CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RELIGION IN SMOOTH AND STRIATED

HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM SPACES

By

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(Under the Direction of Bob Fecho)

ABSTRACT

For this poststructural study, the researcher focused on classroom discussions on religion in a high school world history class in the southeastern United States during a three-month period of time. Rhizomatic cartography, which is based on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, was the analytic method used as the researcher explored the relationship between smooth and striated space in the rhizome of classroom discussion. The terms smooth and striated are not dualistic, as each contains elements of the other and there is a constant back and forth or tension. Using lesson plans, transcripts, student work, as well as a range of artifacts from the classroom, the researcher mapped something that holds together enough to raise more questions, and found that thinking about classrooms rhizomatically offered possibility and the potential to think differently.

INDEX WORDS: Giles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Michel Foucault, rhizomatic cartography, literacy, reading, adolescent, religion

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DEDICATION

To Toby for everything

To Dawan for everything else

and to

To Richard for the rest of it

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If you are reading this then I have survived and that survival is due to my committee. I would first like to thank the best teacher I have ever had, my chair, Dr. Bob Fecho. None of this would have happened without his guidance, encouragement, and occasional reprimand. Bob once told me to trust the process, which I am not sure that I ever did, but I did trust him. I would also like to thank Dr. Bettie St. Pierre w

ho profoundly inspired me, as the quotations in this document affirm, and who challenged me to get smartened up! Finally, thanks to Dr. Denise Davila who agreed to work with me before she had even moved to Georgia. Thank you for taking a risk, as your time and support were needed and invaluable.

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John Coltrane said it best in the liner notes to *A Love Supreme* "With love to all, I thank you."

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INTRODUCTION

When I was about eight my dad and I watched *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the

1977 science fiction classic film directed by Steven Spielberg. *Close Encounters of the Third*

Kind was about a working class man living in Indiana whose life is changed after he has a close

encounter with a U.F.O. late one evening. It has been years since I have seen it, but there is a

scene that I still remember vividly. The main character Roy Neary, played by Richard Dreyfuss,

is trying to hold himself together and participate in his daily routines after his encounter with the

spacecraft. The scene begins at the dinner table with Roy, his wife, and their three small

children. His entire family appears on edge, like they are not sure how to proceed after this

unexplainable event has rocked their quiet family life. Roy's wife is desperately trying to return

to normalcy or the striated space of their life before the U.F.O sighting occurred. Roy on the

other hand, is seeking the mysterious and nomadic space in which the encounter took place. He

seems to want to revisit the encounter. These two spaces, the striated and the smooth or

nomadic, which I will discuss more in Chapter One, create a tension that is palpable in the scene,

though there is very little dialogue.

The evening meal begins and Roy serves himself mashed potatoes. Without realizing it

he starts silently sculpting the potatoes into the image of a mountain that he has inexplicably

become fixated on since seeing the U.F.O. He is not sure where the mountain is, or even if it

exists, but he keeps seeing it in his mind. Roy methodically moves the potatoes around his plate.

He is completely possessed by his task. His family, who are seated around him at the dinner

table, try at first to ignore his strange behavior. Eventually they cannot resist anymore and become engrossed by what he is doing. His children and wife all freeze and watch him. Roy does not notice their gazes and keeps going. When he looks up from his work and sees that his wife and children are witnessing what he thought was his private moment he says, "Well I guess you've noticed something a little strange with Dad" (Spielberg, 1977). Roy is revealed. In this moment of vulnerability, Roy goes on to say that what he is thinking and feeling is indescribable and then tries to explain what the mashed potatoes represent by saying, "This means something, this is important" (Spielberg, 1977). Roy does not know what the significance of the mountain is or why he is drawn to it, but he knows it is important.

After seeing this film, at an arguably inappropriate age, I loved to play with my mashed potatoes at the dinner table and repeat, "This means something, this is important" to get a laugh from an adult. Now I am an adult, and I am back at it again, but not to get a laugh. I have been taken over by this dissertation project. This study was my mashed potatoes and I pushed it around with my fork as I attempted to find out more about the way religion functioned in my classroom and what was driving me to study the topic in the first place. I am not entirely sure why, though I have my suspicions, which I will explore in the pages that follow, but I think it is important—something that I will probably keep poking my fork at for years to come.

Much like Roy's disbelief after his first experience with the U.F.O., I was in disbelief after my first experience teaching public school in a predominantly conservative and predominantly Christian county in predominantly rural Georgia. First, I was in disbelief just because I was a twenty-five year old that got a serious job. Then, I was in disbelief when I encountered the discourses surrounding the Christianity of many of my students as well as my colleagues at my new school. As a person that is not particularly religious, to believe in

something with such certainty seemed unimaginable to me. I take that back. To believe in

evolution and global warming seemed totally comprehensible to me, but to believe in a being

that I could not see or hear but who was calling all of the shots seemed far-fetched.

Eventually, I became transfixed by the cultures of Christianity I witnessed in this space,

not simply out of voyeuristic curiosity or uppity condescension, though at times I felt both

depending on the encounter, but largely out of a reverence and at times even envy. I met

extremely intelligent people that based all of their life decisions as well as daily interactions

around what they thought an unknowable deity wanted them to do. Actually, the unknowable

deity was not even that unknowable to them; Jesus was their friend, their brother, their father,

and their football coach. *What would Jesus do?* was a question I heard repeatedly or at least saw

on wrist bands in the form of WWJD? I started asking questions too. Like, what does it mean to

believe in something? Should I believe in something? And the occasional what if I don't really

believe in anything?

Even though I have since moved on from that school, my time there is still something I

think about and try to make meaning from. My attachment to that space has not broken, but

instead has continued to be an encounter that I keep returning to. Deleuze and Guattari

(1972/1977) describe how "Memories always have a reterriitorialization function" (p.294). This

study has elements of reterriitorialization or a fixation with memory and the past, but I largely

used this study to learn more about the way religion functions within my current classroom,

knowing full well that even the concept of religion may be too knotty to unravel (Caputo, 2001).

It seems likely that "Religion has presented itself in so broad an array of disconnected and

unique manifestations across that span of human history that no generalization can conceivably

apply to the full variety of its expression" (Carse, 2008, p. 2). Religion may be tangled and

complicated but this makes me want to further investigate how it may manifest in the spaces around me. The classroom I researched for this study is different from the place I describe above, but this change has helped me to gain perspective on the encounters in a classroom space and the discussions that occurred within its walls.

Overview of the Study

This dissertation began as a pilot study interviewing youth pastors who worked with high school students about the kinds of dialogues they had in their youth groups outside of school. During that study, I was confronted by my own religious ignorance as I stumbled through conversations with my participants. Not only did I have little knowledge of religious doctrine, I had little understanding of how people constructed their beliefs as well as their faith and how much that faith meant to people. I developed a sense of awe in the "remarkable way the great religions seem to develop an awareness of the unknown keen enough to hold its most ardent followers in a state of wonder" (Carse, 2008, p. 3) and I admired this effect. I now imagine wonder and ecstasy in religion where I used to mainly consider volatility. It is the volatility that I often focused on out of what may be my own simplistic reduction of religion and the thing that I am willing to perceive differently.

For this poststructural study, I focused on a series of encounters, or discussions around religion in a public high school classroom in the southeastern United States during a three-month period of time. The study involved 17 15-year old students in a World History class over eight class days. I used transcripts, memories, discussions and writing I as I mapped those discussions. The question that drove my research was this one:

How might Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome help me think about the smooth and striated spaces in classroom discussions about religion?

I employed Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of smooth space and striated space as the basis of my research questions, which I will discuss more in chapters one and three, because to think with Deleuze and Guattari is to enter into another realm. It is to step away from the discourses of humanism, not that I can ever get away from the influence of humanism or that I even want to. Where humanism attempts to build knowledge, poststructuralism explores how knowledge is constructed and asks how it is possible to think things (Foucault, 1971/1972). I suspect Deleuze and Guattari would understand my earlier analogy involving *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and that I understand myself as making meaning by poking around with a fork. They believed that philosophy should be "in part a kind of science fiction" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1968/1994, p. xx). Science fiction, at the very least, opens the imagination and the possibility of things to come and for things to be different. I also suspect they would not mind my positioning them this way; after all they came up with concepts like bodies without organs which "is what remains when you take everything away" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 151). My desire to attend to what was left when you strip everything down and for things to be different led me to the theories that are largely grouped under the theoretical framework of poststructuralism, which I will explore in Chapter One.

Statement and Significance of the Problem

This study is important because, "Three-quarters of U.S. teens between 13 and 17 years old are Christians" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 31) and it is critical that we understand students' perspectives on religion in order to understand how they making meaning of their world and the subject matter of our classrooms (Beal, 2008, p. 33). The discourses surrounding religion can seem very polarizing to me, whether it is the Taliban destroying Buddhist statues in Afghanistan or an ardent American atheist saying there is no place for religion in schools. This dogmatism,

this certainty, these boundaries and aggression are what I think are the problem (Carse, 2008, p. 4). Derrida "taught us that the alternative to blind belief is not simply unbelief but a different kind of belief - one that embraces uncertainty and enables us to respect others whom we do not understand" (Taylor, 2004, para. 12). The problem I sense in myself, as well as the world, is how to stay in that tension of uncertainty that allows for dialogue, though at times I wonder if it is even possible or advisable to do so (Bakhtin, 1929/1984; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Ricoeur, 1983/1984).

Discussing religion in a public school classroom, even when a teacher is sanctioned to do so by the curriculum, can be complicated and at times contentious. For example, when Georgia in 2006 became the first state to approve using the Bible as a textbook, many teachers shied away from teaching it because it could put them in a vulnerable position (Goodman, 2006). I was offered the option to teach the course and, despite my fascination with religion, I declined. As a teacher, I felt the need to strictly adhere to my then-held belief in the separation of church and state. I constructed a binary between secular and religious systems as well as the discourses in my classroom, as if these two rigid systems could be contained (Derrida, 1972/1981). To me there seemed to be no middle ground. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) pointed out that when you have two rigid systems as I described above one "does not bring the other system to a halt: the flow continues beneath the line" (p. 221). The systems and discourses may not have been visible to my naked eye, but I am pretty sure they were still there, bleeding into each other, but I would not know without getting deeper into these encounters.

I think "religion makes a difference to most people—to the way they find meaning in their lives, to their moral and political judgments" (Nord, 2010, p. 4) but I am still not sure how to talk about it in a classroom. It is not my desire (not that my desires would change things) to

flatten religious discourses or make them more palatable or accessible. If anything, I am attracted to the rough edges, to the conflict and like Bakhtin (1975/1981) I believe "the importance of struggling with another's discourse…is enormous" (p. 348). Foucault knew this and saw that "suppressing conflict is suppressing freedom, because the privilege to engage in conflict and power struggle is part of freedom" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 108). It is the edginess and the conflict that reminds me I am free. I am probably one of a minority of people who does not get uncomfortable when Jehovah's Witnesses show up on my front porch because I am reminded that I can hear what they have to say and am free to not convert.

I am especially interested in religious discussions because they are complicated, intensely personal, and often create the structure of students' worldviews. For teachers who strive to better understand their students, I think talking about religion is important because it is part of how many young people make meaning. It also makes sense to question why discussions about religion in classrooms sound the way they do, and what spaces and contexts produce what kinds of discourses. There can be fear in this proposition but there is possibility. Just as religion can be a point of contention, it can also offer hope. Caputo (2001) offers a vision that reflects this hope, which is much more appealing:

> Religion is for lovers, for men and women of passion, for real people with a passion for something other than taking profits, people who believe in something, who hope like mad in something, who love something with a love that surpasses understanding. (p. 2)

Caputo's interpretation of religion is one that puts aside the animosity and goes for the heart. It offers another vision of religion that is not ridden with strife and intolerance, but instead love.

Where Do We Go from Here?

The chapters that follow intend to create a landscape of my thinking and situate how I use poststructural theories and literature to guide my work. In Chapter One I introduce poststructuralism and the language that makes it even possible to sculpt something that still seems in many ways indescribable. Chapter One is necessary because it situates this study in poststructural theories, though we live in a culture where humanism pervades. Hence, I need some room to attend to the taken for granted concepts that poststructuralism helps critique. This is not to say that humanism exists as one thing or that it should or even could be rejected (Foucault, 1971/1984). It is just that I want to work from a theoretical framework where things open up a little more. Deleuze and Guattari remind me that if you cannot imagine it, you cannot create it. Concepts like rhizomes and smooth and striated spaces, which I discuss in Chapter One, are only the beginning of a language that is able to express things that were not possible for me to imagine before I met them. I also visited the theories of Foucault who informed how I framed my discussion of the relationships between my research and the concepts of space, power truth, and the body.

Chapter Two is a review of the literature in which I situate my study in the larger discussion of religion in public schools. I tended to the general trends as well as gaps in research. I examined the approaches others have taken in regards to research on religion in schools as well as the social, political, and historical reasons that discussions on religion seem the way they do. The United States, of all Western industrialized societies, stands out because "The vast majority of Americans (over 80 percent) identify themselves as religious, and the vast majority of those (95 percent) identify with some form of Christianity" (Beal, 2008, p. 33). Though the country seems religious, there seems to be a sense that schools are not open to

discussions about religion and a kind of muted religiosity exists among many of the adolescents that occupy public school spaces. Due to this reluctance on the part of many to broach religion in classrooms there is much work to be done on the role of religion in schools.

Chapter Three concentrates heavily on the theories of Deleuze and Guattari and features the maps I created using rhizomatic cartography, which is inspired by their work. Deleuze and Guattari are not easily understood; they are the jazz musicians in a world of sugary and sentimental pop music. They can seem atonal and chaotic, but that is a misidentification. They are like the jazz legend Ornette Coleman who dared to question why you have to play notes in the first place? It is not that they are self-indulgent but they can be hard to hold onto. They are improvisers who challenge the reader/listener. For people trying to understand Ornette Coleman, it took a "Willingness to listen, ability to listen, capacity for new musical thinking: the chaos that conservative critics found in Coleman's music actually had an amazing amount of inner organization" (Wilson, p. 39). Relying on Deleuze and Guattari for my thinking means sticking with their peculiarities and allowing them to take me somewhere. Rhizomatic cartography, which is based on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome, is the analytic tool I used as well as the overall inspiration behind my research design.

Chapter Four demonstrates how as soon as I thought I had finished analyzing my data and writing up my findings it started to fall apart in front of me. Deconstruction seeks "to keep to disrupt, to keep the system in play, to set up procedures to continuously demystify the realities we create, to fight the tendency for our categories to congeal" (Lather, 2001, p. 13). In Chapter Four I continue to deconstruct as well as explore the processes of becoming that occurred during and immediately following my study. I borrow the concept of *becoming* from Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) and employ it as I think and write through the generative relationships and

experiences that took place during my study and altered how I saw my research as well as my classroom.

Finally, Chapter Five is a space of reflection as well as a To Do list where I explore the possibilities that developed from this work. I expand on what this study means to me as a researcher and how others may incorporate it into their own work and world. I also try to provide teachers and researchers with some tangible ideas, like avoid fascism, that they may find of interest.

I have more questions than I can possibly attend to in one dissertation. I did not want to completely give up my freedom to explore, but I also did not want to drag the reader through the quagmire of my mind. So, I try to stick with a structure even as I play around with the traditional structures of knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Below is a photomontage by the artist Yves Klein entitled *Le Saut dans le vide* or "Leap into the Void." The picture shows a man falling from a building, but he does not seem depressed or suicidal; in fact, he appears glorious, like he is realizing for the first time that he has wings. There is an untranslatable word in French *l'appel du vide*, which literally means call of the void. This term is used to refer to people who have a desire to jump from tall structures. It is not suicide but more like seeking an opening. Of course, it is easier to stick with the old routines, the old constructions instead of taking the leap. This man's decision to jump will allow some problems to be resolved while new ones emerge, but maybe he wants to live so much that he will not accept living with both feet stuck on the ground.

I share this because to deconstruct and question the very language that inscribes us we have to "stand at the edge of the abyss-that fearful and terrible chaos created by the loss of transcendent meaning-and struggle with our loss" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 176). Leaping into the void is both terrifying and alluring and though many of us are called, most of us do not answer. There is no way for me to avoid problems that may be unresolvable in research, but at least when I jump there is the possibility that I may have wings.

The sections that follow probe the theories and concepts that made it possible for me to think the things that I wrote about in this study. I started by exploring poststructuralism, and the related concepts and theories that underpin my research including deconstruction. Philosopher Caputo (1997) wrote "the very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things-texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices…do not have definable meanings and determinable missions…that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy" (p. 92). The challenge and opportunity in working from this position is that everything I examined started to fall apart before my eyes and I was left "working the ruins" (St. Pierre, 2000).

What are We Calling Postmodernism?

"What are we calling postmodernity? I'm not up to date" this was the response Foucault gave to an interviewer when questioned about modernity (Foucault, 1983, p. 204). I certainly understand his impulse to respond this way. I cannot possibly tackle all of postmodernism and poststructuralism, but would like to address the concepts that relate directly to my theoretical framework and research methodology. Lather (1991) described how "postmodernism/poststructuralism is the code name for the crisis in confidence in Western conceptual systems" (p. 159). The "posts," or theorists like Lyotard and Derrida, did not subscribe to one monolithic theory or philosophy that is easily explained or explained away, though some have tried to lump them together and do away with them at once (Butler, 1992). I must also point out that though I will use the term poststructuralism, the philosophers' work I am the most dependent on, Deleuze and Guattari, never labeled themselves as "post" anything. In many ways it was an obsession with labeling and categorizing that they were working against and in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972/1977) they claimed, "A schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst's couch." (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1972/1977, p. 2). At least the schizophrenic was getting some fresh air instead of lying around labeling everything.

The terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are not synonymous. These two theories, which are both multiplicities of meaning, are often treated interchangeably, but are different and for this study I will use poststructuralism unless quoting someone who uses the term postmodernism. The term postmodernism is well applied to the arts, architecture, literature, and other fields, whereas poststructuralism refers to the body of scholarship that asserts there is no way to completely free something or someone from the structures in which they are inscribed. Poststructuralism challenges structuralism, whereas postmodernism deals with modernism (Peter, 1999). Poststructuralism is largely rooted in the work of Nietzsche, who I will discuss in this chapter, as well as philosophers like Foucault whose theories directly influenced my study.

Many Enlightenment thinkers subscribed to the belief that "science alone could validate morality, religion, politics, and even the arts" (Armstrong, 2009, p. 223). Like God once did, science offered hope and even salvation. Science was seen as objective and could fix anything or at least had the potential to. Enlightenment thinking valued reason and believed there was a transcendental truth that could be sought to build a neutral knowledge. Also, language was thought to be transparent and not socially constructed (Flax, 1990). Modernity also appeared to have the answers, to move beyond superstitions and blind ideologies. These movements privileged science and reason in such a way that they denied that science is in flux and is profoundly influenced by the socio-political world in which it is created (Kuhn, 1996). Take for example when the Nazis used "science" to justify their version of human progress (Armstrong, 2009). In this case, science and modernity were not the great saviors of the world and instead the justification for destroying the worlds of many.

Poststructuralism questions Enlightenment and modernist thinking, not because it wants to replace one ideology with another, but because modernity "seems no longer capable of giving meaning and direction to current conditions" (Lather, 1991, p. 88). This lack of faith in the kind of science associated with modernity is often "coded with the term the crisis of representation, and it has profound implications for the re-thinking the practices of the social sciences" (Lather, 2004, p. 208). The crisis of representation shows that science may not have all the answers after all. As Lyotard (1979/1984) believed, "scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge" (p. 7). It is that other knowledge that I am interested in.

For me, the categories and institutions of modernity can be stifling and fail to address the needs of the world as it is, and instead exist to feed the institution. Lather (1991) says "It is not that the dreams of modernity are unworthy; it is what they render absent and their conflictual and confusing outcomes that underscore the limits of reason and the obsolescence of modernist categories and institutions" (p. 88). The information age does not necessarily make people more informed, but speaking for myself, more desperate to make meaning from the noise. Poststructural thought is not immune to snares but can hopefully avoid some of the pitfalls of modernity's obsession with certainty.

Poststructuralism is not new as "it has been functioning under different labels for centuries, it has only within the last 30 years or so emerged in both popular culture and the academic disciplines" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 479). The crisis, as Lather (2001) described it, that poststructuralism is most recognizably responding to are the hegemonic forces of humanism. "Humanism is the air we breathe, the language we speak, the shape of the homes we live in" and because humanism is everywhere and taken for granted and "natural" we can find it hard to even

recognize (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 478). Humanism, like poststructuralism, is not one thing, though it is pervasive. Foucault (1971/1984) wrote that "we must not conclude that everything that has ever been linked with humanism is to be rejected but that the humanistic thematic is in itself too supple too diverse too inconsistent to serve as an axis for reflection" (p.44). Diversity pervades humanism, as it does poststructuralism, but the two appear to function differently. It is this difference in how they function that makes want to engage with poststructural thinking.

Poststructuralism and humanism are not in binary opposition, but poststructuralism offers a critique of taken for granted concepts that pervade humanism. Where humanism searches for truths, poststructuralism examines how regimes of truth function (Foucault, 1977/1995). Soon after Derrida's death the author Taylor (2004) wrote:

> Mr. Derrida understood all too well the danger of beliefs and ideologies that divide the world into diametrical opposites: the unavoidable limitations and inherent contradictions in the ideas and norms that guide our action, and do so in a way that keeps them open to constant questioning and continual revision.   (para. 5)

It is in this constant questioning; this living under revision, this understanding that life is unstable, that possibility exists. This explains why many feminist (Lather 1991; St. Pierre, 2000) and lesbian and queer (Khayatt, 1992; Leck, 1994; Youdell, 2010) educational theorists are drawn to poststructuralism. There is hope and opportunity in poststructuralism because it destabilizes oppressive narratives and with the acceptance of instability and the resistance to binaries things begin to open up.

The theories and ontologies that are lumped under the titles of "post" are not easily explainable or formulaic. Poststructuralism, as I employed it, does not make truth claims and is even suspicious of those theories that are labeled "post." If it even makes sense to say that

poststructuralism has a core, "The core of poststructuralism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge" (Richardson, 2000, p. 35). Poststructuralism feels alive to me precisely because it is based in doubt, even doubt in itself. If I accept that we are all inscribed and have limitations in what we can know, it does not mean that I should quit making meaning or researching experiences. It does however make me reign in my sanctimony or attempts to empower people who I could not possibly understand. Working within a poststructural framework helped me avoid, but did not entirely prevent me from taking reductivist positions. My study did not aim for a clean conclusion. It was not designed to describe the essence of someone or a situation. Instead, it poked around at discussions of religion in a classroom and explored how different spaces influenced the discussions that emerged.

Thinking about Thinking

The two French scholars that helped to open up the way I understood my study and resist binaries, as well as accept the contradictions and limitations, were Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Deleuze and Guattari stressed moving away from traditional ways of thinking, encouraged deterritorializing the mind, and existing in the nomadic spaces. Their ideas remind me of the poem by 13th century Sufi mystic Rumi (Barks, 1995):

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing,

there is a field. I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,

the world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other" doesn't make any sense. (p. 36)

The field Rumi described in the poem could exist in the nomadic space Deleuze and Guattari described in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1987) and the grass would be the rhizome where all language begins to send out shoots until it does not make sense, at least not like it used to.

My research question is heavily dependent on the theories of Deleuze and Guattari as it attends to religious discussions in smooth and striated classroom spaces. A quick working definition of these spaces is that the smooth space is the "desert, steppe, ice, and sea" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 493) and the "striated space is sedentary space, space that is coded, defined bounded, and limited" (St. Pierre, 2010, p. 369). The smooth space is the less coded or structured, while the striated imposes a kind of order. These two spaces are connected to each other and not a dichotomy. Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of space, which I discussed in more depth in the following sections, are just part of the influence these two French philosophers had on my work. The entire study, including the analytic method I described in Chapter Three, is permeated by one of their best-known concepts—and a nice point of entry, in part because it has so many entryways, into their philosophy— the rhizome (1980/1987). A tuber, like crabgrass or a tulip bulb, as opposed to the root or the tree, can physically represent a rhizome. The tree is arboreal with branches and "plots a point, fixes an order" (p. 7); whereas, "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be" (p. 7). The arborescent model is linear where the rhizome is heterogeneous.

I agree with Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) when they wrote, "We're tired of trees. We should stop believing in trees, roots, and radicles. They've made us suffer too much" (p. 15). The suffering may be from the diagraming of sentences or the bubbling in of boxes that classify you this way or that way or the suffering of loss when we trim off the parts of us that do not fit into what the tree allows. The arborescent model is everywhere. It is in the classifications in

biology and the language families of linguistics. We may want to stop believing in trees but they are not going away. The rhizome is in contrast to an arborescent model or tree-like model of thought as it "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 25). The rhizome is not about the start and finish or it is not as Deleuze (1995) stated "beginnings and ends that count, but middles" (p. 41). It makes sense that the middle is where it counts because that is where we almost always are.

I am drawn to rhizomes because they "cut across borders. Rhizomes build links between preexisting gaps and between nodes that are separated by categories and orders of segmented thinking, acting, and being" (Kamberelis, 2004, p. 164). This fluidity makes rhizomes more applicable to my work, as I need the flexibility and arterial qualities of the rhizome that can bring elements from seemingly disconnected concepts to each other and avoid the totalizing effects of the tree. "Deleuzian understandings of rhizomatic thinking help disrupt that linear and layered thinking about subject positioning that is so dominant in modernist approaches to identity" (Honan, 2007, p. 535). Our identities cannot possibly be this orderly of a construction unless we are always pruning off parts of ourselves. Where the tree is contained, "the rhizome, on the other hand, acts on desire by external, productive outgrowths" (p.14). It is the productive and generative quality that makes the rhizome not a model but an analytic tool.

