

MY *CURRERE* JOURNEY TOWARD A CRITICAL RURAL PEDAGOGY

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Pinar's (2012) concisely definitive statement, "I am allegorical" (p. 52), is indicative of the curricular value inherent in an autobiographical reflection toward the allegorical and suggests the importance of lived experience, in this case my lived experience. The complexity in Pinar's simple sentence in terms of allegorical hiddenness might cause one to consider it an elusive, ever-present quandary, but in understanding that as I exist, reflect, resist, define, discover, and reconstruct my story as an early childhood educator in rural Appalachia, now doctoral student, I have, existing in my lived experience, an allegory. An allegorical story of hidden political and moral issues faced by teachers of rural Appalachian students is beckoning to be told for the benefit of future teachers of poor, White children. For as Pinar (2012) suggests, "It is 'I' (in whatever reconstructed form) who must communicate the character and meaning of experience, including to myself" (p. 52).

This piece represents my journey toward knowing as I present remembered moments as allegorical revelations of hidden political and moral issues in my story as a teacher of rural Appalachian students in an attempt to bring openness and clarity to one's ability to create a space to know and accept the experiences of an Other. Therefore, as I embark on a *currere* journey of allegorical discovery, I hope to create meaning for future work, as well as a source for communicating the moral and political story embedded in the experiences of a White, middle-class teacher in rural Appalachia. I begin this journey with a return to the past and recount a recurring memory in the form of an autobiographical narrative (italicized), which currently guides my work toward an educational system that works for all children.

THE REGRESSION: DAKOTA'S STORY

For many years, I had the joy of teaching young children in a high-poverty, rural school district in southern Ohio. I moved to the district almost 30 years ago, but my first impression of the area remains permanently etched in my memory. Many buildings in town were vacant and in disrepair; the homes were surrounded by garbage and multi-colored vehicles, and the dirt-streaked children were untended and scantily clad. I was shocked; my own hometown, while smaller than this one, did not look like this at all. In fact, we had city ordinances that would have imposed a fine on the owners of these properties. My first thought was how much these people needed my help. Fortunately, my initial understanding has changed. Through experiences, discovery, and reflection I realized I had much to learn about those who live in rural poverty. My students and their families soon captured my heart and instilled in me a burning passion to understand, support, and tell the stories of low-income children in southeastern rural Ohio. Although each of their stories holds a special place in my heart, the story of one child, in particular, has touched me so deeply that it serves as the focus of virtually all of my subsequent inquiry and work.

I met Dakota during a home visit prior to his entrance into kindergarten. His mother and I had arranged a time to visit so we could discuss concerns, questions, and expectations of incoming kindergartners. To say the path to his house was remote is an understatement, and the more I traveled away from the known back road onto what many would consider dirt paths, the more I doubted my decision to venture out by myself. However, I eventually crested the final hill to view two dingy-white mobile homes, both with broken windows, loose aluminum siding, and surrounded by several chained-up dogs—I had reached my destination. Initially unsure of which home to approach, I remembered my conversation with Dakota's mother and her directions that indicated theirs was "not the one on the hill." The home was not fancy, and we met on a back porch cluttered with what most people I know would consider inside items (refrigerator, sofa, recliner, end tables, and a chest of drawers), but I felt welcome. My time with Dakota and his mother left a lasting impression on me. As they discussed their dreams, I sensed the love, fear, and blind trust of this young child and his mother. You see, they made it clear that "Dakota wants to be a doctor," and this family was putting their faith in me to help them make it happen.

As I drove away from their home, I reflected on my newly-defined role as Dakota's kindergarten teacher—the co-creator of dreams—and the obstacles that children like him would face in an educational system that prioritized early identification and intervention raced through my mind. I was confident he would immediately be labeled as in need of intensive intervention, as while I was visiting with him it became clear that he could not write his name, let alone recognize or say the letters in it. I knew the current mandated tests well; he would surely fall into the intensive intervention range, despite the fact that he could communicate clearly, was eager to learn, had a caring heart, and was inspired by lofty dreams—to be a doctor. There was something about this family, this child with a dream, that inspired me to look past the policy roadblocks to a path toward solutions for equitable educational opportunities for low-income, rural children. This journey, as I soon discovered, required more than what a well-intentioned, caring teacher had in her backpack and would lead her down an unpredictable journey of hidden historical, political, and moral dilemmas.

