CHAPTER 1: THE FUNCTION OF RACE IN WRITING ASSESSMENTS

In order to understand why an antiracist project is so important to any classroom writing assessment ecology, even before I define that ecology, the concepts of race, racial formation, and racism need to be discussed and defined. Therefore in this chapter, I argue for a term, "racial *habitus*," as a way to understand the function of race in writing assessment ecologies, making all writing assessment ecologies racial projects of some kind.[5] I distinguish racial *habitus* from Omi and Winant's (1994) term, "racial formations," which I use to refer to the actual people that populate schools and writing classrooms. I discuss the term "racism," which might initially be understood as a larger set of historical structures, assumptions, and effects (or consequences) of any racial project. Through my discussions of racial *habitus* and racism, I address several criticisms or resistances by those who may feel that a focus on racism in classroom writing assessment ecologies may be misguided or wrong. What I hope to make clear is that we have no choice in thinking about racism in our writing assessments. And if we care about antiracist or social justice projects in the writing classroom, we need to care about and address explicitly the way race functions in our classroom writing assessments. Thus, I ask in this chapter: how might we define race and understand its function in classroom writing assessments so that we can articulate antiracist writing assessments?

THE IMPORTANCE OF RACE

Race is an important social dimension, a lived dimension of everyone's life despite its socially constructed nature (Ferrante & Brown, 1998; Gossett, 1963). No one can avoid the way race is structured in our lives, even those who do not wish to see it, and even though it isn't real in the same way someone has black hair or brown eyes. Our social, economic, and political histories in the U.S. are underwritten by the construct of race, as many have discussed already, particularly by looking at whiteness and the creation of white bodies and people (Hannaford, 1996; Ignatiev, 1995; Lipsitz, 1998; Mills, 1997; Roediger, 1999). The influence of the concept of race is in the coded ways we talk about each other, the words we use for race and to avoid its reference (Bonilla-Silva, 2003a, 2003b; Villanueva, 2006). It is in the way we behave and perform our identities (Inda, 2000; Young, 2004, 2007), which can also be seen in discussions of gender performativity (Butler, 1990; Salih, 2002). Many in composition studies

have argued that race is an important social dimension that we must pay attention to if we are to teach better, assess better, and build a more socially just future (hooks, 1994; Hurlbert, 2012; Prendergast, 1998; Villanueva, 1993, 1997; Young, 2007).

Even those who promote multilingual and translingual pedagogies (Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Horner et al., 2011; Jordan, 2012), which are not focused on race but linguistic difference from the dominant academic discourse, often assume racial structures that support and are associated with the linguistic and language competencies of all students. In other words, even if we wish to avoid talking about race and just talk about linguistic difference, which appears to be about a *real* difference in groups of people in the writing classroom, appears to be a dimension without prejudice, appears safer to notice and judge because we're judging writing, not race, the people who most often form multilingual English students or linguistic difference from the dominant academic discourse are racialized in conventional ways, as are their languages and writing. In fact, our discursive performances are some of the ways race is produced as a social dimension that distinguishes people (Inda, 2000). Race is often marked through language. In short, those who identify primarily as African-American, or Latino/a, or Asian-Pacific American often are the multilingual students or the linguistically different in schools.

As a social construction, race is complex, often composed of multiple factors that intersect in one's life despite the fact that it is a fabrication by people over time. We made up race, then it became something real. But it is not real, just as gender isn't real. I'm reminded of Stephen J. Gould's (1981) discussion of the reification of the construct of IQ. In his well-known book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Gould (1981) draws out historically the ways that IQ tests and the testing of intelligence through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to clear racist consequences by creating the construct of IQ and using it against non-white populations to show their inferiority to whites. Gould shows how easy it is for people to "convert abstract concepts into entities" (1981, p. 24), meaning once a test becomes accepted, its results, like an IQ number or an SAT or EPT score, are "reified," which then allows the reification to be deployed in a number of ways in society. While we act as if the signifier of an IQ or EPT or SAT score is something real, the test itself created this thing. We forget that the construct that the scores allegedly measure are created by the tests and do not actually exist before those tests.

In his compelling sociological account, F. Allan Hanson (1993) comes to this same conclusion, showing historically how various tests and examinations create the very attributes and competencies they purport to measure. Thus there is no IQ before IQ tests, no remedial status before the EPT. One might say (although

it isn't completely true), in the case of Fresno, there is no racial hierarchy until the EPT produces it. While the EPT is not testing race, per se, race is a complex set of material and discursive factors that create groups of students with similar competencies and literacies in the test. Race functions through the EPT because the test does not account for the multiple literacies, the multilingual capacities, of all the students currently taking the test. It uncritically and unknowingly accounts for one kind of literacy, a dominant one, a hegemonic one, a white, middle class discourse (I'll offer evidence of this claim later in this chapter).

It is no coincidence, then, that race was used to understand the results of intelligence tests early in the 20th century. One example should do. As Norbert Elliot (2005) explains, the army alpha and beta tests that determined intelligence, thus opportunities for taking positions in the military, were given to recruits in the second decade of the twentieth century (pp. 59-60). A part of the concerns that the test makers had once they began testing recruits was the high frequency of illiteracy in southern Black and immigrant recruits, which they associated with mental deficiency or lack of intelligence (Elliot, 2005, pp. 64-66). It didn't occur to the test makers that perhaps the construct of intelligence in their tests was not universal, and required particular experiences and cultural references that Blacks from the south and immigrants just didn't have access to (for different reasons). Instead, Robert Yerkes, the man in charge of the tests, concluded that the illiteracy of any group of recruits was dependent on the number of Black recruits in the group. Additionally, he concluded that most immigrants from Italy, Poland, and Greece were illiterate (and thus less intelligent), than their English, Scottish, and Irish immigrant counterparts (Elliot, 2005, p. 66). Race functioned to make sense of the test results, validating their findings.

In these obvious ways, race has had a strong connection to assessment generally since assessment tends to confer social and economic privileges. Tests like the army alpha and beta, the SAT and EPT, often are gateways to educational and economic access, privilege, and jobs. Many have shown the ways that U.S. society in general has been designed to protect such privileges and access for whites and kept them at arm's distance to racialized others (Ignatiev, 1995; Lipsitz, 1998; Mills, 1997; Roediger, 1999). Many of these structures still exist, even if only as lingering, familial economic privileges (or lack of privileges) gained by past generations and available to the present generation. Many of these structures exist in everyday reading and judging activities that teachers do with student writing, as Lester Faigley (1992) convincingly shows. In his discussion of Coles and Vopat's collection, *What Makes Writing Good*, Faigley demonstrates that particular class—and I argue racial—dispositions function to produce judgments of student writing, particularly dispositions concerning perceived "authenticity" and "honesty" (1992, p. 121). The examples of authentic

and honest writing from the collection not only reveal a middle class set of tastes but a clear white racial set of experiences and perspectives. Faigley's conclusions are ones about the ways that such reading practices by teachers are an exercise of Foucauldian power, power that is difficult to see thus more potent and pervasive (1992, p. 131). I would add to Faigley's critique that it is race that functions in such daily classroom writing assessment practices, hiding behind power relationships set up by the judgment of student writing by teachers who use a dominant discourse. To put this another way, power is hidden more effectively because a set of white racial dispositions are already hidden in the assessment in various places, assumed as the standard.

Thus it is imperative that writing teachers consider explicitly and robustly the function of race in their classroom writing assessments, which often are a response to large-scale assessments, such as the ACT, SAT, AP, and EPT. The assessment community calls this relationship "washback" (Weigle, 2002, p. 54) when a test influences school and classroom curricula, but it might also be called "whitewashing." If we think that these large-scale tests are racist, or could be, and we know they washback into our classrooms, or are supposed to, then it seems reasonable to assume that our classrooms are constituted by racist institutional structures, and race is a factor in our classrooms. In his chapter on the neoliberal narratives of whiteness that structures racism in the U.S., George Lipsitz offers a reading of the film *Lean on Me* (1989), but begins it with a fitting way to close this section:

> My sister and mother both taught at Eastside at different times during the 1960s and 1970s and established reputations as the kind of demanding and dedicated instructor students remember long after their school years have been completed. Over the years, I have learned a great deal about what it means to try to offer a quality education in an inner-city school from them. My father, my mother, my sister, and many of their colleagues and friends have devoted much of their lives to that effort. I know how hard a job they have, how much patience and love it takes to try to neutralize the effects of poverty and racism even temporarily. I know as well that no amount of good intentions, no mastery of teaching techniques, and no degree of effort by individual educators can alter meaningfully the fundamentally unequal distribution of resources and opportunities in this society. (1998, p. 141)

If as teachers, we cannot alter such pervasive unequal distributions of resources

and opportunities in our students' lives, which affects who they are and what they bring to our writing classrooms, then I think our best strategy as antiracist educators is to change the way we understand and do writing assessment, while simultaneously building arguments and movements to change the larger structural racism in our society and schools. But this antiracist project begins in our classrooms because it is the only place we, as writing teachers, can begin.

LANGUAGE'S ASSOCIATION WITH RACE

Racial formations—material bodies that are racialized—are connected closely to language use and our attitudes toward language. Laura Greenfield (2011) makes this point in a number of ways. She argues that in U.S. society and schools, most people, including writing teachers, tend to ignore or overlook the "linguistic facts of life" that linguist Rosina Lippi-Green (1997) identifies and that reveal the structural racism in society and language preference. These facts of life are long-established linguistic agreements in the field:

- All spoken language changes over time.
- All spoken languages are equal in linguistic terms.
- Grammaticality and communicative *effectiveness* are distinct and inter-dependent issues.
- Written language and spoken language are historically, structurally, and functionally fundamentally different creatures.
- Variation is intrinsic to all spoken language at every level. (as quoted in Greenfield, 2011, p. 33; Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 10)

These agreements essentially say that all language varieties, from Hawaiian Creole English to Black English Vernacular to Spanglish are legitimate, rule-governed, and communicative. They are not degenerate versions of English or "bad English," yet they are often seen in a lower position of power and prestige than the local variety of SEAE. It isn't because SEAE is inherently better, more logical, more effective, or more efficient.[6] It is because whiteness and white racial formations historically are closely associated with SEAEs and dominant discourses. Greenfield concludes, explicitly connecting SEAEs with the white body:

> The language varieties deemed inferior in the United States (so much so that they are often dismissed not simply as inferior varieties but not varieties at all—just conglomerations of slang, street talk, or poor English) tend to be the languages whose origins can be traced to periods in American history when communities of racially oppressed people used these languages to enact agency. It is no coincidence that the lan-

> guages spoken by racially oppressed people are considered to
> be inferior in every respect to the languages spoken predom-
> inantly by those who wield systemic power: namely, middle-
> and upper-class white people. (2011, p. 36)

Thus so-called proper English or dominant discourses are historically connected to the white body. This makes sense intuitively. We speak with and through our bodies. We write with and through our bodies. As teachers when we read and evaluate our students' writing, we do so through and with our bodies, and we have in our minds a vision of our students as bodies, as much as we have their language in front of us. Who historically has had the privilege to speak and write the most in civic life and in the academy? Whose words have been validated as history, truth, knowledge, story, the most throughout history? White people. Additionally, the material conditions that our students come from and live in affect and shape their bodies, making them who they are, making us who we are as teachers. The material conditions of the classroom, of our students' lives, as we'll see in later chapters, greatly determine their languaging and the writing assessment ecology of the classroom. I argue that in most cases writing teachers tend to have very different local histories and material conditions than their students of color and multilingual students, often the common thread is race.

Allow a few crude examples to help me make the point that race is connected to the judging of English. In the seven years I helped run the first-year writing program at Fresno State, an historically Hispanic Serving Institution where white students are the numerical minority, there have been to my count seven teachers of color teaching in the program total. Every year, we bring in around ten to twelve new teachers, sometimes more. We usually have around 25-30 working teachers at any given time. This means that on average there has been one teacher of color teaching first year writing at any given time. The rest are, for the most part, white, middle class, and female. Given my experiences at three other state universities and a two-year college, these conditions seem to be the norm. A report by the Center for American Progress on "Increasing Teacher Diversity" in public schools in the U.S. cites equally alarming statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics. Racial minority students make up over 40% of students in all schools in the U.S., but only 14.6% of all teachers are Black or Latino/a, and in 40% of public schools there is no teacher of color, not one (Bireda & Chait, 2011, p. 1).

If the dominant discourse of the academy is taught almost exclusively by white, middle class teachers, then is it possible that such conditions will affect the discourse valued in writing assessments? Is it possible that those who achieve such positions, such credentials, might have achieved them because they can

use and favor the dominant discourses? If so, it is no wonder that dominant discourses in schools are closely associated with the white body and whiteness, which makes them associated with race.

Some might argue that the picture Greenfield and I paint for why any local dominant discourse is valued is inaccurate. My paradigm seems to say that teachers think about race when they judge students' writing. In one sense, yes. Greenfield and I are saying this. We cannot help it. Gender and race are the first things people identify (or try to) about a person when they meet them. We look, often implicitly and unconsciously, for markers that tell us something about the person so that we can interact with them appropriately. Why would teachers be any different? But at a more fundamental level, Greenfield argues that teachers are simply a part of systemic racism, a structural racism in schools and society that we don't control, and may not even be fully aware of. The fact that most if not all college writing programs demand that their students produce some dominant discourse, then judge them on their abilities to approximate it, according to Greenfield, is racist, since all dominant discourses are associated closely with white middle- and upper-class racial formations in the U.S.

