted material seriously and makes it his or her own, thereby abolishing the distance between the self's and another's discourse. Thus, imitation represents the complete merging of two voices, that of the borrower and that of the source from which the voice is borrowed. Regional dialects, as well as fraternity or sorority speech, are good examples of this type of voice adoption. Members of such groups take on the ways of speaking common to the collective as if those ways were natural or normal in larger social settings. Imitating the ideological perspective of her family, one child in our study embedded the following utterance in one of her texts: "So love who you are,

don't hate yourself, and thank God for making you a person. It doesn't matter if you're White or Black, just know who you are." From our interactions with this child throughout the year, it was clear that she had wholeheartedly adopted this verbal-ideological perspective.

Stylization. Unlike imitation which blurs, even abolishes, the distance between self and other, stylization maintains an objective stance towards the other's discourse by maintaining the other as the condition of its use. In other words, stylization presupposes another's style, albeit not explicitly. The speaker or writer appropriates the utterance of another to express the same point of view or create the same effect as the other might have.

Children's speech is often filled with stylized utterances. Children try on the language of adults much like they try on their parents' too large shoes and clothes. The child's ownership of such language, shoes, or clothes remains tentative as he or she inhabits an "as if" mode of being. Indeed, this "as if" mode often becomes a more genuinely "lived" mode over time. The following utterance is an example of stylization from our own data: "Those white people was too lazy and they wanted to take the slaves from their home in Africa." This quasi-personal utterance is a paraphrase of a statement made by a prominent African-American academic who visited the children's classroom to talk about the history of the African-American people. It contains both the semantic intention of the original source and the more personal intention of the child author.

Parody. Another kind of double-voiced discourse is parody. Parody involves the presence of two different and opposing intentions or ideologies within a single utterance. Bakhtin's description of the parodistic utterance is especially succinct and clear. "The second voice, once having made its home in the other's discourse, clashes hostilely with its primordial host and forces him [sic] to serve directly opposing aims. Discourse becomes an arena of battle between two voices" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 193).

Parody is the staple of stand-up comedy. The stand-up comic appropriates verbatim the words of others, and through intonation and non-verbal cues transforms those words so that their semantic value is the opposite of what was originally intended. The comedic effect is accomplished because the audience recognizes the original meaning, the new meaning, and the difference between the two.

A few instances of parody were found in our own data. In an essay on slavery, for example, one child wrote: "The slave owners gave the slaves some of their old clothes so that the slaves could be warm." Although on the surface this utterance renders the slave owners' practice almost benevolent, in the context of the entire essay, which marshalled abundant historical evidence about the atrocities of slavery, any sense that such a practice was benevolent is clearly being parodied. The word "old" is a pivotal term in the parodistic act. In a peer editing session, the writer of the essay noted: "Those just be *old* clothes that they throw away anyway. They just give 'em to the slaves to get 'em to do more work."

Hidden polemic. A hidden polemic is a form of voice appropriation and transformation wherein "the [appropriator's] words actively influence the [original] author's speech, forcing it to alter itself accordingly under their influence and initiative" (Bakh-

tin, 1984, p. 197). In constructing a hidden polemic, a speaker or writer recontextualizes the words of another speaker or writer in such a way that the meanings of those words are altered by the new context. As such, "the [appropriating] author's discourse is directed toward its own referential object, as is any other discourse, but at the same time every statement about the object is constructed in such a way that, apart from its referential meaning, a polemical blow is struck at [another author's] discourse on the same theme, at the other [author's] statement about the same object" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 195).

Political rhetoric is often characterized by hidden polemic. In such a case, one politician, without ever referring to another or to his or her utterances, takes a stand on an issue which is completely opposed to the other's stand and serves to undermine it.