Contrary to how it may sound, the rhizome and the tree are not opposed or opposites. In fact, they can have elements of each other present within themselves (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). However, "Once a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it's all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces" (p. 14). For this study I tried to avoid a totalizing way of thinking where all desire was repressed, demonstrating that "Whenever desire climbs a tree, internal repercussions trip it up and it falls to its death" (p. 14). What this

means to me is that I can think of countless times in my own life when I have had a desire to do

something, but have limited myself because the desire did not fit into some totalizing system.

For example, as a teacher there are ways I put myself in to my own prison of conventionality and

kill off desire because of the perceived repercussions. It is not a literal death, but a death of

possibility and the collapse of the imagination. A rhizome may have elements of the tree

present, but if it becomes overly structured then the rhizome is done, kaput.

Characteristics of a Rhizome

The rhizome is open, as it is a tuber with mulitiple shoots that can be connected. The

rhizome may seem messy compared to the tree, but there is an inner organization as I pointed out

in the Ornette Colman analogy in the introduction. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) posited

that the rhizome had six main characteristics, which Hagood (2004) organized in the list below:

1. Points on a rhizome need to connect to something else.

2. Rhizomes are heterogeneous not dichotomous.

3. Rhizomes are made up of a multiplicity of lines that extend in all directions.

4. Rhizomes break off, but then they begin again, either where they were before or on a
   new line.

5. Rhizomes are not models; they have no deep structure.

6. Rhizomes are maps with multiple entryways.

(p. 145)

Thankfully, my third grade teacher had us grow a potato in a water cup, which provided me with

my first encounter with a rhizome until I began to truly appreciate music and rhizomes appeared

everywhere. Music and art can allow you to think rhizomatically. First of all, "Music has a thirst

for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage, dislocation" (Deleuze & Guattari,

1980/1987, p. 299). Just as the rhizome can be ruptured, music also breaks apart and can seek annihilation. "Music is never tragic, music is joy. But there are times when it gives us a taste for death; not so much happiness as dying happily, being extinguished" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 299). I am probably being self-indulgent, but rock n' roll legend Patti Smith (1976) demonstrated what I think of as rhizomatic thinking in the following interview.

> **Patti Smith:** We want to initiate change but as soon as you get it, you structure your change, as soon as you start writing pat or as soon as you write some political order, you write dogma, you're right there with Catholicism you're right there with communism anything anytime you start stating this, this, and this rules and regulations you're no longer liberated. You're just like a new a new political game whether its religious, spiritual, whatever, social.
>
> **Interviewer:** It's all like The Doors song *Break on through to the Other Side*
>
> **Patti Smith:** Yeah and then after you break on through to the other side then you break on through to the other side and the other side and the other side. I mean our point is that you spend your whole life keep breaking on through. You can't just break on through once and think well I've made I've broke through. There's a million membranes to break through. There's a million places to go. You know. You move to another direction another dimension. Big deal. We went to the moon. Big deal. We went to Mars. Big deal. We keep moving and moving and moving you know Muhammad went through seven heavens. Big deal. I want to see the eighth heaven, tenth heaven, thousandth heaven. You know it's like break on through to the other side is like going through one door, one door isn't enough, a million doors are not enough. You have to go beyond, beyond one reflection, beyond the mirror, beyond, beyond.

Patti Smith gets it. She is not willing to become arborified, to reach the seventh level of heaven and rest on her laurels. She will not be smug and sit back because she holds the keys to the kingdom. She will continue to push and to struggle and to move beyond a reflection and beyond this door or that interpretation. She also seems to understand that she is always caught in in a structure as much as she may try to escape. To think rhizomatically with Deleuze and Guattari is not to retread old paths, dredge up old thoughts, but instead ask, "What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?" (Massumi, 1987, xv). If a rhizome is open, then to think rhizomatically means to open up. It is to break out of the old routine, to break on through to the other side and the other side and the other side.

Lines of Flight

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote, "Music has always sent out lines of flight" (p. 11). A musician, especially in jazz, may improvise or hold a note making a line of flight or escape. These lines of flight are part of the rhizome and add onto it or take it into different directions. You can break a rhizome, which will not necessarily get rid of it. Rhizomes rebound and "Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc. as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees" (p. 9). This is the inner organization I mentioned previously. There is order and disorder within each rhizome. If a rupture occurs then the line of flight that results is still the rhizome.

In Deleuze and Guattari's essential work *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980/1987) they reintroduced Freud's famous clinical case study of Little Hans, the 5-year-old-boy with a phobia of horses that Freud psychoanalyzed at the request of Little Hans's father. Little Hans, was in

their view, an example of the limiting nature of child psychoanalysis and a rhizome that has been broken. Little Hans tried to send off lines of flight away from the family, but at every turn he is blocked to fit into the schema of psychoanalysis. In a sense "Freud forced Little Hans to take root in the family-traced onto his mother's bed and photographed under his father" (Kamberelis, 2004, p. 166). Little Hans was forced to limit his relationship to the world through the theories of psychoanalysis until "he began to desire his own shame and guilt, until they had rooted shame and guilt in him" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 14). Little Hans became the arborified vision that psychoanalysis created complete with neurosis that may organize and dictate the rest of his life.

For me, Little Hans is a cautionary tale that inspires me to work against reducing the people in my study or intentionally limiting the way they relate to the world. The self-rejection that is demonstrated with Little Hans is disturbing in that "he tries to build a rhizome, with the family house but also with the line of flight of the building, the street, etc.; how these lines are blocked, how the child is made to take root in the family" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 14). Little Hans is taken over and dispossessed. Little Hans has become a tracing. I do not want to create a study that unintentionally validates a world of Little Hans. Instead, I imagine a world that validates more Foucaults, who said in the introduction of *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1971/1972), "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order" (p.17). Foucault did not want to be hemmed in by the labels that people obsessively tried and continue to try to put on him. He also recognized that intellectual work was not static. He allowed himself to change, revise, and reconsider. His theories pulsed with substance, but that substance quickly changed form.

Foucault not only forgave himself for changing, he seemed to relish in it. It was as if he was asking what is the point of thinking if we are always to think the same thing?

As the rhizome and tree discussion above probably indicated, and as I will explain in Chapter Three, I find problems with conventional representation. I am not alone. Artists in the United States since World War II have been working through issues of perception (Kleeblatt, 2008). What many of them have found, as have I, is that to shift the focus from representation to space, and how discourses function in that space, there is less essentializing and therefore less likelihood of just creating another totalizing discourse. This does not mean that I am not in jeopardy of using space in a way that is reductive, but hopefully the qualities of space will help me to be more expansive in my interpretations.

How I Employ the Concept of Space

For this study I relied on my interpretations of space, primarily smooth and striated to explore what happened to discussions around religion when the space had these qualities. I am no Albert Einstein, so what I know about space is simple and visceral and hard for me to put into words. So, I turned to art to help me explain. In art, "Space became the metaphorical matrix for the projection of ideas. It was conceived as active rather than passive" (Kleeblatt, 2008, p. 227). I believe space is active, a determiner in how things are constrained and constructed. It is definitely something that I project ideas onto and those ideas are laden with meaning. I am sensitive to space, seeking some and avoiding others. I have also learned, as I am sure most people have, to live in a range of spaces.

Territorialized and Deterritorialized Space

The identity of teachers and students mostly exists in largely territorialized spaces that can produce highly territorialized discourses. What I mean by territorialized is intensely ordered,

spoken for, constructed space. The territorialized space is a model where things happen according to a plan. The teacher and student largely exist in a room where the doors are shut and locked; there are bells to abide by, and attendance to take, while the nomad exists in a space where the sky and land seem to touch. Yet, there are deterritorialized spaces even in these confined spaces with cinder block walls, but they too are always being reterritorialized. There is no truly free space.

Deterritorialization is the break down of known structures and conditions. Deterritorialization "must be thought of as a perfectly positive power that has degrees and thresholds (epistrata), is always relative, and has reterritorialization as its flipside or complement" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 54). Things do not stay deterritorialized for long as there is always reterritorialization at work. Deleuze and Guattari wrote that, "Territorialities, then, are shot through with lines of flight testifying to the presence within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (p. 55). It is these lines of flight that I am most intrigued by because "The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo" (p. 277). These in-between spaces pulse with substance and push past what appear to be boundaries. It is the improvisation within jazz and it is in these spaces that possibility exists. Deleuze and Guattari also referred to these territorialized and deterritorialized spaces as smooth and striated spaces.

Describing Smooth and Striated Space

My research question was inspired by my desire to explore the smooth and striated spaces of a classroom. The striated spaces are most like the territorialized space and the smooth space would be the deterritorialized space. These spaces do not occur as a binary; but instead, work together like a piece of woven cloth as the smooth space "is constantly being translated,

transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth

space" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 474). The striated space is the city, the shopping mall,

and the articulated and deterministic space where boundaries are plentiful. Of course, "all

progress is made by and in striated space, but all occurs in smooth space" (p. 486). The two

spaces need each other and have elements of one another as "Even the most striated city gives

rise to smooth spaces" (p.500).   They do not exist as a dichotomy as much as a weaving.

Schools mostly produce striated spaces complete with procedures, rules, and standards.

Just about every element is spoken for with very little room to play. Striated space "is defined

by the requirements of long-distance vision: constancy of orientation" (Deleuze & Guattari,

1980/1987, p. 494). Schools increasingly focus on meeting some subjective notion of what

school should seem like. It may mean implementing national standards or studying how other

countries structure their systems. There is a constant focus on orientation to some outside entity.

Within the category of striated space is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as State space. "One

of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize

smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space" (p. 385). The State

space seeks out the smooth space to take control of and incorporate it for its own means. "State

science continually imposes its form of sovereignty on the inventions of nomad science. State

science retains of nomad science only what it can appropriate; it turns the rest into a set of

strictly limited formulas without any real scientific status, or else simply represses and bans it"

(p. 362). The State is constantly seeking to colonize and co-opt what the nomad has to offer.

The public high school is certainly striated, but there are still smooth spaces, maybe

because no one is looking. In smooth space "the struggle is changed or displaced in them, and

life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries.

Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.500). The smooth space may not save us but it can offer a respite. In sitting in quiet meditation or taking a walk through a desert landscape we step into the smooth space. Leonard Cohen sang "there is a crack, a crack in everything and that's how the light gets in." The crack he sings about allows for a line a flight, or a little bit of deterritorialization. We may seek smooth spaces or even be drawn to what they have to offer but "liberation is impossible even in smooth space, but within it we might at least find different fluxes and trajectories and the possibility of further deterritorialization" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 371). Smooth space is not nirvana, but is a place to shift thinking. It is the space where the nomad exists, but is not completely free.

As striated as schools are and as striated as the role of a teacher and research can be, it is still possible to function as a nomad at times. A nomad "does not fulfill the function of the sedentary road, which is to parcel out a closed space to people, assigning each person a share and regulating the communication between shares" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 380). Every time a teacher is "off task" or willing to engage in activities that are not predetermined or striated they enter into a nomadic mode and a smooth space. Deleuze and Guattari wrote "The nomad distributes himself in a smooth space; he occupies, inhabits, holds that space; that is his territorial principle" (p.381). Nomad space "is 'smooth,' or open-ended. One can rise up at any point and move to any other" (p. xiii). It is the space of possibility.

Foucault understood the significance of space. Foucault (1982/1997) described the space of the educational institution and explained "the meticulous regulations that govern its internal life, the different activities that are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function, his well-defined character-all these things constitute a block of capacity-communication-power" (p. 338). His description leads to the idea of the

educational space existing as a block. A block where there are a range of people and functions taking place, but still a block. This description grabbed my attention because my research site was physically a square room with cinder block walls on a 90-minute block schedule. He went on to describe:

> Activity to ensure learning and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior works via a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers, orders, exhortations, coded signs of obedience, differential marks of the "value" of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy). (pp. 338-339)

As my study will go on to explain, much of what Foucault described above was made clear in my observations. Students were marked with codes or grades, they even asked for it, in order to regulate their participation and obedience. It was as if they had internalized the ensemble of processes like reward and punishment and did not know what to do without them. The space had certain activities associated with it and the expectation was that this would carry on even when I tried to create more unregulated space.

Describing a Panopticon Space

A Panopticon is a building design that Foucault had a special interest in because it is designed for control. Jeremy Bentham originally designed the Panopticon to house prisoners in the 18th century. It is shaped like a wheel with spokes and in the middle an observation tower or what we more humanely call an atrium. The intention of Bentham's design was "to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 201). Now the Panopticon design is frequently used as a model for schools. I am not sure who the inmates are at school, the teacher, the student, or both?

My study physically took place in a public high school building. Architecturally, the physical building was a classic Panopticon, designed for maximum visibility and surveillance. At any point someone might walk into my classroom, which in the original design would have been a cell. In fact, whoever the inspector may be, does not even have to walk into the classroom; he can merely look down the halls from the center tower and see all the way from one end of the building to another. Foucault (1977/1995) described the Panopticon as "a marvelous machine, which whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power" (p. 202). Its very design asserts that we should all be on task because at any moment there could an anonymous observer. Foucault (1977/1995) also described how:

> He who is subjected to visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he make them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (p. 203)

I am guilty of subjecting myself or inscribing myself in a power relationship that is part imagined and part real. I fear being in trouble at school. I am not sure who I would be in trouble with or what I would be in trouble for, but I pour over any off color remark I make or grading mistake and think; oh no, they will soon be coming for me. No one has intimidated me but I know they are watching, whoever "they" may be. It is this educational space, with the physical characteristics that I describe above, that I am interested in and how the more subtle aspects of space play out and influence what transpires in between the cinder block walls. Foucault's discussions of physical space were as much about space as they were about power.

What I Think about Power

In some research paradigms power is thought of as a negative force or something used to repress at worst, and something to be dismantled and given away at best (Freire, 1968/1970, 1994; Gramsci, 1971; McLaren, 1989). Nietzsche (1887/2001), who had a profound influence on Foucault, claimed that, "We benefit and show benevolence toward those who already depend on us in some way (that is, who are used to thinking of us as their causes); we want to increase their power because we thus increase our own" (pp. 38-39). Nietzsche posited that power infuses everything, including our attempts at benevolence. In this sense, working for someone else's emancipation can really be an oppressive act. I, like Foucault, do not interpret this as an excuse to not act. In fact, I am very much in favor of acting to shape or reshape the world.

I agree with Foucault (as cited in Crotty, 1998) who saw power not as a "reality lying there for its meaning to be discovered. It is itself a generator of reality and meaning" (p. 205). Power is not necessarily negative, but instead allows for the production of knowledge. Nietzsche "revealed the impossibility of neutral knowledge by showing thought and values to be expressions of power" (Mahon, 1992, p. 11). Power is productive and the reality and meaning it creates may be infinitely interpreted and deconstructed. This study, at times, dealt with the role of power when I described how it seemed to function in a classroom during discussions about religion as well as how it made some things possible to say, while other words were silenced. That being said, this study is not a Foucauldian genealogy, thought I appreciate that "the secret disclosed by genealogy is that there is no essence or original unity to be discovered" (Davidson, 1986, p. 224). I did not seek an essence or origins.

In my study, I saw that power created the institution of the public high school where I observed. Power infused the way the building was physically designed, the schedule of classes

offered, and even what teachers and students talked about in the classroom. It looked the way it did because certain kinds of knowledge were being created. Foucault most fully worked out his ideas of power in *The History of Sexuality* (1978/1990)*,* but it was in *Discipline and Punish* (1977/1995) that Foucault (1977/1995) posited "Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge" (p. 27). In other words, he saw power tied to knowledge and the attempt to bifurcate them as impossible. It is this "power that crosses discourses and to show that it is, among other things, the power that makes possible and legitimate certain kinds of questions and statements" (Bové, 1990, p. 57). I have the power to allow or disallow certain discourses just as my students have the ability to push back. It is this tension that creates the space in which I work and I feel compelled to study this further.

According to Bové (1990) Foucault believed that it was through the dispersing of power that actions are conducted and institutions and disciplines are created (p. 58). The only thing to do was to try to understand the power-knowledge relationship and to study its "processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up" (p. 28). As we confront the things we assume to be true power structures will surely arise. Powers will clash and some forces may overtake others. Prado (1995) wrote that, "What emerges and gains dominance not only looks to be predetermined, it is legitimized in terms of its apparent inevitability" (p. 38). It is this inevitability that I struggle against.

What I Mean When I Talk about Truth

This study did not seek some neutral truth. After acknowledging this, there was no phenomenological searching for essences. The way students and teachers talk and what they talk about convey truths, not fundamental or transcendent truths, but the truths that shape peoples' worlds. Poststructural work posits, "all 'truths' are a function of these frames; and even more radically, these discourses 'constitute' the truths they claim to discover and transmit" (Bové, 1995, p. 56). Truth is something that happens, something that one experiences, and not something waiting to be discovered. For example, if I said, "John has a learning disability," a researcher using Foucault's ideas of discourses would not assume that test scores make this statement true. Instead, the researcher would study the regime of truth or power structures that would make this statement true. More specifically, she may examine what concepts exists in the discipline of special education and how those concepts are used to assign meaning to John.

Foucault was not alone in this idea of questionable and transitory truth. It was Nietzsche who "problematized truth as intimately entwined with relations of power, who sought a multiplicity of relations of forces at the origin of our taken-for-granted values and concepts and even the things we experience" (Mahon, 1992, p. 2). According to Nietzsche, truth only exists within the structures where it exists and those structures are infused with power or "truth cannot be separated from the procedures of its production" (Mahon, 1992, p. 11). I hate to simplify this by the cliché "might makes right" but it seems applicable.

What the Body Has to Do with Research

Foucault (1971/1984) thought, when beginning research, it was important to study those things that are closest, "the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion and energies" (p. 89). The research process has been as much about my body as it has been about my mind, so when I

came across the above line I stopped in my tracks. Whether it was the physical toll that writing was taking or the practices I took up to ensure discipline to the writing practice, the body was involved. When I observed discussions in classrooms the role of the body was striking, from how students arranged themselves in desks to if and when they seemed to felt free to move around the classroom space.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977/1995) painstakingly detailed the tortures enacted on the bodies of the past. In this text he took the reader from the guillotine to chain gang. This history of punitive power through torture and ritual showed how, by starting with the body, one could locate data in the marked, incarcerated, and even self-disciplined body. The body was to be made docile and to be punished for real and perceived threats to the social order. At times the crowds that showed up to watch the spectacle sided with the prisoner and there would be a "a whole aspect of carnival, in which rules were inverted, authority mocked and criminals transformed into heroes" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 61). There were unintended consequences in public torture and punishment and the social order did not always do what the people in power hoped. These shows of power by the state or an institution could not always keep other discourses from occurring.

The body may not tell us everything, but it can tell us a lot. Think about current educational practices and how the bodies of students are managed and manifest the power relations and discourses surrounding schooling. The body tells us much about how power is working in the institution of school, from the school uniforms students wear, to the kinds of cafeteria food that they put in their bodies, to how students are physically herded and surveilled in school buildings. Foucault (1977/1995) described how "educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding" (p. 147). The

way bodies are organized in a room to how they move, or don't move across a classroom. That being said, the body is not the panacea for understanding and as Foucault (1971/1984) wrote, "Nothing in man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men" (p. 88). The body may tell us a lot but we still are limited.

Conclusion

At this point I am still mid-air, falling. I am also painfully aware of many of the contradictions within my work. This study set out to find out more about religion and how it functions in the institution I work within, my curriculum, classroom, and even my students' lives, but I am working from a theoretical framework that rebels against the humanistic and arborescent tree of knowledge that says you can learn things at all. So I am caught. I am writing a dissertation that is hierarchical in format about rhizomes that have no beginning or ends. My only option at this point was to give up or move forward through these paradoxes. I decided to move forward because I think I had enough to say to advance some kind of debate. What I got, or what I have for now, I presented and it consists of the middles.

I paid close attention to the ideas of poststructuralism as I analyzed my data, as well as the subtle, and not so subtle, elements that arose in my research design. I took a position with poststructuralism, not because it was safe or easy, but because it offered me something. It allowed me to get outside of the inscription of humanism, at least for a little bit, and free fall in a world that valued the things that I valued: uncertainty, difference, change.

Foucault (1971/1984) remarked, "There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all" (p. 8). I was feeling stuck, stuck in my

classroom, stuck in my life, but Foucault encouraged me to think differently and also to "question[s] knowledge in a different direction and describe[s] it in a different set of relations" (Foucault, 1971/1972, p. 195). It is hard to pinpoint all they ways that Foucault influenced my theoretical framework as well methodology. I credit him with opening me up to seeing schools, and the research I did there, as infinitely more complex than I originally may have. Foucault was not just an influence on me but also was extremely important to the work of French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari.

Printed across the front cover of Deleuze's *Negotiations* (1990/1995) is the famous or infamous pronouncement by Foucault that "Perhaps one day this century will be known as Deleuzian." This was meant to be a joke, but it may be Deleuze who gets the last laugh. The work of these two men spoke to each other as they often spoke to and wrote about each other's work (Deleuze, 1986/1992). Deleuze (1990/1995) said of Foucault, "I needed him much more than he needed me" (p. 83). Deleuze expressed a sense of humbled awe when discussing Foucault but saw "a lot of parallels between our work and his" (p. 85). I too understand there are a lot of parallels between Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault. By thinking with Foucault as well as Deleuze and Guattari I am just scratching the surface of a rich ontology that is as complex and multifaceted as the rhizome. I will refer back to this chapter as well as move beyond it in Chapter Three when I demonstrate how rhizomatic cartography will serve as the analytic for my research.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGIOUS DISCUSSIONS IN SCHOOLS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I saw the comedian Margaret Cho perform in Athens, Georgia where as part of her stand-up act she told the story of her travels to that evening's show from Atlanta. Coincidentally, the drive she described was part of my commute to the research site for this study. She was perplexed at what lay between the two cities of Atlanta and Athens and specifically mentioned a billboard that I knew well that simply said JESUS in bold black letters on a yellow background. About a quarter mile down the road the following billboard said Zaxby's, the name of a fast food restaurant chain. The joke rested on the tension these billboards created, where there was no way to differentiate what awaited you at the next exit or what was more important JESUS or Zaxby's. Religious discussions in school sometimes feel like this to me, with some students claiming the importance of Jesus, while simultaneously embracing other signs of unfettered consumer culture. I never can quite tell what is more important or what would await me if were to discuss that matter. It is this type of paradox that drove me to explore how students discuss religion in classrooms.

As discussed in earlier chapters, my research questions explore the relationship between smooth and striated spaces in order to understand how discussions about religion are created in certain classroom spaces. It became necessary to situate my study in a larger context and body of literature to better attend to the connections I was making. I began when I examined the most recent studies of religion in American public life. I then quickly moved to adolescents and read about the theories of religious identity and recent studies that describe the importance of religion to American adolescents. Following that, I attended to the connection between religion and

literacy and finally I concluded with the legal and political circumstances that play a role in how schools may relate to religion.

During the process of writing my comprehensive exams I conducted a review of literature that attempted to account for the current state of educational discourses surrounding Christianity and public schools. I received a number of leads from colleagues and other researchers interested in the topic of religion in schools. I was also able to use reference lists from significant studies to follow new lines of flight for my research. When the studies began to circle back, or the same references began to appear repeatedly, I wound the review down.

Religion in American Public Life

The majority of Americans, whether they are teenagers or adults, are either non-religious or Christian. Specifically, "Muslim teens represent one-half of 1 percent of U.S. teens, Buddhists less than one-third of 1 percent, and Hindu a mere one-tenth of 1 percent" (Luhr, 2009, p. 32). I do not want to downplay the significance of non-Christians in American schools and life, but for this study I worked with participants that followed the national trend and were either non-religious or Christian and will keep my focus on them. This was not an intentional oversight but had more to do with the demographics of the research site I described in Chapter Three.

The 2012 Pew Research Forum on Religion & Public Life, in conjunction with the PBS television program Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly conducted a study on religion titled "*Nones" on the Rise*. The study found that the number of adults under thirty that are unaffiliated with religion is growing rapidly. The Pew Research Study found that "Two-thirds of Americans, including 63% of the religiously unaffiliated, say religion as a whole is losing its influence on American life" (p. 23). Pew (2012) also found that "the overwhelming majority of the 'nones' were brought up in a religious tradition" (p.16). I used to think that being brought up in religion

was a sure predictor of your own religiosity, but the above study challenges this and show that religious belief in this country is in flux.

The study also claimed, "The number of Americans who currently say religion is very important in their lives (58%), for instance, is little changed since 2007 (61%) and is far higher than in Britain (17%), France (13%), Germany (21%) or Spain (22%)" (p.17). These numbers and this research create a discourse that says the United States is a country where majorities of people feel religion is important but that "the continued growth of the religiously unaffiliated is one of several indicators suggesting that the U.S. public may be growing less religious" (p.17). There are several theories for this decline including political backlash from young people who understand conservative politics to be wrapped up with organized religion (p.29). The survey supports this theory by showing that "the unaffiliated are concentrated among younger adults, political liberals and people who take liberal positions on same-sex marriage" (p.29). I began with this study because it gives a snapshot of religion in American public life. It also seems appropriate to examine the context of the country where the participants of my study live. I also wish to point out that though the Pew Study deals with adults, it demonstrates changing attitudes that may have implications for adolescents as well.

Religion in Adolescent Life

Much of what I learned while researching the topic of adolescents and religion comes from the data produced by the National Study of Youth and Religion (2005). This is one of the most, if not the most, comprehensive studies on religion in the lives of U.S. teenagers to date. The study began in July of 2002 and lasted until March 2003. The study began with "a national, random-digit-dial telephone survey of households containing at least one teenager age 13-17, surveying one household parent for about 30 minutes and one randomly selected teen for about

50 minutes" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 6). To follow up on the survey, "Seventeen trained project researchers conducted 267 in-depth, face-to-face interviews with a subsample of telephone survey respondents in 45 states" (p. 6). I am aware that a study like the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) and my own experiences can end up "forcing understandable identities, overlooking differences" (Lather, 2000, p. 20), which is a reductivist act. The discourses that emerged from the studies I described on the importance or decline of religion are constructed and are of interest to me, but it is important for me to realize that they are just part of the story. On a related note, though many mainline Protestant churches are losing members, "Conservative Protestants and Mormons have excelled at retaining young people within their traditions, and most religiously devoted teenagers who passionately adhere to their faith derive from these traditions" (Luhr, 2009, p. 71). So, there does not seem to be a single story of religion in the lives of adolescents.