But wait, some may argue further that even if this is true, even if structural racism does form the context of any writing course, it doesn't change the fact that there is a dominant discourse that is the lingua franca of schools, the workplace, and civic society. If you can approximate it, you have more power in those circles. You, in effect, negate the structural racism that may hold you back, keep power and privilege from your grasp. And so, in good writing classrooms, goes the argument, one can honor and respect the languages that all students bring to the classroom, then teach and promote a local SEAE so that those students have a chance at future success. This pedagogy is posed as antiracist, or at least one whose goal is social justice. This kind of argument and pedagogy, says Greenfield, is based on two false assumptions. The first is that these other language varieties, say BEV, are somehow less communicative and cannot do the job needed in the academy or civic life (Greenfield, 2011, p. 49). A simple example will show the flaw in the pedagogy's logic. Hip hop and rap are mainstream musical genres now, have been for years. Most of the lyrics are based on BEV, yet the music is listen to by people from a wide range of socioeconomic strata and by all racial formations in the U.S. and worldwide. If BEV isn't as effective in communicating in civic life, how is it that it is so popular, so mainstream? How is it that it connects to so many different kinds of people? How is it that it can tell such compelling stories? Is it that we don't mind Black people entertaining *us* (a white mainstream audience), but we don't want *their* language tainting the so-called important areas of *our* life, academics, knowledge making, civic life, law, politics, etc.? Are we just slumming in Harlem when we celebrate the relatively

few Black entertainers and sports figures, the few who make it economically, the exceptions, so that we can ignore the multitudes who do not?

The second false assumption that Greenfield says supports the above peda-gogical decisions is that "[p]eople believe falsely that by changing the way people of color speak … others' racist preconceptions will disappear and the communi-cative act will be successful" (2011, p. 49). So teach Blacks or Latinos/as to speak and write a dominant discourse and they will have more power and opportuni-ty. They'll be more communicatively successful. The logic here says that today people aren't racist toward people, but they may be toward the languages people use. Consider again the hip hop example. If we really did believe that changing the language of people of color would gain them power and opportunity, make them more communicative, then again I ask why are Hip Hop and rap so popu-lar? It's mainly performed by Blacks in the U.S., although it has become a global genre. Could it be so popular if it wasn't effectively communicating ideas and narratives?

We are talking about the exceptions really. The rule is that African-Amer-icans who speak and write BEV are not usually successful in school or civic life. But is it because they are not able to communicate effectively and clearly? According to Greenfield, the answer is no. Referencing several studies that prove the fact, she argues that people really are racist toward people because of the way racialized white bodies historically have been and are closely wedded to local SEAEs. She says:

> Black people are not discriminated against because some speak a variety of Ebonics—rather, I argue, Ebonics is stig-matized because it is spoken primarily by Black people. It is its association with a particular people and history that has compelled people to stigmatize it. Our attitudes toward lan-guage, it appears, are often steeped in our assumptions about the bodies of the speakers. We assume an essential connec-tion—language as inherently tied to the body. In other words, language varieties—like people—are subject to racialization. (2011, p. 50)

What does it mean that Ebonics or Spanglish or some other variety of English is stigmatized already in writing classrooms? The word's root is "stigma," which the OED defines as " a mark made upon the skin by burning with a hot iron (rarely, by cutting or pricking), as a token of infamy or subjection" (Stigmata, 2015). Thus something stigmatized is something already judged, something already in subjection, something lesser. No matter what antiracist motives a teacher may have, including my own motives, we all work within conditions and systems

that have branded some languages as less communicative, less articulate, less than the dominant discourse. No matter who we are, we always struggle against antiracist systems in the academy.

We shouldn't pretend, however, that any local dominant discourse, BEV, Spanglish, or any variety of multilingual English is monolithic or self-contained, therefore these stigmas are also not categorical. What I mean is that everyone speaks and writes a brand of English that has its nuances, its deviations. For instance, not every African-American student will speak BEV, and not everyone who uses it will use BEV in the same ways that others will use it. V. N. Volosinov (1986) makes this point clear about language generally, arguing that there is no *langue*, only *parole*, only language that is in a constant state of flux and change. Vershawn A. Young's (2004; 2007; 2011) arguments for "code-meshing" agrees and helps us see the nuance, helps us see why it's difficult to speak of BEV or a dominant white discourse alone. In fact, none of us speak or write solely some brand of English alone. We use variations of English that we encounter around us. Young (2007) argues that we all have hybrid Englishes. We speak in codes that are meshed with other codes, and we should account for this in the classroom. Additionally, because the dominant discourse is a white racial discourse, associated with white bodies historically, Young explains that "[w]hen we ask Black students to give up one set of codes in favor of another, their BEV for something we call more standard, we're not asking them to make choices about language, we're asking them to choose different ways to perform their racial identities through language" (2007, p. 142). However, just because we can see the hybridity of any brand of English, it doesn't mean the stigmas go away. The question is: how do we not let the stigmas determine how we assess writing in our classrooms?

The bottom line is we cannot separate race, our feelings about the concept or particular racial formations, which includes historical associations with particular racialized bodies in time and space, from languages, especially varieties of English in the U.S. This makes language, like the dominant discourse, racialized as white (I'll say more about this later in this chapter). More important, as judges of English in college writing classrooms, we cannot avoid this racializing of language when we judge writing, nor can we avoid the influence of race in how we read and value the words and ideas of others. Lisa Delpit offers a poetic way to understand language and its connection to the body, which I read with racial undertones: "[o]ur home language is as viscerally tied to our beings as existence itself—as the sweet sounds of love accompany our first milk" (2002, p. xvii). Freire has another way of pointing out the power of language in our lives, the power it has in making our lives and ourselves. He says, "reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world" (1987,

p. 23). When we read the words that come from the bodies of our students, we read those bodies as well, and by reading those bodies we also read the words they present to us, some may bare stigmata, some may not.

THE FUNCTION OF RACE IN THE EPT WRITING ASSESSMENT

I've just made the argument that race generally speaking is important to English as a language that we teach and assess in writing classrooms. But how is race implicated in writing assessments? How does race function or what does it produce in writing assessments?

One way to consider the function of race in writing assessment is to consider the consequences of writing assessments. Breland et al. (2004) found differences in mean scores on the SAT essay among Asian-American, African-American, Hispanic, and white racial formations, with African-Americans rated lowest (more than a full point on an 8 point scale) and Hispanic students rated slightly higher (p. 5), yet when looking for differences in mean SAT essay scores of "English first" (native speakers) or "English not first" (multilingual) students, they found no statistically significant differences (p. 6) —the mean scores were virtually identical in these two groups. I don't know how Breland and his colleagues determined native speaking proficiency, but my guess is that it may fall roughly along racial lines. These findings have been replicated by others (Gerald & Haycock, 2006; Soares, 2007), who found that SAT scores correlate strongly to parental income, education, and test-takers' race. Similarly, in Great Brittan, Steve Strand (2010) found that Black Caribbean British students between ages 7 and 11 made less progress on national tests than their white British peers because of systemic problems in schools and their assessments. These patterns among racial formations do not change at Fresno State, in which African-American, Latino/a, and Hmong students are assessed lower on the EPT (see Inoue & Poe, 2012, for historical EPT scores by racial formation) than their white peers and attain lower final portfolio scores in the First Year Writing (FYW) program readings conducted each summer for program assessment purposes (Inoue, 2009a; 2012, p. 88). Race appears to be functioning in each assessment, producing similar racialized consequences, always benefiting a white middle class racial formation.

Between 2011 and 2014, I directed the Early Start English and Summer Bridge programs at Fresno State. All students who were designated by the English Placement Test (EPT), a state-wide, standardized test with a timed writing component, as remedial must take an Early Start or Bridge course in order to begin their studies on any California State University campus. Even a casual look into the classrooms and over the roster of all students in these programs

shows a stunning racial picture. These courses are ostensibly organized and filled by a test of language competency, however, each summer it is the same. The classes are filled with almost exclusively students of color. Of all the 2013 Bridge students, there were only four who were designated as white by their school records—that's 2% of the Bridge population. And the Early Start English program is almost identical. So at least in this one local example of a writing assessment (the EPT), when we talk about linguistic difference, or remediation (these are synonymous in many cases), we are talking about race in conventional ways.[7]

The remediation numbers that the EPT produces through blind readings by California State University (CSU) faculty readers also support my claims. In fall of 2013, as shown in Table 1, all students of color—it doesn't matter what racial formation or ethnic group we choose—are designated by the EPT as remedial at dramatically higher rates than white students. The Asian-American category, which at Fresno State is mostly Hmong students, are the most vulnerable to this test, with 43.9% more of the Asian-American formation being designated as remedial in English than the white formation.[8] How is it that these racially uneven test results are possible, and possible at such consistent rates? How is it that the EPT can draw English remediation lines along racial lines so well?

Table 1. At Fresno State, students of color are deemed remedial at consistently higher rates than white students by the EPT (California State University Analytic Studies, 2014)

Race	No. of First-Year Students	No. of Proficient in English	% of Designated as Remedial
African- American	119	61	48.7%
Mexican- American	1,298	593	54.3%
Asian- American	495	161	67.5%
White Non-Latino	601	459	23.6%
Total	2,965	1,548	47.8%

While my main focus in this book is on classroom writing assessment, the way judgments are formed in large-scale ratings of timed essays are not much different from a single teacher reading and judging her own students. In fact, they show how language is connected to the racialized body. The processes, contexts, feedback, and consequences in a classroom may be different in each case, but how race functions in key places in classroom writing assessment, such as the reading and judgment of the teacher, or the writing construct used as a standard

by which all performances are measured, I argue, are very similar. And race is central to this similarity because it is central to our notions of language use and its value.

To be fair, there are more things going on that produce the above numbers. There are educational, disciplinary, and economic structures at work that prepare many students of color in and around Fresno in uneven ways from their white peers. Most Blacks in Fresno, for example, are poor, go to poorer schools because of the way schools are supported by taxes, which are low in those parts of Fresno. Same goes for many Asian-American students. But why would the Mexican-American students have twice as frequent remediation rates as white students? There is more going on than economics and uneven conditions at local schools.

Within the test, there are other structures causing certain discourses to be rated lower. Could the languages used by students of color be stigmatized, causing them to be rated lower, even though raters do not know who is writing individual essays when they read for the EPT? Consider the guide provided to schools and teachers in order to help them prepare their high school students to take the EPT. The guide, produced by the CSU Chancellor's Office, gives the rubric used to judge the written portion of the test. Each written test can receive from 1 to 6, with 6 being "superior" quality, 4 being "adequate," 3 being "marginal," and 1 being "incompetent" (2009, pp. 14-16). The rubric has six familiar elements:

a. response to the topic
b. understanding and use of the passage
c. quality and clarity of thought
d. organization, development, and support
e. syntax and command of language
f. grammar, usage, and mechanics (CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, p. 14)

At least items e and f correspond to a locally dominant SEAE, while a, b, c, and d correspond to some conventions and dispositions that are a part of a dominant discourse. The guide offers this description of a 4-essay, which is "adequate," that is, not remedial:

a. addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the task
b. demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage in developing a sensible response
c. may treat the topic simplistically or repetitively
d. is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with

reasons and examples

e. demonstrates adequate use of syntax and language
f. may have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage, and mechanics (CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, p. 15)

I cannot help but recognize this rubric. It's very familiar. In Chapter 13, "Evaluation," of William Irmscher's (1979) helpful book, *Teaching Expository Writing*, he provides a very similar rubric, one I've used in the past in writing classrooms:

- Content
- Organization/structure/form
- Diction/language/style
- Punctuation/mechanics
- Grammar/style (1979, pp. 157-159)

Irmscher's dimensions are a variation of the five factors that Paul Diederich (1974) and his colleagues, John French and Sydell Carlton, found in their factor analysis of fifty-three judges' readings of 300 student papers in a 1961 ETS study. The five factors they found most important to academic and professional readers' judgments of student essays were (in order of importance/most frequently used):

- Ideas
- Usage, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling
- Organization and analysis
- Wording and phrasing
- Style (Diederich, 1974, pp. 7-8)

Diederich explains that these five factors that most of his readers used to read and grade essays only accounted for 43% of all the variance in the grades given to the set of papers in his study. He says, "the remaining 57 percent was unexplained" (1974, p. 10). Most likely, the unexplained variance in grades was due to "unique ideas about grading that are not shared by any other reader, and random variations in judgment, which may be regarded as errors in judgment" (Diederich, 1974, p. 10). In other words, most of what produced evaluations and grades of student writing simply couldn't be accounted for in the study, and could be unique or idiosyncratic. Each reader has his or her own unique, tacit dimensions that do not easily agree with the tacit dimensions that other readers may have. But what does this have to do with the EPT's use of a very similar rubric and how does it help us see race in the assessments of writing made on the EPT?