We found very few polemical uses of other people's ideologies in our data. However, in a text that likened drug use to slavery, one child re-envoiced the ideology of the street in polemical fashion in the following utterance: "But people think it's fun and they get high off it." This utterance was sandwiched between the following two utterances: "Crack is stupid" and "It's making people go and kill other people. Because drugs is telling them what to do." Juxtaposed as it was between these two opposing utterances, clearly the idea that drugs are fun has been undermined.

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, there are many ways in which another's voice can be indexed in the utterances of a given speaker or writer. Thus, in order to interpret any utterance for the voices within it, something must be known about the verbal-ideological history of the speaker or writer. This exophoric context has largely been ignored in most analyses of children's speech and writing where the focus has primarily been upon the use of endophoric reference in the interest of text coherence or cohesion (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Yet, the verbal-ideological histories of child writers are important and often critical in understanding and analyzing their texts, particularly with respect to understanding the development of voice within them.

Using knowledge of the verbal-ideological context surrounding children's textual productions, we have tried to excavate, sort out, and analyze the many voices speaking through their written texts. We gained knowledge of these verbal-ideological contexts from classroom observations, conversations and interviews with children, and interviews with their parents and their teacher.

METHOD

Classroom Context of the Study

The child whose writing we focus on in this paper participated in a year-long collaborative teacher-researcher project in a fourth-grade classroom in an inner-city elementary school which drew its students from the surrounding neighborhood—a community rich in African-American culture and social activism. There were 35 children in the class. The children's teacher, Victoria Rybicki, invited us (the two authors) to collaborate with her in constructing a whole-language writing program that accented the transformative possibilities that writing might offer her students. In her search for a

writing program that would celebrate the voices of children—voices that she believed teachers must listen to and encourage—Vicki saw a need for children to participate in the shaping of their language arts class and to become active language users. This vision derived from Vicki's knowledge of and commitment to the community in which the school was situated. She had lived in this community much of her life and was active in many of its religious, social, and cultural groups and institutions.

In order to help her meet her goals, we collaborated with Vicki to design a literacy program that invited the children in the classroom to read and write about themselves, their families, their community, and their cultural histories. We believed that these topics—as opposed to topics more commonly assigned in language arts curricula—would create occasions for children to use writing for a variety of personal, social, and political purposes, and to draw upon voices from a wide variety of social and cultural arenas.

We began this new writing program by helping the children to plan and conduct a neighborhood tour during which they introduced us to their community by identifying and commenting upon a variety of local landmarks that had particular meaning for them (e.g., churches, homes of relatives and friends, favorite restaurants, parks, abandoned homes, and local hang-outs). Throughout the tour, the children provided extensive commentary on the sites they had selected to show us. Interestingly, this commentary included historical information about featured landmarks, as well as information about the personal, communal, and political significance of these sites.

The neighborhood tour was videotaped. Soon after the tour, children began to elaborate and expand upon the videotape in their conversations and writing. As the year progressed, students decided to call their class the "Writers' Community." Within this community, they wrote and shared writing on a wide range of personal and community-related topics. Often this writing was inspired by reading they did, friendships and family ties that they wished to affirm, current events related to their own historical and cultural identities (e.g., Nelson Mandela's visit to America, Black History Month, the public television documentary, *Eyes on the Prize*), and visits by prominent local figures in educational and political life (e.g., the director of The Center for Afro-American and African Studies at a local university). A portion of each child's writing was published in a small student anthology at the end of the school year, and some of the children in the study read their work at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration at a nearby university.

Data Collection

We worked in Vicki's classroom as participant-observers 4 days per month from November through May of the school year. In this role we participated in many classroom discussions, writing sessions, and peer-editing sessions. We also had many informal conversations with children in school, on the playground, and in various community settings. Field notes were taken during all of these activities, and some of the activities were also audiotaped. Finally, we selected five children for more detailed case study. We interviewed each of these children approximately five times during the course of the study. In each of these semi-structured interviews, we focused on the content of children's writing, their reasons for writing, and the voices that we

heard in their writing. During each interview, a child was first asked to review the writing that he or she had done since the previous interview and to identify those text(s) that he or she wanted to focus on. Once a child had selected a text to talk about, the researcher asked the child a series of questions. Typical questions included: "Why did you write this piece?" "Who do you think would really like to read this piece?" "Where did you get the idea for X?" "Who else that you know thinks X?"