This memory feeds my intense desire to identify, deconstruct, and examine the hurdles of creating a school in which all children such as Dakota, who are White and live in generational poverty in remote rural areas (rural Appalachia), might realize their dreams. But, how does this particular memory connect with the moral and political factors of teaching in rural Appalachia? What conceptual knowledge is hidden in this story—my story? Where/how might I begin the analysis of this regression? In the process of reflecting on these questions, I've come to a plethora of new realizations, two of which are particularly relevant to this project: 1) the mainstream literature and media portrayal of this group of citizens includes, but is not limited to, derogatory terms such as *White trash*, *redneck*, *hillbilly*, and most recently, *the uneducated White*, all of which stem from historical attitudes and policies designed to maintain a buffer between haves and have nots (Allen, 2009; Isenberg, 2016; Wray, 2006; Wray & Newitz, 1997); and 2) race, class, and place are intertwined in a manner that suggests that Whiteness and White supremacy takes precedence over place and class (Gillborn, 2005; Matias, 2013;

Matias & Zembylas, 2014; McCarthy, 1990). The latter is relevant, as the concepts of class and place had, until recently, guided my research and dominated my thoughts on the education of poor, rural Whites.

THE PROGRESSION: THE DREAM OF A BETTER FUTURE

In light of several recent events, such as the noteworthy responses of classmates to my incessant comments and musings regarding poor, White students, the viral response to an ill-conceived cheerleader sign designed and displayed in ignorance, the overwhelming turnout of rural, White voters in the 2016 presidential election, as well as an opportunity to attend a campus talk by J. D. Vance, author of the best-selling 2016 book, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*, my focus has shifted from regressive moments to progressive and present moments. I discuss these personal and societal events as impromptu ethnographic opportunities, along with the under examined, historical, and scholarly representation of poor, White citizens. I present a narrative that demonstrates how these perspectives complicate my vision of preparing an all-White faculty to provide citizenship education for all students in an all-White community school, while at the same time acknowledging that race matters, even in spaces in which class differences appear to take precedence. As I work toward developing a school in which poor, rural, White children can flourish and contribute to the good of today's diverse society, I must acknowledge that, in many Appalachian regions of the country, there is an absence of anti-racist education, which goes unacknowledged or perhaps in some cases acknowledged and even preferred, by those living in these spaces and serves as a barrier to consciousness of the distant Other. The unconsciousness of racist practices in these remote, rural areas is highly criticized by those outside as an unexamined sense of privilege that comes with White membership (Gillborn, 2005) and is complicated by the existence of poor Whites, questions of Whiteness, and related dialogue (Allen, 2009).

THE ANALYSIS: A DECONSTRUCTION/RECONSTRUCTION OF A CLASS

As I continue to find myself interested in, returning to, and questioning the absence of research on rural, White, poor children, families, and communities, and the dream of a space in which they might flourish, I have researched, read, and written on the topic from many angles—the importance of place, rurality, and identity (Gruenwald, 2003; Theobald & Wood, 2010); pedagogical implications of remote, rural areas (Azano & Stewart, 2015); deficit models of rural poverty (Theobald & Wood, 2010); and most recently, the history of classism in America (Isenberg, 2016; Wray, 2006). But, always underlying my research are reservations regarding my complicity in a co-opted story, one that I choose to tell *about* the rural poor, rather than to tell *for* them (Andreotti, 2015). Am I interpreting and representing the narratives of scholars as well as poor, White families with integrity? Who really are the rural, White poor as social beings? Cultural beings? Historical beings? Political beings? Do those who teach them know? Do they, themselves, even know? How might a teacher educator prepare middle-class teachers to work with these children?