I saw communities develop around religion and the practices of expressing religious belief in the school district where I conducted my study. In some cases these communities seemed very supportive to students that may not have many resources. As unappealing as some of the discourses of religion are to me, I am left wondering what will be left in some of these communities if these religious discourses shrink or go away? Will there be more homogenization at the expense of local knowledge? Will it be the discourse of materialism or neoliberal capitalism that fills in the gaps? Is that really an improvement? Will we ever be able to talk about any of it?

It has been said that to really examine the religious and spiritual lives of Christian adolescents, "We must frame that understanding in the larger social and institutional contexts of therapeutic individualism, mass-consumer capitalism, the digital communication revolution,

residual positivism and empiricism, the structural disconnect of teenagers from the world of adults" and the list goes on (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 191). This list seems thorough, but does not explicitly mention public schools.

Ways Adolescents View Religion At School

For better or worse, most American teenagers will spend the majority of their waking lives in a public school building. It is within the walls of a school building where adolescents will primarily be socialized in how they think and talk about religion. Schools have tremendous power over American teenagers culturally, socially, and, arguably, even spiritually. Researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion noted this power and stated, "Public schools have served as an effective training ground for teaching teenagers to be civil, inclusive, and nonoffensive when it comes to faith and spiritual matters" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 160). I noticed that my students adopted "a posture of civility and a careful and ambiguous inclusiveness when discussing religion with possible 'others,' especially in public" (p. 160.)

The NSYR found that "although most U.S. teenagers report that schools are not hostile to teens who are seriously religious, only about one in ten teens expresses their religious faith at school a lot" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 70). Studies have shown that many teenagers "hold in their minds a negative image of people who are too religious, which they definitely seek to avoid by muting their own religiosity" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 141). However, research also shows, "On average, fewer than one in five U.S. teens reports that other students at school generally look down on teens who are openly religious" (p. 59). This begs the question, if public schools do not seem to be antagonistic towards religious teens, then why do they not express their faith more in school?

Many teenagers seem to have a negative image of overly religious people, but they also do not feel that the school is hostile towards religious students. Although there may not be blatant attacks against religious students, it raises the question as to whether religious lifestyles are not validated and therefore something kids do not talk about in school. Expressions of faith are very limited in public schools with teenagers reporting, "65 percent do so only some or a little. Only 12 percent of religious teens report expressing their faith a lot at school; 23 percent do not express their faith at school at all" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 59). What I also found interesting was, "Most teenagers report that their school teachers avoid discussing religion like the plague and that their school friends largely act as if religion is not part of anybody's life" (p. 161). As a school teacher I can validate a tendency to avoid discussing religion in the classroom as well as the appearance of reluctance by many of my students to engage in religious discussions.

When looking at the religiosity of adolescents it is important to keep in mind the multidimensionality of religion. Religion is not one thing. It is said that there are three main dimensions of religion including, "content of religious belief, the conduct of religious practices, and the centrality of religious thought" (Pearce, 2011, p. 3). It is important to note that these layers also exist within a complex consumer society and some people "claim that youth are particularly influenced by a contemporary postmodern culture that profoundly reconfigures understandings of knowledge, belief, and moral reasoning" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 5). The multiplicity of these layers has allowed people to take various snapshots of the religious lives of teens and make sweeping pronouncements. For example:

Some suggest that religion is really a marginal factor in the lives of American teenagers, not central to their real problems and concerns. Yet others observe a growing movement

among American youth returning to religion tradition, liturgy, and historical orthodoxy.

(Smith& Denton, 2005, p. 5)

These scenarios could both be true depending on whom you talk to, and what stories you choose to listen to; though if you study the content, conduct and centrality of religion another picture emerges.

Content of Religious Belief

According to the NSYR, "About half of teens said that faith is very or extremely important in their lives, only about 8 percent said faith was not important at all," (Smith& Denton, 2005, p. 39). On a related note, "Thirty-six percent report that they feel very or extremely close to God" (p. 39). Another "35 percent report feeling somewhat close to God; 25 percent feel some degree of distance from God; and 3 percent do not believe in any God to feel either close to or distant from" (p. 39).

According to the NSYR, "Three-quarters of U.S. teens between 13 and 17 years old are Christians. About one-half of teens are Protestant and one-quarter are Catholic" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 31). This seems to reflect similar polling with adults done by Gallup and Pew (2008). In 2006, Gallup conducted a poll that found, "73 percent of Americans are convinced God exists; 14 percent believe God probably exists but have a little doubt; 5 percent say that God probably exists but they have a lot of doubt" (Nord, 2010, p. 295). In comparison to the Gallup Poll, the Pew Center on Religion and Public Life found, in a survey in 2008 of 35,000 Americans, "that 1.6 percent call themselves atheists, 2.4 percent agnostics, and 12.1 percent claim to be 'nothing in particular,' meaning that 16.1 percent of Americans are religious unaffiliated" (p. 295). On paper it would also seem that we are becoming a more, not less, religious nation.

"According to NSYR data, 38 percent of all U.S. teenagers are currently involved in a religious youth group, and 69 percent are now or previously have been involved in religious youth group" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 50). Though many Americans organize their worldviews through their religious beliefs, however, there is much research to show, "Many Americans believe that believing is enough" (Nord, 2005, p. 41). In *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know but Doesn't* (2007) Steven Prothero, chair of the religion department at Boston University, supported a paradoxical thesis that asserts, Americans in general "are both deeply religious and profoundly ignorant about religion" (p. 1). This disconnect is alarming, especially when you consider that 34 percent of Americans believe that the Bible is the literal word of God, yet many do not seem to have read the Bible (Prothero, 2007, p. 24). This lack of knowledge begs the question just what kind of Christianity do Americans subscribe to? America is a place where "religion has been privatized," (Nord, 2005, p. 41). This privatization has possibly led to the increase of religion, but also the marketing of a Christianity that merges with the modern world.

Conduct of Religious Practices

According to the NSYR, most teenagers use religion as a pick me up, or something to help them with a problem, but not something to structure your life around. For many American teenagers, "God is treated as something like a cosmic therapist or counselor, a ready and competent helper who responds in times of trouble but who does not particularly ask for devotion or obedience" (Smith, 2005, p. 149). For many teenagers, religion is just one more thing in their busy lives and "simply occupies a largely losing structural position when it comes to most adolescents' obligations, schedules, routines, and habits" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 161).

Americans' religious pluralism may be overstated, as well as the diversification within the faiths, but tolerance does seem to exist, even in some unlikely places. About half of their teens say that many religions may be true; more than one-third say it is okay to practice multiple religions; more than one-quarter believe people should not try to evangelize others; more than one-third say it is okay to pick and choose one's religious beliefs and not accept the teachings of one's faith as a whole; and nearly two-thirds say a person can be truly spiritual without being involved in a church (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 77).

Researchers charged with the National Study of Youth and Religion were so taken with the lack of religious strife between teenagers, as well as the lack of a coherent religious framework of many they studied, that they created new terminology to describe what they saw. They called the kind of religious thought prevalent among adolescents Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. They define Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as:

> Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is about belief in a particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines our general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one's affairs--especially affairs in which one would prefer not to have God involved. (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 164)

The God of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is kind of like a self-help guru who believes in a morality "that means being nice, kind, pleasant, respectful, responsible, at work on self-improvement, taking care of one's health, and doing one's best to be successful" (p. 163). This morality of pleasantness is supposed to pay off in a person being successful in life.

There is no official religion called Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, but "It seems that the latter is simply colonizing many established religious traditions and congregations in the United States, that it is becoming the new spirit living in the old body" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 166).

There is no official doctrine, nor is there a dependence on keeping Sabbath, serving your fellow man, sacrifice, grace through suffering; "Rather, what appears to be the actual dominant religion of U.S. teenagers is centrally about feeling good, happy, secure, at peace" (p. 164). This emphasis on feeling good, instead of obedience to doctrine led researchers to claim, with the exception of Mormonism and American Judaism, "We have come with some confidence to believe that a significant part of Christianity in the United States is actually only tenuously Christian in any sense that is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 171). It was not through what teenagers said in interviews for the NSYR, but in what they did not say that tipped researchers off that the defining attributes of Christianity might not be grounded in historical or Biblical Christianity.

In the interviews for NSYR, there was little talk about core tenants of Christianity by respondents who consider themselves Christian. This conclusion was reached after interview transcripts were coded to search out, "Teenagers who made reference to specific subjects or phrases of interest. We found, first, that relatively few U.S. teenagers made reference to historically central religious and theological ideas" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 167). Teenagers hardly made any mention of obedience, service and sacrifice, or loving thy neighbor as thyself. Very few spoke of Christianity in terms of a personal transformation or a seeking of a higher truth or obedience to a higher power. So, much of the core of historical American Christianity just did not come up. The researchers believed that

> The language, and therefore the experience, of Trinity, holiness, sin, grace, justification, sanctification, church, Eucharist, and heaven and hell appear, among most Christian teenagers in the United States at the very least, to be supplanted by the language of niceness, and an earned heavily reward. (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 171)

This language creates a new reality and teenagers either do not know the difference between the more traditional interpretations of American Christianity or they accept the modern edition. This is evidenced in that most "attending teenagers rate their religious congregation with high marks for teaching them what they want to know about their faith" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 65). Overall, teenagers seem satisfied by what they are learning at church, but how would they know what they aren't learning? In fact, "Adolescents seem to merely absorbing and reflecting religiously what the adult world is routinely modeling for and inculcating in its youth" (Smith, 2010, p. 43).

Popular Culture, Christianity, and Power

Research shows that popular influences the literacies and lives of adolescents (Alvermann, 1999). Christianity and popular culture may seem at odds with one another but there are many overlaps. Hagood (2002) pointed out, "Though often left unrecognized and unaddressed, popular culture and pleasures also include a world of images and lifestyles associated with religious lives" (p. 139). Hagood's (2004) study of two adolescent girls who "used religious paraphernalia in efforts to assume identities created for them and to construct their own niches," (p. 145) is a fascinating study of how complicated religious identities can be as well as the power and discourse that allow or suppress religious identities. Hagood also explored how these girls negotiate and reconcile the intersections of adolescent life, popular culture and Christianity and discovered that religion is treated very differently in schools depending on the situational tensions at play.

An incident that demonstrates this power dynamic is when one of the girls, Rosa, wears a shirt with the Virgin Mary on it and is made to turn it inside out after a teacher tells her that she is not allowed to wear religious clothing to school. Rosa, who is Catholic, interprets the

experience to mean her beliefs are not valued at school and, from that point on, carefully guards her faith from the people at school. On the other hand, the other girl in the study, Tee, is part of a school culture that supports her belief system. One implication of this is that Tee's friends carry teen Bibles to school, which makes Tee also want a teen Bible. She buys one and it becomes a book that she enjoys reading, including doing so publicly (Hagood, 2002).

I consider these same patterns, and am fascinated by this type of affiliation, in the students of my school. Hagood's work is of interest to me not because of the emphasis on popular culture but because of what it says about power and silence. Many of the students that participated in my research study were very involved in their church communities and participated in after school programs as well as weekend church and study groups. These students may or may not choose to share this aspect of their social life in class, which is where power comes into play. Hagood's case studies made me curious about when my students feel empowered by their religious identification and when or if they feel silenced.

Describing the Connections Between Religion and Literacy

It is no longer sufficient to say that literacy is only reading and writing. Studies on the connections between literacy and video games (Gee, 2003), as well as literacy and popular culture (Alvermann, 1999) showed us that literacy is more than just reading in school spaces and needs to be purposeful and connected to students' lives. Despite reports by conservatives in the 1980's that literacy was in crisis, we know that literacy consists of more than basic skills (Hirsch, 1988; Ravitch & Finn, 1988). Literacy "cannot be understood without consideration of the multiple and varied contexts that influence access and opportunity" (Willis, 2002, p. 11). Literacy is contextual and texts are always in flux (Street, 1984).

Research supports the notion that religion has a role in literacy (Graff, 1987; Resnick & Resnick, 1977). Despite the prominent role of religion in the lives of many teenagers, "Very few efforts to better understand American adolescents take seriously their religious faith and spiritual practice" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 4). I wanted to learn about my students' religious lives and the spaces that hold meaning for them because religion is integral to many of my students' connections to literacy. It has been documented that school literacy can be in conflict with non-school literacy (Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000; Gee, 1996) and I am left with the question of whether it is possible to create a culture of dialogue in which we talk about religion in the classroom.

As described earlier, this study is poststructural and "takes the position that there is no essential or 'natural' way of doing reading and writing, but that literacy's many meanings and forms are products of culture, history, and discourse" (Kapitzke, 1995). Literacy is always a creation of a time and place that are infused with power. When I sought out studies that specifically dealt with the religious culture of the southern region of the Untied States I came across Willis's (2002) journal article titled, *Literacy at Calhoun Colored School 1892-1945*. This study was of interest to me because Willis disentangled the "multiple, interwoven, and interdependent contexts that influenced literacy access and opportunity within and beyond the specific period and geographical location to contemporary spaces" (p. 11). Willis's work used a Foucault-inspired genealogical approach to examine the historical conditions of literacy in the South as well as the interconnections of literacy, Christianity, and power. Though she is talking about a different time and community within the South I still found her work helpful and connected to my own efforts to understand how religious discussions were playing out in the spaces of my classroom.

Attempts to Increase Religious Literacy in Schools

On September 15, 2001, a man seeking revenge for the attacks of September 11th 2001 shot a Sikh gas station owner to death. The victim, Mr. Sodhi, was assumed to be a Muslim Arab because of his turban and beard. This type of hate crime, fueled in part by ignorance, has prompted some to call for more religious dialogues as well as religious education. Some believe that "Religious illiteracy is, in short, being recognized more and more as a public problem that public schools ought to address" (Rosenblith, 2010, p. 17). Many secular scholars now believe that there is a place, and even a need, for religion in a liberal public school education (Feinberg, 2006; Noddings 1993; Nord, 2005; Wuthnow, 2005). Although some, like Charles Haynes (2006) from the First Amendment Center, a center devoted to supporting the First Amendment based out of Vanderbilt University and the Newseum, have said that partisan politics is behind the drive to include topics like the Bible in the curriculum, arguments in support of Bible courses in the public schools have gained traction from religious and secular groups alike. Nord (2005) pointed out that, "What is completely missing is any effort to require students to understand live religious ways of understanding the world" (p. 190). The question remains as to whether it is even possible to educate for religious understanding, or what understanding would even mean, when fundamentalist both religious and secular may not be open to dialogue.

Nord did not promote a Christian agenda. In fact, he said, "Modern science (or secular humanism) provides us with the most reasonable account of the world, all things considered" (Nord, 2005, p. 191). His trepidation concerned a belief that secularization in public education was so powerful and exclusionary that students would be hard-pressed to think any other terms. "We systematically and uncritically teach students to make sense of the world in exclusively secular categories," (Nord, 2010, p. 5). Other scholars have argued that we may even be on the

verge of mostly unintentionally, yet systematically, indoctrinating students into a secularized worldview that holds scientism, consumerism, individuality, and even the nation-state, as sacred (Cavanaugh, 2011). The divisiveness surrounding Biblical literacy can also be found in all manner of textbooks. For years, companies have struggled with how to write about world religions with any meaning or authority. Ravitch (2003) pointed out that, "Religion presents a special problem for texts; they can't avoid acknowledging its significance but they take care not to offend believers. Usually they do this by blurring the line between religious legends and historical fact," (p. 144). While textbooks may not completely silence religion, by presenting so little information both teachers and students are left to decipher on their own its role in human history.

Christian Literacy

At one time I tried to avoid dealing with the intersections of religion, especially Christianity, in my own classroom until St. Pierre (2012) told me to attend to the places of discomfort because that is where I would have agency. Working in the places where I was stuck led me to what Eakle (2006) called Christian literacies. These are literacies that are based on perceptions of Christian texts like the Bible, as well as popular Christian novels, films, and audiobooks. Christian literacy is not the major focus of much recent research and I only became interested in it because poststructuralism encouraged me to re-examine my own beliefs and opened me up to seeing, as Lyotard (1979/1984) wrote, "Scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge" (p. 7).

To find out more about Christian literacies, I found it helpful to read an ethnographic study that focused on literacy practices in a Ugandan village. In Lyster and Openjuru's (2007)

article *Christianity and Rural Community Literacy Practices in Uganda* the researchers examine

the role of literacy in people's lives, but specifically how religion factors in. Literacy

development in Uganda, like much of the African continent, has roots in missionary movements

dating from colonialism to the present day. The Christian religion has encouraged many literacy

activities, though not all sects have had the same level of success. For example, Catholic

churches placed more emphasis on recitation than reading, whereas the Anglicans encouraged

those considering conversion to learn to read the Bible. It is through the understanding of this

history that the context of current literacy practices in this community can be understood.

    Though Uganda is on the other side of the world, I think there are major implications for

my work in the Southern region of the United States because Christianity is heavily embedded in

rural sub-Saharan African life, just as it is in the southern region of the United States.

Though public schools in the United States are secular, personal religious practices like

reading the Bible have implications for where I teach and have been largely ignored. As Eakle

(2007) points out, "Christianity and its literacies are an important part of everyday life in the

United States, and they may have effects on multitudes around the world" (p. 478). Seeing what

practices exist and how they shape the community where I teach is a first step to a better

understanding of these literacies.

    In *Literacy Spaces of a Christian Faith-Based School,* Eakle (2007) explored issues of

power and literacy in Christian fundamentalist faith-based educational spaces in a rhizome-

inspired study. The author uses both empirical data as well as qualitative methods to investigate

the ruptures, distances, and lines of power between the experiences of adolescents involved in

activities both inside and outside of the classroom. Eakle's work is directly connected to my own

and enabled me to think more about what constitutes data and the possibilities of its use. Like

Eakle, I used Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of the rhizome, specifically rhizomatic

cartography, to map religious discussions in my classroom.

Ways Religion May Benefit Adolescents

Re-incorporating religion into public school settings is fraught with conflict, but research

has shown multiple benefits for students who are engaged in religious life. Overwhelmingly, the

research supports positive correlations of adolescents involved with Christian churches and their

relationships to education. For instance, "Higher church attendance leads to more years of

education" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2010, p. 148). Of course, there could be other factors

that contribute to this relationship, such as the higher rate of church attendance of two-parent

families, which may also contribute to more years of education. Studies also show that "better

educated people generally had parents who attended church services twice a month or more"

(Stark, 2008, p. 184). We also read in study after study that "church attendance during

adolescence helps to mitigate a number of the harmful long-term effects of a disadvantaged

childhood and leads to better educational outcomes across the board" (Stark, 2008, p. 185).

Research on the urban black community has also tried to identify if church indeed offers

any type of inoculation against poverty, gangs, and drugs that have plagued many communities.

As far back as "Twenty years ago Richard Freeman, a Harvard economist, found that black

youths who attend church were more likely to attend school and less likely to commit crimes or

use drugs" (Micklethwait &Wooldridge, 2010, p. 147). These kinds of studies probably

contribute to the perception that the church has contributed to positive changes in America and

especially in the black community. These studies also further suggest that public education might

be strengthened through church attendance.

Parents, likewise, think there are benefits to involvement in religion and church and have used these institutions to achieve "prosocial outcomes for their children, to help their kids be more healthy, safe, and successful in life" (Micklethwait &Wooldridge, 2010, p. 148). There is a belief that religion does people good and many parents want their children to reap the benefits. Religion is seen as something that can help children succeed and be well adjusted in life.

Constructive elements of religion can be discussed at length, but the cultural capital that church attendance provides is also worth noting. As a high school social studies teacher I can identify the connection between students who possess strong biblical literacy and those with a strong understanding of Western history. This is "simply because familiarity with the Jewish and Christian (and Greek and Roman) traditions is a precondition for truly understanding Western history, civilization, and culture" (Smith & Denton, 2005, p. 246) and provides adolescents with cultural capital in the classroom.

Describing the Legal and Political Conditions of Religion in Schools

A much-noted paradox in the United States is that "We seem to be the most religious nation in the advanced industrialized West but at the same time appear to be blatantly, even aggressively, secular" (Reeves, 1996, p. 18). On paper, the United States is a very secular nation with Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists serving as a cornerstone when invoking the idea of "building a wall of separation between Church & State" (Jefferson, 1802). As the scholar Nord pointed (2010) out,

> The United States is a very religious country in terms of belief in God, comparatively religious in terms of commitment to religious institutions, but it is quite secular in terms of its public institutions--in part a consequence of our historic decision to separate church and state constitutionally. (p. 21)

There have been three major phases of religion in the public schools. These phases are not clear-cut, like a layer cake, but instead are more like a marble cake with layers blending into each other. The first phase is what is called the evangelical Protestant phase, which traces from the nation's first public schools until the 19th century. The second phase, which can still be found in some schools despite court rulings to the contrary, involves what some describe as nondenominational or generically religious practices, such as posting the Ten Commandments or having prayer at school functions. The phase that most schools exist in currently is the secular phase (Lines, 1984, p. 4). There are many reasons cited for the shift to secularization, ranging from an emphasis on the utilitarian nature of schools to an interesting theory that posits that nationalism took supremacy over religion.

When liberalism spread through Europe and the United States it worked to bar "allegiance to any and all controversial political, religious, or moral belief or doctrines, or on pain of indoctrination" (Carr, 2007, p. 661). Secularization and an emphasis on the supremacy of the nation-state dates back as far as the 18th century, when schools began to preach a new kind of faith--faith in the new nation and faith in liberty and democracy. In *Migrations of the Holy: God, State and the Political Meaning of the Church*, Cavanaugh (2011) theorized, "The nation-state needs the constant crisis of pluralism in order to enact the *unum*. Indeed, the constant threat of disorder is crucial to any state that defines its indispensability in terms of the security it offers," (p.53). This theory suggests that allegiance to the nation could either unite the nation, or at least be manipulated to appear to unite the nation, which had the effect of making sacred the nation itself instead of Christianity.

Constitutional Contexts of Religious Discussion in Schools

Beginning in the 1960s, the Supreme Court developed rulings in regards to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment that had the effect of excluding religion from public school settings. The 1962 case of *Engel v. Vitale* dealt with the legality of prayer in school. The court opined:

> Because of the prohibition of the First Amendment against the enactment of any law "respecting an establishment of religion," which is made applicable to the States by the Fourteenth Amendment, state officials may not compose an official state prayer and require that it be recited in the public schools of the State at the beginning of each school day--even if the prayer is denominationally neutral and pupils who wish to do so may remain silent or be excused from the room while the prayer is being recited.

> (p. 370 U. S. 422-436)

This decision marked an official shift in the United States from a country that tolerated religious discussions in public schools, as long as they were non-denominational in nature, to a position that was more secular.

The second case defining the court's interpretation of the Establishment Clause was *Abington Township School District v. Schempp (1963),* which dealt with a devotional Bible reading at the start of each school day in Pennsylvania. Writing for the majority, Justice Tom Clark created a two-part test to assess if the purpose of the devotional Bible reading was to advance or inhibit religion. The court maintained that there is a difference between "devotional Bible reading, which is unconstitutional, and the academic study of the Bible and religion-or to use the Court's language, teaching about religion-which is constitutional" (Nord, 2010, p. 163).

The *Schempp* decision laid the groundwork for the first two parts of what became known as the Lemon Test, based on *Lemon v. Kurtzman 1970* that dealt with states providing financial support to non-public schools, including partially funding teacher's salaries and supplying curriculum materials. Based on the Lemon Test, the courts found that it was not constitutional to support religious schools. The test goes as follows: "First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; finally, the statute must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion'' (Nord, 2005, p. 117). The Lemon Test is still widely employed when the issue of religion in public life appears.

Secularization may be a concept that once resolved a problem, but it now may be "we need to invent ways in which our different knowledge traditions can coexist rather than displacing 'theirs' by 'ours'" (Gough, 2007, p. 287). The only way I think it is possible to get away from this displacement is through resisting essentializing discourses in the first place.

The Christian Right And Public Schools

The groups that seem to be most critical of the role, or lack of a role, that Christianity has in public schools are Christian fundamentalists and Christian evangelical conservatives. Christian fundamentalists, "typically understand the world as being caught up in a cosmic war between the forces of good and evil" (Nord, 2010, p. 14). The word fundamentalism comes from a collection of essays called *The Fundamentals*, published between 1910-1915 in the United States, with the goal being "to determine what was fundamental to Protestant Christianity" (Nord, 2010, p. 13). For the most part the fundamentals were seen as "the virgin birth of Jesus, his miracles, his atoning death, his Second Coming, and perhaps most important at the time, the inerrancy of Scripture" (p. 13).

Evangelicals have a long history and have been or are a part of almost all American Protestant religious denominations. Currently, self-identified conservative evangelicals tend to adhere to traditional or orthodox views on issues liked inerrancy of the Bible, a belief in moral absolutes and have a high degree of faith (Smith, 1998). When Christian fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals have targeted the public school curriculum, it has been mostly on "evolution, values clarification, sex education, stories in literature anthologies, and the role of religion in history textbooks" (Nord, 2010, p. 178), all of which are "related to a much larger assemblage of values, fears, and commitments" (Apple, 2001, p. 146).