Data Transcription, Coding, and Analysis

One text from each case-study child was randomly selected for the analysis of voice. All interviews with case-study children were transcribed. Sections of the interviews relevant to the selected texts were gathered together. All field notes were sorted and sections relevant to the chosen texts were also gathered together. Texts were then segmented by utterance independently by the two authors. Agreement in segmentation was 90%.

The unit of analysis that we used deserves some explanation. An utterance is a linguistic unit that is marked off by boundaries designated by *who is speaking*. Utterance boundaries can occur as a function of conversational turns, or they can occur within texts if the voice of the language shifts. Clues helpful in marking utterance boundaries include a sense of finalization and a shift in generic form. Finalization is characterized by the completion of a thought, point of view, or rhetorical strategy at a particular time or within a particular context. Shifts in generic form are characterized by changes in the semantic or ideological content of the text and are usually accompanied by concomitant changes in phonological, syntactic, and pragmatic aspects of the language within the text.

Once the texts were segmented by utterance, these utterances were coded independently by two trained research assistants for the voices embedded within them. Throughout this process, we employed the constant comparative method of qualitative analysis outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), repeatedly reviewing children's texts in relation to their interview transcripts, interview transcripts of their teacher and parents, and our field notes. Specifically, we tried to code for the following dimensions of children's voice appropriation. First, we tried to determine the *source(s) of the voice(s)* (e.g., teacher, peer group, parent, minister) embodied in each utterance of each text. Second, using the abridged version of Bakhtin's typology, which we described above, we tried to determine the *types of voice appropriation* enacted by the child writers (e.g., imitative, stylized, quoted, parodistic, polemical). Third, we tried to infer *how particular types of voice appropriation functioned* for children to establish various kinds of social and political alignments (i.e., alignments of solidarity, power, or resistance). By alignments of solidarity we mean positive affiliation and perhaps "in-group" status. Imitating or stylizing the language of a particular individual or social group is a typical discourse maneuver designed to establish solidarity with that individual or group. By alignments of power we mean gaining a superior power position over another individual or social group. Parodying or polemicizing the verbal ideological perspectives of others is a discourse strategy used for gaining such a power position. By alignments of resistance we mean actively advocating ideologies or

actions that oppose those advocated by others. As with alignments of power, alignments of resistance are often forged by means of parodistic or polemical discourse.

Interjudge agreement for coding the *source(s) of the voice(s)* was 91%. Interjudge agreement for coding the *types of voice appropriation* was 96%. Interjudge agreement for coding the *functions of different types of voice appropriation* was 88%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analyses of the texts of all five case-study children revealed the presence of multiple voices. Although the particular voices, as well as the relationships among voices were different in each text, analyses of all texts provided abundant evidence that voice is an intertextual, social, and political process. Results from our analysis of one of these texts is presented here to illustrate this point. This text is entitled *Guns*, and it was written by a boy named Anthony. While this text is quite powerful and illustrates very well how children engage in self-construction as they construct their written texts, almost any text by any of the case-study children (or other children in the class for that matter) could have been used for illustrative purposes.

In order to provide a summary of our analysis of *Guns*, this text, parsed by utterance, is presented in Table 1. This table also presents information about the *sources* of the voices that resonate within the text, the *types* of voice appropriation enacted by Anthony, the social and political *functions* accomplished by adopting others' voices in particular ways, and the evidence we used in coding for these *sources*, *types*, and *functions* of voice.

The following interpretive analysis of *Guns* focuses on collections of utterances that represent the most common voices or ideological perspectives within the essay, *Guns*. Through this analysis, we hope to provide a sense of the primary voices or ideologies that Anthony embeds within his essay, some of the conflicts he encounters in this process, and the social foundations for these conflicts. In addition, we hope to demonstrate how in the process of appropriating and transforming various voices, Anthony is forging his own personal, social, and political identity.