APPALACHIAN OR WHITE TRASH: COMING TO TERMS

I remained confused for many months by ambiguity regarding what it means to be *Appalachian*. As I spoke of my interest in rural, poor students, I was directed toward faculty doing work with Appalachian groups. That made me wonder whether my students are Appalachian or simply rural. Our county *is* situated on the fringe of

what is defined as the Appalachian region of the United States, *but* when I thought of Appalachia, I thought of a rich Scots-Irish mountain culture with deep and honorable cultural roots, not a poor, White community with uncertain cultural roots, high poverty, and limited education situated in an economic desert. I was also encouraged to meet with “so-and-so” because he/she did work with urban Appalachians. That didn’t make sense to me either. How could a term used to represent rural poor be applied to an urban setting? In searching for related scholarly literature, I had more success in using the term “Appalachia,” as the term “Rural” often would produce resources that highlighted regions quite different from southern Ohio, such as rural Alaska, New Mexico, China, India, etc.

I was overwhelmed with questions regarding my students and my place. Who exactly is Dakota? Who are these students I taught for so many years? What does it mean to be *Appalachian*? Is it something one is? Is it a way of life? Is it a geographic region? Is it a who? A what? A where? Is there a universally accepted answer to these questions, and if so, does it match my students? In an informal, yet almost desperate, attempt to find answers, I turned to friends and acquaintances who live near me in what is labeled the fringe of Appalachia. The overwhelming casual response to my questions—“Oh! You mean White Trash.”

I think I already knew that but didn’t want to go there. Can I go there? Can I name my research *that*? The following offers my remembrance of the competing voices regarding these questions and my concern over “going there”:

Doubtful Voice 1: *“No one cares about White Trash.”*

Me: *“I do...I think? People talk all around it...but never it. Somehow, someone has to tell their story (for Dakota). Don’t they? (pause) Is there someone who should?”*

Doubtful Voice 2: *“No one wants to hear what my family has to say, especially their political views.”*

Clarifying Voice 1: *“Are you talking about rural, working-class whites?”*

Me: *“No, I’m referring to rural non-working whites...those who have depended on government assistance for generations. It seems they’re absent from the conversation.”*

Clarifying Voice 2: *(In a quiet voice... almost under her breath) “It’s because we see them as brown.”*

Me: *(Brown?) “I can’t ‘go there.’ It can’t be me. I’m not big enough.”*

Resolute Voice: *“Well, I certainly can’t do it! It has to be you...go there, gurl.”*

This conversation reflects my hesitance and confusion to continue my work regarding the rural, poor children in my county. But, what did it reflect regarding a racialization of poor Whites? What did it indicate regarding my journey to a rural, anti-racist pedagogy for all-White schools? I had hit a roadblock and remained at a standstill for several weeks due to my ignorance regarding race, privilege, and a fear that, in attempting to approach this as a member of a privileged group, I might offend or go

against progress in antiracist efforts. I was inspired to not only return to the topic, but to momentarily step away from the need to define *Appalachian* in order to research the history and social construction of the term White Trash.

AMERICAN HISTORY...CLASS

Most American elementary students know the stories of Christopher Columbus who sailed three ships to discover our great land, immigrants who left their homelands for a better life in this new land, Pilgrims and Wampanoag who shared a meal of thanks, slaves who were treated in brutally inhumane ways, and a Civil War that brought an end to that practice. Children are taught that “all men are created equal” and that if they work hard enough they “can be anything they can dream.” Dakota and his family were convinced of that and put great stock in me to assist him in his dream to be a doctor. However, few, if any, know of the atrocities and less-than-pretty untold counter-narratives to these same events and systemic hindrances to dreams due to hidden and rarely discussed class divisions and limitations (Isenberg, 2016; Loewen, 1995; Wray, 2006). This rarely spoken history reveals an interesting story of a socially constructed category of waste people (Isenberg, 2016; Wray, 2006) who served as a political buffer between the Black slaves and elite Whites (Allen, 2009; Wray & Newitz, 1997)—White Trash.