Diederich and his colleagues show us that reading student writing, like the impromptu essays written for the EPT, will be judged by other factors as well as

those explicitly expressed. Even with careful norming, which I'm sure occurs in the EPT readings, there will still be variance. Readers will read from their biases. They have to. That's reading. But the question I'm wondering is: What stigmata do they see? Is this what is affecting the racialized remediation rates? The guide, to its credit, explains that readers will not "penalize ESL writers excessively for slight shifts in idiom, problems with articles, confusion over prepositions, and *occasional* misuse of verb tense and verb forms, so long as such features do not obscure meaning" (emphasis in original, CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, p. 16). It's the qualifier I wonder about. Isn't it possible that many readers will read confusion over prepositions or misuse of verb tense and forms, as obscuring meaning? Is it possible that multilingual students, like Fresno State Hmong students, will usually have more than "occasional" slips in the above linguistic features of their texts? Without doing a detailed linguistic analysis of samples, it seems plausible that such features of texts are associated with many students of color's discourses. For sure, multilingual students, like most Hmong and many Latino/a students at Fresno State, use discourses that are characterized by "misuse of verb tense and verb forms," as well as the other items listed. Are these markers read as stigmata though? Does seeing such linguistic markers compel a lower judgment by a reader who is most likely white, female, and middle class? It would seem that the instructions allow for this interpretation.

All EPT writing prompts direct students to read a short paragraph from a published argument, then explain it and make an argument agreeing or disagreeing with it. In one of the examples in the guide, the passage is from Sue Jozui, which argues against advertisers' use of celebrities' testimonials or endorsements to sell products. Here's the excerpt from Jozui:

> Advertisers frequently use the testimony of a celebrity to support a claim: a football star touts a deodorant soap, an actress starts every day with Brand A coffee, a tennis pro gets stamina from Brand X cereal, a talk-show host drives a certain kind of car. The audience is expected to transfer approval of the celebrity to approval of the product. This kind of marketing is misleading and insults the intelligence of the audience. Am I going to buy the newest SUV because an attractive talk-show host gets paid to pretend he drives one? I don't think so. We should boycott this kind of advertising and legislate rules and guidelines for advertisers. (CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, p. 17)

The prompt then states: "explain the argument that Jozui makes and discuss the ways in which you agree or disagree with her analysis and conclusion. Support

your position by providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading" (CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, p. 17).

Often the most instructive examples of student writing are the ones that reveal the borderlands, the margins that define the mainstream. The 2-essay, the "very weak" essay is a four-paragraph essay, one that does not reiterate Jozui's argument, but attempts to argue both sides of the issue. It has many more errors in local SEAE usage than any of the other sample essays rated higher, but in some ways, it does try to offer an academic approach by considering opposing points of view. It appears, however, to lack focus and a conventional organizational pattern. The 2-essay reads:

> If a football star touts a deodorant soap, an actress starts everyday with brand. A coffee, a tennis pro get stamina from Brand X cereal and if a talk show host drives a certain car it does not mean that your going to do that. I agree with Jozui if an atractive talk-show host gets paid to pretend to drive a car, it does not mean that your going to go buy one.

> It would be good boycotting this kind of advertisement but theres always a positive & negative side to the advertisements. Boycotting this advertisement will be good so it wont be misleading or insulting anyones intelligence. If a celebraty want to be advertised with a product or something at their own I think they have the right to. On my positive side of it I see it that its okay to be advertised, one thing is to be advertised & get known or get the product known, and another thing is buying the product.

> Some examples are for May 1st theres been a law trying to pass people, news reporters, and radio stitons were saying that on May first no one should go out & boycott by not buying anything that day, and not even going to work. That was getting known, so that point was to do a lot of peoples ears but not everyone did it about sixty to seventy percent of people I bet did not listen to them, if they were not going to work who was going to pay them for those hours lost no one, but, the other thirty to forty person of people did do the boycott. They did no care about it they want the law to pass.

> Everyone has the right to advertise. But its not like your going to go buy something just because come one else did. You

> have to follow your thought do what you wanna do not do
> what you see other people do. (CSU Office of the Chancellor,
> 2009, p. 22)

The guide offers these judgments on the "serious flaws" of the 2-essay:

- The writer begins by responding to the topic of celebrity advertising and the proposal to boycott it, but then goes off topic and writes about another kind of boycott entirely.
- The essay reflects a lack of understanding of Jozui's arguments and seems instead to be discussing the right of celebrities to be in advertisements and the consequences for people who participate in boycotts.
- The essay has no apparent focus or organization. After agreeing with Jozui, the writer tries to mount a pro and con argument, and by the third paragraph resorts simply to a stream of consciousness.
- The lack of command of language makes it difficult to understand what the writer is saying: "If a celebraty want to be advertised with a product or something of their own I think they have the right to."
- A variety of serious errors occur throughout the essay. The third paragraph is composed almost entirely of a single run-on sentence. (CSU Office of the Chancellor, 2009, pp. 22-23)

If we assume that the prompt, a familiar kind of argumentative prompt, was free of structural racism—that is, we assume that such tasks are typical in the curricula of schools where this student comes from and are typical of the discourses that this student uses—and we assume that the expectations around the first four items on the rubric are not culturally or racially biased (we can more easily assume that the last two items are racially biased), then we can conclude that the above judgments are "serious flaws" in the essay, and perhaps the essay deserves a score of 2. But what if we assumed that the prompt itself is already biased toward a dominant discourse that is associated closely to a white body and a white discourse?

Putting aside for the moment the many errors and miscues in the essay (some of which can be accounted for by the impromptu nature of the test), this essay might be one that engages in a rhetoric that could be a product of some other discourse(s), a discourse other than the dominant white one promoted in the EPT test prompt, rubric, and explanations of judgments that are assumed to be normative. Take the most problematic, third paragraph, which is judged as "off topic" and "stream of consciousness." This paragraph surely contributes to the assessment that the essay lacks focus and organization. But the paragraph does offer a material perspective on the discussion. It takes the abstract discussion

of boycotting advertisements that use celebrities and juxtaposes a discussion of something that allegedly occurred on May 1 in California, an actual boycott. There is a clear connection, but it's labeled by the guide as off topic. While there could be explicit connections to the current discussion about celebrities in ads, this discursive strategy might be associative or working from a logic of juxtaposition. These are logics that usually do not expect explicit connection to be made by the writer. But is the guide's assessment of the essay racist because it refused to value this paragraph in this way?

While this is purely speculative, since I don't know when this essay was written exactly, only that it was written before 2009, the publication date of the guide. The paragraph could be referring to the "Great American Boycott" of 2006 and 2007 (Associated Press, 2007), in which millions of Latino/a immigrants boycotted schools and businesses for one day in order to show the degree to which the U.S. depends on them financially. It is a decisively racial reference, which likely most EPT readers at the time would have been aware of, since Los Angeles was one of the cities with the largest turnout in 2006, estimated at 400,000 (Gorman, 2006). In fact, it is reported that in L.A., the protesters chanted, "Si, se puede" ("Yes, it can be done") (Glaister & MacAskill, 2006), which was the motto of the United Farm Workers organization, headed in part by César Chavez.[9] While the writer of the 2-essay doesn't mention any of these details, one could read them underneath the text. The references to "not even going to work," "hours lost" from work, and the sense that many "did not care" that they lost some money but wanted social and economic change seems to be sentiments felt or experienced by those in the student's community.

These changes are not simply about labor, but about Latino/a labor in California, about immigration policies, and racially defined immigrants and their material struggles with participating in social justice projects, like a boycott. They are about the experience of Latino/a immigrants engaging in a boycott that is meant to affect advertising and consumer consumption. These references are only off topic if you don't find such Latino/a cultural references valid in a discussion about the marketing of consumer products. If a reader's primary relation to such advertisements is that of a buyer, and not the laborer or retail worker working in the department store stocking and selling the soap or cereal, then this paragraph may seem off topic. But what if a reader imagined that her primary relation to the production and distribution of such advertisements was as a laborer who made such items available to customers? Then, I think, this paragraph, with its reference to the Great American Boycott, is far from off topic and racialized as Latino/a in a California context. It calls upon the common relations of Latinos/as in California to Capitalist consumption.

Yes, I read a lot into the essay, maybe too much, but that is the point. White

discourses and dispositions tend to lean on abstraction, and avoid such racially politicized readings of texts. I don't think the writers of the prompt or the guide intended for such an assessment to be valid of this essay because it racializes it. Does this mean that the essay should get more than a rating of 2? I think so. In the above ways, it addresses material concerns in a pretty unique way, in a way that matters to many in California, in a way that stretches the prompt to be more applicable than simply about an abstract idea like celebrities in ads, in a way that may very well matter to the student writer.

I cannot argue definitively that the guide or any judge would consciously see the markers of this text as racialized stigmata, but it doesn't matter. What the guide does promote is a particular ideal text, one that values only abstract ideas, with no sensitivity to the way particular racial formations might respond differently, respond from their own social conditions. This ideal text, I argue, is informed by a dominant white discourse, seen in the rubric and the way it asks readers to judge from it. The assessment that the guide promotes seems to ignore the possibility that what is "off topic" is culturally and socially constructed by a dominant, white discourse, and that any response will be constructed by one's material relations to the ideas around advertising and consumer economies in a racially divided California. Judging essays in the way the guide asks teachers to do produces the uneven and racist consequences that we see in Fresno State's remediation rates and its Early Start and Bridge programs. One cannot know who this writer is, but that's not the point. The point is what gets read and stigmatized in the text while not explicitly about race ends up having racist consequences.

RACIAL *HABITUS*

Up to this point, my use of the term race has been imprecise. At the same time, race as an abstraction or as a social dimension in which people are grouped or group themselves is tricky to define too finely. It encapsulates an historically organizing set of structures that structure social interactions and society, to draw on Pierre Bourdieu's phrase for *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). The term *habitus* gives us a way to think about race as socially constructed in at least three ways:

- *discursively or linguistically*, that is, through discourse and language practices;
- *materially and bodily*, or through people's material conditions and the bodily and material markers that our environments leave on us; and
- *performatively*, or through the ways we perform, behave, and act, which includes what we consume in conspicuous ways.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as "not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principles of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes" (1984, p. 170). That is, race as *habitus* structures and is structured into our lives, bodies, languages, actions, behaviors, expectations for writing, reading practices that judge writing, etc. Quoting Pierre Bourdieu, E. San Juan uses this definition of *habitus*:

> Bourdieu means "the conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence that produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them." (2002, p. 52)

For Bourdieu, *habitus* is multiple, historically situated structures composed of and conditioned by practices, material conditions, and discourses, that iterate into new structures (i.e., structuring structures), all the while these structures are durable and transposable, even when history and conditions alter them superficially. Racial *habitus*, then, is one way one might think of race as a set of structuring structures, some marked on the body, some in language practices, some in the ways we interact or work, write, and read, some in the way we behave or dress, some in the processes and differential opportunities we have to live where we do (or get to live where we can), or where we hang out, work, go to school, etc. Thus, racial *habitus* places an emphasis on the continual (re)construction of race as structures, as sets of dispositions that are discursive, material, and performative in nature. We speak, embody (are marked materially), and perform our racial designations and identities, whether those designations are self-designated or designated by others. Another way to say this is that racial *habitus* explains the way race is made up of discursive, material, and performative structuring structures.

To complicate further the concept of race as a social dimension, race has two ways of being experienced and referenced in the world that make it slippery and ambiguous in any given situation beyond the historically changing nature of it.[10] It is a dimension that can organize one's own subjectivity in the world, the way one acts, speaks, relates to others, and behaves. This is its *subjective* dimension. Everyone experiences race subjectively, or from a particular subject position and

set of experiences, which intersect with other dimensions of experience (e.g., class, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.). One might consciously or unconsciously reproduce particular racial structures in language, dress, behavior, appearance, etc. that structure one's own sense of one's racial subjectivity. In this sense, race is consciously a set of discursive, material, and performance choices.

Race is also commonly seen or understood by others through physical, linguistic, social, and cultural markers, structuring structures themselves that have uneven and various meanings to others. This second dimension is race's *projective* dimension, or one of others' perceptions and expectations placed upon the person or persons in question. It is the dimension of race that people or institutions use in order to know people and organize them either privately or institutionally. Even though we may not publically act on or voice assumptions about racial formations or individuals in our midst, we all have such assumptions. It's hard not to given the way our minds work to help us make sense of things, people, and experiences, particularly the unknown. In this sense, race is projected onto individuals and groups for a variety of purposes, often institutional.

Allow me to offer an example that illustrates how racial projection affects assessments (sets of judgments and decisions about people), despite a contradictory racial subjectivity. Growing up in Las Vegas, I was at least five or six shades darker than I am today. I was short, skinny, with jet black hair and brown eyes. In that context, among the working class whites at school and in our neighborhood, I was a "beaner," a "dirty Mexican," a "trouble-maker." In that context, where local Mexican-American communities were vying for working class jobs against whites, any brown-skinned, brown-eyed boy was a Mexican. It didn't matter that my name is as Japanese as you can get, very obviously non-Anglo, but that marker itself was read as a marker of the racial other that was most at odds with working class whites in my neighborhood and school. Unlike ethnicity, race is usually a broad brush stroke, not a fine penciled line. All my actions, all that I did, walking past a fence or a neighbor's trailer, knocking on a door to see if a friend could play, or trying to get a soda from a vending machine at the trailer park's office, all were seen as suspicious activities, ones that suggested I was surely up to no good.

I'm not making up this feeling of being suspect everywhere, every day, by everyone. The stigma was real, so real that a group of white trailer park tenants and the manager (also white) got together, wrote a letter to my family, listing all the activities my twin brother and I had done in the last year. One more misstep and we were evicted, kicked out. Interestingly, there were a list of activities and wrong-doings attributed to my brother and me during the previous summer, a summer we had spent with our grandmother in Oregon. We were not even in the state, yet all bad things were attributed to us, the Mexicans in the trailer

park. To my white, working class neighbors, it seemed obvious and clear that all wrong-doing in the trailer park were markers that my brother and I had been there. Our skin tone, eyes and hair were judged to be Mexican, which told them about our natures as boys.