Anthony's text is a personal and heartfelt position paper that represents his emerging ideological perspective toward the problem of handgun violence in the inner city. Moreover, his text is animated with the voices of a number of different people from his school, family, and community—especially his teacher and members of his Block Club, his grandfather, and his older brothers and their friends, each of whom holds different ideologies about guns. In most cases, Anthony *stylizes* or *imitates* the voices of others that he appropriates. He usually does this in order to forge solidarity relationships with the sources of these voices. However, there are a couple of instances in his text in which Anthony *parodies* or sets up *polemics* against certain voices that he appropriates, asserting his own power or resistance in relation to the ideologies embedded in them.

The strongest voice that speaks through Anthony's text expresses a clear anti-handgun ideology. For the most part, he *stylizes* this voice, and he appropriates it largely to help forge solidarity relationships with the individuals and social groups

Table 1

Summary Analysis of the Interplay of Voices within Anthony's Text

Utterance	Source	Voice Type	Function	Evidence
Guns are nothing to fool around with.	Grandfather	Stylized	Solidarity	Child Interview Teacher Interview
Parents should hide guns away from children. Children shouldn't play around with guns anyway.	Neighbor	Stylized	Solidarity	Child Interview
So I think guns is no good at all.	Teacher/ Family	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview Field Notes
	Friends	Imitated	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview
Some people have guns in our neighborhood. We can do something about it. I will do my best and to try my best to stop the guns in my neighborhood. I will guarantee you it will stop. It will stop! I promise you.	Block Club	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview Teacher Interview Field Notes
It is a time to use guns.	Brothers/ Older Boys	Stylized/ Parody	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview Field Notes
	Grandfather	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview
When you are a police officer it is OK to use guns. Guns do kill people but sometimes when some people are used to guns they are lucky and don't get hurt.	Grandfather/ Mother/ Grandmother	Stylized	Solidarity	Child Interview Teacher Interview Field Notes
Some police get shot when they are on duty. That is so-so-so sad when they get shot on purpose.	Family	Stylized	Solidarity	Child Interview Field Notes
Why is guns bad to our children?	Block Club	Stylized	Solidarity	Teacher Interview Field Notes
Some people think guns are for safety.	Grandfather	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview Field Notes
I think guns are for protection.	Grandfather	Stylized/ Polemical	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview
	Brothers/ Older boys	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Field Notes
Some people sell drugs to get guns.	Brothers/ Older boys	Polemical	Power/ Resistance	Child Interview Field Notes
I think guns is just a piece of trash.	Teacher	Stylized/ Polemical	Solidarity/ Power/ Resistance	Child Interview Field Notes
But if it wasn't for weapons people wouldn't get killed.	Teacher	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview Field Notes
	Block Club	Stylized	Solidarity/ Power	Child Interview
But some people ask for peace, but so you think they get it when they use guns?	Teacher	Stylized	Solidarity/ Resistance	Field Notes
What do you think about it?	Teacher/ Researchers	Stylized	Solidarity	Field Notes

who advocate this ideology. Of course, appropriating this voice also functions to assert power over and/or to resist individuals and social groups who advocate competing ideologies.

Utterances embodying the anti-handgun voice include "So I think guns is no good at all," "Some people have guns in our neighborhood. We can do something about it. I will do my best and to try my best to stop the guns in my neighborhood. I will guarantee you it will stop. It will stop! I promise you," and "But some people ask for peace, but so you think they get it when they use guns?"

We learned from observations and interviews that the primary bearers of this voice were his teacher and members of his Block Club (53.3% of all utterances). For example, in relation to the influence of his teacher, Anthony told us, "Like I said in my story, if it weren't for weapons, police officers wouldn't have to use guns, cause it'd be peace. . . . Like Mrs. Rybicki told me that I should write a whole bunch about guns because like the police don't even know what to do about guns. Like she put it in my mind from. . . . she told me like, police don't know about guns."