Evolution came to represent many conservative Christians' anxieties over modernity and, "in a society increasingly deferential to scientific opinion, some conservative evangelicals acted to keep creationism alive by seeking scientific evidence for the Genesis account" (Larson, 1989, p. 92). Despite the divisive, and at times unscientific, nature of these theories, scholars such as Nel Noddings (1993) have promoted a compassionate and nuanced approach when broaching the issue:

> As science teachers, they have a special obligation to pass on to students the most widely accepted contemporary beliefs in science together with the evidence used to support them. But as educators, they have an even greater responsibility to acknowledge and present with great sensitivity the full range of solutions explored by their fellow human being. (p. 144)

Noddings is not alone. Other scholars have called for more openness and a dialogic approach (Apple, 2001; Fraser, 1999; Nord, 2005). Some have noted that "religious people have been marginalized and driven into the arms of political conservatives, who are not otherwise their

allies, to that degree educational liberals, secular and not quite so secular have failed" (Fraser, 1999, p. 239).

Organizations like the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools (NCBCPS), founded in 1993 by Elizabeth Ridenour, are working to get the Bible included as part of school curriculum. However, this group is not interested in fostering a pluralistic understanding of religion and does not want the Bible taught in a comparative fashion. Instead, they have been accused of advancing a more evangelical position that seems more closely tied to views of the late Rev. Jerry Falwell and the 1970s conservative movement he founded called the Moral Majority (Malikow, 2010, p. 2).

It was Jimmy Carter, a Southern Baptist as well as a Southern Democrat and former president of the United States, who "persuaded millions of Evangelicals who had hitherto been leery of politics to vote for him," (Michlethwait & Wooldridge, 2010, p. 103). However, that love affair was short-lived. When the Justice Department in the Carter Administration attempted to "enforce antidiscrimination laws at Bob Jones University, a fundamentalist college in Greenville, South Carolina, many evangelicals regarded this as governmental incursion into the evangelical subculture, which had been so carefully constructed in the decades following the Scopes Trial," (Butler, Wacker & Balmer, 2011, p. 393). After feeling let down by Carter and continually disappointed on issues like abortion, conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists started to mobilize and create an infrastructure to politically promote their causes. The Reagan Revolution carefully courted the Religious Right, including Falwell and the Moral Majority, and crafted a message to include fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals. Leaders like Ralph Reed soon emerged and formed the Christian Coalition, which believed that the "religious right

should focus on local races for parent-teacher associations and schools, rather than the big political prizes," (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2010, 105).

The rise of the Christian right has not been smooth, but instead tumultuous wracked with scandal and organizational problems. Despite their difficulties, they have managed to create a massive political infrastructure that has lobbied and litigated. One of the groups within the movement, the Alliance Defense Fund, has "notched up more than twenty-five victories before the U.S. Supreme Court and hundreds more before the lower court" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2010, p. 107). There was also a success when George W. Bush, who was seen as an Evangelical, took office. In 2004, when Bush ran for reelection, "Evangelicals provided roughly 40 percent of Bush's total vote," (p. 112). Many evangelicals were disappointed that Bush did not go further with his plan of giving taxpayer money to religious organizations for the administration of public services or taxpayer funds to support religious schools.

Conclusion

In 2006, Georgia was the first state in the country to offer public school students an academic class on the Bible (Associated Press, 2011). When my administration asked if I would teach the Bible course, I realized that I could not bring myself to do so despite possible educational benefits and my belief that a course on the Bible could be a wonderful complement to my World History class. The risks were just too great for misunderstanding. For some "religion, religious belief and religious education are a private disgrace and a public menace" (Carr, 2007, p. 671), and though I do not put myself in that camp, I was wary. My own fears told me that evangelical students are anti-intellectual and intolerant of anything but socially conservative belief systems and that teaching the Bible course would be a nightmare encounter with fundamentalism; however, my subsequent work with evangelical Christian students has

complicated my own prejudicial notions. This research is designed, in part, to further disrupt and rupture what it is I think I know.

In my attempts to be a classroom teacher who keeps a clear division between the secular and the religious, I wonder if I have unintentionally yet systematically indoctrinated students into a secularized worldview that holds scientism, consumerism, individuality, and even the nation-state, as sacred (Apple, 2001; Cavanaugh, 2011).

The American public school is, in many ways, an arm of the state and the markets (Apple, 2001). Though public schools in the United States are largely secular, personal religious practices still exist and have implications for the community I researched. As Eakle (2007) points out, "Christianity and its literacies are an important part of everyday life in the United States, and they may have effects on multitudes around the world" (p. 478). Seeing how students discussed religion and what spaces those discussions occur in may provide a better understanding of how we attend to religion in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

INTERPRETATIONS

"We create monsters and then we can't control them."

-Joel Coen

As a result of my theoretical shift away from humanism, where the emphasis is on the human subject, I did not try to capture the experience of the classroom participants in discussions as much as the conditions that made the experiences possible. In Chapter One I introduced a theoretical framework that relied heavily on the oeuvre of Deleuze and Guattari as well as Foucault and explained my understandings of some of their major theories. While Deleuze and Guattari did not create a method, their concepts of the rhizome and rhizomatic mapping suggest a way to move past traditional representation and break down the divide between subject and object.

I employed *transcendental empiricism,* which explores how experiences are possible (Bryant, 2008). Transcendental empiricism is not concerned with knowledge but instead with thought. Where knowledge makes us believe we have understanding and a framework, thought is in flux. When I tried to create knowledge, information someone could use, I deconstructed it almost immediately and nothing stuck. Instead, when I focused on thought, even though it was fleeting and momentary, I felt like I could discuss the conditions that created thought or the expression of that thought in my classroom discussions on religion. So, when I conducted this research and created the maps in this chapter I focused on the conditions of experiences.

I also describe how I created the possibility to understand my classroom dynamics differently when I used Deleuze and Guattari's (1980/1987) concept of the rhizome (as opposed to an arborescent model of research). The rhizome works at the surface and is not a deep structure. The rhizome is open and connects to experiences, thoughts, and concepts outside of itself. The rhizome allows assemblages, or multiplicities with heterogeneous conditions to be created rather than hierarchies and dualities. The rhizome can be connected to other rhizomes, so when I map and write about the rhizomes in this chapter, they may connect to other rhizomes of other people or experiences. Just as ants form rhizomes or send out new shoots, this work sends out new shoots every time it is read. The concept of the rhizome eventually led me to *rhizomatic cartography*, a figuration or analytic tool I used to think about the rhizomatic space where discussions of religion occurred in a high school classroom.

Rhizomatic cartography involves mapping conditions of experiences. For example, in this study I mapped the conditions that produced discussions on religion in a high school social studies classroom. Rhizoanalysis and rhizomatic cartography have been used in literacy research (Alvermann, 2000; Hagood, 2004; Kamberelis, 2004; Leander, 2006) but, like the rhizome, there are multiple openings for additional work. Hagood (2004) explained rhizomatic cartography as a figuration that allows the researcher to "move beyond coding and categorizing data in order to redescribe and to represent concepts differently" (p. 145). Hagood's 2004 study, which I described in Chapter Two, involved rhizomatic cartography and adolescent construction of the self. She used a figuration, which she constructed and defined as "an analysis perhaps best described as one of coming and going, of offshoots and new directions" (Hagood, 2004, p. 145). She was able to identify connections and ruptures that may not have been apparent using other analytic tools. I used rhizomatic cartography as an analytic method between current lived

experience, past relationships, subjectivities, and discourses. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987; Hagood, 2002, 2004; Eakle, 2007). I was not separate from my study, a neutral observer, but became a participant, part of the rhizome. Subsequently, this study moved away from a traditional humanistic qualitative methodology toward an ontology where "one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outsider" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 23). I came to believe that I was not an outsider in this work but was part of the rhizome I analyzed and, "There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)" (p. 23). The division fell away and text was not privileged, interviews were conducted and discarded, and it all became about the rhizome, within which I existed.

Rhizomatic cartography allowed me to work from within, across, around, and outside of texts and concepts as I mapped spaces and power relations. "Rhizomes are maps with multiple entryways" (Hagood, 2004, p. 147) and because of this I lead the reader in and out of the map in this dissertation through my writing. I subscribe to the belief that writing is thinking (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Fecho, 2011). According to Deleuze (1986/1992), from Foucault we learn that "to write is to struggle and resist, to write is to become, to write is to draw a map" (p.44). It was in the writing that I became a mapmaker. It is through writing that I "learn something that I did not know before I wrote it" (Richardson, 2001, p. 35). Writing is how I moved through the study and discovered things I did not know existed and thoughts that I did not know I could think. "*Writing is a method of discovery*, a way of finding out about yourself and your world" (Richardson, 2001, p. 35). Writing is how I learned about the rhizome and mapmaking.

The maps I included were drawn from classroom discussions on religion that occurred in my sophomore Honors World History class composed of seventeen 15-year olds—eight boys

and seven girls. One student did not participate in the study and did not explain why she chose not to, and I, out of respect, did not ask. This specific classroom situation was conducive to mapping because the class was comparatively small, the students were generally articulate, and they seemed to enjoy discussing religious topics.

For this research study, I obtained permission from the county school district to study this particular class of students as well the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) that engages in the oversight of working with human subjects. Of course, the federal laws and local policies that enable IRBs are themselves striations in what might be considered normal teaching practices. After receiving approval to begin my study, I spoke with my students using a written script that described the purpose and expectations of those who participated (Appendix, A). I also discussed confidentiality and provided minor assent (Appendix, B) and parental permission forms (Appendix, C). After receiving 17 of the 18 forms, I created lessons that provided enabling conditions for discussion about religion. I audio recorded and simultaneously taught the eight class sessions that dealt specifically with religion and then used the concept of the rhizome to analyze the discussions. Since I was in the position of both teacher and researcher, I was unable to make notes while I taught and relied heavily on the transcripts from the audio recordings for analyzing and mapping my data. My dual roles of teacher and researcher were a challenge, but that made me more aware that the researcher is never separate from the study. I was a part of the rhizome.

In most cases, I transcribed each of the eight class sessions, which took place over three months, either immediately after or within a week of when the class occurred. The sooner I transcribed, the more quickly I moved through the recordings because the words were still fresh in my mind. I transcribed the discussion portions of class word-for-word and only left out the

parts of class that dealt with classroom routines, like announcing a school food-drive. When I finished the transcriptions, I printed them and placed them in a binder by date along with supporting lesson plans, student work, and other relevant classroom artifacts like handouts or readings I assigned the class that day. I listened to parts of recordings later and repeatedly read transcripts and made notes when I began to map.

Once all data had been transcribed, I began to create maps. At first the process was systematic and chronological; I took out the binder, looked at the first day of the study and attempted to draw my first map using Microsoft Word. I began with the transcript, student work, artifacts and a blank Word document. My plan was to use text boxes and shapes to map those parts of the classroom discussion that seemed significant. See the example below:

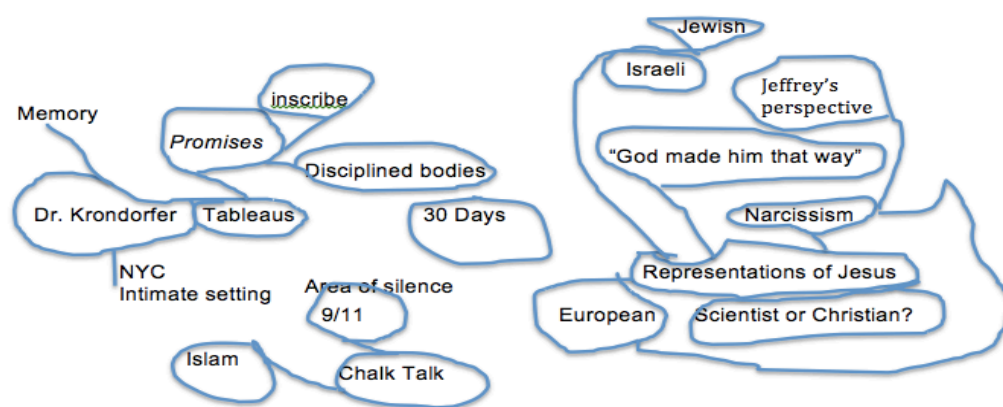*Figure 1. Example of early Word document map.*

While combing through my data, my maps functioned as pathways; understanding that "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to" (Geertz, 1973, p. 9) and that data and analysis are always intertwined. What some conventional humanistic qualitative researchers would call the data of

my classroom—the transcripts, student work, and various connections—functioned as analysis and it became "impossible to separate data from analysis" (St. Pierre, 2011). Data and analysis existed together and I studied their relationship and the related conditions.

I eventually became frustrated with this process because Word did not allow sufficient flexibility or fluidity. At the suggestion of a colleague, I bought a 24-sheet, 18 x 24 inch sketchpad. I mapped each of the eight class days on a separate sheet of paper, using materials from my binder (transcripts, lesson plans, student work, and artifacts). The sketchpad provided flexibility, openness, and the randomness of a classroom because "The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted, to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 12). My maps included words students spoke in discussion as well as words I used to describe the connections I made to the content of the lesson plans. Eventually, I mapped conditions that may have produced those words. For example, I mapped the term *Bible Belt*, which was not spoken in student
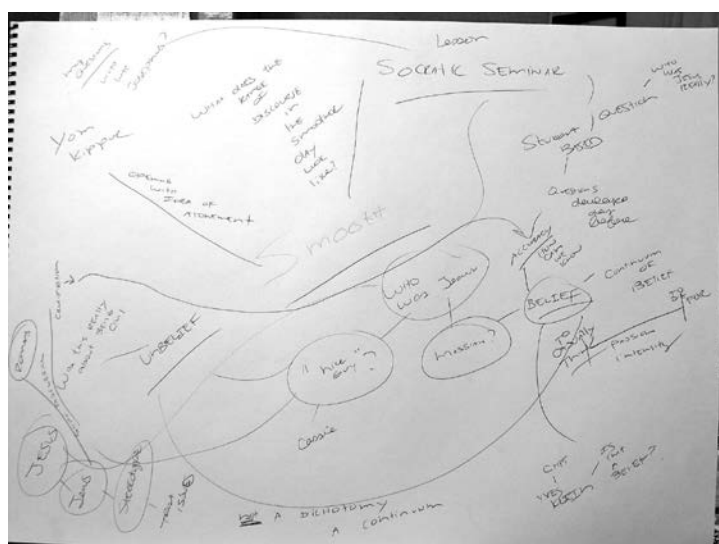
discussion and did not appear in my lesson plans but refers to a characterization of the region where my study occurred and my early expectations about what kinds of discussions might be produced. The sketchpad helped me but was not the tool I found the most suitable.

Figure 2. Example of map created in sketchpad.

When I wrote an early draft of this chapter based on my sketchpad sketches/maps, a chronological organization no longer worked, especially as I considered the characteristics of smooth and striated space. Thus, I combined the eight maps in order to understand how the class days and discussions connected. Next, I transitioned from my sketchpad to PowerPoint and began to create a single map in a PowerPoint slide. As I transferred parts of all eight sketchpad maps to one map, I reviewed characteristics of the rhizome described in Hagood's (2004) list that I included in Chapter One, such as "Points on the rhizome need to connect to something else" (p. 145). I set my binder aside and focused my attention on my sketchpad and what I wanted to transfer to the PowerPoint map. This work was also analysis. I included conditions and concepts, like school demographics, that seemed to pertain to the overall rhizome of my classroom.

I then created a key for the reader to help explain some specific aspects of the rhizome: smooth conditions, striated conditions, lines of flight, and ruptures. I enclosed the predominantly smooth conditions in boxes composed of a dashed line, which implies penetrability. Striated conditions are enclosed in boxes with solid lines to show rigidity. The weights of the striated lines vary based on how rigid the element seemed at the time. Lines of flight are marked with an arrow, and ruptures are represented with an inequality sign. I hope these explanations are helpful, but no map is complete, and no key can completely unlock the rhizome that is the map, but it is not incomprehensible.

The more I wrote, the more I mapped. The more I mapped, the more I wrote. Every time I worked on this chapter I added material to the map. The map was a process that did not end because the rhizome was so dense and continued to grow. I did not worry about adding too much because the "rhizome never allows itself to be overcoded" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 9). I could not follow every line of flight but tried to describe as much as I could within the

rhizome. At any point, one comment in a class discussion could send out a shoot that led to something else. Alvermann (2000) noted that "texts functioned outside themselves" (p. 117) and that "texts, like rhizomes, connect with other things" (p. 117). The rhizome kept growing and sent out shoots to other rhizomes. At times rhizomatic cartography seemed to turn on me but then I remembered the map was a monster of my own making.
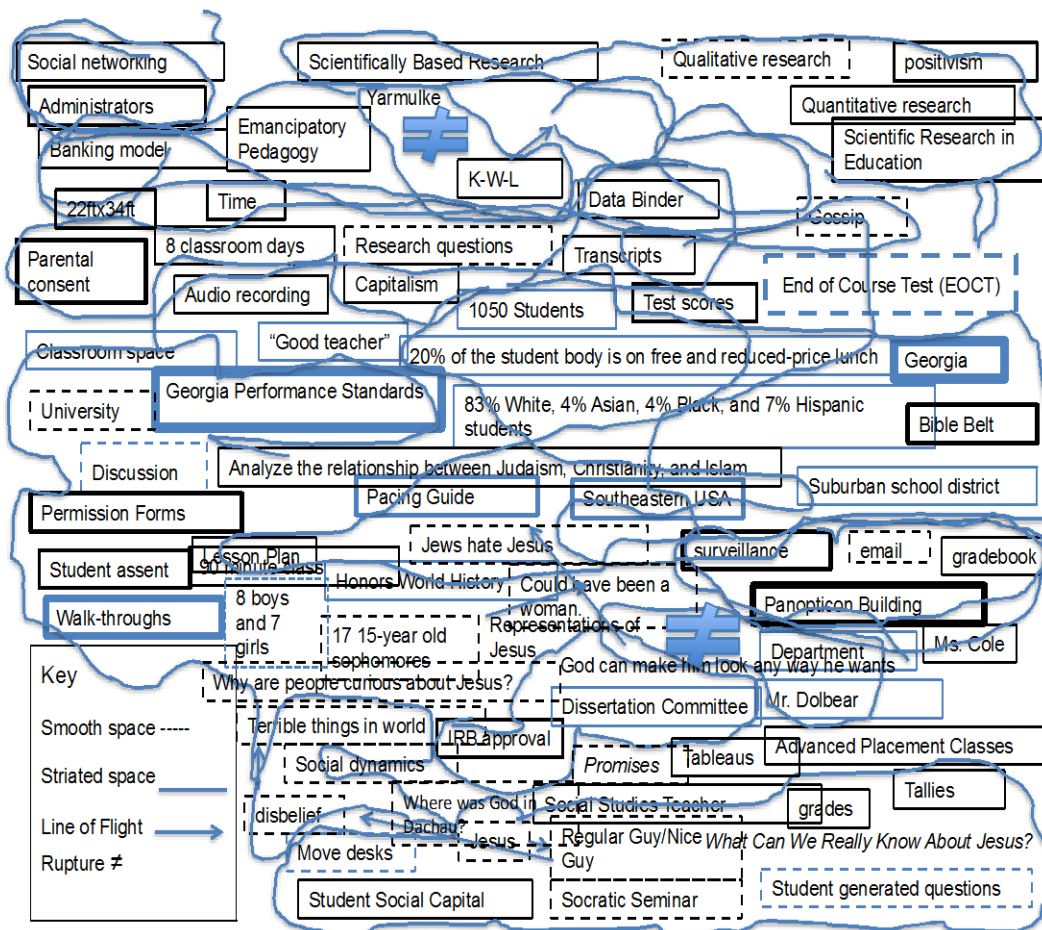
Map

Figure 3. Map of rhizome.

The map is my analysis, not a *representation, a mirror image,* of something that existed

prior to mapping. As Kamberelis (2004) explained, "A map produces an organization of reality

rather than reproducing some prior representation of reality" (p. 165). The analysis began with

my preparation for class discussions. In my mind I knew the kinds of conditions I wanted to

produce in the classes. For example, I knew I wanted students to discuss the historical figure of

Jesus and how historians have shaped the narrative of his life. The analysis continued when I

transcribed and then read through transcripts, student work, and artifacts from class. The more I

worked the texts and ideas that I connected with those texts the more I mapped. The process, as

I described above, was generative as the map fueled my writing and my writing inspired my

map.

Tracings

Tracings exist on maps, but are only one element of what a map charts. For example, a

minor interstate on a road map is a tracing. It is one element, but it is not the map nor does it tell

anything about the landscape. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) instructed, "Make a map, not a

tracing" (p. 12). I made maps which are different from tracings in that they are experimental and

do not attempt to recreate reality. On the other hand, "The tracing replicates existing striated

structures" (Kamberelis, 2004, p. 165). Tracings perpetuate reductivist concepts. I run the risk of

creating a dualism when talking about tracings and maps. Much like the relationship of the

rhizome to the tree, tracings and the map are not binary. Tracings exist on the map. Deleuze and

Guattari (1980/1987) wrote largely in metaphor, and they described how "accounting and

bureaucracy proceed by tracings" (p. 15). Tracings seem to be fated when we talk about things

like personality types or disorders. Freud's Little Hans (discussed in Chapter One) tried to break

out of Freud's analysis, but his psychoanalysts kept "blocking his every way out, until he began

to desire his own shame and guilt, until they had rooted shame and guilt in him" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 14). He was forced to exist as a tracing. Tracings are not to be excluded from maps that are rhizomes. In fact, "These tracings are part of the rhizome and should always be put back" (p.13). When I put the tracings back on the map, I take part in what Deleuze and Guattari called decalcomania, which I describe below.

Decalcomania, a term borrowed from art, explains how a drawing is created on special paper and then translated to porcelain or some other surface. I employed decalcomania in my cartography work. The words of my participants were tracings, like photographs or X-rays. After selecting these tracings, which represented something more complex. I used decalcomania and put the words that were tracings back on the map. Decalcomania is putting the tracings; in this case the words, back on the map. For example, this occurred when I mapped the discussions of a K-W-L activity as well as a Socratic Seminar. I did not physically transfer all of the transcripts of classroom discussions to the map, nor could I represent the students who uttered the words. Instead, I performed decalcomania when I chose portions of text, a tracing, which I worked into other concepts in the rhizome.

Decalcomania can be dangerous because it may give the impression that the tracing is the substantive part of the map. The first few times I used decalcomania in working with the transcripts from my classroom discussions, I lost sight that they were tracings and treated them as if they were rhizomes or maps. I gave my participants' words too much authority. The tracing can structure the rhizome but it is not "reproducing something else it is in fact only reproducing itself" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 13). The tracings are a part of the map but they should not be confused because tracings are structural and maps are not.

In my description of analysis that follows, I periodically reterritorialized this dissertation and returned to my research question: *How might Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome help me think about the smooth and striated spaces in classroom discussions about religion?* Of course, a research question is very striated or "limited in its parts, which are assigned constant directions, are oriented in relation to one another, divisible by boundaries, and can interlink" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.382). I striated my own study out of necessity to move through dense terrain. As Honan (2007) wrote, "The rhizomatic journey is not the urban trudging along a concrete pavement but, rather, a trail that may connect to other trails, diverge around blockages or disappear completely" (p. 535). The research question kept me focused, but I still took detours.

I organized this chapter into two categories that roughly describe smooth and striated space, but they bleed into each other. Smooth and striated spaces are interconnected, and not dichotomous. Space is not a container but something that is produced and even in the striations of a city laid out on a grid smooth spaces exist (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Since a rhizome is not subject to chronology, the analysis of this study was also not chronological. I attempted to keep the sections that follow from becoming too tangled when I moved between smooth spaces and striated spaces that occurred in the rhizome of my classroom at different times and on different days. I also noted that there are lines of flight in both spaces as well as movements of reterritorialization and deterritorialization.

Striated Space Encounters Smooth Space

In Chapter One I described Deleuze and Guattari's concept of smooth and striated space. The terms smooth and striated are not dualistic because each contains the other and there is a constant tension between the two concepts. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote that striated

space "is defined by the requirements of long-distance vision: constancy of orientation, invariance of distance through an interchange of inertial points of reference" (p. 494). Schools are institutions that produce a mixture of smooth and striated spaces. For example, there is smoothness in the last days of school when standardized testing is completed and teachers begin to relax, compared with the striated Monday mornings when students have homework due and teachers have content to cover. Words like standards, accountability, transparency, and measurability that are casually thrown around school spaces imply striated space that is organized for production and not necessarily becoming. "What is both limited and limiting is striated space" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.382) even though it is necessary at times. Though I am drawn to the smooth, deterritorialized, or nomadic space, I recognize that to be productive and to get things done I also have to work with striated space. In the sections that follow I describe many of these striations including State space, the research site, and surveillance culture in schools, and explain how these conditions were connected to classroom discussions on religion.

State Space

I include State space under the heading striated space though they are not synonymous. When I write State space I am referring to the Deleuzoguattarian concept discussed in Chapter One— a space that tries to take over nomadic space in order to perpetuate itself. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) "One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space" (p.385). The State reigned over this study on multiple levels as it mandated curriculum and standardized testing in my school and academic conventions in my doctoral studies. The high school social studies classroom where this study took place and the

university that trained me to do this research both produced State spaces. When I mapped, I included the State spaces I describe in this section. I begin this discussion with what I believed were conditions that created State spaces.

Scientifically Based Research. Research is not a monolithic activity but another rhizome full of multiplicities. On the map, I included a rhizome of research. The words scientifically based research is enclosed in a box consisting of a solid line that indicates striations. Scientifically based research (SBR) came from the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 and refers to attempts by factions within the U.S government and private business to define what works in classrooms. It largely influenced the discussion in my classroom because it supposedly determined the curriculum and the kind of classroom space I designed. The intent of SBR is to control everything from the research that produces rigorous curriculum in schools to the research conducted by doctoral students.