Loewen (1995), in *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, offers an interesting review of the limitations of history textbooks as they present and represent a slanted White-centered account of American history at the expense of people of color. However, an argument for an equally slanted elite-centered account as it is indicated in the practices such as indentured servitude, restrictive land ownership laws, and the eugenics movement to sterilize ignorant, poor, White folks is absent from his book. There is brief mention—3 sentences—of discrimination against White immigrants, the last of which states: “Nonetheless, the segregation and physical violence aimed at African Americans has been of a higher order of magnitude” (Loewen, 1995, p. 168). In reading Loewen’s counter-narrative, I realized that the poor, White students in my classes were reading of successful, White forefathers, dislocated Indigenous peoples, and the mistreatment of Black slaves with little to no mention of the historical oppression of lower-class Whites. Some readers may view this as a minimization of class in favor of race. However, I am simply suggesting that race and class are intertwined, and conversations about poor Whites must be included in history textbooks if we are to have an honest and open dialogue about oppression in the United States.

Isenberg’s (2016) history of White Trash tells of the initial concept of poor Whites as it is linked to 16th century England’s utter disdain for poverty and idleness and the idea that the newly accessible America offered a “dumping ground” to rid their country of the “rubbish.” Her work offers an opportunity for poor Whites to claim their historical memory (Sleeter, 2008) as she (Isenberg, 2016) recounts a detailed political and typically “untold” history of how a large majority of early, White Europeans were actually criminals, poor, and orphan children who were forced onto boats and shipped to America as waste. Many of these poor and landless Whites, though not all, existed in Appalachian regions and were perceived as an ignorant, non-working, incestuous culture with little desire to work and essentially nothing to offer the new country. The Darwinist ideology of biological inferiority exacerbated the idea that poor Whites were an incestuous breed, which perpetuated ignorance and led to policies such as institutionalization of imbeciles, involuntary sterilization to rid the land of the feeble, and overwhelming representation of the poor, rural, White simpleton in the media (Isenberg,

2016; Wray, 2006). Wray (2006) suggests that the categorization and bounding of White Trash as a group is solidified by “distinction and boundaries [that] enable and structure our cognition and perception of our worlds” (p. 9).

After reading these historical and sociological accounts of poor Whites, which I must say were totally new to me, the number of generations for those living in generational poverty is much greater than I had imagined. Some families may have existed in poverty for over 400 years, largely due to systemic policies that promoted this existence (Isenberg, 2016). A deeper review of differences that define symbolic boundaries illuminate not only the cultural differences of poor Whites, but also how dominant, non-poor, Whites exploit and expand these stereotypes through the promise of White privilege to those at the bottom as a means to protect their own White fragility (Allen, 2009; Wray, 2006). I soon found myself wondering about how to proceed as I noticed historical parallels (e.g., eugenics, exploited labor, dehumanization) between poor Whites and people of color but was confused by the fact that I had not ever heard/read of these similarities. What was I to make of this? Why doesn't anyone speak of the historic inequality of class? Isn't poverty a phenomenon of class? Can we not speak of the oppression of poor Whites? How might I, as a White, middle-class woman, tell a story of White poverty without 1) appearing to paint poor Whites as victims of their own fate; 2) appearing to discount the history of people of color; and/or most of all 3) appearing to be ignorant of the big picture of White supremacy? How will other scholars respond to my work? Again, in an attempt to make sense of this conundrum, I turned to faculty advisors and colleagues. What follows is an excerpt from a conversation I had with a Black female colleague, a trusted friend with whom I often exchange thoughts on privilege, racism, and Whiteness.