In discussing his experiences at a Block Club meeting, Anthony provided us with further insight into the sources of the anti-handgun voice in his text: "A whole lot of people in my neighborhood, like most people on my block, cause we have a Block Club and stuff, say, 'I promise you we'll fix up this neighborhood. I promise you it will stop.' When they get together at meetings, or just hanging out, or at barbecues, or whatever. I got some ideas about guns cause I went to the meeting with my mother and they were talking about guns, so. . . ."

In another conversation that we had with Anthony, it became clear that his appropriations of the voices of his Block Club, and his community in general, were politically complicated acts. He noted that, "Sometimes a lot of things with guns happen in our community, 'round our corner like on Angelo's street, drug dealers, like every time I hear someone is shot on the news, I think about my story. Should I write that in my story? Should I write this body got killed, should I write that in my story, stuff like that?" As a young author with little power and prestige in the community Anthony seems to struggle with which community voices ought to be affirmed and which ones ought to be silenced. This struggle seems rooted in a conflict between his desire to maintain a solidarity relationship with his community while also acquiring the freedom and power to "call it as he sees it."

Another powerful, although somewhat more tentative, voice that echoes within Anthony's text posits quite a different perspective on the issue of guns and gun control, one that advocates the limited use of handguns for public safety and protection. As he did with the anti-handgun voice, Anthony *stylizes* this voice. Appropriating this voice functions largely to help forge solidarity relationships with the individuals and social groups who advocate this ideology. Conversely, appropriating this voice also functions to assert power over and/or to resist individuals and social groups who advocate competing ideologies.

Among the utterances that embody the voice are the following: "It is a time to use guns," "When you are a police officer it is O.K. to use guns. Guns do kill people, but sometimes when some people are used to guns, they don't get hurt."

This voice derived primarily from Anthony's grandfather, a retired police officer (33.3% of all utterances); it was also occasionally echoed by several other of his

family members. When we asked Anthony to elaborate on the meaning of certain utterances that embodied this voice he replied:

> My grandfather talks to me about how it is a time to use guns in self-defense. . . . To keep peace sometimes, police officers need to use guns even if it's not great; or in self-defense it would be okay to use a gun, if someone else was messin' with you, might kill you. . . . Police officers also think that guns is O.K. for self defense. What should they [police] do? Should they put the people in jail or have guns in their house. It's probably all right to have guns in the house if you, no wait, know how to use them. . . . The only thing I think is right to have a gun is if you're a police officer or I think it's right to have a gun on New Years. That's all or they're just for killing people. . . . My mother, my grandmother, whole lot of people also talk about, that guns is O.K. in self defense.

As we have already mentioned, the stance that Anthony takes toward the voices of his teacher, the Block Club, and his grandfather is one of *stylization*. While he appears to align himself more with the anti-handgun voice than the limited-access-to-handguns voice, Anthony does not seem to have fully adopted either of these voices. As with all instances of stylization, he has taken them seriously but maintains a certain distance toward them by acknowledging that either his teacher and Block Club or his grandfather are the conditions for his appropriation of these voices. Anthony uses their language to express the same point of view or create the same effect that they might. Yet he does not hold his teacher and Block Club or his grandfather responsible for the entire meaning, effect, or results of his statements. He assumes responsibility for them, and he does so because he desires *solidarity* with the people and social groups from whom he borrows these voices.