In line with the idea of SBR was the 2002 National Research Council report, *Scientific Research in Education* that advocates a view of science that is deterministic and interested in certainty. This type of positivist science in only one kind but as St. Pierre (2011) wrote, "Science is not one thing but a highly contested concept whose meaning and practices shift across philosophical approaches and historical and political moments" (p. 614). The science of SBR contrasts with the science that places an emphasis on experimentation and a rejection of truths in favor of theories that can always be overturned. SBR is grounded in positivism. Paradoxically, when schools rely exclusively on positivism there is little room to develop the creative mind.

Our epistemologies and ontologies are not ahistorical but are grounded in our culture and dispositions. Ideas about truth, knowledge, and reality are debated, and there is a power struggle

to privilege realist ontologies and eradicate postmodernism. This leaves postmodern research in a dangerous position. However, as Foucault pointed out, "If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do" (as cited in St. Pierre, 2006, p. 256). Despite the striations created by SBR there is space to work around it as my rhizome does.

Georgia Performance Standards. One way that State space was explicitly imposed in my classroom was through the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) that dictate the Honors World History curriculum. The standards reflect thinking that assumes that every social studies teacher in Georgia will interpret a standard (e.g., "Examine the rise of women as major world leaders; include Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher," World History Performance Standards, 2011) in the same way and design appropriate curriculum to achieve that interpretation. Some believed the GPS in social studies were to be phased out and replaced by the Common Core initiative but this has not happened.

Included on the map is the standard that striated the discussions on religion in this study, "Analyze the relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam." The standard does not explain how to accomplish that analysis, thus leaving the work up to the teacher, an almost impossible task. Some scholars spend their entire careers studying just one aspect of one of the three major monotheistic religions. If I were true to the pacing chart I created, the daily plan of what I must accomplish each day in order to teach all of the standards in one semester, I would have completed this analysis in a couple of days. But that was not what occurred as my study unfolded. The striation of the pacing chart, noted on the map, gave way to smoothness as I amended my plans and gave in to what was happening in my classroom. I will now consider other conditions that created striated spaces in our classroom discussions.

The Site

Several striations noted on the map reference physical space, such as the Panopticon building and the classroom. This study was conducted in a high school located in a suburban school district near the small college town of Athens, Georgia. This area is also known as the Bible Belt because of an emphasis on Christianity throughout the region. The phrase *Bible Belt* itself is an example of striated space. For example, when Michigan recently legalized gay marriage, my nephew (who goes to school in Ann Arbor) attended his teacher's same-sex wedding. I was curious and asked my students if they could imagine it being acceptable in our community to attend a teacher's same-sex wedding. The majority of the students said no. This is not to say that things are not changing, but there were no openly gay teachers or students (that I knew of) at the school, and teachers who lived with partners outside of marriage mostly kept that arrangement private. There was also an emphasis on the value of traditional nuclear families and traditional gender roles.

At the time of the study, the school had an enrollment of more than 1,050 students and was growing. The student body was made up of 83% White, 4% Asian, 4% Black, and 7% Hispanic students. Approximately 20% of the student body qualified for free or reduced-price lunch, an indicator of low family income. In some ways it is a homogeneous school as well as fairly affluent. About 44% of people in the county over the age of 25 had at least a bachelor's degree. The school offered a rigorous academic program that included 16 Advanced Placement classes. Of the 2012 graduates, 67% said they were going on to attend a four-year college (AdvancED, 2013). These characteristics are included as words on the map that I enclosed as striations because they are signifying factors. For example, if students or I tried to claim that the

school was racially diverse, the statistic that the school was 83% White would challenge that notion. The demographics striate, in that it limits or contains how I write about the space.

The school seemed productive and organized. Teachers arrived early and stayed late and there was a procedure for most tasks they were asked to do. Students seemed to understand what was expected of them academically and behaviorally and were for the most part largely docile and compliant. The school produced high school graduates who mostly went on to college. It was competitive and much of the conversation among teachers and administrators focused on high-test scores, making classes "rigorous," and increasing student participation in Advanced Placement classes.

Time

Foucault (1975/1977) wrote that the timetable was the "old inheritance," referring to its use in monasteries and factories where it imposed rhythms and order (p. 149). The timetable defined what we did in a day at school. For example, on days when I lectured, I moved through material in an efficient manner and felt productive. When I created these striated spaces they were oriented toward meeting future deadlines or teaching material before an assessment and the bell that dictated movement in and out of the classrooms approximately every 90 minutes, as noted on the map, was also a striation.

I never seemed to have enough time. Every day I had to make choices about what to keep in my lesson plans and what to leave out. I had to make decisions about what kind of space to produce. The first thing to be cut was usually any kind of activity or discussion. When I was running behind, I almost always lectured to make up for lost time; in effect, I territorialized the space. If I had had more time, or less content, my class would have looked very different and the conditions that existed in the room would certainly produce different discussions and space.

Surveillance

Power at the school was exerted and made evident through a range of surveillance tools that kept the students and teachers on task and controlled. Foucault (1977/1995) wrote, "The exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce the effects of power" (p. 171). The architectural design of the school was a Panopticon, designed for surveillance, as I described in Chapter One. The Panopticon created a space where I thought I could, as the cliché says, "just close my door and teach," but ultimately I was always surveilled. For example, it was not uncommon for administrators to conduct walk-throughs, appearing in classrooms unannounced to observe. I experienced many walk-throughs and though none resulted in punitive action, they were just one of multiple opportunities and techniques for surveillance and observation, which I describe below.

Email was used as a tool for surveillance and control. For example, the attendance secretary would rebuke me via email if I was late in submitting attendance data, and the administration emailed the number of photocopies each faculty member made each month. We were told this was not intended to embarrass anyone, but we were listed by name starting with the person who made the most copies. Not surprisingly, we all compared our copy numbers with each other. Another kind of surveillance that affected students and teachers was that my online gradebook was always accessible to students and their parents. On more than one occasion, a parent emailed me to ask for more information about an assignment within an hour after I entered a zero in the gradebook. This type of parental oversight made my job easier but it was definitely a tool for control and observation. Within this context, however, email also created a

smooth space for teachers to critique policies or vent about impending changes and directives with colleagues.

Teacher and student gossip was also a powerful tool for surveillance and reterritorialization. Gossip, rhizomatic in nature and hard to manage, frequently occurred during breaks in the day and produced both smooth and striated spaces. There was gossip among students and teachers about who was a "good teacher" and who was lax. Teachers sometimes inquired about their colleagues from students and then disseminated that information to other teachers, which imposed a kind of hierarchy. A good teacher was described according to the banking model "in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 1968/1970, p. 72). The good teacher was the expert, controlled the space, and was an efficient depositor of knowledge in her students. On more than one occasion I had an interesting or provocative discussion in my class that another teacher commented on later in the day. Idle chatter like this sent a powerful message to me that we were constantly being surveilled, even by students who enjoyed our classes. At faculty meetings or staff development sessions, administrators and workshop leaders focused on an engaged pedagogy that was inquiry based, but the power of high-stakes assessments and a general atmosphere of competitiveness regarding these measurements kept this from being a reality and kept the banking model firmly in place.

Many teachers, students, and administrators also participated in surveillance when they texted, snap-chatted, tweeted, and instagrammed throughout the school day, and I included those practices in the upper left portion of the map. It seemed that whenever we did something remotely interesting in class the students wanted to film or photograph it, which quickly ended my desire to keep the space open. I believed many of my students were more interested in surveilling and documenting than in participating in the class's work. Everyone, administrators

and other teachers as well, tweeted frequently. Surveillance dominated the physical space of the

Panopticon that was the school building, but despite the overwhelming striations, some classes

had an open and trusting quality to them.

K-W-L

In one of my classroom discussions on religion I used an International Reading Association

(IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) endorsed teaching protocol called a

K-W-L to begin my lesson (IRA/NCTE, 2014). The K-W-L is a chart that asks students first to

write what they *Know* and *Want to Know* about the topic they will study that day. At the end of

the class, they add to the chart what they *Learned* about the topic. I used the K-W-L chart to

learn what students already knew about Judaism, the first of the three monotheistic religions we

discussed in that unit. I thought K-W-L would enable smoother spaces of becoming because I

accept Derrida's (1967/1976) suggestion that, **"**We must begin wherever we are" (p. 162). I

quickly realized I actually created a striated classroom space when I used the K-W-L chart that

allows only bulleted, concise statements that can be shared publicly, or at least with the teacher.

In addition, each element of the K-W-L chart is separate and cannot be integrated with another.

The K-W-L was largely striated because it "closes off a surface and 'allocates' it according to

determinate intervals, assigned breaks; in the smooth, one 'distributes' oneself" (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1980/1987, p.481).

Prior to teaching that class, I thought I used the K-W-L to encourage connectivity between

students' school lives, (or the lives they spent sitting in a desk) and their lives outside of school. I

later realized the striated nature of a public classroom as well as my teaching methods and the

overall lesson did not encourage students to freely make connections (Deleuze & Guattari,

1980/1987). When I studied the transcripts, I noted that I quickly tried to steer the conversation

back to what I wanted to address and not necessarily what my students wanted to talk about. I arborified the conversation and thus killed their desire to participate. I particularly did this when I watched the time, which was the ultimate striating force. As a teacher, I thought about productivity and my desire to move the class to some independent work so I could take roll and check my email. I also wanted to be productive and collect the K-W-L charts so I could put a grade in the gradebook for that day.

Students largely produced institutionalized knowledge on their K-W-L charts (Foucault, 1971/1972). They knew information about Judaism that many young people their age would be expected to know, for example, they knew what Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs are, they knew the major Jewish holidays, and they recognized the Star of David. Students also knew that the Jewish population of Europe was targeted in the Holocaust. On their K-W-L charts, they often referred to Jews or followers of Judaism as *They*. I was not entirely sure what that meant, but I think they were not sure what to call Jews. In the past I had noticed that students sometimes giggled when I said the word Jew, as if it was derogatory.

Student responses in the Know section of the K-W-L mostly focused on school knowledge, but when I mapped the Want to Know section of this particular lesson, the first of the eight days of my research, I realized the rhizome ruptured. When I analyzed the transcripts, I noticed that the word *yarmulke* flavored a large part of the discussion. This began when we discussed the Want to Know section and a student asked how to spell yarmulke, and, though I'm a good speller, I fumbled. At that moment I no longer seemed to be an expert on Judaism and the rhizome broke. I indicated this rupture on the map with the symbol $\neq$. "A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 9). The new rhizome, enabled by my misspelling of

yarmulke, became a space where students moved away from institutionalized knowledge. For example, one student asked a practical question, "How do you run in a yarmulke?" Another student answered, questioningly, "You get a Nike yarmulke?" This may seem to be trivial talk, but this is the kind of conversation students engage in when they felt freer. Students demonstrated that even in striated space there were conditions that produced non-institutionalized knowledge that I did not expect. I describe one of those instances below when we discussed interpretations of Jesus.

Representations of Jesus

The day after the K-W-L lesson on Judaism we began exploring the idea of the historical Jesus. I started class with a PowerPoint slide show that included six different historical representations of Jesus, though I initially did not tell students that it was Jesus at all. I included the words, "representations of Jesus" on the map to indicate this discussion. They figured out it was Jesus after a couple of slides, but until they did, we had an interesting discussion. When I first showed students the earliest depictions of a Middle Eastern- followed by an Eastern European-inspired Jesus and asked them who it was, Mary Ann guessed that it was Abraham. Erika answered that the image was a prophet and Kane asked if it could be Saint Peter? To that Erika responded, "It doesn't have wings." I finally told them it was a portrayal of Jesus.

Once students realized the game I was playing, the discussion changed. The third picture I showed them was a darker skinned (almost black) Jesus, which prompted Hunter to say "That's probably closer than the other two because the other two probably European because they're narcissistic and they think he's white." Hunter made a bold assertion that basically bodily representations of Jesus were influenced by the power of the intended audience. Then Brenna chimed in that "He was born in Bethlehem so that's in the Middle East so Middle East people

usually have tan skin." Just when I thought the students were all headed down the same path,

Sally threw me for a loop when she asked, "Do we know if, like, for sure Jesus was a guy?

Because he could have been a woman." I mapped this response because here was a line of flight

I did not expect. I thought I would challenge students and now they challenged me. Sally

questioned the presumption that Jesus was a man. Her comment showed a different way of

thinking but I did not have a great answer and then the rhizome rupture when she concluded:

> But the Bible says Virgin Mary so it wasn't from her so God can make him whatever he
>
> wants him to look like cuz he technically was not a descendent from any of them there.
>
> He could be white or he could be completely black.

After Sally added this dimension to the discussion, the conversation took a turn away from the

historical and arguably scientific into the pseudo-religious. I was out of it—not only did I not

have a good explanation for how we know Jesus was a man (if he was), I had no response to

Sally's claim that God could make Jesus look however he wanted without sounding as if I did

not believe in the authority of God. The conditions of teaching in the Bible Belt, and in a society

that has a tradition of the separation of church and state, made this discussion space precarious.

The conversation became more intense, at least for me.

The next line of flight shot out when Kane said, "God made Jesus look more like the

people around him. But since he was placed in more of a Jewish community. Maybe that's why

the Jews hated him because he looked different from the Jewish people around there." Here was

another line of flight. This was not a new idea in our class. Despite my repeated attempts to

territorialize this line of thinking and show that Jesus was Jewish as were his first followers,

some students resisted or contradicted that idea. Kane described Jesus as being placed in a

Jewish community but not being from of that Jewish community. He also returned the

discussion to this idea that Jesus was hated by the Jews, but this time he claimed it was because he did not look the same as other Jewish members of the community.

I was agitated. Hunter, who also seemed agitated by the turn in conversation, asked the question "So, are we studying him as like a scientist or as a Christian?" This was a provocative question and I decided to step in and try to get the students to put their thoughts on paper. I asked students to write a response to the questions: *Why are there such different representations of Jesus? Which one is correct and how do you know or do you know and what information are you using to decide?*

After I gave students time to write their responses I asked for volunteers to share. Brenna began and said "I put none of them are correct because nobody knows what Jesus actually looks like so." Hunter stuck by his earlier line of reasoning and added "I said the last one was probably the most geographically and historically correct depiction of Jesus, but it's probably not the correct picture of Jesus. But he is definitely Middle Eastern and possibly Israeli."   I wish I had stopped the discussion at this point to ask him what he meant when he said Jesus was Israeli because it was the closest anyone had come to recognizing Jesus as Jewish but I watched the clock and moved on. Laney was along the same lines as Hunter and said, "I think the most recent picture is more accurate. This is because of all the information gathered about him. They are able to formulate a more realistic picture so as time goes on, people are becoming more logical as to what he really looks like." She described a picture of Jesus that reflected the characteristics that geneticists believe Jesus would have had based on the region and time period.

The more scientific view did not last long and Kevin added what seemed to be the other dominant position, which was, "We don't know because God created him and he could have made him any way or any race." When the students were going back and forth about the validity

of genetic testing and the subsequent image that resulted from this genetic theory, Jeffrey (who was one of the only students in the class who was not White) commented, "It could be less accurate for the fact that he may have been born there but that doesn't mean he is from that or this race." Jeffrey seemed to claim that just because you were born in an area and lived in an area did not mean that you would look like the people of that area, just as he was born in Georgia but looked Asian and not white like the majority of people in the school.

The discussion and subsequent mapping offered much for me to think about. I was not interested in discovering what Jesus looked like but in the conditions that facilitated my students' discussion on the representation of Jesus. When I mapped this discussion, I saw contradictions. Some students contradicted themselves, some contradicted each other, and some contradicted my expectations. Students, like Hunter, seemed willing to believe Jesus was someone different from them and allowed for Jesus to be of a certain place and time. Other students seemed to think God directed everything including what Jesus looked like. Students produced a Jesus that was dependent not on me but on them. Maybe they thought of him as they thought a Christian would think or maybe an historian.

The conditions that allowed this kind of discussion to occur were partially due to me. I started the discussion with my slide show of different portrayals and was provocative. The fact that I led the charge probably opened up space for students to think different thoughts. What was important to me was that there was a range of beliefs and, though I was factor, I was probably just scratching the surface of the conditions that produced that range. In the next section, I discuss other conditions, but this time in a smoother space.

Smooth Space Encounters Striated Space

In the previous sections, I mapped and described some of the striated spaces of the classroom rhizome. I determined that even in the most striated State space, smooth spaces were produced. One might think of smooth space as the space that is not spoken for, though it is always on the verge of being taken over. For example, during my career as a teacher, we once had a one-hour lunch period every day. That space was free for students to get extra help, take a longer lunch, go the library or do whatever they felt they needed to do that day. However, whenever the faculty and administrators talked about the daily schedule, that space was threatened and quickly territorialized. It eventually became a special remediation time, and lunch was reduced to twenty-three minutes. The time was striated and absorbed into the other striations of the day. In the sections that follow I explore smooth space but realize that even in the smooth space striations occur. I begin with a discussion of how smooth space can exist in State space, then examine Nomadology, and finally map a smoother class space of a Socratic Seminar where there is room for the Deleuzoguattarian idea of becoming that I define and explain.

State Space

State space is striated but even there smoothness can be produced. As I described earlier when I wrote about the Georgia Performance Standards, State space can have a territorializing effect or ability to take over free action or smooth space to serve the state. However, even in the Georgia Performance Standards is smooth space because there is no mandated way or order in which teachers have to teach the standards. There is also no end-of-course test or high-stakes assessment at the end of the World History course. These factors allowed for smooth spaces to be created within the striation of my world history course. They also allowed more flexibility in

how I, the classroom teacher and researcher, shaped my lessons. When I made lesson plans and taught, I lingered in some areas and condensed other content to make more time and space for topics that seemed to engage my students in my history classroom. In mapping those conditions, I indicated their smoothness by the dashed lines around the words on the map.

Striated space is where requirements get done as opposed to the smooth space which could be, for example, like the time between classes when students flow into the hall and for a few minutes are free rather than confined to desks in a classroom. The space does not stay free long, however, as students begin to translate the space for themselves and teachers and administrators move in to produce striations. We may not accomplished much required work in the smoother spaces of class, but there was a quality of free space that I identified when I analyzed why and how the space functioned the way it did. The smooth space is where the nomad is thinkable.

Nomadology

Schools are largely striated, but when I think more nomadically I can identify some open spaces. The nomad suggests images of movement and freedom but that is not what I mean when I say nomad or describe Nomadology. Instead, the nomad represents the possibility of redefining oppressive conditions through reterritorialization. For example, I can make the GPS accomplish my own goals in addition to those of the State. The nomad understands how to negotiate spaces. The nomad is not entirely free, and there is no truly free space, but there is deterritorialization and reterritorialization. As a social studies teacher I understand that history does not always appreciate the nomad because "history is always written from the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus…even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is Nomadology, the opposite of history" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.23). In order to bring a

little Nomadology into my history class, I used a smoother, more rhizomatic and regional approach to teaching world history.

To do that, I stopped teaching one overarching chronological narrative of the history of the world and instead taught regionally. I approached history regionally because it was too cumbersome and complicated to teach the entire history of the world in one unified narrative that did not take into account differences across civilizations. When I divided the world into regions and then moved from early civilization to the modern era, themes began to stand out to students. For example, I began with the continent of Africa, in Olduvai Gorge where the Leakeys discovered the extinct hominid Australopithecus. Their discovery prompted a discussion in class about the origins of civilizations and the research methods used when studying the past. We then transitioned to modern Africa and studied globalization, resource allocation, and depletion as well as terrorism and religious extremism. I then shifted back in time to the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East and then to the present in that region. I continued in that fashion through Asia, Europe, and the Americas. By the end of the semester, students had learned about each region and the significance of events like colonialism and imperialism and how they affected every corner of the world.

I lectured less in my Honors World History class than others because I did not feel the same time pressures because there was no state-mandated end-of-course test. I frequently used more student-centered teaching methods, like the Socratic Seminar, in which students investigated beliefs and ideas through discussion and questioning. The Socratic Seminar that I discuss in depth in the next section was a teaching method that produced smooth spaces. In a dissertation that questions humanistic ways of knowing, it may seem odd that I used a teaching method so steeped in a humanistic tradition. But I can only say that much of my life and career

has been full of these theoretical and practical incongruities. That is not meant to be a cop out but I have not successfully developed a "post" teaching pedagogy and for this project wanted to really examine normative spaces. In the next section, I describe a Socratic Seminar not because it signifies some reality of lived experience but because I wanted to understand what it was possible to speak in my classroom.

Socratic Seminar

The class worked through the history of Christianity during three class periods that I taped and transcribed, but it was the day we had a Socratic Seminar that stood out to me because of the smoothness of the space. This class was the only one of the eight observation days with a sustained student-centered discussion space. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote that "all progress is made by and in striated space, but all becoming occurs in smooth space" (p. 486). The Socratic Seminar allowed the class to shift from progress-oriented routines to a space where becoming was possible. The day before the Socratic Seminar occurred we addressed Jesus as an historical figure as well as the beginnings of Christianity. I used a reading called *What Can We Really Know About Jesus?* to provide background on the historical evidence related to early Christianity. We then shifted from the historical to the Socratic Seminar where students could probe ideas and concepts without a pre-determined conclusion. For example, using this method, I might ask an open-ended question such as why people want to know about Jesus as an historical figure, encouraging students to respond as they liked. I do understand that students never feel free in a classroom; however, after some time, students did seem to respond more easily.

The Socratic Seminar required a foundation and structure in order for students to be prepared to lead the discussion. I laid ground rules for the discussion, including asking students not to interrupt each other. The day before we began the Socratic Seminar, students generated

questions about Jesus as an historical figure. I combined their questions into PowerPoint slides to help organize the discussion. Clearly, this introduced striations, but they seemed helpful.

I projected their questions onto the screen at the front of the room, though they were not bound to them. This was also a striation I enacted to reassure any administrator conducting a "walk-through" that there was an underlying structure to the class. The following are questions the students asked:

- Are the gospels as reliable as they seem?

- How do you think the views of people changed the way the Bible was written over time?

- Could you identify any given truth in the gospel?

Many of their questions seemed to call for definitive answers. For example, "Who was Jesus really?" or "Could you identify any given truth in the gospel?" Here was the search for truth that I had long since given up on because it was based in a positivistic assumption that there was a truth to be found. To Foucault (1972), and to me, "Truth" is "to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements" (p. 133). Searching for the "truth" in what the gospels said would not result in finding a universal truth as much as finding interpretations of statements that were possible within a context. When I typed the questions, I was curious whether the students would seek the same kind of certainty in discussion that they asked for in some of their questions. I also questioned whether I had I locked them into a defined and positivistic kind of discussion space when I asked them to generate questions.

Students also asked questions that showed openness to interpretation, such as, "How do you think the views of people changed the way the Bible was written over time?" This question allowed for the possibility of outside forces, not an inerrant God, to play a part in how the

gospels were interpreted or perceived over time. Students worked through their own ideas

instead of just rehearsing the memorized terms and timelines I gave them.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) described how "smooth or nomad space lies between

two striated spaces: that of the forest, with its gravitational verticals, and that of agriculture, with

its grids and generalized parallels" (p.384). The discussion unfolded between the questions that

were generated and the ground rules and norms I set. Once we all seemed to understand the

purpose and parameters, I asked students to move their desks into one big circle and I positioned

myself on the outside to observe and record. This physical act of moving desks and repositioning

bodies was intentional and I mapped this. As the teacher I was still in a position of surveillance,

but my students were faced away from me and toward each other, creating the striated spaces

that the smooth space of discussion opened up in-between.

I do not think it is possible to be the "objective social scientist who thinks herself capable

of producing disinterested truths, and maintaining a safe distance between herself and the

research participants" (MacClure, 2010, p. 2). I do not believe I can be an objective voyeur who

manages to stay detached from my participants, but I do think I can lessen the degree to which

the research relationship is in some way exploitative or intrusive. When I write about the high

school students that were participants I attempt to ascribe those characteristics that are key to

describe power or context because this study is not about the human subject, but about how

certain conditions make it possible for discussions to take place. In many ways the Socratic

Seminar was a performance enabled by the power relations in the rhizomatic space, and I had a

role in it as much as the students.

Territorialization. I tallied how many times each student talked, more striation on the

map, because it increased participation among students, especially those who were very grade

oriented and were used to striated space. Students were expected to speak five times to earn a 100 for a daily grade. I could then put a grade in the gradebook for the day and prove that I was a productive teacher if surveilled by a parent or administrator who wanted to see results from the activity. Also, some of the students pleaded for me to grade them which "made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding" (Foucault, 1977/1995, p. 147), demonstrating that even when I tried to create a smooth space, surveillance and striations continued.

The Socratic Seminar is a striated structure, but as the map indicates there were many openings for smooth or nomadic space. I began by asking students why they thought people were so curious about Jesus' life. A student named Kane, who tended to talk a lot, responded, "We want to know more about him because of our culture and because of our peers and because of our surrounding environment." Students offered a few directions, or shoots, from which further discussion could occur. Hunter, a very popular boy with lots of social capital, used Kane's response to send out a line of flight, "So, now we know why we want to know who Jesus was. Who do you think Jesus was or what do you think Jesus was?" I suspect Hunter's shifting of conversation had less to do with the content of what Kane said and more to do with Kane's tendency to dominate conversation, a frequent complaint in the classroom's sideline gossip. I mapped the word "social dynamics" to represent this tension and I am sure there others I didn't capture. I was reminded "Deleuze and Guattari move us to consider how social life and social foundations are an outcome of dynamic connections" (Leander, 2006, p. 41). Hunter asserted that Kane's response provided all we needed to know about why we are interested in Jesus and, with a deft turn, directed the discussion toward unpacking who or what Jesus was, at least in the opinions of his classmates.

Deterritorialization. In Chapter One I described deterritorialization as "the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 508). For example, in response to the question of who Jesus was, Cassie, a girl who was less traditional than many of her classmates (for example she played guitar in a rock band) stated, "I think he was just a regular Jewish guy that taught people and, like, a great man or preacher so people, like, looked up to him as a messiah." Cassie's comment connected to Hunter's question, but also sent out a line of flight, as noted on the map, in that this idea of a "regular Jewish guy" deterritorialized Jesus or at least his status as deity. Her interpretation that Jesus that was not particularly religious provided another shoot for dialogue.