Me: *I've been reading a really interesting history of class in America. It's titled "White Trash: The 400-year untold history of class in America." It's a new book by Nancy Isenberg.*

Adalyn: *Oh, Snap!*

Me: *I know! Right? I'm finding out my poor, White students have an interesting history. And 'White Trash' has a longer history than I realized. I had no idea. Many early White... actually most early White immigrants were criminals, orphans, or indentured servants sent here from England to rid that country of rubbish. The term actually is thought to come from Black slaves who used it to suggest it was better to be a slave than "po' White Trash"*

Adalyn: *OK, wait...there is a big difference...*

Me: *I realize that...*

Adalyn: *(continues... talking over me) they were free to roam around...slaves were not...their history is entirely different. Toni Morrison writes of the dying Black slave, who was attempting to escape, that was found in the woods by a White angel. It is very different. The angel was free to move around. Black folks were stuck... enslaved...not free at all...*

Me: *I understand.*

Adalyn: *(continues... talking over me) there is no way you can compare the two histories. (Adalyn continues for several minutes, but at this point I don't remember the details.)*

(Adalyn finally takes a breath)

Me: *I understand. I just can't stop thinking that knowing this will be helpful for Dakota...in some way...I might be able to use it to teach White teachers how to teach about racism to poor White children.*

Adalyn: *Absolutely, it is...it can be spoken of at the same time, but never as bad as what African Americans experienced.*

Me: *yah. I agree.*

That was a scary but valuable lesson. Although we have exchanged thoughts on how one might bring these conversations to White, rural America many times, I learned quickly that there is a line that separates how we might speak of the needs of poor White children in relation to poor Black children—I had obviously crossed it. I immediately put aside the work of rural scholars and began to read the work of Black scholars in order to gain insights into what is necessary for a balanced two sided-dialogue on classism, racism, Whiteness, and the role of poor Whites. In one fell swoop, I had gone from a focus on classism in America to the realization that, in understanding class, I must also understand race. For that I turned to McCarthy (1990) who:

argued that the intersection of race, class, and gender in cultural and ideological institutions such as schools is problematic, contingent and systematically contradictory or nonsynchronous. (p. 12)

Soon after deciding to take this fork in the road, I was again overwhelmed by the tangled and deeply-rooted nature of educational inequalities. I realized I wasn't in Appalachia anymore, and I would need more than a backpack to continue—I needed a hatchet to chop my way through this concept of nonsynchrony. The method of choice was to chip away at what it is not, clearing away the brush of previous theories of racial inequality to reveal a clearer vision of pedagogical possibilities for poor, White school children and their teachers.

In *Race and Curriculum*, McCarthy (1990) explores the strengths and weaknesses of scholarly attempts to explain persistent racial inequality in American schools, even as curriculum theorists at the time were producing a wellspring of literature on the phenomenon. He suggests that their early over-reliance on structural class inequalities stemming from labor-capital contradictions offered insight into the systemic implications. However, he also argues that they failed to consider the socially constructed nature of racism and educational inequality and that, while mainstream theorists did consider social construction of racism and inequitable classroom practices that might be altered to reduce inequalities, they came with the price of deficit thinking. McCarthy further turns to Apple and Weiss' (1983) parallelist position regarding how the economic, cultural, and political practices of curriculum shape schools and are "also thoroughly stratified by dynamics of class and gender as well as by race" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 8). According to McCarthy, parallelists offer a more comprehensive and balanced approach *and* reject the "reductionism and essentialism of earlier neo-Marxist structuralism" (p. 9). However,

they fail to address the limitations of viewing race relations as parallel, reciprocal, or symmetrical (Hicks, 1981).

In following Hicks' (1981) lead on the idea of nonsynchrony—that “individuals or groups, in their relation to economic, political, and cultural institutions such as schools, do *not* share identical consciousness and express same interests, needs, or desires “at the same point in time” (p. 221)—McCarthy (1990) explores how this less parallel, more complex, and multifaceted perspective might “work in schools” (p. 84). He clears away the brush by describing specific relations: 1) relations of competition; 2) relations of exploitation; 3) relations of domination; and 4) relations of cultural selection. These complicated and contradictory interrelationships “govern nonsynchronous interactions of raced, classed, and gendered...actors in the school setting” (p. 84), “interact with, define and [are] defined by the others in an uneven and decentered manner” (p. 84), and “help to position these youth in respect to power relations with majority peers and adults” (p. 85).