I have always been proud to be Japanese-American, to be Asian-American, despite the racial and ethnic ambiguity that has often followed me. This is why I've placed extra effort and labor in my racial subjectivity, even back then, even as a pre-teen and teenager. It didn't matter what I said, or what I claimed to be. My performance, my physical and material appearance, even my discourse, which was quiet around adults, especially men (having almost no contact with men until deep into high school), was assessed as Mexican, as trouble-maker, as racial other. No matter what I did or said, it was seen as suspicious or bad. And because I was raised by a single-parent, my mom, who didn't have a college education, worked several low-paying jobs just to keep the lights on, our clothes were not the newest or nicest. They were clean and cared for, but there were several years in which we had to make do with last year's school clothes, last year's shoes. These economic constraints only reinforced the other material markers that constructed me as Mexican in the eyes of the whites around me.

I believe writing teachers, as good-hearted and conscientious as most are, use racial projection in the same ways that I experienced as a boy. Perhaps they do not make the same exact assessments when working with students of color, but we do racially project our notions and expectations onto others we meet, others we read, others we evaluate and grade in the writing classroom. If we didn't, it would be difficult to teach, to interact with any group of students, to understand the language offered us in writing by our students. We have to have assumptions, otherwise nothing makes sense. Now, I realize that some may find my conclusion about racial projection difficult to accept. They might say that they don't have to see race or assume and project some set of racial attributes in order to get along and work with others who appear different from them. Fair enough. Yet, I too find the typical alternative conclusion, that we can escape such racial projections in our interactions with our writing students when reading their writing, including multilingual writing, equally unacceptable and unrealistic. This practice of ignoring racial *habitus* in our lives, in reading and writing practices, and in our dispositions for judging, is essentially an attempt to negate much of what makes all of us who we are and how we communicate. It means that a teacher who tries not to see race is forced to assume a non-racial set of dispositions, which amounts to a white racial *habitus* (discussed below). But I understand that likely those who do not accept my conclusion likely have not experienced constant racial projections that contradict their own racial subjectivity. And this is likely because they fit into a white racial *habitus* that often doesn't have such

contradictions in school.

Thus these two dimensions of race, subjective and projective, may not match up in any given particular person, but they operate simultaneously. Our writing assessments should struggle with these two ways of experiencing race, race as subjectivity and race as projection by others. Although tangled and flawed, race as discursive, material, and performative are good ways to organize inquiries into what happens in writing assessments, since our life experiences, whether we acknowledge them or not as racialized, are often organized by racial subjectivity and projection to some degree, just as gendered *habitus* organize our experiences. Racial *habitus* offers language that calls attention to the dynamic, (re)productive structuring structures of discourse, materiality, and performance that are central to judging student writing. The term helps us talk about race as sets of structures—as parts in and of systems—structures that are not categorical, nor static.

To think of race as racial *habitus* has been approached by Edwardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) in his sociological work on racism and whiteness, only he focuses on a white *habitus* that produces particular language about race. In his study, Bonilla-Silva examines the ways that students from various U.S. universities use certain discursive "frames" (e.g., abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and minimization of racism) to articulate their racial ideology and cloak it in linguistic "styles" (e.g., "I'm not prejudiced, but …" (p. 57), "I'm not Black, so I don't know" (p. 58), "anything but race" (p. 62), "they are the racist ones …" (p. 63)).[11] This color-blind racist discourse used primarily by white students attempts to ignore, erase, or minimize the structuring structures in language that construct racial difference and racism. He explains that "social and spatial segregation" in different communities creates a "'white *habitus*,' a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters" (2003, p. 104). Thus whites have structuring structures that construct local white racial formations, just as Hmong and Mexican-Americans do in Fresno.

Arguing that writing teachers and writing assessment theorists need to "interrogate and refashion our racial politics of assessment," Nicholas Behm and Keith Miller (2012, p. 125) provide a detailed account of Bonilla-Silva's (2006) study of color-blind racism, and explain his concept of a white *habitus* in which whites are socialized. Behm and Miller explain that a white *habitus* is a set of "historically and culturally constructed dispositions, feelings, and discourses, which '*conditions* and *creates* whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial matters'" (2012, p. 129, emphasis in original). But *habitus* may be more complex than this. Sometimes it is unconscious, so it may be more accurate to say that we participate in already existing racial *habitus*,

participating in structures that are to some degree outside or beyond individuals, making *habitus* structuring structures we make our own, nuancing them in the ways that Young (2007) discusses code-meshing. Furthermore, when I speak of white racial *habitus* below, it is not necessarily linked to a racialized body, a white body, as it appears to be in Bonilla-Silva's study. Instead, the structuring structures of a local white racial *habitus* make white students, or ideal students, in writing assessment ecologies of the classroom. A white racial *habitus* exists beyond or outside of bodies, in discourse, in methods of judging, in dispositions toward texts, etc.

And so using a term like racial *habitus* can keep us from thinking of these structuring structures as simply dwelling in individuals, as inherent characteristics of individuals – since I'm rarely taking about individuals when I discuss issues of race and racism in classroom writing assessments. Instead, racial *habitus* foregrounds the macro-level phenomena, foregrounds the structures and social structuring, foregrounds the patterns among many people who associate or find themselves geographically and historically in the same places and circumstances, without forgetting that these patterns exist in individuals who augment them.

WHITE RACIAL *HABITUS*

Important to seeing racial *habitus* as a determining aspect of any classroom writing assessment project is seeing a white racial *habitus* as fundamental to all classroom writing assessment, whether we promote it, critique it, or actively promote something else. Many have discussed how to define whiteness as a construct that affects writing pedagogy (Frankenberg, 1993; hooks, 1994; Keating, 1995), which has bearing on how writing is judged in classrooms by teachers using a local SEAE or other academic expectations for writing.[12] Timothy Barnett (2000) synthesizes five statements about whiteness that the scholarship on whiteness overwhelmingly confirms, and is a good way to begin to understand whiteness as a racial *habitus* in classroom writing assessment ecologies, or as a set of structuring structures that are performed or projected onto student writing:

- Whiteness is a "coded discourse of race," that "seems *invisible*, objective, and neutral";
- Whiteness maintains its power and presents itself as "*unraced individually*" and "opposed to a racialized subjectivity that is communally and politically interested";
- Whiteness is presented as a *non-political* relational concept, defined against Others, whose interests are defined as "anti-individual" and political in nature;
- Whiteness "is not tied essentially to skin color, but is nevertheless

related in complex and powerful ways to the perceived phenomenon of race";

- Whiteness maintains power by *defining (and denying) difference* "on its own terms and to its own advantage" (my emphasis, p. 10)

As a *habitus* that is practiced in language, expected in classroom behaviors, and marked on the bodies of students and teachers, whiteness, then, is a set of structuring structures, durable, transposable, and flexible. As Barnett summarizes, these structures construct whiteness as invisible and appealing to fairness through objectivity. The structures are unraced (even beyond race), unconnected to the bodies and histories that create them. They are set up as apolitical, and often deny difference by focusing on the individual or making larger claims to abstract liberal principles, such as the principle of meritocracy. These structures create dispositions that form reading and judging practices, dispositions for values and expectations for writing and behavior. Echoing Lippi-Green and Greenfield's arguments that connect race to language, Barnett offers a succinct way to see whiteness as a racial project in the classroom, which can easily be a way we might describe any classroom writing assessment as a default white racial project:

> "Whiteness," accordingly, represents a political and relational activity disguised as an essential quality of humanity that is, paradoxically, *fully* accessible only by a few. It maintains a distance from knowledge that depends on the power of authorities, rules, tradition, and the written word, all of which supposedly guarantee objectivity and non-racial ways of knowing, but have, not incidentally, been established and maintained primarily by the white majority. (2000, 13, emphasis in original)

In her discussion of the pervasiveness of whiteness in bioethics in the U.S., Catherine Myser defines whiteness as a marker and position of power that is situated in a racial hierarchy (2002, p. 2). She asks us to problematize the centrality of whiteness in bioethics as a field of study and industry, which I argue we should do in the writing classroom too. By looking at several studies of whiteness, Myser provides a rather succinct set of discursive and performative dispositions that could be called a white racial *habitus* that writing teachers often enact:

- [A focus on] Individualism, hyperindividualism, self-determination, autonomy, and self-reliance, self-control;
- The person is conceived in purely individual terms, as a

rational and self-conscious being (the Cartesian "I" or *cogito ergo sum*), making failure an individual weakness and not a product of larger structural issues;

- Relationships are understood as being between informed, consenting individuals, but individual rights are primary, placing an emphasis on contracts, laws, and abstract principles for governing relationships;

- Cognitive capacity is the ability to think rationally, logically, and objectively, with rigor, clarity and consistency valued most;

- All problems are defined as those situations or conditions that are out of control, that disrupt autonomous functioning. (Myser, 2002, pp. 6-7)

Whiteness as a discourse and set of expectations in writing, then, like the dispositions distilled from Barnett's summary, can be boiled down to a focus on individualism and self-determination, Descartes *cogito*, individuals as the primary subject position, abstract principles, rationality and logic, clarity and consistency, and on seeing failure as individual weakness, not a product of larger structural issues.

These dispositions are very similar to Brookhiser's (1997) six traits of WASP whiteness in the U.S.[13] The important thing about whiteness, as Barnet and many others have identified about whiteness generally, is that it's invisible, often denied as being whiteness. This is the nature of whiteness as a *habitus*. Ross Chambers (1997) explains that whiteness remains unexamined through the "pluralization of the *other* and the homogenization of *others*" (p. 192). He says that whiteness has been "unexaminable" (or rather, "examinable, yet unexamined") because it is not only the yardstick by which difference (like quality of writing) is judged and identified in the classroom and out of it, but whiteness is bound to "the category of the individual" first through "atomizing whiteness" by homogenizing others, which allows it to be invisible (p. 192). This invisible and universalizing nature of the above dispositions gives some reason for why the first two items are the most telling, and perhaps contentious. These two dispositions (hyperindividualism and the primacy of the *cogito*) alone make up much of Faigley's (1992) discussion of tastes in the ways teachers described the best student writing in their courses found in Coles and Vopat's collection, *What Makes Writing Good* (1985). What did most teachers say was good writing? Writing that exhibited a strong, authentic, honest voice. And what does strength, authenticity, and honesty look like as textual markers? It is a self-reliant voice that is focused on itself as a cool, rational, thinking self in the writing and

in its reading of writer's own experiences or ideas. This isn't to say these are bad qualities in writing, only that they are linked to whiteness and this link often has uneven racist consequences in classroom writing assessments.

To put it more bluntly, a white racial *habitus* often has racist effects in the classroom, even though it is not racist in and of itself. Citing Mills (1997) and his own studies of whiteness (2001), Bonilla-Silva argues that "whiteness is the foundational category of 'white supremacy' …. *Whiteness, then, in all of its manifestations, is embodied racial power*" (2003a, p. 271; emphasis in original). The maintenance of whiteness and white supremacy, even if tacit as in the "new racism" that Bonilla-Silva and Villanueva (2006) describe, is vital to maintaining the status quo of society's social, economic, and racial hierarchies, the structuring structures that (re)produce a white racial *habitus*. Bonilla-Silva (2003a) explains that the new racism isn't just "racism lite," but manifests through five key structures that I argue destroy many healthy writing assessment ecologies:

- racial language practices that are "increasingly covert," as with those who argue that using a local SEAE as the privileged discourse in a writing classroom is not racist because the course is about the appropriate language use for college students, without questioning why that brand of English is deemed most appropriate or providing ways in the class to examine the dominant discourse as a set of conventions that have been "standardized" by the hegemonic;
- racial terminology that is explicitly avoided (or a universalizing and abstracting of experience and capacities), causing an increasing frequency of claims that whites themselves are experiencing "reverse racism";
- racial inequality that is reproduced invisibly through multiple mechanisms, reproduced structurally, as in my critique of the EPT or others' findings in the SAT;
- "safe minorities" (singular examples or exceptions, often named) that are used to prove that racism no longer exists, despite the larger patterns and statistics that prove the contrary, such as the Fresno State Hmong and African-American student racial formations;
- racial practices reminiscent of the Jim Crow period (e.g., separate but equal) that are rearticulated in new, non-racial terms, such as the new use of the EPT as a *de facto* entrance exam that by result attempts to stem the tide of students of color in California universities without ever being explicitly about

race. (p. 272)

In many ways, the new racism discussed by Bonilla-Silva and Villanueva occurs more frequently in our classroom writing assessments because we uncritically promote (often out of necessity) a dominant academic discourse that is associated with a local SEAE. While these discourses and sets of linguistic conventions are not bad in and of themselves, they do need interrogating with students as structuring structures that give us certain tastes in language and thought. But writing classrooms cannot leave white racial *habitus* at that, at just critical discussions of language and texts, without also using those discussions in some way to change the writing assessment ecology of the classroom. This isn't easy work, but I hope to show ways I've attempted to do this in Chapter 6.