At this point Kevin, seemingly a traditional boy involved in Future Farmers of America, surprised me by saying, "I agree with Cassie on that." However, it's not clear exactly what he was agreeing with. Did he agree with the implication that Jesus was not descended from God or did he just agree, through his interpretation of the words *regular guy*, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, or just as Cassie stated a "great man." In ambiguity lies complexity. Kevin's response not only suggested a new direction for the class discussion, but also might suggest a new direction for Kevin's perspective on Jesus.

The key here is that, despite my rather striated start, the Socratic Seminar opened the lesson into a smoother space. After I transcribed that lesson, I mapped my original question that asked students why they thought people were so interested in Jesus. What I learned is that students responded to each other and, in doing so, the dialogue continued to shift in other directions. As Bakhtin noted (1975/1981), response and understanding are dialogically merged; this assertion is vividly demonstrated in the exchange. All four students took turns responding to and then owning the direction of the dialogue. I didn't prompt those shifts. All I did was count

responses. Before long Kane was back in the fold when he created a line of flight that took nice

guy Jesus in a different direction into the realm of disbelief.

On the map I note that disbelief was addressed before a discussion of belief. The role of

disbelief and the concept of post-faith are also the current project of many theologians and

philosophers (Caputo, 1997b, 2001; Kearney, 2010; Lundin, 2009). None of the students went

so far as to directly say that they did not believe in God or Jesus, though Cassie came closest by

eluding that Jesus might have been a regular person. A couple of students seemed to echo what

Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor asserts in *A Secular Age* (2007), "The shift to secularity in

this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is

unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option

among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace," (p. 3). Many students seemed to assert

that Jesus and belief were not easy to embrace, and the class began working through disbelief

and produced theories of why people might not believe in Jesus.

The smoother, more deterritorialized space of the Socratic Seminar, seemed to enable

discursive practices that tolerated disbelief and even, in a way, justified it. Deleuze and Guattari

(1980/1987) stated that "The absolute of religion is essentially a horizon" (p. 382), but in this

smooth space the horizon was further in the distance than it might have been in a more striated

space. Perhaps, also, students's explorations of why people do not believe in religion pushed the

horizon further away.

Kane remarked that Jesus' niceness was unbelievable and was a factor in disbelief, which

allowed the discussion to shift from talk of Jesus being a regular guy to disbelief. Erika

contradicted Kane and said, "We have nice people in the world today still," which initially

seemed to reflect her sincere beliefs. However, viewed in the context of her later comment,

"Everybody wants to know more about the bad things than the good. That's probably a downfall, which is why Kane believes that there's more bad people in the world today than there were back then," may have demonstrated the growing tendency of the students to dispute Kane at every opportunity. Of course, I will never know that for sure.

Hunter's remark, "You hear more about the bad than you ever do the good," threw out a new rhizome, shifting from Jesus' niceness being unbelievable to the terrible things happening in the world and society's focus on bad news. It is interesting to consider whether Hunter's defense of Kane's position was accepted by his classmates because of his social capital or because of his added twist–placing the blame on what we "hear" rather than on what actually occurs. Regardless, Hunter and the other students' implication that people cannot believe in Jesus because the world is so broken resonated with me and the question posted by philosophers like Kearney (2010): "So where was God in Dachau and Treblinka?" (p. 61). For some, the answer is that this God is dead. The students did not say that, but it was all I could think about and I began to assume that was what they were thinking, which was unlikely but reminded me that I brought my own theories and positionalities to every word they uttered. I added my own interpretations of their interpretations to the map.

The discussion of people wanting to hear bad news continued until a student posited, "People want to hear on the news about some dude getting shot," at which point Mary Ann interrupted, pointing out that good things were happening in the world and gave the specific example of a recent news story reporting men who rescued a woman with a broken ankle. Again, I wanted to interject and interrogate the binary of good and evil, but before I could, the rhizome that I identified as disbelief quickly sent out a shoot into a discussion about the role of interpretation.

I am not sure whether the classroom discussion would have been possible if I had been leading the class in a more striated teacher-centered space. When I transcribed this discussion, I realized, first, that the responses were longer and more complex than the more striated classroom spaces of lecture or the K-W-L discussion. Second, I realized that students stopped funneling their ideas through me and sent out shoots to each other. I do understand that the "the ostensible freedom and reciprocity of the seminar may disguise power relations" (Deacon, 2006, p.185). The student-teacher power dynamics may have been lessoned in smoother space, though I was giving points for participation. Students absorbed and deflected each other's words instead of mine. In some ways the smoother space may have been more intense for students because power ricocheted around the room, sending out lines of flights, ruptures and connections during the seminar.

Prior to witnessing this discussion, I would have guessed that students would have described the Bible as the true word of God. As I discussed in the striated section of this chapter, this classroom was located in a traditional community in the Bible Belt, yet something outside traditional religious discourses had occurred. I became aware of this when Mary Ann asked, "How do you think, like, their views and the way they saw it affected how they wrote it?" Mary Ann's question acknowledged that the Bible might be an interpretation instead of the Word. Kane took that possibility a step further when he said to Cassie that the gospels not only tell, "what really happened," but also provide an interpretation of events, implying that authors may have engaged in purposeful selection and revision. Tommy began to circle back to the idea of unintentional change and interpretation occurring when the texts were translated into other languages or when scholars tried to simplify difficult topics. But Tommy also suggested nefarious actions, "but at the same time a bunch of people translated it to put things in that no

one really knows about." Kevin moved the conversation into the present by pointing out how stories regarding school antics evolve depending on the teller, demonstrating again that there is no "single truth." Only Kane seemed concerned about the "essential truth" of the Bible regarding the Christian view that God is "the one and only and Jesus is his son."

Kevin seemed to say that interpretation was a part of coming to a certain understanding of the gospels He also seemed to allow everyone to have their own interpretation to which Cassie agreed and added, "I think it really depends on, like, the people who write and it depends on the people who read it and how they interpret it themselves." The students seemed to be, for the time being, avoiding what Derrida called "an excessive preoccupation with content, and an insufficient concern for relations, locations, processes and differences" (Derrida, 1967/1978, p. 209). It was the relations, locations, processes, and differences that they were interested in and began to deconstruct.

Kane attempted to move the discussion away from deconstruction by saying, "But somehow we can always interpret the true point out of it and that should be that God is the one and only and that Jesus is the savior." It was a comment that took a sharp turn back to fundamentalism, but he later stated, "We can only believe what we interpret," which signaled a certain release of a search for an essential truth and supported my belief that people do not have fixed beliefs that we can ascribe to some notion of their essential self. In the same vein, much of the discussion revealed that the students gave up assuming there was an essential nature to a text. The smoother space of the Socratic Seminar allowed for a discussion about interpretation and deconstruction of the very idea of who Jesus was and asked how we could really know anything about Jesus at all.

I thought about the Socratic Seminar differently when I revisited the research question that guided this study:

How might Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome help me think about the smooth and striated spaces in classroom discussions about religion?

Students made comments possible because the space had become smoother. Where were those connections and depth of information when I was asking students what they knew about Judaism during the more striated lesson of the K-W-L on the first day of my monotheism unit? What I observed was that in smooth space students were free to be differently than in a more striated class. During the Socratic Seminar I mostly gave up the clock and my agenda. My grades or tally marks were even a bit of a ruse. I recognized that students became more expansive in their thoughts and words in this condition during which they explored connections in spaces without the expectation of arriving at an answer. They were not as stifled or reduced but the space did not stay smooth for long.

Students began to striate and territorialize the space themselves as they moved from one idea to the next. During class discussion the day before, Kane attributed the crucifixion of Jesus to his appearance, but during the discussion I recorded that I've discussed here, he stated that Jesus was crucified because he was a false messiah. It seemed that students felt free to produce different interpretations in the smooth space of the Socratic Seminar; that is, their ideas were not fixed but in flux. They did not maintain a static set of beliefs and behaviors; instead, much of their discussion was largely performative (Butler, 1990). Students performed, or acted out the identity, that the conditions of the discussion facilitated. This discussion inspired me to create conditions for even smoother spaces where there would be more room for such performances. I describe how that transpired in the sections that follow.

Promises

On the last of the eight class days I recorded for this study I decided to take a risk and enable what I thought would be a very smooth space in a lesson about the modern Israeli Palestinian conflict. I used the 2001 documentary film *Promises*—nominated for an Academy Award in the Documentary Category—to give context to the complex issues between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims. *Promises* follows the lives of seven Palestinian and Israeli children between 1995-2000 who physically lived only twenty minutes apart, and students in past years had found it powerful. I assigned my students a child to follow throughout the film and asked them to write from the child's perspective about issues of land, religion, and reconciliation. When the film ended, I had students represent that child in a series of activities. In the past I have used essays and other text-based evaluation methods, but after an experience at a summer seminar in 2013 for teachers (which I describe below) I decided to try something new.

Dr. Krondorfer. For my lesson on the Israeli Palestinian conflict I designed an activity that used the body to understand the conflict. My interest in the experience of the body in the classroom was heightened by a workshop on teaching the Holocaust that I participated in during the summer of 2013 in New York City with the scholar Bjorn Krondorfer, a Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Martin-Springer Institute at Northern Arizona University. His work is in the field of religion, gender, and culture and he also studies remembering and forgetting. He used a series of what I call here embodiment protocols, though he may have called it something else. His work seemed to be about using the body to process memory. Dr. Krondorfer has facilitated encounters between Israeli and Palestinian children as well as the descendants of the perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust. I was inspired by my experience

with him and decided to use some of the exercises that he used with us with my own students.

The issue we focused on in class was our impressions of the film *Promises*.

Tableau. Students based their participation on the child they'd followed during the film, and I

grouped students with different perspectives together. For example, I grouped a student assigned

a child like Shlomo, who was a young Israeli boy studying to become a rabbi, with Faraj and

Sanabel, a boy and girl who lived in a Palestinian refugee camp. My students' task was to use

guiding questions (which I created) to write a dialogue between the children they represented.

Finally, they created a tableau, or a visual representation enacted by the students, that expressed

the relationship between the children and reflected their written dialogue. I asked students to use

gestures and position their bodies in a way that could efficiently show me they understood the

film as well as the complexity of modern Israeli politics, which they did, but it did not work.

The first group that shared their dialogues with the class included Hunter as Faraj, Jeffrey

as Shlomo, and Cassie as Sanabel.

Faraj-Why are the checkpoints so important?

Shlomo-For protection since it's our land

Sanabel-But it's also our land so why can you roam freely but we can't.

Faraj-So what do we do?

Shlomo-It's not my problem to fix.

Sanabel-You just can't stop it.

My first impression, when I first began to map the dialogue was that I had limited it with my

guiding questions. In effect, rather than enable an open space, I had striated it from the

beginning. At first, the discussion seemed light-weight, watered down, and a waste of time. Dr.

Krondorfer used the tableau to create a space where we could use our bodies to demonstrate how

memory had inscribed itself, whereas what I did was force students to inscribe someone else's

experience on their own body and not only that but through "touristic invitations to intimacy"

(Lather, 2000, p. 19). This kind of false intimacy flattened out difference and gave way to a kind

of entitled knowing.

Beth and Dale shared their dialogue when Faraj, the boy living in the Palestinian refugee

camps and Moishe, an orthodox Jewish boy living in a controversial settlement, speak.

Faraj: This (is) my land and should be given back to us.

Moishe: The Jews were promised the land of Israel by God. Palestinians do not belong

here.

Faraj: Palestinians were here first and I shouldn't be checked to visit my own land.

Most of the dialogues were about this length and of similar depth. After we shared the

dialogues, I asked students to come to the front of the class and assume the position of the child

represented in the form of a tableau. They dutifully did what I asked. In the tableaus, my

students visually created with their bodies generic forms of tension and frustration we had

discussed in class, but they seemed awkward and forced. In a sense, students also striated the

smooth space by simply following my instructions. I thought I was enabling smooth space, but

they did not respond as if I had.

Disciplined bodies. When I recall my experience with Dr. Krondorfer and my attempt to

recreate his activity in my own classroom, I cringe. I realized I had asked students to inscribe on

their bodies something that was not their own experience. Maybe I wanted to neutralize

difference. Palestinians and Israelis fight over many things, and some, like the same parcel of

land, cannot be easily reconciled. Was the tableau flattening differences to imply that empathy

and understanding could resolve difference? Was my interest in religion in my classroom coming

from a desire to assimilate difference? Foucault (1977/1995) described how "disciplinary control does not consist simply in teaching or imposing a series of particular gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body, which is its condition of efficiency and speed" (p. 152). The tableau used the body, not necessarily for disciplinary control, but to conform to my interpretation of what I thought they think about the Israeli Palestinian crisis after watching *Promises*.

As I mapped the conversation of that class, I began to understand that I hoped my students, in using the tableau, would empathize with the children. However, empathy now seemed a shallow response to a situation that demanded greater action. As David Brooks (2011) pointed out "Empathy makes you more aware of other people's suffering, but it's not clear it actually motivates you to take moral action or prevents you from taking immoral action" (September, 29 2011). As far as I know, not one student pursued action on behalf of Israelis or Palestinians, not that this was my goal, but it made me question what my goal was.

In 1990 February, *English Journal* published a poem by a teacher named Thomas Thonton called *On Wiesel's Night* (1990) about the poet's approach to teaching the book *Night* in his English class. The final stanza of his poem follows:

No, I cannot teach this book

I simply want the words

to burn their comfortable souls

and leave them scarred for life

This teacher clearly wants *Night* to transform, and I would say traumatize his students, but why? I had to ask myself the same question. Was it possible to create a smooth space in which students could empathize with their bodies in tableau? Should the goal of a lesson be empathy?

Lather (2000) explained that, "To argue against empathy is to trouble the possibilities of understanding, as premised on structures that all people share" (p. 19). Can we really understand each other? Maybe we resist empathy because we know we can't know someone else—that difference must be difference, that empathy is the desire to disappear difference into the same.

I explore my reasons for doing research in Chapter Four but when attempted to create a smooth space of becoming I realized that a dichotomy, which posits that one space is good and one space is bad, is not interesting to me. Instead, I recognized that both spaces are infused with power and that this power is not neutral nor is it purely positive or negative. However, this power has the potential to produce different kinds of discussions

Silence

As I tried to better understand the range of religious discourses in my classroom, I was dependent on the discourses students seemed to speak. When I repeatedly listened to my audio recordings, I realized that "I was being attentive only to the words that were spoken" (Mazzei, 2004, p. 30). I echo the words of Bakhtin (1979/1986) that "for the word (and consequently the human being) there is nothing more terrible than a lack of response" (p. 127). But, of course, silence is as much a response as are words. Perhaps I want to say that nothing is more terrible than a response of silence. We do not completely understand someone when they speak, but we are really lost when people remain speechless. So students who sat silently and did not join the conversation are absent from my map. Alvermann (2000) asserted:

> Reasons behind the choices that we make when speaking out or remaining silent are
> inherently tied to how we perceive ourselves in relation to others, to what we are willing
> to reveal about our own interests and desires, and to whether or not we believe we can
> make a difference by adding our voices to the mix. (p. 123)

Students who did not participate in the discussion surely had their reasons and, though I wanted to hear what they thought, I respected their silence as "silence can be resignified as resistance, as agency, since the irruption of silence penetrates and transforms fixed definitions of what it means to be subjugated" (Jackson, 2003, p. 707). Silence can be powerful, and when I later reflected on the study I appreciated it when students choose to remain quiet.

I noted that I, too, was often silent in discussion, especially when I was not sure how my students would interpret my comments. For example, during the Socratic Seminar I saw an opportunity for a nuanced discussion of Kearney's (2010) position that there can only be faith "if we can overcome our natural response of fear and trauma," (p. 180). I wanted to ask the students what they thought about the idea that there has to be an acceptance of all of the horrible things that happen in the world and then a decision to believe in something anyway, but I remained silent because of my own self-imposed rules of the teacher not entering the Socratic Seminar and my fear of talking about religion. As Bob Dylan put it, "Jesus got himself crucified because he got himself noticed. So I disappear a lot." I also realized that by silencing myself and following the rules, I was trying to resist territorializing the space my students were traversing. "It is through the spaces, the gaps, the silences that occur between and across these positions that a place is made for teachers to make their own agentic choices about the ways in which they take up these subject positions" (Honan, 2007, p. 543). My choices often determined what kind of space I produced and whether I let students territorialize it themselves.

When Alvermann (2000) used rhizoanalysis to re-examine findings from a study she had previously conducted she found "areas of silence" (p. 123) in discussions of power and sexuality that she had not noticed in her previous analysis. I, too, experienced areas of silence, but they

occurred in religious discourses that could be silenced in my classroom for a multitude of reasons, many of which I will never identify or understand.

Conclusion

Nietzsche (1886/2002) wrote, "Whoever fights with monsters should see to it that he does not become one himself. And when you stare for a long time into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you" (p. 69). To conclude a chapter implies that one can tie things up and unify ideas in order to move forward, but I am still fighting the monster. Rhizomatic cartography helped me "to redescribe and to represent concepts differently" (Hagood, 2004, p. 145). I used rhizomatic cartography because it decentered a representational approach to meaning-making, but this different work is difficult to navigate. I agree with Honan (2007) that "it is impossible to provide a linear description of the journey taken through and across a rhizome" (p. 533). When I employed poststructural analysis, specifically rhizomatic cartography, I did not try to be a trickster or huckster or obfuscator, I just accepted that rhizomatic cartography offers multiple access points and endless interpretations.

I made maps that held together enough to raise more questions, and tried not to essentialize or totalize either my participants or myself. I found a certain amount of fluidity or capacity to move between fields of life that drew me to this approach. When I analyzed my study rhizomatically rather than in an arboreal fashion, I avoided unnecessarily killing off discourses that did not conform to what I expected or wanted to happen. No map is ever complete, but I tried to avoid tracings, though one must always put the tracings back on the map. The maps presented in this dissertation will not be my last analysis and my students' conversations are rich enough to be written about again and again.

Finally, I am inspired by Cy Twombly's (1961) painting, *The Second Part of the Return*

from Parnassus with its discordant elements, which form no clear representational image. Twombly, like Foucault (1971/1984), Bakhtin (1975/1981), and Nietzsche (1887/1992), knew that words do not keep their meanings, that discourses are broken. Twombly's work may seem chaotic or thrown together, but the painting demands attention to detail and a willingness to go to uncomfortable places. Rhizomatic cartography accepts that "material rich enough to bear re-analysis in different ways bring(s) the reader into the analysis via a dispersive impulse which fragments univocal authority" (Lather, 1991, p. 91). I made a map that held together enough to raise more questions and encourage more analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

BECOMINGS

"If you don't become the ocean, you'll be seasick every day."

– Leonard Cohen

In thinking and working with the ontology of theorists like Deleuze and Guattari, I find that thinking differently is a commitment and offers a lifetime of reading and producing difference. It is an act of becoming and not a fixed horizon. This chapter focuses on this process of becoming, which I define and explain below; however, first, I recall where I have been. When I conducted this study, I embraced the schizophrenic from Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/1977) who is "never giving the same explanation from one day to the next" (p.15). Because I chose to work from deconstruction, a place that "provides a corrective moment, a safeguard against dogmatism, a continual displacement" (Lather, 1991, p. 13) this study will never be complete. I understand that I have to accept instability when I work with a poststructural theoretical framework and an analytic tool like rhizomatic cartography. Poststructuralism does not allow me to anesthetize myself with false certainties. For example, when I re-read the map and the pages I've written thus far in this document, I realize that I already analyze them differently. I understand there are "new possibilities for how reality might be organized" (Kamberelis, 2004, p. 166) and that there will always be more to add to the map. I am engaged in a process of, as Alvermann (2000) explained:

> Looking for middles rather than beginnings and endings, makes it possible to decenter
> key linkages and find new ones, not by combining old ones in new ways, but by
> remaining open to the proliferation of ruptures and discontinuities that in turn create other
> linkages. (p. 118)

The rhizome continues to emit shoots and when there is discontinuity there is possibility. The non-linearity of the study and the "ephemeral and temporal" (Hagood, 2002, p. 197) characteristics of the rhizome allow me to continue to map. The endless possibilities and conditions that could have and still could be placed on the map relate to the idea of becoming.

The Deleuzoguattarian concept of becoming is a process as well as a relationship. Becoming occurs when a rhizome is deterritorialized and loses some elements but is simultaneously reterritorialized and gains properties of another rhizome within an assemblage. For example, when I bring all the disparate parts of the rhizome that is "me" to a new environment or in to contact with another person, I may lose parts of my rhizome but gain elements from another. One sheds the territorialities of one situation, only to be reterritorialized in another. This may sound like a progression or growing into something better, but it is not an evolution from something incomplete or inaccurate to a more adequate description. This work is more like an alliance or an involution, which involves turning in on oneself. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote about becoming when they described a wasp pollinating an orchid.

> A becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these
> becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterriitorialization of
> the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities
> pushing the deterritorialization ever further. (p.10)

The example of the orchid and the wasp demonstrate the activity of one becoming another. The orchid forms an image of the wasp. It is deterritorialized while the wasp reterritorializes the orchid. The wasp is also deterritorialized when it becomes part of the orchid. Then the wasp goes on to reterritorialize when it spreads the orchid's pollen. Together they form a rhizome.

Becoming is not imitation; but, rather, bringing in the new. Becoming is a process that is always occurring; for example, one is never "woman" or "man" but in the process of becoming-woman or becoming-man. There is ambiguity in the process of becoming that is not logical in the old way because "there is no preformed logical order to becomings" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 251). Instead, when Deleuze and Guattari wrote about becomings they wrote about sorcerers, werewolves, and devils. They wrote about other dimensions and multiplicities and entered the realm of science fiction. My discussion of becoming remains both in the boundaries of this research study but also in all possible becomings I witnessed and will experience in the future. Becoming occurs in smooth space. The smooth space is where things are "constantly being translated" (Deleuze &Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 474). Smooth space is permeable and negotiable and allows for becoming and the deterritorialization and reterritorialization that accompany it to occur. The first encounter with becoming I discuss took place in conversations between a colleague and myself.

Becoming-Another

Mr. Dolbear, a pseudonym for my department head at the high school described in this study, is an accomplished teacher, my mentor, and someone I was becoming. He was organized and in command like a ship captain who striated the archetypal smooth space of the sea. He might love the ocean but was not going to be taken out by a swell. Mr. Dolbear was our captain but he was also our Moby-Dick. We, students and members of the faculty, chased him and wanted to be like him. We were a bunch of Captain Ahabs. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1983) identified "Moby-Dick in its entirety is one of the greatest master-pieces of becoming; Captain Ahab has an irresistible becoming-whale, but one that bypasses the pack or the school, operating directly through a monstrous alliance with the Unique, the Leviathan, Moby-Dick" (p. 243). Mr.

Dolbear was someone I was in a sense "becoming," not as imitation, but for survival as I soon explain.

The year prior to this research study was the first year I worked with Mr. Dolbear as well as the first year at my new school. This was the second high school where we taught together, and at both schools he helped me get adjusted. I had to teach three different courses, so he graciously gave me his lesson plans, lecture notes, and assessments for a class we both taught. He was prolific, and created and produced large amounts of teaching materials that most of the teachers in the department benefited from or used. Just about anyone could obtain his materials and understand what every second of a 90-minute block class entailed. Many of my habits and methods from my old school were deterritorialized as I became reterritorialized in this new space. I started to become-Mr. Dolbear.

Mr. Dolbear influenced what I did in my class and how my teaching was executed. Under his wing I became more self-conscious of how, as a teacher, I sent out lines of flight. My previous mode of operation was to dart and change course, to decide not to do something at the last minute. This had its inspired moments but could occasionally lead to a mess. Mr. Dolbear did not make messes. I began to understand that he was a striating force in my classroom because I did not want him to think of me as disordered.

Mr. Dolbear's conscientiousness, and knowledge of commas, also made him a great editor, so I sent him a copy of an earlier version of what is now Chapter Three of this dissertation to read and edit. When I first wrote that draft, I used more conventional humanistic methodologies and treated classroom discussions as texts that could be analyzed by the words that were spoken. I have since shifted methodologies but still found the conversation between Mr. Dolbear and myself about my classroom study of interest. It demonstrates that re-analysis is

always occurring. Mr. Dolbear became the reader who dispersed much of my authority over the text. Deterritorialization as well as reterriitorialization occurred when we considered what the other wrote. I include below our electronic communication using the comments feature of Word as he read my work.

>Me: They may not have thought much about me moving them through material quickly and presenting them with key concepts to ensure that work was being done. Instead of taking advantage of the questions they raised, I moved the lesson on to my preplanned lecture on monotheism. Partially I did this because I was not sure what to say, though I did go back in following classes to address some of these questions once I had gathered materials. These are not bad things, but are aspects of working in a particular space, a space that was very striated.

>Mr. Dolbear: It's funny you say that, because all that you've written indicate that these are indeed "bad things."

Mr. Dolbear's comments made me think I had unintentionally fallen into a dualistic trap. I was using a narrative that conceived smooth space as good and striated space as bad. I half-heartedly tried to say that the things happening in striated space were not "bad things" but the tone of my writing demonstrated I felt otherwise, at least to Mr. Dolbear (and to Bob my major professor). Thinking back on it, I believe I felt guilty when my classes exhibited striated space, which was most of the time. The pressure to move through the ever-growing content I was required to teach made me feel more like a machine than a teacher. When I wrote about my teacher-centered classes I apologized, as I did in the following lines in my Word comments with Mr. Dolbear: "If I seem dissatisfied with the lesson that day, it is because I was disappointed in myself, specifically how I managed and contributed to the striated space." To some extent it is possible

that the guilt I felt during teacher-centered classes may have been misguided. Perhaps the striation was necessary for there to be music and not just noise. Teaching and life are full of mundane tasks. It is not possible to get rid of them all, but I was so afraid of being trapped in routine that I think I came to think that routines were bad. I understood that students needed routines but I questioned whether they needed so many of them. Mr. Dolbear responded to me below.