But what does this mean for poor, White children with dreams? What does it mean for a teacher committed to creating a space where dreams are fed? In all honesty, at this point, I haven't cleared away enough brush to know exactly, but I do know this non-synchronous position, with epistemological complexity and tensions, offers me a way forward as I continue this journey toward rural school renewal that refuses to reduce, essentialize, or compare the “Dakotas” as members of a predetermined group of students incapable of achieving rich dreams. So I move on toward realizing a space in which poor, White children might begin to dream big dreams with a revised goal—to explore White supremacy and Whiteness as they operate as nonsynchronous relationships in poor, White, rural communities (Allen, 2009; Gillborn, 2005). However...

*A SERIES OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS:
GATHERING DATA THROUGH IMPROMPTU ETHNOGRAPHIES*

As I gathered new knowledge of a critical history (Sleeter, 2008) and non-synchrony (McCarthy, 1990) into my “backpack” and was looking forward to exploring Whiteness, I immediately encountered three significant unforeseen detours. In the scope of 30 days, I found myself handed valuable opportunities to engage in what I might refer to as impromptu mini-ethnographies: 1) an ill-conceived cheerleader sign designed and displayed in ignorance; 2) the overwhelming turnout of rural, White voters in the 2016 presidential election; and 3) a campus talk by author J. D. Vance (2016), author of *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. I considered these to be impromptu mini-ethnographies because they allowed me to observe, analyze, interpret, and tell of a group of individuals at a single site with a common set of beliefs, values, and language, BUT since they were not purposely designed, or organized, in any manner by the researcher (in this case, me), they lacked formal organization or recording of data (Creswell, 2013). They are events that I, in no manner, could have predicted or planned and that occurred in spaces in which I found myself intimately situated without predetermined research questions and/or the means to document my findings. My position as a sort of *local-outsider-researcher* interested in this particular culture privileged me with access that is denied to many.

Late in October, seven naïve high school cheerleaders in my small, rural community created a sign for the football team to break through in the final game of the season with our bitter, cross-county rival suggesting the “Indians” leave in a “trail of tears.” While the rival team name—Indians—is, in and of itself, racist and insensitive, the issue I wished to study was the public response to the use of the term “trail of tears,” as well as the aggressive social media response of offended strangers. I could not have planned nor

predicted this unfortunate event, yet the proximity and availability of comments opened the door to a powerful, impromptu ethnographic review. The community responded with a call for understanding the beautiful nature of these naïve girls' hearts and that no harm was intended...and that those who didn't understand that were a "bunch of crybabies" who could go *do something nasty to themselves*. The local school officials apologized for a lack of sensitivity to the opposing team and offered a lesson on the history of the Trail of Tears (again problematic, but not the point of this query at this time). The clear message from those outside of the community was the call for extreme punishment of all involved, from the cheerleaders themselves all the way to the superintendent. The most extreme called for "death to all," while more prevailing minds would have been satisfied with everyone involved being dismissed from their duties. My first assumption: This rural, White community is supportive, forgiving, and loving of its own but closed-minded, harshly aggressive, and skeptical toward differing opinions of outsiders.

Then, in early November, came the 2016 election of Donald Trump. Of the three events that I consider in this piece, this particular significant event, or impromptu ethnographic opportunity, is the most complicated for me as I exist in the political borderlands. Many of my local friends are Trump supporters and are those who turned out in number to "vote for the first time in years" for a candidate who they felt offered the best chance for economic recovery of this depleted area of the country. They were very aggressive in their anti-Hillary language, suggesting jail time and even death. In light of the comments related to the cheerleader banner, Trump's rhetoric was viewed as what I will call metaphorically honest. They listened with a different ear than those sensitive to oppression, taking Trump's comments more figuratively as that is inherent in the cultural language of poor, White folks. Educated liberals speak a different language and were deeply offended, some irreparably, by anyone who could even speak the atrocities that came from Trump. The disgust and attacks on a way of life on the part of liberal elites worked to motivate and mobilize a group of conservative, poor, White people who saw something familiar and comfortable in the rhetoric. My second assumption: The language of poor Whites is often vulgar and offensive to those outside of the culture.