RACIAL FORMATION, RACIAL PROJECTS, AND RACISM

To conceive of and use an antiracist classroom writing assessment theory, we need concepts like racial *habitus* and white racial *habitus*, but while these concepts reference racialized bodies and suggest a definition of racism, the terms do not inherently explain racism as a phenomenon. They also do not explain how to reference actual bodies in the classroom. As I've reiterated above, racial *habitus* is not a term that directly references students' material bodies, and racism affects real people, real bodies, not *habitus*. Thus I use the term racial formation to do this referencing. Racism then affects racial formations.

Omi and Winant define "racial formation" "as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed" (1994, p. 55). Any racial formation, then, is a part of a dynamic, historical process, constantly changing. These changes occur because of numerous "racial projects" that create, represent, and organize human bodies in particular times and places. These racial projects "simultaneously … interpre[t], represen[t], or explai[n] … racial dynamics," and "reorganize and redistribute resources along particular lines" (Omi & Winant, 1994, pp. 55-56). In short, all notions of race are (re)created by various racial projects in society and schools. Individual racial formations, such as the Hmong of Fresno, are constructed subjectively and projectively through racial projects in schools, society, in the EPT, in the university, etc.

Thus racism, Omi and Winant say, isn't simply a consequence of bigotry or prejudice. Historically in the U.S. it has been an "unavoidable outcome of patterns of socialization which were 'bred in the bone,' affecting not only whites but even minorities themselves." They explain that discrimination, inequality, and injustice have been "a structural feature of the U.S. society, the product of centuries of systematic exclusion, exploitation, and disregard of racially defined

minorities" (1994, p. 69). Thus today, a racial project is racist "if and only if it creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 71). In the introduction to their collection, *Race and Writing Assessment*, Inoue and Poe (2012a) provide this way of understanding the concept of racism in light of Omi and Winant's racial formation theory:

> If racial formations are about the historical and structural forces that organize and represent bodies and their lived experiences, then racism is not about prejudice, personal biases, or intent. Racism is not about blaming or shaming white people. It is about understanding how unequal or unfair outcomes may be structured into our assessment technologies and the interpretations that we make from their outcomes. (p. 6)

If it's not clear already, just like large-scale assessment ecologies, classroom writing assessment ecologies are racial projects, regardless of their purposes, our intentions, or their designs. These racial projects may produce fair, good, and equitable outcomes or something else. I'm sure the EPT is not intended to be racist, nor to exclude, nor to create educational barriers for Hmong students, but that is exactly what it does as a racial project, making it a racist project. The EPT as a racial project directly affects the students in writing classrooms, and affects those classrooms' writing assessment ecologies as well, because it affects how students get there, how they see themselves, and what the curriculum offers them. Despite the best antiracist intentions, any classroom writing assessment ecology can easily be racist if it doesn't explicitly account for how students get there and how they are constituted subjectively and projectively by writing assessments.

To give you an example, consider Fresno State's writing program. The conventional grading systems used in the writing program before we redesigned the curriculum, installed a grading contract, and implemented the Directed Self-Placement[14] (DSP) process, produced racialized failure rates and grade distributions among our four main racial formations, which can be seen in the first row of Table 2 (listed as "2005-06 (Engl 1)").[15] Without any ill intentions on the part of writing teachers, many of whom were and are very conscientious about issues of fairness and racism in their classrooms, almost all writing classrooms reproduced higher levels of course failure in Hmong, Latino/a, and Black racial formations, with white students having the least amount of course failure.

The changes made to the program were almost all assessment-based, reconfiguring all the classroom writing assessments, from how students get into courses (DSP), to how most courses calculated final course grades (the grading contract), to the curriculum and pedagogies available (a program portfolio). As can be seen in Table 2, the failure rates in 2009-10 for the new end course, Engl

5B (equivalent to the old Engl 1) dropped by about half in all formations, except the Black racial formation, and the failure rates generally became more even across all racial formations.

Table 2. Students of color fail writing courses at consistently higher rates than their white peers in Fresno State's First-Year Writing Program (reproduced from Inoue, 2014b, p. 338)

	African-American			Asian-American (Hmong)		
Academic Year	n	No. failed	% failed	n	No. failed	% failed
2005–06 (Engl 1)	198	45	22.7%	454	90	19.8%
2009–10 (Engl 5B)	130	25	19.2%	158	16	10.1%
2010–11 (Engl 5B)	109	18	16.5%	195	19	9.7%
2011–12 (Engl 5B)	66	11	16.7%	160	16	10.0%

	Latino/Latina			White		
Academic Year	n	No. failed	% failed	n	No. failed	% failed
2005–06 (Engl 1)	843	188	22.3%	788	121	15.4%
2009–10 (Engl 5B)	682	75	11.0%	292	21	7.2%
2010–11 (Engl 5B)	685	65	9.5%	273	23	8.4%
2011–12 (Engl 5B)	553	78	14.1%	158	10	6.3%

In this very limited way, classroom writing assessment ecologies in the program can be seen as racial projects, as projects that produced particular kinds of racial formations associated closely with failure and success. No one is trying to be racist, but it is happening systemically and consistently, or structurally through the various classroom writing assessment ecologies. What should be clear is that racism isn't something that is always a "conscious aiming at ends," rather it is often a product of overlapping racial structures in writing assessments that are subjective and projective. Racism is not usually produced by conscious intentions, purposes, or biases of people against others not like them. Racism is a product of racialized structures that themselves tend to produce unequal, unfair, or uneven social distributions, be they grades, or access to education, or the expectations for judging writing. Conversely, antiracist projects must be consciously engaged in producing structures that themselves produce fair results for all racial formations involved.

Some may argue that the above failure rates may not be showing some form of racism, rather they only demonstrate that racial formations of color have performed worse than the white racial formation, so there is no clear racist project occurring here since the cause of the above effects cannot be determined to be

racial in nature. How do we know racism in writing assessments is the cause of the course failure and not something else? This critique comes from a discourse of whiteness, from a white racial *habitus* that demands that such racialized conclusions reveal in a logical fashion racist intent by teachers, disregarding effect or results, as those are typically attributed to the individual (e.g., failure). The white racial *habitus* informing this question also assumes that there be a clear cause and effect relationship demonstrated in such conclusions about racism, conclusions from observations that make no assumptions about race. But as the literature on whiteness explains over and over, there is no getting around race in our epistemologies. The assumptions around needing clear racist causes that then lead to racist effects stems from a white disposition, a rationality that is calm and cool, for such things when we discuss racism (racism is hardly a calm and cool discussion in the U.S.). What seems clear to me in the above figures is that whites perform better regardless of the assessment ecology, but some ecologies mitigate the racist effects better than others. The uneven effects of these same ecologies demonstrates a problem. But if you still need a racist cause, there is a common cause for all the course grades: the courses' writing assessment ecologies that produced the grades.

Part of my argument for racism in classroom writing assessments, like those mentioned above, is that there are larger societal structures that are racist that create and influence the classroom. As my discussion of white racial *habitus* suggests, the structures of our writing assessments come from our society, our academic disciplines, and educational institutions, which have been organized to keep whites and whiteness dominant. In Charles Mills' (1997) award-winning book, *The Racial Contract*, he argues that Western civilization historically has cultivated and maintained a "racial contract" for the purposes of maintaining such white racial dominance in society at large. In one sense, Mills' could be arguing that there is an over-arching racial project that Western societies have participated in historically. We can hear how the racialized consequences of the racial contract are easily translatable to the consequences of college writing assessments in Mills explanation of the racial contract:

> set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements (higher-level contracts *about* contracts, which set the limits of the contracts' validity) between the members of one subset of humans, henceforth designated by (shifting) "racial" (phenotypical/genealogical/cultural) criteria C_1, C_2, C_3 … as "white," and coextensive (making due allowance for gender differentiation) with the class of full persons, to categorize the remaining subset of humans as "nonwhite" and of a different and inferior

> moral status, subpersons, so that they have a subordinate civil
> standing in the white or white-ruled politics … the general
> purpose of the Contract is always the differential privileging
> of the whites as a group with respect to the nonwhites as a
> group, the exploitation of their bodies, land, and resources,
> and the denial of equal socioeconomic opportunities to them.
> All whites are *beneficiaries* of the Contract, though some
> whites are not *signatories* to it. (1997, p. 11)

One good way to subordinate nonwhite groups in California generally would be to maintain the EPT as a placement and entrance writing assessment, since doing so would in effect keep more students of color out of college and allow more (relatively speaking) white students in. A good way to validate its uses so as to maintain white racial supremacy is to do so abstractly, using disciplinary meta-agreements about what constitutes validity and bias, despite the contradictions those agreements create when applied to the literacy competencies of locally diverse students in, say, Fresno. This racial contract flows into, is then assumed in, all writing classrooms.

Furthermore, a part of the racial contract is the categorizing of other things that lead to racial hierarchies, such as an uncritical privileging of a local SEAE in college writing courses, or an unreflective expectation of the fictional, monolingual English speaker and writer that many have critiqued (Horner & Trimbur, 2002; Horner et al., 2011; Jordan, 2012; Lu, 1994). Before writing teachers can breach the racial contract, we have to recognize it as such, and see it as informing our past and present classroom writing assessment ecologies because it has informed the U.S. history and Western society.

There is one adjustment, however, to the language of Mills' racial contract theory that I make for use in classroom writing assessment. His language suggests that the purposes, perhaps even intent, of the racial contract's sets of agreements are to privilege whites, but I think, at least in the realm of classroom writing assessment, it should be emphasized that the *purpose* of the racial contract might be more accurately identified as its *function*, which is beyond or despite intentions or purposes. The racial contract involved in any writing assessment ecology cannot be said to regulate explicitly the assessment's purposes. Purposes are connected tightly to people, and have particular associations with writing assessments. It would be extremely rare, in my opinion, to find a writing assessment whose purposes are explicitly to subordinate students of color or deny them opportunities in a writing classroom. However, I emphasize that the racial contract for these same writing assessments *functions* in the same way that Mills describes, but not from an expressed purpose to do so, instead the racial contract

of writing assessments usually functions in these ways despite our antiracist intentions or good purposes because the racial contract is structural in nature and privileges a white racial *habitus*.

To put it bluntly, when the function of a writing assessment is primarily to promote a local SEAE or dominant discourse, without regard to the literacies that various racial formations bring to the classroom, or the various ways that particular racialized linguistic structures are judged by the teacher, then many students may be treated unfairly. The writing assessment may be racist, and all in the name of an abstract liberal principle: to teach all students the same English, the dominant one, to maintain the tacit whiteness associated with the local SEAE and the writing assessment itself. My implicit argument is that this project (to assess everyone by standards of the same discourse, the same English) is an inherently racist project.

Often writing teachers claim to assess everyone by the same standards or expectations because this practice is inherently fair. If only we could stop being so fair, we might have a chance at making serious antiracist change. Fairness is often articulated as a white liberal value, but it often protects white interests by maintaining racist practices and effects by appealing to an abstract liberal principle, such as, "everyone should be treated the same." This value makes no sense when we try to transplant the abstract principle of fairness to, say, fruit. Is an orange better than an apple because it is juicier? Of course not, they are just different. And their differences are acknowledged and accepted. But when we deny racialized difference in the writing classroom, we tend to judge apples by their orangeness. I realize the metaphor breaks down, but my point is: it is not fairness that we need in antiracist writing assessment ecologies, or any antiracist project—it is not judgment by the exact same standard that we need—it is revolutionary change, radically different methods, structures, and assumptions about the way things are now and how to distribute privileges.

As I've argued similarly elsewhere (Inoue, 2007), fairness in any writing assessment ecology is not an inherent quality, practice, or trait that then allows us to claim an assessment is fair for everyone. Judging everyone by the same standard is not an inherently fair practice in a writing classroom. Fairness is a construction of the ecology itself. It is contingent, and its primary constituents are agreement and participation by those in the ecology. When you don't have enough agreement (not consensus), participation, and an acknowledgement of fairness as a dynamic and shifting construct of the ecology, it is difficult to have a fair writing assessment.

CRITICISMS OF RACE AS AN ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE

Some may argue that the problems we see, for example in the Hmong student populations and their lower performance on the EPT or the failure rates in the writing program I showed above, are mostly economic in nature, or a product of different cultural values about school or language practices, or a result of some social dimension that has nothing to do with race, that there is no need to think in terms of race because race doesn't really exist. It just confuses and muddies the waters. In short, some may argue that it is not race but other non-racial, more fundamental factors that affect any writing assessment's results.

I do not deny that such factors as economics are involved. African-Americans and Hmong in Fresno are often some of the poorest in the community, with very high poverty rates, higher than those of whites—and this intersection of economics and race is not a coincidence so we shouldn't treat it as such. These kinds of factors intersect and make up racialized experiences as political, as relations of power. In the U.S., power usually is organized around three nodes of difference: gender, race, and economics. These non-racial factors are the structuring structures that racial *habitus* references. These structures become racialized when they pool or gather into patterns in groups in society, creating distinctions from the white hegemonic group. These structures then are used as markers of difference that then justify the denial of privilege, power, and access to opportunities, such as education. Using a local SEAE as a way to determine the merit of a student, her fitness for college, or the value of her literacies in college are clear cases of societal structures that become racialized when they are used to maintain white privilege. Just because we don't call our valuing of a dominant discourse racist doesn't make it not racist. So could we deal with the above assessment issues in classrooms as economic ones and not racial ones? We could, but we'd be denying the way economics constructs racialized experiences and subjectivities in the U.S. and in our classrooms.