> Mr. Dolbear: Maybe you felt the need to offer students some basic historical/religious context that could then be used in a smooth space discussion? All this hand wringing that you're doing in these paragraphs comes off as odd. It's one thing to acknowledge that you work in a space that often demands striation; it's another to wallow in the guilt these last few pages exude. On second thought, strike all that—that's probably me just reading this section and feeling defensive!

When I read my analysis of a more striated day, which Mr. Dolbear referred to as hand wringing, I found it wrought with overarching tensions. I will not speculate on why Mr. Dolbear felt defensive, but I expect he too found himself in a struggle between conflicting pedagogical perspectives. I was, as Bakhtin (1975/1981) described, in "an intense struggle within [the individual] for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view" (p. 346). As a teacher and researcher, I tried to please a range of people and influences that would never be reconciled. For example, one day I could be told that process, not product, is all that mattered in teaching while the next day I might learn that my salary would be based on my students' test scores. If I mapped myself as a teacher, I would create a very tangled rhizome.

I felt torn between the theories I learned in my education classes, influences of mentors, needs of my students, and the demands put on my classroom time. When I mapped class

discussions, I also saw that I was influenced by my master's program that espoused emancipatory pedagogies, as noted in Figure 3, and teaching for social justice and democracy (Apple, 2001; Freire, 1968/1970, 1994). I was engulfed by pressure to comply with the state-mandated curriculum and a desire to be seen as competent and to conform to the more striated nature of the school. I was also a doctoral student in language and literacy education and wanted to be sure I addressed and included reading in my classroom curriculum. Finally, I was embarrassed by giving in to the tedium of another lecture in a social studies class, but I stuck with it because I did not want to be fodder for gossip that might label me as being an inefficient teacher. My default was to become Mr. Dolbear and to try to focus and not let all of the competing voices pull me off course, which was to teach all of the standards as efficiently as possible.

Mr. Dolbear pushed me to examine my issues with striation as well as deal with the duality or binary that I had constructed. I had lost the energy to deal with striations until I thought from another perspective. Here is an example of how Mr. Dolbear helped me produce a different understanding of the space:

> Mr. Dolbear: You might want to end with a jazz analogy in which the teacher-centered lesson, though striated, offered a structure and basic set of ideas (like notes and chords) that students could then use during their "guitar solos" that took place on the smooth day. That point would reiterate the intertwined nature of your classroom and remove the duality problem you referenced earlier. It would also address the guilt and judgment that pervade much of your commentary about the striated day.

Mr. Dolbear's jazz analogy illustrated the relationship I had tried to articulate between smooth and striated space, and it also showed that Mr. Dolbear and I formed a rhizome. He had previously teased me about my (over) use of jazz analogies throughout the text and now he had succumbed and created his own. In the first chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) wrote, "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd" (p. 3). Like Deleuze and Guattari, I believe we are multiplicities, not only always in a process of becoming, but in multiple processes of becoming. Just as I was becoming-Mr. Dolbear, becoming-Body without Organs, and becoming-researcher as I describe in the sections to follow, Mr. Dolbear was going through is own becomings.

Later, when Mr. Dolbear read a description of a discussion in what I labeled a smooth space, he offered a different interpretation. I characterized the smooth space as positive and wrote, "Their shifts weren't prompted by me or by the needs of a text, but by their engagement in the discussion," to which Mr. Dolbear responded, "But they were in a way because they knew that they had to talk to earn points, right?" I credited student engagement with the qualities of a smoother class space, but Mr. Dolbear pointed out that I had in fact put striations in the space by grading students for participation. I found that students actually relaxed in class discussion if they believed I was surveilling them, which could be a research study in itself (Foucault, 1977/1995). The smooth space I thought I created was enabled by the striations of grades and other accountability methods like the rules and grading used in a Socratic Seminar. I sought smooth space because I was tired of the striations, but I realized that smooth space does not have all the answers, nor is it usually very smooth.

When I brought Mr. Dolbear into the project, it was possible "to construct a mode of thinking that works out a different set of assumptions" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 165). After I talked

to Mr. Dolbear, I was better able to accept striated space, and what I came to understand was that poststructuralism did not provide escape from striations, nor should I always try to escape. We are always inscribed within a space, and that space is infused with power (Foucault, 1980). I was inscribed in my school and had to take care of the class roster, my email, and my grades or face consequences of that power, but when the striations kill off all of the smooth space then I have gone too far, but purely smooth space is not possible.

Classrooms in which teacher and students value only test scores and measurable results feel empty and soulless to me. Rabbi Abraham Heschel (1951), the Jewish rabbi who gained recognition in the American Civil Rights Movement and wrote the book *The Sabbath*, described how "The solution of mankind's most vexing problem will not be found in renouncing technical civilization, but in attaining some degree of independence from it" (p. 28). I could not, as Mr. Dolbear reminded me, renounce the striations of the classroom or the world, but as Heschel pointed out I could find some respite in the smooth spaces. Just as the promise of the Sabbath offered Heschel some smooth space from the striations of the technical civilization, poststructuralism allowed me to imagine a classroom with more smooth space where I would be less afraid of not getting enough done or that student discussion might not improve test scores.

We cannot get away from the need to survive, which "begins when man, dissatisfied with what is available in nature, becomes engaged in a struggle with the forces of nature in order to enhance his safety and to increase his comfort" (Heschel, 1951, p.28). It is when the obsession with increased comfort, or better test scores, consumes us that we may lose the smooth spaces out of fear that we are not producing enough or that we are not safe enough or that we are not good enough. The process of becoming is generative and my discussions with Mr. Dolbear are on-going and, like the tension between smooth and striated spaces, will continue to territorialize

each other. This was not the only tension because as I was becoming-Mr. Dolbear, I was also becoming-Body without Organs.

Becoming-Bodies without Organs

Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) invented the concept of the Body without Organs or BwO, which may sound like science fiction but is deconstruction in action and which informed how I thought and wrote about this study. Becoming BwO is a goal but not really a possibility. You cannot function without your literal or metaphorical organs. In a sense, it may be clearer to think of the BwO as a response to psychoanalysis. Where psychoanalysis creates meaning, the BwO strips it away. It offers the possibility to go below the surfaces of existence as, "The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and signifiances and subjectifications as a whole" (p. 151). It cannot actually be completed, otherwise, there would be nothing left, and it can be a perilous path toward self-destruction if not done with care because, "if you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then instead of drawing the plane you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe" (p. 161). For example, if you start to dismantle an organism, an organization, the routines of your classroom, or the format of your dissertation, it can go badly, showing that "staying stratified—organized, signified, subjected—is not the worse that can happen" (p. 161). There is certainly something to be said for keeping the old routines, keeping the organs, and not leaping into the void.

Becoming-BwO was possible in this dissertation because the study used a theoretical framework that accepts and values deconstruction. When I started this dissertation process I believed, as St. Pierre (1997) stated:

Dissertations are about backgrounds, problems, positionings, literature reviews,

methodologies, validities, conclusions, and even implications, for Heaven's sake--all

constituting a carefully staged academic *fictio*, a construction approved by the authorities,

a rite of passage into citationality, a normalizing function of the gaze of the institution. (p.

182)

I learned conventional humanist qualitative research methodologies, but when I tried to employ

them, I felt like a fraud. I have hundreds of pages of transcriptions that I could not use,

interviews that would not work, and observations discarded because when I began

deconstructing what I was doing I realized I would be lucky if I could engage even one question

I had posed at the beginning of my study. But Bodies without Organs called to me, and I gave up

the familiar structure that I had been taught. I believe I have written at least two dissertations

because I was working within two different and conflicting theoretical and methodological

approaches. I tried to keep enough of the structure to make this work but deconstructed it so I

could move closer to the horizon of the BwO. Bob, my major professor, says I hedge, and he

became weary of my self-flagellation, but I cannot help myself. Derrida (1993/1994) believed

that to deconstruct we must learn to "constantly suspect" (p. 18), and the person I usually suspect

is myself. Perhaps that is why I am drawn to the Body without Organs.

As I thought about my study, I started to understand that if I kept enough of the BwO to

experiment with then I might be able to undo it. I chose to dismantle much of my dissertation

after a writing meeting with my committee. We realized that my theory and methodology did

not align. .Deleuze and Guattari's transcendental empiricism did not fit with the empiricism of

conventional humanist qualitative methodology. Thus, I had to let the methodology for this

study emerge from the onto-epistemology of their work. This was a difficult task considering

much of the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari is "anti-methodological" (Bryant, 2008, p. 77). Transcendental empiricism is not interested as much in knowledge as thought. It meant I stopped looking for universals and instead looked for conditions in which things were produced. For example, I stopped thinking about what happens in all classrooms and began thinking about the conditions that made things happen in my classroom.

In becoming-Body without Organs, the first written description of my study began to dissolve and give way to another written description focused more on a series of lived encounters. These lived encounters are what I wrote about throughout this dissertation in the form of discussions, conversations, and the conditions that enabled them. These were the run-ins, chance encounters "the mark of the encounter is that it interrupts experience, does it violence, calls its assumptions into question" (Bryant, 2008, p. 77). It is almost a performance that I was selected for but I "cannot will it, I can only be open to it when it takes place" (p. 77). This means I had to be open to thinking differently and look for signs and use intuition. I suspect, though I am not sure, that this is what many researchers do. If I want to push my thinking then I "must seek out those events which disturb the complacency of recognition, which call it into question, which perplex and startle us" (p. 91). If I only look for what I recognize, then I will only repeat what I already know. If I want to understand the monster then I have to go where the monsters live. This also means becoming-BwO.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) offer a protocol of how BwO can be accomplished: "Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movement of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities" (p. 161). I began to experiment but held onto enough of the organism, or the study, so that I was not

plunged into oblivion. And then the "BwO reveals itself for what it is: connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities" (p. 161). When I undid the normalized and normal organization of my dissertation, I found that it was not a collection of chapters but instead a collection of heterogeneous connections of desires and flows. Once I understood this, "You have constructed your own little machine, ready when needed to be plugged into other collective machines" (p. 161). This dissertation may read like a series of essays because in the process of becoming-BwO I realized that I was not building knowledge but was mainly interested in thought and how it was possible to think things. I also learned that all these thoughts and encounters were tied to other thoughts and encounters, and I just needed to be open, and willing to plug in. Becoming-BwO may seem like pretentious talk, but for me it was the only thing that made sense. Becoming-BwO is one becoming, and one I do not recommend for everyone, and becoming-researcher is the next becoming I will describe.

Becoming-Researcher

Becoming-researcher is the most humbling of the becomings I describe. I have to avoid the temptation to create a linear, modernist narrative about a researcher who (ironically) becomes enlightened by poststructuralism, as this would be paying servitude to a humanist and progress-oriented story of individualism. Instead, I am willing to unearth and decenter long held beliefs and agree that:

> We as researchers operate from within certain philosophical or civilizational assumptions that structure how we think, what we think research is and what researchers are, how we do research, what we think the value or use of research is, and what we think the outcome of research is. (Scheurich, 1997, p. 6)

I commit to the idea that epistemologies do not get closer to a transcendent truth but reflect the politics and ethical leanings of the researcher.

As I become-researcher, authoring a dissertation, I run into the same snags that Bridges-Rhoads (2011) encountered when she realized that a proprietary notion of authorship was problematic and, "Who I can or should claim to be as an author, for example, must be highly contested" (p. 3). I realized that when I become-researcher I borrow from others or form rhizomes with others. Caputo (2001), whose work was invaluable to this study, wrote:

> We begin wherever we are—in the midst of a language, of a tradition, a heritage, of a complex and ultimately unfathomable web of intersecting, interweaving and conflicting beliefs and practices, an inescapable cacophony of voices and counter-voices, a crazy quilt that we will never succeed in unstitching or simply bringing into harmony. (p. 301)

These words are credited to Caputo, but even he "assimilates the words of others" (Bakhtin, 1975/1981, p. 341). He opens with, "We begin wherever we are," words that are a play on Derrida1967/1976); includes the "inescapable cacophony of voices and counter-voices," which could have been said by Bakhtin (1929/1984), and closes with, "a crazy quilt that we will never succeed in unstitching or simply bringing into harmony," which has the feeling of the smooth and striated spaces of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987). Like Caputo, my words are not my own, but those of countless theorists, philosophers, students, and theologians through "the process of selectively assimilating the words of others" (Bakhtin, 1975/1981, p. 341). There is choice and agency in whose words I assimilate and whose I discard. I select and I invest in some theories and ignore others. Butler (1995) expounded:

> For the question of whether or not a position is right, coherent, or interesting, is in this case, less informative than why it is we come to occupy and defend the territory we do, what it promises us, from what it promises to protect us. (pp. 127- 128)

I occupied this territory for reasons I do not entirely understand, but I think it is has to do with a feeling that "the events that restore a thing to life are not the same as those that gave rise to it in the first place" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1977, p 261). In focusing on thinking, and thinking differently, I wanted to avoid the cancer that comes from the cell reproducing itself over and over again; I realized things must be different.

Lather (2001) encouraged me to think about the question, "How do we explore our own reasons for doing the research without putting ourselves back at the center?" (p. 91). I think at times I am at the center of my research, and I don't always know where I stop and the data begins. That being said, this work does not feel like it is entirely about me. I am there, and sometimes at the center, but more often than not I am looking at the systems I can identify in which I exist. I am small—just trying to take some of it in. There is a limit to how much I can know because "all intellectuals, all teachers and students within the disciplines, are to some extent incorporated within these systems of control based upon the mode of knowledge and truth production that defines much of our social world" (Bové, 1995, p. 54). I am limited by the knowledge and truth of the discourses in which I am produced. I am in an awkward phase. I am in a place where the old systems do not work for me, but I also know there is a certain entitlement that allows me to take these positions and write these sentences. I can longingly shape the mashed potatoes, seeking some kind of meaning, but that meaning is always in flux.

Becoming-valid

I am not being entirely serious when I labeled this section becoming-valid, but I do want to discuss validity. As a researcher I am faced with the issue of how valid my work is or whether my data and interpretations should be trusted. The traditional definition of validity is "a set of research practices within the conventional social sciences is, thus, the name for the boundary line separating research that is acceptable from research that is not" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 81). This definition also addresses the line between conventional and unconventional kinds of research. I do not consider my research cutting edge, but it definitely does not make the claims that more conventional social scientists may make.

I agree with poststructural researchers who do not consider validity a legitimate concern or even a possibility (Elis 1997; Richardson 1997; St. Pierre, 1997; Lather 1993, 2000). That being said, what I have to say matters. I am comfortable with this positioning but realize it could be unsatisfying to some. So, I turn to Lather's (1993) concept of transgressive validity for help. Lather raised powerful questions about validity and research in general. She offered the concept of transgressive validity, complete with a checklist, that allowed her to do research while simultaneously rupturing foundational ideas of validity. I used rhizomatic cartography as my analytic, so I relied specifically on Lather's (1993) transgressive validity checklist that deals with this analytic tool:

- unsettles from within, taps underground
- generates new locally determined norms of understanding; proliferates open-ended and context-sensitive criteria; works against reinscription of some new regime, some new systematicity
- puts conventional discursive procedures under erasure, breaches congealed

discourses, critical as well as dominant. (p. 686)

I argue that this study is valid in that I am "asking different kinds of questions and engaging in a different mode of thought" (Leander, 2006, p. 41). The act or performance of engaging in a different way of thinking is possibly the best most of us can do.

Conclusion

My tendency to over-intellectualize, to re-inscribe myself precisely as I am trying to break down the institutions and systems that I am inscribed in, leads me to realize the importance of taking a walk, of being like the schizophrenic from *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/1977) who is better off walking in the fresh air than trapped on his analyst's couch. The walk is the space where I am not forced to situate myself "socially, in relationship to the God of established religion, in relationship to his father, to his mother" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1977, p. 2). The walk is the space that allows for becoming. A walk is sometimes the best we can do, but I would say the run is better. In the 1984 Summer Olympics held in Los Angeles, California, Joan Benoit ran in the first women's marathon and won it in a blazing time of 2:24. This marathon occured when women were told it was unhealthy to run long distances. Benoit had never seen another woman run in the Olympic marathon, yet she envisioned this possibility for herself. She was part of the American rhizome, sending out an offshoot and showing that "everything important that has happened or is happening takes the route of the American rhizome: the beatniks, the underground, bands and gangs, successive lateral offshoots in immediate connection with an outside" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 19).   Benoit, the beatniks, and the garage bands of my youth all pushed against the arborescent model. They sent out lines of flight or joined rhizomes with other entities to become-runner or to become-beat.

In the poem *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer*, Whitman (1900) wrote:

When I heard the learn'd astronomer;

When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me;

When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them;

When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much applause in the

lecture-room,

How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;

Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,

In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars. (p. 526)

Whitman's description of being able to deal with the astronomer's lecture and formula for only so long resonates with me as a teacher and researcher. I find myself appropriating many of the ideas and words of philosophers and theorists, making them half-theirs and half-mine; while at the same time I sense that I could walk away from these theories and never look back. Fortunately, this paradox of accepting and nurturing ideas yet being willing to shed them is not antithetical to a poststructural perspective. If anything, accepting a positioning that is constantly changing embodies what it means to appreciate lived experience in a world with competing tensions and perspectives. Whitman touches upon the importance and primacy of the lived experience in *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer*, by stepping into the night air to witness the stars instead of simply learning about them abstractly in a lecture hall. I believe in the power of simply staring at the stars. I also want to create more spaces where that can occur.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS

I intend this chapter to be useful for teachers who might want to reimagine ideas in this study in the context of their classrooms and schools, even as they realize they cannot replicate my process because "the rhizome is not the object of reproduction" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 21), and the rhizomatic journey "is never completely re-traceable, as, just like the footprints in the sand, it is erased almost at the same time it is created" (Honan, 2007, p. 535). I also think this study could be useful for other researchers as I realize, "We are always on the hook, responsible, everywhere, all the time" (St. Pierre, 1997, p 177), and I owe the greater educational community some accounting for my time in a doctoral program and what I think it offers as "we have no excuse not to act" (Caputo, 1993, p. 4). My research question examines the production of smooth and striated spaces in classroom discussions. Perhaps this research was a mission to distract myself from the banality of the daily grind. Or, possibly, I tried to think about things in another way because I like to take chances.

Through this process, I fought the urge to distract myself. I did not cauterize desires or inconvenient or messy thoughts. As isolating as this fight could be, I was not alone. There are others who try to stay with that which is in front of them as much as it turns on them. In a piece for *The Guardian* titled, "What's Wrong with the Modern World" author Jonathan Franzen (2013) wrote:

Our far left may hate religion and think we coddle Israel, our far right may hate illegal

immigrants and think we coddle black people, and nobody may know how the economy

is supposed to work now that markets have gone global, but the actual substance of our

daily lives is total distraction.

Still, distraction abounds. In our schools, we are distracted by the false promises of technology

(Postman, 1995). It is as if we believe an iPad in every classroom will make education

meaningful. We search for magic bullets and make "Faustian bargains, giving and taking away"

(p.41). We fall back on 18th century notions of science in an attempt to measure everything

(Lyotard, 1979/1984) and overemphasize the certainties promised by positivism, leaving little

room for mystery, questioning, desire, or risk. We turn to business, though it would seem that

the near-collapse of the global economy in 2008 might have shown us that the captains of

industry do not have all the answers (Apple, 2006).

Capitalism and Schizophrenia

Deleuze (1990/1995) predicted schools that looked like businesses before the No Child

Left Behind Act was passed into law and before standardized testing became rampant in the

United States.

Even the state education system has been looking at the principle of "getting paid for

results": in fact, just as businesses are replacing factories, *school* is being replaced by

continuing education and exams by continuous assessment. It's the surest way of turning

education into a business. (p. 179)

Capitalism is alive and well in public schools and, as Deleuze and Guattari wrote, it is

schizophrenic (1980/1987). For example, both capitalism and schools need creative people yet,

"Resistance is dangerous. Originality is dangerous" (p. 65). The only thing to be adhered to is

the market. The worker, or in this case teacher, must be willing to do whatever is needed out of fear that her job will disappear. Surveilling and rewarding "heightens individual competition through actively increasing individual vulnerability" (Davies, 2010, p. 64). Teachers are encouraged to be innovative as long as their students earn high scores on multiple-choice standardized tests.

I mentioned in Chapter Three the surveillance mechanisms operating at the research site, specifically administrators tweeting what happened in classrooms. Those tweets were seemingly benevolent gestures about positive and innovative things witnessed in classrooms; however, they also demonstrated that the school was thought of as a place to be controlled "to extract maximum productivity from it, while at the same time enhancing the production of new and creative ideas" (Davies, 2010, p. 54). For example, I have a friend who is a "cool hunter" in New York City. She walks around Brooklyn taking pictures of hipsters for a company that turns these street trends, these new and creative ideas, into clothing items that are mass-produced as cheaply as possible in an overseas factory and then sold to markets in the United States. We see this in education, usually in the form of a teacher that "gets it" or is creative and inventive and then tries to mass produce their style of teaching in a series of workshops or a book.

Clearly, these schizophrenic messages are not unique to schools, but I become more depressed when I think of teachers, who still inspire and encourage me, forced to be chameleons or "appear to be whatever a particular workplace wants" (Davies, 2010, p. 65). I am also guilty of passing these messages on to my students when I tell them I am preparing them for jobs that do not yet exist. We reproduce the schizophrenia and make the next generation as insecure and neurotic as this one.

This anxiety leads to egos that "must be defended at all costs, since they are intensely aware of their own demise. Every threat to the survival of ego creates a wound, and the wounded ego seeks, ever more avidly, confirmation of its survivability" (Davies, 2010, p. 65). I frightened myself while writing these sentences, because I know what I have just written describes the way I live. I will work 70 hours a week for a little recognition. I believe that working all the time is not good enough but that I could do more, work harder. I struggle to "be counted as an appropriate member of the institution" (p. 65). I try to be original but not rock the boat. I live a schizophrenic life.

A reverence for business and capitalism is something I am not only familiar with; it is the world I come from. I am the only teacher in my family and the only person who is critical of a system where profits and bottom-lines are considered the ultimate measure of success. While capitalism is an integral part of my cultural DNA, it is not my religion. In fact, it is what spurred my interest in religion.

As a younger person, I ran from religion because I understood the negative consequences of doctrine that persecuted and excluded while claiming moral authority. I later realized that religion was not the only culprit and "blind and irrational commitment to religious dogma or doctrine can have terrible consequences. But it is also clear from history that this applies no less to atheistic and scientific than to religious dogmas" (Carr, 2007 p.671). An overemphasis on positivism and science also created dangerous implications for the world. What originally drew me to poststructuralism was that it did not let anyone off the hook. I also learned about the substantial amount of poststructural work being done in schools of religion and realized that it was blind adherence rather than religion that was the problem. The problems of blind adherence may also be applied to science and the markets.

There are plenty of ways in which capitalism and religion, especially Christianity, work together, but I identified ways in which religion brought a check to the excesses of capitalism, especially in schools. In schools we often talk about valuing people and not just test scores and in my experience the people who keep that talk alive are often those who are religious. For example, I worked at a school in rural Georgia that was very religious; there was prayer at school faculty meetings, as well as school board meetings, and not just a bow-your-head for a moment of silence, but calling out to Jesus. It was at this school that we had a thriving and very visible Special Education department that hosted the Special Olympics. There was a tremendous effort to avoid tracking or labeling kids based on test scores. Competition was seen as fine but not what defined us. Much as St. Pierre (2010) struggled during her study on older women's constructions of identity, I wrestled with this religiosity and ultimately questioned, "Who am I to judge those who pray over me so sweetly? Who am I to desire a different life for them?" (p. 374). Poststructuralism helped me not be put off by such demonstrations of faith, and I actually enjoyed the challenge of engaging with colleagues and students who held on to different truths than my own.

In humanism we can hide behind constructs of who we think we really are, this self that is given and that we can relax into and not change or confront systems of oppression. A move away from humanism is not an excuse to avoid responsibility; in fact the individual is possibly more responsible in the postmodern world than in a world dominated by liberal humanism. There is a cliché that claims you cannot run away from your problems. I disagree. You can get out of the context, change the discourse, sabotage the oppressors and resignify yourself. Through postmodernism we understand "the self is not given," and, "subjectivity is constructed

within relations that are situated within local discourse and cultural practice" (St. Pierre, 2007, p. 176). Our subjectivity is malleable.

I am trying to think differently, represent things differently, and now I will attempt to reflect differently. I hope I have avoided moralizing, making blanket pronouncements, and being self-indulgent, though I may have failed. I hope this chapter can point to possibilities for becoming for teachers and classrooms including my own. Diana Nyad who after five attempts, starting in her late-twenties, swam from Cuba to Florida at the age of 64 also inspired me. After accomplishing her goal and the death of her mother Nyad reflected on life and said, "There's a real speeding up of the clock and a choking on, Who have you become? Because this one-way street is hurtling toward the end now, and you better be the person you admire'" (as cited in Levy, 2014, p. 27). I want to become the person I admire and, as I reflected on this study I had an urge to create a To Do list for myself—a list that I could hang up in my bathroom or keep on my nightstand to remind myself what these years of a doctoral program have illustrated I need to do. As reductivist as a list sounds, I realized that I am always in the process of becoming and the least I could do was be a little more intentional about it. The following sections provide the suggestions that will hopefully propel me to new possibility. My first suggestion, which is completely replicable, is to go to the grocery store.