Finally, only days after the election, I had the opportunity to hear J. D. Vance (2016) speak of his life as a member of the poor, White, working class community in Kentucky and Southern Ohio and his ideas on the systemic causes of classism in the Rustbelt region of the United States. Although I planned my attendance at this event, I did not plan for the audience I would encounter, offering yet another impromptu mini-ethnographic opportunity for me to consider. I had assumed that, because this talk was held on a college campus, I would sit among a small, diverse group of liberal students and faculty interested in rural Appalachia. I could not have been more wrong! When I arrived, 30 minutes early, I found a line of approximately 50-75 mostly middle-aged, White, working-class people that wound through the second floor of the student center. I recognized them; they spoke, dressed, and performed as those from my own small, rural community. They might have been my neighbors—Dakota's neighbors.

When we finally entered the room, I saw a large venue set up for over 300 attendees. As the room continued to fill (to the point of standing room only), I soon realized that what I was experiencing was highly parallel to the Trump turnout. I did what any good doc student might do—I began to survey the audience. From my vantage point, I was able to count approximately five people of color in the entire room, and that included the student section. I want to point out that the author did grow up in a neighboring city, so it was highly likely that many of the audience members were Vance's friends, family, and fellow citizens from that city, but the point remains that there was little to no

representation of people of color in attendance. My third assumption: The plight of poor, rural, White folks is important to other poor, rural, White folks.

What do these impromptu mini-ethnographic opportunities offer as I continue this winding and unpredictable journey toward a space in which my poor, White students might achieve their dreams? How might these assumptions offer new insights in preparing an all-White faculty to provide citizenship education for all students in an all-White community school, while at the same time acknowledging that race matters, even in spaces in which class differences seem to take precedence? How might we prepare poor, rural, White children to flourish and contribute to the good of today's diverse society, in regions of the country where there is an absence of anti-racist education that goes unacknowledged, or perhaps in some cases acknowledged and even preferred, by those living in these spaces and serves as a barrier to consciousness of the distant Other? How might we heed the criticisms of those outsiders who suggest an unexamined sense of privilege comes with White membership (Gillborn, 2005)? How is the desire to bring awareness of racist practices to these remote, rural areas complicated by the existence of poor Whites who tend to reject outsiders, questions of Whiteness, and related dialogue (Allen, 2009)? Unfortunately, these questions remain unanswered for the moment. But as I seek direction/re-direction in creating an educational space for a culture with a complicated allegiance to Whiteness and White Supremacy, I will "attempt to build 'integrated' political projects and alliances from within the already constituted hegemonic struggles and everyday practices" (McCarthy, 1990, p. 120) by intentionally exploring what I have intuitively done in the past—regress, progress, analyze, and synthesize (Pinar, 2012) a way forward for all students.

THE SYNTHESIS: CONSTRUCTION OF CRITICAL RURAL PEDAGOGY

In conclusion, I return to Pinar's (2012) statement that "I am allegorical" (p. 52) and to my story as an allegory for rural, White teachers who wish to inspire rural, poor, White children to *dream rich*. At this point of my journey, I have more questions than answers, but I do know that teachers must first reflect on their own understanding and consciousness of class as it intertwines with race and place (McCarthy, 1990) and explore the changing "collective representations" of poor Whites (Wray, 2006, p. 17) as seen in the present political and societal arena. My experience as a local-outsider in a rural Appalachian school district has provided a foundation for this work, and my relationships with families and students, such as Dakota and his mother, living in rural poverty motivates me to persevere. In analyzing and revealing the hidden, allegorical story, I seem to have determined that my work centers on a critical rural pedagogy that seeks to educate teachers regarding White Supremacist educational practices and policies that dismiss, exclude, and marginalize young children of poverty as early as kindergarten.

We can no longer afford to allow the past history of poverty to be normalized by silence, ignorance, or fear. Someone must engage all-White, rural faculty in conversations that challenge White supremacy in all-White community schools—conversations that must be informed by the complexity of race, class, and gender as it is deeply intertwined in economic, political, and cultural systems (McCarthy, 1990) and must include anti-racist rhetoric, even in spaces where class differences seem to take precedence over race. That someone just might be me.

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