Furthermore in the U.S., we just do not uniformly act or behave based on fine-tuned, ethnic or cultural distinctions because the tensions among various groups have always been about maintaining or gaining power, privilege, property, or rights. Culture, language, and ethnic differences to a hegemonic whiteness are used to construct power relations, but they tend to be used to create broader racial differences. It's much easier to use a broader category like race, than distinguish between ethnic Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Hmong, etc. It's easier just to say Asian. Because the bottom line is, historically the main reasons to identify the differences in any group in the U.S. has been to subordinate that group to white power and deny privileges. And even though the motives may not be what they used to be, the effects of the structures that remain are the same.

Education and literacy, the keys to the kingdom, are a part of these power

relations because they tend to be seen as a way to confer privileges and jobs. Consider the discussions of literacy in the U.S. as white property, particularly around the decisions of Brown v. Board of Education (Bell, 2004; Prendergast, 2003). Or more broadly, consider the ways whiteness has been used as a way to claim and hold onto jobs and property by whites (Lipsitz, 1998; Roediger, 1999). Perhaps the most powerful term that explains how race often is used to maintain power, property, and privilege is in Pierre L. van den Berghe's term, "herrenvolk democracy" (; Roediger, 1999, p. 59; van den Berghe, 1967, pp. 17-18). Herrenvolk democracy explains the way a society, through laws and norms, creates a democratic system for a dominant group, but simultaneously offers a considerably less democratic one for subordinate groups. Race is a convenient and well-used way to construct subordinate groups, ones with less access to property, jobs, literacy, and education. Today, we use language to do this subordinating, which racializes all writing assessment.

It isn't hard to see the denial or dramatically less access to education, jobs, privilege, and social power to people of color, particularly African-Americans, Latinos/as, and Native Americans (Asians are a set of complex racial formations, uneven in their access to power). While no one is denying college entrance to, for instance, Black students because they are Black, almost all colleges use SAT and ACT scores to help determine candidacy. As mentioned earlier, Breland et al. (2004) found that SAT scores are hierarchical by race, with whites performing the best and Blacks the worst. Furthermore, GPAs and other extra-curricular activities are used by colleges in their application processes also. This means if you are poor, you likely will have gone to a high school that couldn't prepare you well for college. According to the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, Blacks and non-white Hispanics live in poverty at the highest rates of all racial groups, with just over a quarter of non-white Hispanics and 27.2% of Blacks living in poverty (National Center for Law and Economic Justice, n.d.).[16] Many more Blacks and Latinos/as live in poverty than whites, thus they are more likely to go to schools that do not prepare them for college in traditional ways, and any application they may submit likely will be viewed as weaker than their white counterparts. Economics, tax laws that fund schools unequally, and the like are some of the structuring structures that seem not to be about race but are racialized, and they structure the racial *habitus* of students. A herrenvolk democracy in schools, from elementary to college, itself structures inequality into just about all writing assessments by working from laws and norms that racially privilege a white racial *habitus* that is nurtured in some places and starved in others.

It is important to remember, though, as Bourdieu's *habitus* makes clear, that there is no "conscious aiming at ends." There are no racists, just structural and systemic racism. The herrenvolk democracy of a classroom writing assessment

happens through a variety of means, such as valuing a local SEAE, but it produces a two-track system of privilege that rewards a white *habitus* exclusively. This is why translingual approaches (Horner et al., 2011), world Englishes, and code meshing pedagogies (Canagarajah, 2006; Young, 2004, 2007, 2011; Young & Martinez, 2011) are important to develop; however, I have yet to see a serious attempt at developing classroom writing assessments from such approaches. Understanding racial *habitus* as a set of historically generated discursive, material, and performative structuring structures that are both subjective and projective in nature seems a good place to begin thinking about how writing assessments might understand the Englishes they attempt to judge and make decisions on.

RACE AS PART OF A GLOBAL IMAGINARY OF WRITING ASSESSMENT

But if teachers are not consciously trying to be racist, and usually attempting to do exactly the opposite in their classroom writing assessments, which I think is the case, then what is happening? How can race affect a teacher's practices if she isn't thinking in terms of race, or if she is trying not to let race be a factor in the way she reads or judges student writing? How can my classroom writing assessments be racist if I'm not racist and I try to treat everyone fairly, try not to punish multilingual students or Black students or Latino/a students for the languages they bring with them into the classroom? In fact, I try to celebrate those languages. In short, the answer to these question has to do with larger, global imaginaries about education and race that started long before any of us were teaching our first writing courses.

Again, the Fresno Hmong are instructive in addressing these questions. There are only two ethnic formations in Fresno that can be called refugees, the Hmong and Armenians. The experiences of Hmong in Fresno are racialized. Hmong are the newest, having arrived in three waves, between 1975 and 1991, 1992 and 1999, 2000 and the present (Yang, 2009, p. 79). The Hmong originally came to Fresno not by choice but because it was the only way out of persecution and the eroding conditions in the refugee camps of Laos and Thailand (Chan, 1994; Dao, 1982; Lieb, 1996, pp. 17-20). Coming in three distinct periods and under very similar conditions makes the Hmong racial formation quite consistent in regards to living conditions, cultural ties and practices, employment, languages spoken, and educational experiences. However because they share Asian physical traits and come from Asia as refugees after the Vietnam war, Hmong tend to be seen and treated as foreigners, as the racial other, despite the fact that most Hmong in college are U.S. born citizens. This is historically the way all Asian immigrants and Asian-Americans have experienced racialized life in the U.S.,

including me (just consider my experiences in the trailer park). The U.S. government's treatment of its territories of Guam and American Samoa epitomizes this racialize alien othering. These territories are not considered sovereign states, yet are governed by the U.S., and those born there do not receive automatic U.S. citizenship, but they are allowed to join the U.S. military. American Samoa has the highest rate of U.S. military enlistment anywhere (Total Military Recruits, 2004). Guam was acquired in 1898 as part of the Treaty of Paris after the Spanish-America war, while American Samoa was occupied by the U.S. Navy in 1900 and officially named a territory in 1911. A U.S. territory was originally meant to be a short-term political designation that referred to areas that the U.S. was acquiring, particularly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The long reluctance to make these territories (among others, like Puerto Rico) states suggests the associations of Asians and Pacific Islanders as perpetual foreigners, as racialized alien others.

Angelo Ancheta (1998) shows historically how Asians have been legally deemed the other, denied rights, property, and citizenship. Robert Lee (1999) demonstrates the ways Asians have been represented in U.S. culture over the last century as the racial other, as the "Heathen Chinee" "Coolie," "gook," and "model minority." Vijay Prashad (2000) demonstrates the complex relationship that the U.S. has had with the East as mysterious, filled with menageries, harems, and gurus, but these associations always reinforce the idea of Asians as perpetual foreigners. Christina Klein (2003) shows the way a cold war mentality in the U.S. affected the Orientalism that constructed the ways Americans tend to relate to Asians, most notably through narratives of "sentimental education" that offered cultural and racial integration on a global scale after WWII. And this sentimental education, one of parental guidance for the childlike Asians (similar to the sentimentality voiced in Kipling's "The White Man's Burden") has bearing on Hmong students in Fresno. The parental language that says, "we know what's best for them," is pervasive in schools and college and is the rationale for the EPT and Early Start program, even though the test does not target Hmong students. It does give teachers and schools reason to engage in such narratives.

Klein explains that sentimental education was part of a "global imaginary" that connected and unified U.S. citizens to other parts of the world, most notably the more volatile areas of Asia after WWII, where the threat of communism seemed to be most potent. Klein explains:

> A global imaginary is an ideological creation that maps the
> world conceptually and defines the primary relations among
> peoples, nations, and regions … It produces peoples, nations,
> and cultures not as isolated entities but as interconnected with

one another. This is not to say that it works through decep-
tion or that it mystifies the real, material conditions of global
relations. Rather, a global imaginary articulates the ways in
which people imagine and live those relations. It recreates an
imaginary coherence out of the contradictions and disjunc-
tures of real relations, and thereby provides a stable sense
of individual and national identity. In reducing the infinite
complexity of the world to comprehensible terms, it creates
a common sense about how the world functions as a system
and offers implicit instruction in how to maneuver within
that system; it makes certain attitudes and behaviors easier to
adopt than others. (2003, pp. 22-23)

Klein uses the film *The King and I* (1956), among others, as one example of the
way a sentimental education imagines social relations between whites and Asians
in a global imaginary. Not so ironically, these relations are gendered, with a
white female teacher (played by Deborah Kerr) teaching Asian children (the film
is situated in Siam, or contemporary Thailand) geography, English, etiquette,
and the like (Klein, 2003, pp. 2-3). It would appear she is teaching Asians their
place and relations in the world, to whites, and to English literacies, through
a kind of parental pedagogy.[17] The film not only imagines relations between
whites and Asian school children, but maintains Asians as racially foreign by
associating them with all the tropes that U.S. audiences understand as the Asian
that Lee (1999) and Prashad (2000) discuss. In a pivotal musical performance
of the song, "Getting to Know You," as the teacher sings the song of interracial
relations and etiquette, she is surround by the King's children and his harem,
all decked out in colorful, exotic Siamese dress. At one point, a fan dancer per-
forms. In the background, a map of the world with Siam identified, even central
in the map, is prominent. The only thing missing is a menagerie of animals.

The global imaginary that Klein discusses hasn't changed much. It articulates
the ways teachers and schools in Fresno imagine and live the global relations be-
tween them and their Hmong students. This global imaginary offers a common
sense: we can all be full citizens of California and America if, like the Teacher
and her pupils in *The King and I,* we all speak and write the same particular
brand of English. But this set of relations demands a racial hierarchy, one that
imagines a white (female) teacher in charge of helping her Asian students learn
English, while she "gets to know them." Thus we have the EPT and Early Start
programs, which spawn from sentimental, maternal logic. It's only logical and
right, even fair, that the state provide an Early Start experience for underpre-
pared students in Fresno, which happens to include almost the entire Hmong

student population in Fresno. These students need more help with English so that they can succeed in college. This global imaginary functioning in the EPT writing assessment assumes that one key to success in college (and perhaps elsewhere) is a particular kind of English fluency, which is a dominant white middle class English, similar to the kind that Deborah Kerr teaches her Siamese charges in the film (she invokes a British accent in the film). Without this white hegemonic English, students will fail at their work in and out of school. This is the script, the common sense, a part of a global imaginary that reinforces a sense of maternal duty and obligation to straighten out those twisted tongues and words of all Hmong students. I argue this same sensibility, this global imaginary of sentimental education, grounded in past race relations, is alive and thriving in many college writing classrooms, affecting (or infecting) their writing assessments because it determines the ways teachers read and judge writing and create the larger mechanisms for assessment. In one sense, our writing classrooms could be labeled, "The Hmong and I," with the "I" being the teacher, who often is a white female.[18]

It should be remembered that Klein's theory of a global imaginary comes from Edward Said's (1979) powerful and explanatory concept of Orientalism. And the theory is instructive for understanding the Hmong racial formation's position in classroom writing assessments at Fresno State. Through an exhaustive account of various Western scholars, the academy, and government institutions, Said demonstrates how the West generally has constructed and dominated the orient (our Middle East), what it means, what it is, etc. He explains that Orientalism offers the orient as a "system of representations," which can be understood as a "discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it." Academics and their related institutions primarily create this discourse and grant it authority and "prestige" by their act of articulation and *ethos* as Western specialists. Orientalism, as a discourse, perpetuates itself by collecting, organizing, and recycling a "catalogue of *idées reçues*," or "received ideas" (Said, 1979, p. 94).

It isn't that far-fetched to see writing teachers (from high school to college) in Fresno participating in such Orientalist discourse when they read their Hmong students and their writing. Who knows best how to understand and describe the literacy practices of Hmong students? Apparently, the EPT, and those who translate and use its scores: schools and writing teachers in California. This isn't to deny the expertise that many writing teachers develop by teaching multilingual students in classrooms, instead I'm suggesting we question the nature of our expertise in and methods for assessing multilingual and locally diverse students and their writing. We question what informs the judgments we make and what those judgments tell us we should do as teachers, what decisions they seem to

demand. Not only might we find a global imaginary of sentimental education functioning in our writing assessments' discourses, processes, and methods, but we may also be constructing our locally diverse students and their writings by a set of racist received ideas that determine the quality of their writing. If Orientalism is anything, it is a discursive field of assessment. It provides its specialists with automatic judgments of the Orient and the Oriental. It is the discourse of Asian and Middle Eastern racial stigmata. Is it possible, then, that there might be an Orientalism occurring in our classroom writing assessments around Hmong students' and their writing, around other Asian racial formations?

In his discussion on early Twentieth century Orientalism, Said shows how Orientalism accomplishes its tasks of consumption, manipulation, and domination by Western academics' "visions" of the oriental and the orient, which has a clear analogue to Hmong taking the EPT and writing teachers' discourses on their writing in college classrooms. Said provides an example in John Buchan, a Scottish born classicist at Oxford in 1922. Buchan illustrates how vision works, and displays several key features of American visions of Chinese during the same period:

> The earth is seething with incoherent power and unorganized
> intelligence. Have you ever reflected on the case of China?
> There you have millions of quick brains stifled in trumpery
> crafts. They have no direction, no driving power, so the sum
> of their efforts is futile, and the world laughs at China. (Said,
> 1979, p. 251)

Buchan's "clarity of vision and analysis," common during this part of the twentieth century, "selectively organize[s]" the orient and its objects (including its inhabitants). The Chinese of Buchan's vision is a massive horde of unorganized, incoherent, half-crazed, quick-brained, brown-skinned devils, who might, as Said says, "destroy 'our' [the Occidental] world" (Said, 1979, p. 251). The details that build this analysis are not really details at all but the commonplaces that hold currency in the Western mind, prefabricated judgments, predetermined assessments, serving to uplift the West and suppress the Far East, recreating hierarchical relations of power between whites and Asians. Buchan's passage and its commonplaces are driven by his vision. In fact, Orientalism, in all its manifestations (for Said acknowledges that it's not uniform), is always guided by the Western scholar's vision, coloring all that he sees, helping him make judgments, assess, augmenting his analyses and conclusions.