In addition to the two primary voices that speak through Anthony's essay, there is another voice that is quite interesting. This is the voice of his older brothers and their friends, and it embodies a radical pro-gun ideology. In four adjacent sentences, Anthony asserts: "Some people think guns are for safety. I think guns are for protection. Some people sell drugs to get guns. I think guns is just a piece of trash." In the first sentence, "Some people think guns are for safety," Anthony echoes his grandfather's ideology toward guns. This is followed, in the second sentence, "I think guns are for protection," by a reformulation of the same basic position in a way that personalizes this ideology at the same time that it betrays his ambivalent alignment with the more extreme pro-gun ideology of his brothers and their friends. In relation to this point, Anthony provided us with some insight into his brothers and their attitudes toward guns when he told us that, "when somebody messin' with 'em or something, they might need a gun 'cause if they don't have a gun, cause they know if the other person have a gun, a stick ain't gonna hurt 'em 'cause. . . ."

In the third sentence, "Some people sell drugs to get guns," Anthony's alignment with the pro-gun ideology of his brothers and their friends is at least partially disavowed when, in polemical fashion, he notes the relationship between drugs and guns that obtains for these boys. In our discussions about this utterance, Anthony told us that his brothers and their friends "probably like, like say, 'I want to sell some drugs cause I need a gun.' . . . People on the streets sell drugs to get guns. They probably would say, 'I sell drugs to get guns.' " The use of the words "they" and "probably" in Anthony's discourse about guns, drugs, and his brothers and their friends is particu-

larly interesting, betraying Anthony's ambivalence toward aligning himself too wholeheartedly with their ideology. He seems to desire solidarity with his brothers, but he also wants the power to reject some of their values, values which clash with the values of other important people and groups in his life.

Anthony's ambivalence is expressed once again in the fourth sentence, "I think guns is just a piece of trash," in which he follows up his disavowal of a radical pro-gun ideology by re-envoicing his teacher's and Block Club's anti-handgun position. This utterance is an interesting hybrid construction. It expresses the ideology of his teacher and Block Club, but it does so in the vernacular of his peers or perhaps in the language of the street where his contact with older neighborhood boys occurs. Casting the content of one voice in the style of another seems to allow Anthony simultaneously to resist peer group values while not entirely negating his partial solidarity relationship with the group.

The competing voices within Anthony's text seem responsible both for the power of the essay and its rhetorical meandering. Because of the clashing of voices in *Guns*, the essay does not entirely succeed at putting forth a persuasive argument in favor of any specific position. Similarly, it appears to be addressed to many audiences and to no audience at the same time. Multiple voices are juxtaposed but never synthesized, and it does not seem as though Anthony does this for a particular postmodern rhetorical effect. Indeed, the essay ends with an appeal to the reader for assistance in forging a more unified moral stance toward guns.

The clashing of voices responsible for the rhetorical texture of *Guns* reflects Anthony's struggle to forge a social identity and a set of political positionings. Anthony desires solidarity with several different social groups who promote radically different ideologies. He cannot fully adopt one without resisting the others; yet he is unwilling to resist any group completely. Anthony shifts back and forth across ideologies trying to find a position he can call his own. Although he arrives at an impasse, by juxtaposing and reflecting upon competing ideologies through his writing, Anthony moves closer toward an internally persuasive ideology about guns and gun control.

Interestingly, the discourse politics that permeate Anthony's essay were also played out in several discussions of inner-city violence that occurred in his classroom during the school year. In these discussions, Anthony would express the idea that guns might play an important role in public safety and personal protection. This position would be challenged by other class members (especially by his friend, Paul, whose mother was outspoken about the problem of hand-gun violence in the community) or by Anthony's teacher's requests for him to explain exactly what he meant. As the discussions proceeded, Anthony would either retract his limited pro-gun ideology, claim that he hadn't really meant it the way people took it, or say that he wasn't really sure what he meant and that he would have to think about it some more. It became clear to us as we witnessed these discussions that any pro-gun ideology was unwelcome and often silenced in the classroom, and that there were potentially serious social consequences for voicing such ideologies. Although we did not participate in similar discussions about guns and violence in Anthony's extended family, out-of-school peer group, or community groups, we suspect that in at least some of the these social contexts, any anti-gun ideology was also met with resistance and silencing pressure.