Go to the Grocery Store

C. Wright Mills (1959) stressed that "you must learn to use your life experience in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it" (p. 196). Going to the grocery store is about as common a life experience as you get in the United States, yet at the time of this dissertation it has been almost a year since I stepped into a conventional grocery store. I am not talking about the natural foods store or my neighborhood co-op. I am talking about the big box

grocery store. When I am in the grocery store, I feel terrible. I become judgmental. I see all the obnoxiously oversized SUVs in the parking lot and the processed food in the carts and feel disgust. I cannot handle it, so my husband does the grocery shopping.

This is just one of the many striated spaces I can no longer handle—malls and home improvement stores have long been on the list. Yet, if I follow this trajectory, how long until I cannot walk into a school building or a classroom? I may need to force myself into the grocery store, not on a regular basis, but maybe once a year. I need to go so that I can practice thinking differently. In David Foster Wallace's commencement address at Kenyon College titled, *This is Water* (2005), he described the depressing experience of going to the grocery story after a long day of work, standing in a checkout line as an exemplar of "many more dreary, annoying, seemingly meaningless routines," and having a choice about whether or not to give into the judgment or to think differently.

Wallace (2005) explained that in the grocery store his "natural default setting is the certainty that situations like this are really all about me. About MY hungriness and MY fatigue and MY desire just to get home," but what if a different choice was made. He continues, "Or I can choose to force myself to consider the likelihood that everyone else in the supermarket's checkout line is just as bored and frustrated as I am" (Wallace, 2005). This is not a call for empathy. I am tired of "the liberal embrace of empathy that reduces otherness to sameness" (Lather, 2000, p. 19) though I certainly understand where the urge to understand the Other comes from. So when I stand in front of the copy machine at school and it jams, when a student turns in a late assignment (which means I have to reload the computerized gradebook to enter their work) I have a choice about how to make sense of the situation.

The social movements and liberation projects of the post World War II era inspired acceptance of diversity "because we wanted to hear everyone's voices and know what they knew, we invented new methodologies to captured subjugated knowledges" (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 11). Researchers wanted to move beyond quantitative and statistical data and be with people. There was a desire to know, first-hand, what pain people suffered and what oppression they faced. The researchers wanted to understand people and "if we'd carefully and systematically captured and recorded their authentic reality, we could reproduce it, represent it in words, in thick description, so that others could read our text and be there too" (p. 11). I began this project with conventional humanistic intentions and qualitative methods in hand. I wanted to understand my students, I wanted to be there with them and understand how they made sense of religion and then communicate that to the world. I was proud of myself for my interest and my empathy, and then I realized it was all about me. My desire to understand was egocentric and very different than having compassion as I moved through the world. The difference comes in the inscription. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) explained this point through their critique of the regime of truth that is psychoanalysis (Foucault, 1977/1995). When people go into psychoanalysis, it matters what they say. "It is read against Oedipus, the phallus, lack, desire for mother, rage against the father, and so on" (Kamberelis, 2004, p. 165). Understanding that exhaustion from taking care of an aging parent may be why he or she acted rudely is different from inscribing people. When we resort to psychoanalyzing, reducing when we begin "forcing understandable identities, overlooking differences" (Lather, 2000, p. 20) we are engaged in a kind of violent and reductivist act.

Deleuze and Guattari viewed psychoanalysis as a totalizing system and wrote that "psychoanalysis becomes the training ground of a new kind of priest, the director of bad

conscience: bad conscience has made us sick, but that is what will cure us!" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1977, p. 332). Their comment reminded me of my own experience with personality tests like the Myers-Briggs that are often given to college undergraduates. The test essentially creates a typology of the test taker who is assigned a code E for extrovert or I for introvert, among other codes. This practice is similar to a tracing. It takes some key aspects or dimensions of the person and draws attention to those while ignoring the other complex elements that exist. These tests may make people feel as if they know themselves better, but it also reduces complexity, which could stifle or kill off aspects that do not appear on the test. The lines of flight are cauterized. What if I am only introverted around strangers but am very extroverted when in familiar company? What all of these examples have in common is a suspension of judgment, not in a self-help feel good kind of way, but something deeper. Going to the grocery store means I may have to see more complexity. For example, I have to realize that I do not know all about the shoppers lives based on what they have in their carts.

Create a More Dialogical Classroom

I worked with my major professor, Bob Fecho, on a book in which we described what writing could be like in a dialogical classroom. A dialogical classroom "is one in which literacy is used to immerse teachers and students in an ongoing reflective conversation with the texts of their lives" (Fecho, 2011, p.5). The idea of classrooms or writing being dialogical is based on Bakhtin's notions of a dialogic imagination. Fecho claimed "that through response comes meaning—a restless, transient, ephemeral meaning that is contingent on context and included toward its next response" (p. 5). I learned much from the project but my leap into poststructuralism led me away from the idea of a dialogical classroom, not that Bakhtin is in opposition to poststructuralism as "poststructuralism views research as an enactment of power

relations; the focus is on the development of a mutual, dialogic production of a multi-voice, multi-centered discourse" (Lather, 1991, p. 112). Bakhtin believed in multi-voiced discourses; it was just that I wanted to do something else.

Now I believe that Bakhtin has a lot to offer and I think making classrooms more dialogical is a good idea. I agree with Lather (1991) that "The task is to construct classroom relations that engender fresh confrontation with value and meaning—not to demonstrate to students their ignorance" (144). Working on the idea of a dialogical classroom may be a way to work in classrooms without falling into the same routines that lose meaning.

In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1986/1993) Bakhtin made major assertions about existence, Being, modern philosophy, and the human condition, but the essay is mainly concerned with something he calls "the ought." The ought in Russian is *postupok,* as Bakhtin (1993) explains "my individually answerable deed or performance, and with the world in which my *postupok* orients itself on the basis of its unique participation in Being as an ongoing event" (p. xix). Bakhtin accounts for different paradigms with unique codes of ethics, but seems to imply that the ought cannot be held to the same ethical rules that govern other systems. It is like the utterance, in that there are rules for grammar, but the utterance cannot be caught in those trappings. However, this is not a kind of relativism. If anything, Bakhtin seemed to promote a kind of ethical responsibility. He wrestled with much more than language, much like how teachers deal with more than just our curriculum, but with how we view the world and our place in it.

In *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (1993) Bakhtin described the place where theory and the ought meet in the molten lava of life. There is no escape from theory because even not having a theory is, in a sense, a theory. In trying to organize everything into a theoretical or

symbolic structure, you create an authoritarian discourse and you reify or abstract life, in a sense, objectifying and killing it. For example, if all I think about while my students are talking is how what they say fits my theoretical framework, I am objectifying those students and failing to understand the complexity, as well as missing the immediate experience, of what was present during the exchange.

Bakhtin also wrote about the modern dilemma where we feel confident when playing a role "of teacher" or "of student," but when we have to act from our ought we are uncomfortable. Bakhtin (1993) posited that:

> Contemporary man feels sure of himself, feels well-off and clear-headed, where he is himself essentially and fundamentally not present in the autonomous world of a domain of culture and its immanent law of creation. But he feels unsure of himself, feels destitute and deficient in understanding, where he has to do with himself where he is the center from which answerable acts or deeds issue, in actual and once-occurent life. (pp. 20-21)

That is, we act confidently only when we do what we know and are inscribed in the systems or constructions we have come to accept. It is often the acceptance of norms and roles that have been placed on us or that we have brought upon ourselves that we feel most comfortable. If we acted from the ought, this one-time place, then we would be acting outside of some of the striation. As a social studies teacher, there is a temptation to present myself as the expert. Despite my previous attempts to create a dialogical classroom, I know that when I teach topics in history it "is always entangled in someone else's discourse about it, it is already present with qualifications" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 330). I hope I am teaching my students to think in a critical

manner without breeding cynicism or disconnecting them from the beliefs that sustain them. I want them to have the space, whether striated or smooth, to work on and through their own ideas.

For teachers like me, who want to envision classroom spaces differently, then it is critical to discuss why we are doing the things we do. This discussion of the ought, or acting from the once-occurent place of being, relates to the dialogical classroom and poststructuralism because it is another way of being in a deterritorialized space; a space where one can act from a place that is not codified or inscribed. We may even be acting from a smooth space. The polyphonic discourses of Bakhtin and poststructural thinkers are in stark contrast to the monologic discourses of institutions. When I talk about teaching, I often find myself falling into discourse patterns that come from years spent in institutional settings. It is a habit I want to break.

Recognize When I Operate From Fear

I fear that teaching and life have the potential to be a series of repetitive tasks in striated spaces that ultimately lead to boredom and petty frustrations. I also fear that teaching is designed to "supply the system with players capable of acceptably fulfilling their roles at the pragmatic posts required by its institutions" (Lyotard, 1979/1984, p. 48). I wanted teaching to be more than a series of tasks on a checklist. I believe we are freer than we imagine. There was a time when I avoided talking about religion in the classroom because I assumed that my students' religious beliefs were so deeply entrenched that it was impossible to have a respectful discussion that would not become dogmatic. I put myself in my own prison with that thinking.

I would argue that the age we live in allows space to talk about interpretation in religion and questioning of religious thought and practice. However, as a teacher I do not always take advantage of this space because I am afraid of coming up against belief. What I forget is that belief is not always tantamount to the end of a discussion. The discussions students had about

religion in my classroom during the three months of this study were not focused on church-taught beliefs about how to carve a path for living or issues of eternal life. Many people feel more comfortable eventually settling down with belief in which someone has to be right and someone has to be wrong, but belief does not always mean a line must be drawn in the sand because there are often smooth spaces that can be navigated without people feeling that they are betraying their beliefs (Carse, 2008).

All beliefs are not held with the same level of conviction. Maybe I believe that I should not eat meat, but this does not mean that I have enough conviction to remove it from my diet. Carse (2008) noted "the content of our beliefs does not in itself determine where we locate them on a scale of intensity" (p. 23). Maybe my conviction increases as I learn more about the meat industry and I change my behavior or maybe not. During the Socratic Seminar discussed in Chapter Three, part of the discussion seemed to examine how texts, specifically the gospels, were produced and how they functioned. Lyotard (1979/1984) described how "The grand narrative has lost its credibility" (p. 37). The grand narrative in the case of my classroom discussion was the Bible. It is not that my students did not believe in the Bible, but they seemed poised, ready to question and deconstruct the gospels just as they had the messianic qualities of Jesus earlier in the discussion. I heard this deconstruction in the dialogue about Jesus being a regular guy who was ascribed messianic qualities by others, and I heard it as students questioned the reliability of the gospels, even if they did not seem to have a solid understanding of what the gospels actually said.

Through listening to my students talk about religion, I began to appreciate that, "To have a religious sense of life is to long with a restless heart for a reality beyond reality, to tremble with the possibility of the impossible" (Caputo, 2001, p.15). Talking about religion allowed a little

space for a little more becoming, and some of the students' restless talk reminded me of

poststructuralism because it would not be pinned down and each door opened to another layer

and then another layer. This also reminded me of the things I need to remind myself about re-

engaging with the idea of a dialogical classroom. When exploring why teachers (including me)

refrain from a dialogical pedagogy, Fecho (2011) came up with the following list:

- Fear of doing the wrong thing

- Fear that students will perform poorly on standardized tests

- Fear that there is too much to do and too little time

- Fear of spinning out of control

- Fear that students aren't up to the task. (p. 15)

Fear permeates his list, and I realized it permeated much of my thinking. Paranoia, the "what

ifs," got in the way of taking chances. The fear-based classroom is not a creative or generative

space for me. I have only witnessed the firing of one teacher, although I have seen some

pressured to either change their teaching or resign. If it is unlikely that I am going to be fired,

what am I afraid of? I am afraid of not knowing where things are going. What if students don't

talk or what if they say something intolerant or even cruel? Maybe I do not trust that I could

handle the conflict, but maybe that is just an excuse, or how I have allowed fascism to creep into

my thinking. For the teachers reading this fear-based teaching may seem like the only path, but

there is always a choice. When I think about the people that inspire and challenge me they are

not the type of individuals that live in fear of breaking a rule or a social norm.

Avoid Fascism

In Foucault's (1972/1977) preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* we find out

that "The strategic adversary is fascism...the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday

behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us." (xiii). As I try to better understand spaces in my classroom I have to be careful of my own fascist tendencies and arrogance. Fascism and arrogance prevent us from having dialogues in good faith with people who do not understand the world as we do.

Fascism is tempting. How easy it would be to be led by school administrators so I do not have to feel responsible for blindly asserting my judgments and myself at every opportunity, to reign over students. In the introduction to *Anti-Oedipus,* Foucault (1972/1977) described how fascism "is based on the desire to be led, the desire to have someone else legislate life" (xvi). How quickly I give in to this desire to be told what to do and when to do it, to fascism that is "prompted by an instinct of self-affirmation and self-preservation that cares little about preserving or affirming life" (xvii). This also happens with students who beg to be lectured to, who buck when the alternative is work that requires they be the primary actor. There is fascism in the Panopticon building where surveillance reigns. There is fascism everywhere but to work around it or resist it leaves you vulnerable or, maybe just an eccentric, because, "History has always dismissed the nomads" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 394). The nomad, who does not need to have everything orderly, is the bane to the fascist but because nomads do not usually write the history books they may not always get the credit they deserve. The self-satisfaction of the fascist is not appealing to me as a teacher or researcher, as it is the nomad, the people that act from their ought, and those who do not let fear dictate their lives, these are the people that give me hope.

Accept Apocalypses

I am apocalyptic. Not a lowbrow Hollywood blockbuster *The Day after Tomorrow* kind of apocalyptic. My apocalyptic visions are based on what I understand as the condition of being

human in the modern or better yet post-modern world. The apocalypse has a negative

connotation but I don't think of it that way. I understand it as a time to burn (metaphorically) the

old ways down and hopefully watch new ways of being rise from the ashes, "maybe apocalypse

is, paradoxically, always individual, always personal" (Franzen, 2013, p. 276). If the best we can

do during our brief time on earth is deal with the particular set of attachments we have formed

due to the circumstances we were born into before we die then I want to make the best of this go

on earth. When I talk to educators who taught in public schools in the 1970s, 1980s, and even

1990s they sometimes speak of halcyon days past, pre-No Child Left Behind, pre-data rooms,

pre-world where I teach and research. Their experiences are so different from mine that it feels

like there is no connection; the ties have been severed between the school of their career and the

school of mine. The apocalypse has happened. The destruction has happened and happens again

and again. If the apocalypse is upon us then "it is urgent that we rethink our understanding of

both knowledge and its production in order to envision revitalized academic and public

discourses to guide our teaching and learning" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 175). I want to imagine

something different.

I invite the apocalypse in, and I recognize "nothing nihilistic or apolitical or irrational or

relativistic or anarchistic or unethical about the task of resignification" (St. Pierre, 1997, p. 176).

I do not want to go back to the imagined schools of the past. I do not want to accept the

dualisms of humanism such as man-woman or good-evil. I also do not think the acceptance that

things decay and die is a callous move to "destroy traditions and institutions, our beliefs and

values, to mock philosophy and truth itself, to undo everything the Enlightenment has done—and

to replace all this with wild nonsense and irresponsible play" (Caputo, 1997, p. 36). I am not

dancing on the ruins, but I certainly accept that things change. The apocalypse gives us a chance to reinvent if we take advantage of it and do not fall back on fear and fascist thinking.

So What?

As I reach the end of this dissertation and reflect on what I did and where I am headed, there is still a lingering question of so what? For example, what did rhizomatic cartography offer that conventional research methodologies did not and what does this study mean for teachers and researchers? Rhizomatic cartography and thinking about my classroom and data rhizomatically, offered me a more holistic view of what it is I do and how conditions, that I previously did not think about, contributed to my classroom discussion space. Until I mapped, I did not think about how seemingly little striations managed to shape the way I looked at a class. When I mapped the rhizomes in my classroom, I was able to better understand the conditions that created a space and think about it on a micro and macro level simultaneously. For example, when I mapped I identified many conditions that seemed to work on a macro level or affected many teachers, like standards. I also identified micro conditions, like my relationship to members of my department that may have affected fewer people but were still profound. I was able to weave these conditions together to see how they influenced my classroom as well as each other. It was this flexibility that I appreciate about the rhizome and what I think it has to offer to other teachers and researchers.

In Chapter One I included a large excerpt from an interview with punk icon Patti Smith that demonstrated a restless way of being in the world. Smith (1976) described breaking through level after level in an attempt to go beyond. What lies beyond is not clear, but what is clear is more dogma is not the answer. Teachers and researchers do not need more doctrine they need less. I have already written that I accept striations as a part of working and living in the world,

but I do not want to create more. I advocate, and would be happy if other teachers and researchers joined me, for smooth space. Not that smooth space is entirely possible; it is just that I think a little bit could go a long way. It was in the smooth space where I was able to actually become a researcher and not just go through the motions or mimic the work of other dissertations. I also stopped being afraid of not doing things right and engaged in research that felt alive and fluid instead of formulaic. It was in the smooth space where my students came alive in discussion and expressed thoughts and ideas that I did not know were possible.

Conclusion

Much of this study was permeated with the voices of Michel Foucault, Giles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari. I tried to check the impulse to put these men on a pedestal. In the Preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972/1977) Foucault explained that:

> The book often leads one to believe it is all fun and games, when something essential is taking place, something of extreme seriousness: the tracking down of all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives (xiv).

This returns me to the *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* analogy I used in the introduction of this dissertation. Just as Roy Neary's mashed potatoes were important to him, this study is important to me. I try hard and if I try hard to live, teach, and do research in a way that is not based in fascism, then I try to pay attention and create spaces where just for a few minutes, a smooth space opens, a discussion occurs, it becomes possible to think something differently, it becomes possible to get outside of a humanistic binary or role. For just a few minutes, if we can talk about something that is immaterial, that is not serving the production or reproduction of a

capitalist state, then I can keep going. If for just a minute my class sings a sea shanty, we talk

about the possibility of God, we take a walk, and I don't think of my students as mindless

consumers but as beings in a process of becoming, then I can feel alive. If for just a few minutes

I ward off pettiness and bitterness and maybe even fascism, then I can imagine something

differently. If that is all that comes of this, then that is fine with me.

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APPENDIX A

Classroom Script

Classroom and email script

I am asking you to take part in a research study entitled Close Encounters of the Rhizomatic Kind: Religious Discourses in a Public School Classroom.

Through this study I am seeking to learn more about the range of religious discourses in my high school social studies classroom. I am focusing on what is happening when religious discourses emerge or do not emerge when I am teaching topics that relate in some way to religion or religious ideology. I am asking you to participate because you have either been a student in my classroom or you are one now.

Study Procedures (For current students ONLY)
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to…
- Allow us to audio record and transcribe comments you make in class as well as study comments you may write on paper.
- It is also possible that comments you say aloud or write will be referenced in my research.
- You do not have to say "yes" if you don't want to. No one, including your parents, will be mad at you if you say "no" now or if you change your mind later. We have also asked your parent's permission to do this. Even if your parent says "yes," you can still say "no." Remember, you can ask us to stop at any time. Your grades in school will not be affected whether you say "yes" or "no."

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to withdraw the researcher will retain and analyze already collected data relating to the subject up to the time of subject withdrawal. If you decide to stop or withdraw from the study, the information/data collected from or about you up to the point of your withdrawal will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed. There will be no monetary incentive for participating in this study.

The main researcher conducting this study is Dr. Robert Fecho a professor at the University of Georgia. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Robert Fecho at bfecho@uga.edu or at 706.542.4526. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kathleen Paige Schadek Cole
Language and Literacy Education
315 Aderhold The University of Georgia Athens, GA 30602

APPENDIX B

Minor Assent Form

Assent Form for Participation in Research
Close Encounters of the Rhizomatic Kind: Religious Discourses in a Public School

Classroom

We are doing a research study to explore how religious discourses appear in the secular space of public school. We are asking you to be in the study because you are in a class where the subject of religion is frequently discussed in relation to the state mandated content matter we are studying. If you agree to be in the study, you will allow us to audio record and transcribe comments you make in class as well as study comments you may write on paper. It is also possible that comments you say aloud or write will be referenced in my research. The benefits are that you may help us to learn more about how religion factors into learning in a secular environment.

You do not have to say "yes" if you don't want to. No one, including your parents, will be mad at you if you say "no" now or if you change your mind later. We have also asked your parent's permission to do this. Even if your parent says "yes," you can still say "no." Remember, you can ask us to stop at any time. Your grades in school will not be affected whether you say "yes" or "no."

I will use this information for my dissertation and possibly other articles that I write based off of this data. We will not use your name on any papers that we write about this project. We will only use a pseudonym so other people cannot tell who you are.

You can ask any questions that you have about this study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can contact me at pschadek@uga.edu (706) 372-4970.

_____

Name of Child: _____ **Parental Permission on File:** ☐ Yes   ☐ No

(For Written Assent) **Signing here means that you have read this paper or had it read to you and that you are willing to be in this study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign.**

Signature of Child: _____ **Date:** _____

(For Verbal Assent) **Indicate Child's Voluntary Response to Participation:** ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Signature of Researcher: _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX C

Parental Permission Form

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Close Encounters of the Rhizomatic Kind: Religious Discourses in a Public School Classroom

Parental Permission Form

I give my permission for my child to participate in the research study titled "**Close Encounters of the Rhizomatic Kind: Religious Discourses in a Public School Classroom"** that is being conducted by Kathleen Paige Schadek Cole, Department of Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia, 706-372-4970, under the direction of Dr. Bob Fecho, Department of Language & Literacy Education, University of Georgia, 706-207-5909. This participation is entirely voluntary. My child can refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled. If I decide to withdraw my child from the study, the information that can be identified as my child's will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed.

The following points have been explained to me:

The reason for the research is to give researchers and other educators a better understanding of how religious discourses function in secular high school social studies classrooms.

The study will last from August 12, 2013 until December 13, 2013. My child will not be asked to do anything specifically for the study. I will allow Kathleen Paige Schadek Cole to audio record and transcribe as well as study comments participants make in class and write on paper. It is also possible that comments will be referenced in research reports.

The only discomfort or stress my child might experience during this research would be the normal range of discomfort or stress usually associated with being in a high school classroom.

No risks to the participants are foreseen, except the minimal risk sometimes associated with revealing personal information through writing and speaking.

The results of my child's participation will be confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior written consent, unless otherwise required by law. All participants will be assigned aliases and all specific identifiers will be removed from reports. Only Kathleen Paige Schadek Cole will have access to the audio recordings and only excerpts from the written transcripts will be shared in reports. All data, paper or electronic, will be stored no more than five years, at which point they will be destroyed.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research now or during the course of the project and can be reached by telephone (706-372-4970) or e-mail (pschadek@uga.edu).

In no way will these activities affect, either positively or negatively, grading in my child's courses. **If I choose for my child not to be part of this study, that choice will also not affect his/her grade either positively or negatively. Participation in this study will not release my child from any course or school requirements.**

FINAL AGREEMENT:

_____
Student's Name (Please Print)

Please check:

_____ I WILL ALLOW MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY.

_____ I WILL NOT ALLOW MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY.

My signature below indicates that the researchers have answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I give my consent to allow my child to participate in this study. In addition, I have been given a copy of this form

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date   Signature of Parent   Date

Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the researcher, who can be reached by telephone (706-372-4970) or e-mail (pschadek@uga.edu).

Additional questions or problems regarding your child's rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX D

Principal Letter

7/08/2013

Dear IRB Members,

After reviewing the proposed study, "Close Encounters of the Rhizomatic Kind: Religious Discourses in a Public School Classroom", presented by Kathleen Paige Schadek Cole, graduate student at UGA, under the direction of Dr. Bob Fecho, UGA professor. I have granted permission for the study to be conducted at North Oconee High School.

The purpose of this study is to give researchers and other educators a better understanding of how religious discourses function in secular high school social studies classrooms.

I understand that observations will take place at school at a time that does not interfere with regular classroom activities. The observations will be conducted over a time period of no more than 3 months. I expect that this project will end not later than January 2014. Ms. Cole will also *contact* student participants according to district regulations and in accordance with the IRB approved procedures of the University of Georgia. Student participation will be entirely voluntary.

I understand that Ms. Cole will receive consent from her participants. Ms. Cole has agreed to provide me any documents that I request in relation to the study. Any data collected will be kept confidential and will be stored *in a secure location accessible only by the researcher.*

If the IRB has any concerns about the permission being granted by this letter, please contact me at the phone number listed below.

Sincerely,

Philip Brown, Principal

(706) 769-7760

Table 1

Table 1 Summary of Lesson Plans

Day	Date	
1	9/11/13	1. Zoroastrianism Start Up reading and short video 2. K-W-L on Judaism/Debrief 3. Three Monotheistic Religion questions and debrief 4. Work with partners on words for Judaism notes/Debrief 5. Monotheism Lecture/Finish Learned part of KWL and share
2	9/12/13	1. Finish reading/activity of One and Only God Reading 2. PowerPoint of pictures of Jesus and discussion about how we know which Jesus is correct? Discussion and writing time to follow. Collect Student responses 3. How do we know about Jesus reading/Students create questions for Socratic Seminar
3	9/13/13	1. Yom Kippur reading and PBS clip 2. Who was Jesus to the Jews reading 3. Christianity Socratic Seminar
4	9/16/13	1. Debrief Socratic Seminar 2. Christianity Background Notes 3. John Green/2 Things learned 4. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians 5. Address remaining Burning Questions 6. Islam Chalk Talk/30 Days with questions
5	9/17/13	1. Review Abrahamic Tribes/ Monotheism Notes 2. Hijab reading/PPT and article 3. 30 Days and questions
6	9/19/13	1. Students work with partners to go over 5 Pillars and the comparison between similar traditions in Judaism and Christianity 2. Islam Background Notes 3. Bill Moyers Now/Coleman Barks reading poetry of Rumi "Out Beyond Ideas of Wrongdoing and Right Doing" 4. 5 Pillars Graphic Organizer
7	9/24/13	1. Notes on Fundamentalism 2. Notes on Middle East Conflict 3. *Promises*
8	10/1/13	1. Creation of *Promises* Dialogues and Tableaus