One might make a similar critique of the way Hmong student writing, or any multilingual student writing, gets typically judged in classrooms, or on the EPT? They are remedial because visions similar to the ones operating in Orien-

talism determine what is most valuable, visions that are a part of a global imaginary that privileges a particular dominant English and its dispositions, then assumes a parental role toward students. Take the sample 2-essay from the EPT guide previously discussed. The ideal reader described in the guide sees the discussion of the "Great American Boycott" in paragraph three as merely "stream of consciousness," an unorganized, off-topic, and perhaps illogical discussion. The vision required to see such details as stream of consciousness is similar to Said's Orientalist vision since it is reasonable to understand why a Latino/a or Hmong student with a particular relation to advertisements and consumer consumption in California might include this information. This vision fulfills the needs that the narratives of sentimental education create and that circulate in California and the U.S. generally.

The fact that Fresno Hmong students who take the EPT have parents who recently immigrated to California in the last few decades from Laos as political refugees, and who only spoke their native Hmong language upon arrival, and are mostly low-income or living in poverty (Asian-American Center for Advancing Justice, 2013, pp. 20-21) seem not to matter to those who might judge their writing, seem not to matter to those designing or reading the EPT. By the logic of this global imaginary, which uses an Orientalist set of received ideas, these historical exigencies are irrelevant to the assessment of English competency. These historical structures that continue to structure Hmong lives, while not racial in the old-fashion sense of being essential to Hmong (similar factors affect Chinese, Vietnamese, and other students), not biological, pool consistently in Hmong populations in Fresno because they are structuring in nature, perpetuating themselves. But the structures are both subjective, as in the case of Hmong literacies, and projective, as in the case of how those literacies are read and judged by teachers who read them through a global imaginary of sentimental education. Seeing these structures as a part of Hmong racial *habitus* that then work in concert with Orientalist visions of multilingual Asian students and a global imaginary that cast teachers into parental roles in scripts of sentimental education can help teachers rethink and reconstruct classroom writing assessments that do not play power games with students based on factors in their lives they simply cannot control. So to be poor and multilingual are not ethnic or cultural structures, but they are racialized as Hmong in Fresno, which is not to say they are essential but deployed in ways that end up harming Hmong students in college.

It could be said that I'm being overly harsh to local writing teachers, of whom I have been one, and the designers and readers of the EPT. I do not deny that these are well-intentioned, good people, trying hard to offer a quality education to all students in California. I do not deny that writing teachers in the area

explicitly attempt to provide educational experiences to Hmong students, most of whom are multilingual, in ways that will help them in their futures in school and careers. But I wonder how many of us have considered the way a Hmong racial *habitus* is or is not accounted for in our writing assessments, in the ways we judge, in the expectations we have for writing, in the processes we design. I wonder if many have considered the white racial *habitus* clearly operating in most writing assessments? I wonder if many have considered the function of a global imaginary of sentimental education in their relations with Hmong students, or Latinos/as, or Blacks? I wonder if many have thought explicitly about the ways race in any way is already in their writing assessments?

A final example I hope will capture the way race functions in classroom writing assessments that cannot help but draw on a global imaginary of sentimental education. For a time, I was the Special Assistant to the Provost for Writing Across the Curriculum at Fresno State. In the first semester I took the job, the dean of the College of Arts and Humanities sent me a package. In it was a memo with an attached marked and graded student draft of a paper from a general education course. The memo was from the professor, whom I'll call Dr. X. The dean said, "here, now you can deal with him. Apparently every semester, Dr. X would send the dean another paper with a similar memo. The memo proclaimed the illiteracy of "our students," with the accompanying draft as proof, complete with his copious markings of grammar issues and errors. Now, I would get his memos and sample drafts each semester.

A few semesters later, Dr. X attended one of my WAC workshops, and I asked him about his memos. I said that I appreciated his concerns for our students' writing, but I wasn't sure what he wanted me to do, since he never made any call to action or offered any ideas. He simply complained. Dr. X looked at me without hesitation, and said, "I want you to feel bad about our students' writing." I told him that I could not feel bad, since what I saw in each draft were opportunities to talk to the student about his or her writing choices. That's what writing in college is about, making mistakes and finding ways out of them.

The one thing I have not said about these memos and drafts is that almost all of them were from Hmong students. I know this because in Fresno we have about 18 Hmong clans represented and they have distinct last names. So if the last name of the student on the draft is one of these 18 names, he or she is almost certainly Hmong.[19] Dr. X seemed to have an Orientalist vision that saw his Hmong students' writing as flawed and illiterate, so much so that he needed to show someone else in power. He needed to show someone that we were not doing our parental duty toward our Hmong students. We weren't educating them, and so we should feel bad because we were shirking our duties, or white man's burden. Dr. X wasn't alone in his assessment of Hmong students' writing

abilities on campus, and there were certainly some who didn't see things this way. The point I'm making is that without a global imaginary of sentimental education that determines teachers' judgments, assessments, behavior, pedagogy, and the like when confronted with multilingual Hmong student writing, Dr. X likely would have had a different reaction to his students' drafts. Perhaps, the texts he saw from his Hmong students would have indicated that his assignments didn't fit them very well, or his curriculum might need to be better adapted to his students' needs.

In many ways, this global imaginary creates a vision that may actually augment reality. For instance, I wonder exactly how many students of Dr. X's fit into the category of "illiterate." I asked this question to another professor who complained about a similar occurrence in his general education courses (note: both of these vocal faculty were white males). So I asked him how big the class was? He said 200 students. I asked how many students seem to have these deep language problems in each class? After a few seconds of consideration, he said, "maybe ten." "So 5% of your class have these problems," I reiterated. "Yes," he said. "So 95% of your students are essentially okay," I asked rhetorically? "I don't see a pervasive problem," and I left the conversation at that.

RACE AS A NEXUS OF POWER RELATIONS

Race, *racial habitus*, and racism are about power. So when we avoid it in our writing assessments, we tend to avoid addressing important power relations that create inequality. Paying attention to race in our classroom writing assessments isn't racist. In fact, not paying attention to race often leads to racism. Racism occurs in the nature of assumptions, the production of racial hierarchies, and the effects or consequences of racial projects. And using exclusively cultural or ethnic terms, such as Japanese or Hmong, without connecting them to race (thus leaving them unconnected to racism) have their own problems. Doing so elides the non-cultural and non-ethnic dimensions of human experience in society, defining a social formation primarily by ethnicity or cultural practices that some students may not have experiences with or practice yet still be associated with. Race isn't solely, or even mostly, about culture, as I hope my discussion above about racial *habitus* and racial subjectivity and projection reveal.

Race as an organizing term is primarily about understanding power and privilege, not cultural differences. I'm a good example of the way race is about more than culture or ethnicity. Ethnically I'm Japanese-American, Scottish, English, and some Mediterranean (likely Greek or Italian). My father was Japanese from Hawai'i, but I was raised by my mother, who has always identified as white. This means that I was not raised in a Buddhist or Shinto home, nor did I have the

chance to go to Japanese school, or speak Japanese. I wasn't raised with many culturally Japanese practices, yet I am mostly Japanese by blood heritage. I have usually been mistaken for some kind of Latino, depending on the context. I have been the target of many racist remarks, acts, and the like. This is my own racial subjectivity, and I've had to come to my own Japanese-American cultural and ethnic practices, history, and awareness as an adult. Racially, I identify as Asian-American, given the power differentials I've encountered in my life, yet I do this by repressing or denying to some degree my whiteness and white heritage, which I'm sure has helped me in some ways. I do not think that I'm such a strange occurrence. Ethnicity simply is insufficient for me. Race, however, is an identifier of one's political position or relation to power in society, and better captures such complexities of subjectivity.

And so, using ethnic identifiers can make us think that we are looking at ethnic differences, when it is more important to see differences of power and privilege, differences produced by social structures associated with sets of racialized dispositions (or discursive, material, and performative structures), ones that may be subjective (self-identifications) or projected onto groups. Regardless of the structures, we are always seeing differences in power and privilege. Using Manning Marable (2002), Carmen Kynard (2013) explains clearly the relationship between race and power:

> I also define race as the central, power-defining principle of modern states and, today, as a "global apartheid" that has constructed "new racialized ethnic hierarchies" in the context of the global flow of capital under neoliberalism. This means that white privilege can be more specifically understood as the historical accumulation of material benefits in relation to salaries, working conditions, employment, home ownership, life expectancy rates, access to professional positions, and promotions. (Kynard, 2013, p. 10)

The result of the historical accumulation of material benefits to those who inhabit a white racial *habitus* is structural racism that provides power, privilege, and access to opportunities that most folks who inhabit other racial *habitus* simply are denied, and denied for ostensibly non-racial reasons. And this racism amounts to power differentials based on how an individual or group is situated racially in society, school, and the larger global economy. And so, to have an antiracist agenda for classroom writing assessment means that writing assessment is centrally about the construction and distribution of power in all the ways that power is exercised in the classroom. But for the writing classroom, power is mostly exercised through the ability to judge, assess, and grade writing. It is

exercised mostly through the assessment ecology.

LOCAL DIVERSITIES

Writing teachers who wish to engage in antiracist writing assessment practices must address race at the local level, considering the racial and linguistic diversity in their classrooms, something very few writing assessment discussions have been able to do. Race is a tangled construct, a clumsy, slippery one. It is not biological, nor even real in the ways that language use or citizenship status are, but race is a way to understand patterns in lived experience that equate a social formation's relation to dominant discourses and a local white racial *habitus*, one's relations to power. If we assume that writing assessments are ecologies (I'll make this argument in the next chapter), then they are local in nature, as others have discussed (Gallagher, 2010; Huot, 2002; O'Neill et al., 2009), and as NCTE and CWPA have recognized as an important consideration for effective writing assessments (CCCC, 2009; NCTE & WPA, n.d.). If they are local, then the populations that participate in them at the local level are important to theorize into our writing assessment practices. So, how can we understand local diversities in particular schools and classrooms in ways that help teachers to assess the writing of racially diverse students in their classrooms?

On today's college campuses, the local student populations are growing in their racial and cultural diversity, and this diversity means different things at different schools. According to The National Center for Educational Statistics enrollment figures for all U.S. colleges and universities, the numbers of Black and Hispanic[20] students have steadily increased: Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of college students who were Black rose from 11.3% to 14.5%, and the percentage of Hispanic students rose from 9.5% to 13%. For the same years, they show that international ("nonresident alien") student enrollment remains virtually the same at 3.4% of the total student population (U.S. Department of Education & National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). And this doesn't mention the variety of Asian and Asian-American students on college campuses, or the very small but just as complex numbers of Native American students, nor does it adequately complicate what each of these racial categories means at particular schools.

Regardless of the local complexities, with all these students comes more English literacies spoken and written in the classroom. Paul Kei Matsuda highlights the importance of these trends in composition as a field and the classroom by arguing that composition studies must address more directly the "myth of linguistic homogeneity," that is, that writing classrooms and programs work from a

false myth in which the teacher's or program's normative image of typical writing students is of "native speakers of a privileged variety of English" (2006, p. 638). Matsuda extends a critique by Bruce Horner and John Trimbur (2002). Horner and Trimbur argue that U.S. college writing classes hold assumptions about the preferred English—the privileged variety of English—used in classrooms, which they call "unidirectional monolingualism." They argue for "an alternative way of thinking about composition programs, the language of our students, and our own language practices that holds monolingualism itself to be a problem and a limitation of U.S. culture and that argues for the benefits of an actively multilingual language policy" (2002, p. 597). Matsuda and Horner and Trimbur are talking about writing assessment without saying it. The myth of linguistic homogeneity really boils down to how we read and judge writing of locally diverse students. A writing pedagogy that doesn't assume a unidirectional monolingualism is one that assesses writing and writing students by considering more than a single dominant English. But to incorporate their good ideas, to construct writing pedagogies that do more than demand a dominant discourse, we must begin by thinking about local diversities in classroom writing assessments.

In Jay Jordan's (2012) discussion of multilingual classroom realities, he too argues that the Englishes that come to us in writing classrooms are more and more global Englishes, a part of a "globally changing language," and we "cannot afford to continue ignoring the multiple competencies students have developed 'on the ground' and often before entering our classrooms" (p. 53). These are conclusions that others have also made about world Englishes (Canagarajah, 2006) and code meshing (Young, 2007, 2011; Young & Martinez, 2011). Claude Hurlbert (2012) makes a convincing argument for considering "international composition," or an English composition classroom that considers epistemologies across the globe as valid and worth learning from and about (p. 52). The bottom line is that the cultural, material, and linguistic diversity in our writing classrooms demands a writing assessment theory that is robust enough to help teachers and WPAs design and deploy writing assessments that are responsibly informed and fair to all students, regardless of their pre-college experiences or cultural and linguistic heritages. Furthermore, this theory of writing assessment should be dynamic enough to account for the ways various racial formations may change when participating in the classrooms that the assessments produce. I could use the conventional assessment language to describe the kinds of writing assessments that I'm speaking of, that the decisions from them be valid enough and reliable writing assessments, or use other terms, such as ethical and meaningful (Lynne, 2004), but the point is that we understand what we are creating and what those creations do in our classrooms to and for our students and teachers.