In sum, during classroom discussions, in his conversations within various social groups, and during the many hours that he worked on his essay, *Guns*, Anthony was constantly engaged in struggling with who he was and who he was becoming, which social groups he belonged to and what his status was within those groups, and where he stood on particular social and political issues and whether and how these stances could be voiced in different social settings. Text recapitulated life. Or was it the other way around?

CONCLUSIONS

As children develop as language and literacy users, they appropriate features of the language they experience—the language of parents, teachers, peers, books, television, video, movies, and so on. This process is critical for understanding not only language development but also social development and the development of the self. Most theories of language and literacy learning have emphasized how the child acquires language. Viewing the development of voice as an intertextual, social, and political process suggests that we need to look beyond this basic premise toward how language might acquire the child. Indeed, this theme has been implicit in a number of recent theories of discourse including Heidegger's (1971) work on poetry language, and thought, Vygotsky's (1978) theory of internalization, Foucault's (1970) theory of discourses, Goffman's (1974) theory of frames, and Bateson's (1972) cybernetic theory of the context in the mind. These theorists have all included principles to account for how cultural forms acquire cultural members. Such principles suggest that the subjectivity that allows a child to communicate more and more effectively extends beyond the child's own cognitive capacities. Discursive practices are first constructed interactively with more fully socialized language users and later internalized and transformed. In this process, the voices of others—encountered in dialogue and social interaction—are involved not only in the child's social talk but also in the development of his or her overall discourse skills, cognitive abilities, sociality, and political orientations. Put another way, the appropriation and transformation of other people's voices acts as a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) or a cultural prosthetic (Bruner, 1986), helping children to synthesize convention and invention (Goodman & Goodman, 1990) as they forge their own "ways with words" and ways of "being-in-the-world."

This process is seldom automatic, clear-cut, or conflict-free, however. Children must struggle for identity, power, and group belonging in a number of different social settings—home, school, peer group(s), church, community, and so forth. In the context of these struggles, many identifications, ways of being and talking, modes of belonging, and power relations are accepted, resisted, and rejected. Juxtaposing and reflecting upon a variety of voices of authority in their writing becomes for children a kind of "deep play" (Geertz, 1973) in which they experiment with different personal, social, and political positionings and work toward developing their own "internally persuasive voices" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342), voices that will, of course, continue to develop with new social and cultural experiences. As they develop these voices in their writing, children are simultaneously creating themselves and their propensities

for social and political action. Text is a synchronous moment of developing self. Self is text under continual revision. Since this complex process is instantiated in the play of voices within children's written texts, paying attention to these voices results in a better understanding of children not only as emerging writers but also as emerging selves.

In light of this fact, conceiving voice as an intertextual, social, and political process has important implications for facilitating and evaluating children's writing. Such a view suggests an interactional relationship between writers and audiences, including the audience of the classroom teacher. One message in all of this for writing classrooms may be that the insistence on the need for the child writer to "find" his or her own unitary voice may be a mistake, undergirded by a misguided folk theory about voice as monologic. Of course, writers always forge their own voices in some sense. They explore and partially control the voices that they appropriate and allow (or encourage) to intermingle in their texts. However, a writer's voice is never created solely out of depths of his or her individuality. Rather it is constructed out of the voices of the individuals and communities to which the writer has formed various kinds of social and political alignments.

With this in mind, we need to take more seriously, and even celebrate, the heterologic character of voice in children's writing. Moreover, we need to try to understand and explain what the tolerance (and encouragement) of a diversity of voices within children's texts might mean for their development as writers, thinkers, and social beings. It may be that the appropriation and orchestration of other people's voices serve as a "concrete link between representation and reflection" (Foucault, 1970, p. 83), allowing children (as well as adults) to work through what they can readily represent, on the one hand, and their reflections about the nature and implications of the representational process itself, on the other. Indeed, reflecting upon the nature and meaning of representation often results in the envisagement of new possibilities for thinking, acting, and being.

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