In our increasingly racially and linguistically diverse writing classrooms, a

theory of writing assessment is robust if it can address the difficult question of ethnic and racial diversity among students and teachers, a question addressed publically in 2008 on the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Diversity blog (http://cccc-blog.blogspot.com/). Diversity seems to mean many things to many people. Much like the critique that Joseph Harris makes of "community" in composition studies, that it has no negative binary term (2012, pp. 134-135), an argument he actually draws out from Raymond Williams definition of the term (1976, p. 76), "diversity" may have only positive associations in academia. This isn't a problem until we find that the concept is deployed in ways that function to erase difference, or merely celebrate it without complication (Schroeder, 2011), or as a commodity for institutions to measure themselves by (Kerschbaum, 2014, p.44). In other words, we like to celebrate diversity without dealing with difference. And these complications are different at historical moments and geographic places, at different schools. So it may be best to speak only in terms of local diversity around our writing assessments. This doesn't solve the question of the meaning of "diversity," but it does give us a place to begin understanding so that the writing assessments we have in local places can be developed in ways that meet locally diverse needs.

In the abstract, the idea of designing a writing assessment in response to a local set of diverse students and teachers is no different from best practices in the field of writing assessment. Huot's (2002) calls for "context-sensitive" assessments, meaning they "honor the instructional goals and objectives as well as the cultural and social environment of the institution or agency" (p. 105), seems to say the same thing. But looking closer at Huot's explanation of this principle reveals an absence of any concepts or theories that could explain or inform in some robust way the racial, cultural, or linguistic diversity that any classroom writing assessment might have. Huot explains:

> Developing writing assessment procedures upon an epistemological basis that honors local standards, includes a specific context for both the composing and reading of student writing and allows the communal interpretation of written communication is an important first step in furnishing a new theoretical umbrella for assessing student writing. However, it is only a first step. We must also develop procedures with which to document and validate their use. These validation procedures must be sensitive to the local and contextual nature of the procedures themselves. While traditional writing assessment methods rely on statistical validation and standardization that are important to the beliefs and assumptions

> that fuel them, developing procedures will need to employ
> more qualitative and ethnographic validation procedures like
> interviews, observations and thick descriptions to understand
> the role an assessment plays within a specific program or insti-
> tution. (2002, p. 106)

While it is clear in Huot's discussion that teachers should be taking into account their particular students when developing writing assessments, which makes for "site-based" and "locally-controlled" assessments (2002, p. 105), he focuses attention on procedures and institutional needs, not the ethnic or racial diversity among students who come into contact with those procedures and needs, both of which have been designed before any student arrives on the scene. I don't want to be unfair to Huot. He is concerned with how locally diverse students are treated in writing assessments, and places most of his solution on validation processes, thus on local teachers abilities and intentions to look for and find unfairness or racism. In a broad sense, local teachers have to weed out racism in their assessments. Who else will? But do they? Will they if they aren't prompted to look?

Knowing or being prompted to look is vital. The validation of a writing assessment's decision[21] is usually not designed, nor conceived of, as engaging productively with difference or diversity in student populations or teachers. This is likely why he calls for "qualitative and ethnographic validation procedures," but it's hard to know what exactly these procedures would focus on or reveal. What is the range of hypotheses that teachers begin with? While it is easy to read into the above description of a site, say a writing classroom, as nearly uniform or homogeneous, I do not think Huot means this. But isn't that often the assumption we make when we look to assess writing or design a classroom writing assessment of an essay or a written document of some kind? Procedures and rubrics are usually designed to label and categorize student performances in uniform ways, which means they identify sameness, not surprises or difference. These kinds of procedures and institutional needs (like a need for a standard, local SEAE to be used) enforces homogeneity, and punishes diversity, as we can conclude from both Matsuda (2006) and Horner and Trimbur (2002).

Huot does offer alternatives to validation that could take into account local diversities, procedures that work toward "qualitative and ethnographic valida-tion," but these procedures are mainly to "understand the role an assessment plays within a specific program or institution." This is a worthwhile goal, and while the searching for student difference may be assumed in such procedures for validating an assessment's decisions, terms like "program" homogenize student populations and erase difference. They keep us from thinking about it or seeing

it, especially when we are designing such writing assessments. It is simply harder to see local diversities if we do not explicitly name them, or look for them, or account for them. This is even tougher to do in a writing classroom assessment where it has been my experience running writing programs that teachers are not thinking about ways to validate their own grading practices or even feedback practices. Validation is usually a programmatic concern, not a classroom assessment concern. And since it isn't, racism has fertile ground to grow in classrooms.

I should make clear that I believe that we always already are diverse in our classrooms, schools, and geographic locations, which Huot surely is assuming as well. But I'm also suggesting that writing teachers develop writing assessments that explicitly engage with the local diversities in the classroom, that these local diversities be a part of the designing of the assessment's needs and procedures. Designing with local diversities in mind means that we choose to see the inherent multilingual aspects of our students as something other than signs of incomplete students, students who are not quite of the dominant discourses and expectations for college writing (e.g., a local SEAE). I realize that this claim pushes against Bartholomae's (1985) insightful explanation of students needing to "appropriate" the discourses of the academy in his famous essay "Inventing the University," but I'm less sure now that helping students toward the goal of appropriation is a worthwhile social goal, less sure that it helps our society as well as academia break the racist structures that hold all of us back, that limit the work in the academy as much as it limits our ways with words.

This is not to forget or elide the real issues of representation that most people of color face in the academy and U.S. society, nor the real concerns that many have for learning the dominant English of the marketplace. Nor is it lost on me how much I have benefited from a mastery of academic discourse, that this book is a testament to that discourse and how I've made it my own, but I have also been punished by not conforming to it in the past. And like most writing teachers, I am not like my students, in that I have an affinity for language. I love it. Thus I was resilient to the punishments. Most students are not so resilient. The bottom line is that local diversity is something that once we assume it to be a fact, it becomes essential to a healthy, fully functioning, and productive writing assessment ecology.

At Fresno State, Hispanic (which means mostly Mexican-American, but the institution uses "Hispanic") student enrollment has steadily grown since at least 2003 and surpassed Whites in 2010—Whites are a numerical minority on campus. Asian (mostly Hmong) students have also increased in the same period, but at a slower pace. Meanwhile, white student enrollment has decreased each year since 2006. In Fall 2012, 38.8% of all students enrolled where Hispanic, 28.8% were White, 14.8% were Asian (mostly Hmong), 4.4% were African-American,

3.0% were International, and 0.4% were American Indian (CSU, Fresno, n.d.).

Furthermore, in the city of Fresno in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau states that 44.3% of people aged 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home (Ryan, 2013, p. 13). Of this population, 76.2% spoke Spanish, while 15.5% identified speaking an Asian and Pacific Island language, likely Hmong. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention corroborate these numbers, noting that in Fresno County the top three spoken languages in homes are English, Spanish, and Hmong (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007). The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates that in 2011 in Fresno County 44.7% of those who speak Asian and Pacific Island languages at home, speak English less than "very well" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Not surprisingly, of those admitted to Fresno State in Fall 2011, 72.2% of all Asian-Americans were designated as not proficient (remedial) in English (CSU Division of Analytic Studies, 2013), the highest remediation rate of any racial formation, as previously mentioned.[22] The story these statistics tell is one of local diversity, a diversity of people, cultures, and most importantly Englishes. It's also a story that reveals the problems bound to happen in classroom writing assessments that do not account for such local diversity. These issues begin with the EPT and its production of the remedial student, who is primarily Mexican and Hmong.

Now, one could argue against the validity of Fresno State's remediation numbers—that is, the decisions that the EPT makes for Hmong students—especially since they are produced by a dubious standardized test based on judgments that pit student writing against a dominant white *habitus*, a test designed for all California students, a large and complexly diverse state. And the EPT's placement decisions' questionable validity is exactly why local diversities need to be understood better and accounted for in writing assessments. How could it be that so many more Asian-Americans taking the EPT are deemed remedial by that test than any other racial formation at Fresno State? Are they all just bad writers? If a recent survey of all Hmong students conducted in the Writing Across the Curriculum program at Fresno State is accurate (266 students responded), only 10% of Hmong students say they use only English on and off campus on a daily basis to communicate to others. Most (63.4%) say they use mostly English but sometimes another language, while 23.4% say they use half English and half another language. So if this is true, then it's reasonable to say that the Hmong formation at Fresno State is highly literate, at least functional in two different languages. The EPT as a writing assessment doesn't account at all for the local diversity of Fresno State, for the dual languaging of Hmong students. It only cares about the institutional need to promote the myth of the monolingual, native English-speaking student. Local racial diversity, which in this case is constructed by home and school language practices and conditions of immigration to name

a few factors, is ignored by the EPT.

The EPT clearly has problems adequately accounting for the multilingual students in Fresno if over 72% of Asian-American students are designated as remedial by it, meanwhile only about 25% of white students are. And we shouldn't be fooled by arguments that claim the EPT, or any writing assessment, could produce fairly such numbers in student populations, populations who come from the same schools, all born in the U.S. The argument is that perhaps the EPT is actually testing writing competency and not biased against Fresno Hmong since it cannot be determined that the EPT measures something different in Hmong students or measures the same construct differently in Hmong students (Inoue & Poe, 2012, pp. 343-344, 352; White & Thomas, 1981, p. 280).

The trouble with this argument is not that it uses conventional, positivistic, psychometric theories of bias (Jensen, 1976; Reynolds 1982a, 1982b; Thorndike, 1971) to determine if the EPT is not a racist test, which it does, but that it ignores the fact that failure (low scores that mean remediation) pool so cleanly, abundantly, and consistently in Hmong racial and linguistic formations in Fresno. It shows us that larger structural racism is happening in schools and classrooms, as much as it is in the test itself. Good writing assessments should be able to identify such structural racism, not work with it to produce more racist effects. Speaking of the EPT historically, Inoue & Poe (2012) explain why this writing assessment can be considered racist:

> The bias of a test, like the EPT, is not just a matter of finding traditionally defined test bias. If this were the case, we most likely must agree with White and Thomas' original judgment that the EPT is not biased against students of color. Bias can also be measured through the consequences of assessments. If an assessment is to respond fairly to the groups on which it makes decisions, then shouldn't its design address the way groups historically perform on the assessment? Thus, we wish to suggest that *understanding an assessment as producing a particular set of racial formations produces educational environments that could be unequal, either in terms of access, opportunities, or possibilities.* (pp. 352-353)

Thus it is the racial consequences of a test that can make it racist and unfair. And these unfair consequences stem from the EPT not addressing local diversity, and arguably only addressing a presumed white majority. So the classrooms at Fresno State are not isolated from the larger structures and previous assessments that construct the students who come. Classroom writing assessments must account for these conditions, and we can do so by understanding better these factors as

factors that construct the local racial diversity of our students.

But how do local diversities affect classroom writing assessments in those classrooms? As a teacher if you noticed that 16 out of the 20 students in your writing course were failing their essays, wouldn't you re-examine your assignment, or expectations, or how you judged essays, etc.? Would you assume that those 16 students are all bad writers, and only four in the class are proficient? Of course not. Now, what if your school had a history of accepting students who were conventionally less prepared for college writing, who tended to have trouble approximating the dominant discourse expected, say urban Latino/a and Black students from poor neighborhoods and schools? Given this context, what would you assume? Would you check your methods, your assignments, perhaps even talk to students about how they interpreted the assignment? Now let's say that of those 16 students 14 were Asian-American and multilingual, the rest in the class were white. Now, would you still think your classroom writing assessment is potentially flawed, or would you engage with the global imaginary of a sentimental education that says you know what is best for these less developed Asians, or Blacks, or Latinos/as? Would you imagine your role as parental? Would you imagine that you had an obligation to help these students become more proficient in the dominant English of the classroom for their own good? Would this global imaginary keep you from critically examining the way your writing assessment is or is not explicitly accounting for the locally diverse students you have in your classroom and their relations to a white racial *habitus* that is likely functioning in your assessment? That is, would you change your assessment so that it folded back onto itself instead of pushing back onto your students? Could your assessment assess itself, assess the dominant discourse and not just the discourses of your students?

If your assessment could do this, then it is necessary, vital, that other discourses, other perspectives, other epistemologies exist so that students can compare them to the dominant one the classroom promotes. Notice I'm not saying that the classroom is not promoting a dominant discourse. I'm saying it promotes one alongside other non-dominant ones. And the non-dominant ones become the ways toward critical examination, toward critical assessment practices.

The concept of local diversity ultimately means classroom writing assessments must engage meaningfully with the diverse students in classrooms. It means teachers really cannot develop assessment procedures or expectations without their students' literacies. And this means, local diversities should change the academic discourse, change what is hegemonic in the academy, but this is a difficult task, one requiring a more holistic sense of classroom writing assessments, a theory of classroom writing assessment as an ecology.