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Ventriloquism 001: How to Throw Your Voice in the Academy

ABSTRACT:This article sketches an operationalization of Bakhtinian voicing theory – a practical method of reading that we call "hearing voices." It also connects this method to service learning and other pedagogies that invite "private" voices into the classroom. Reported discourse is at the center of the technique, and we suggest that its significance relates to the types of speakers students are allowed to report and what they are reported as saying. Therefore, a taxonomy for categorizing reported discourse is offered – popular, scholarly and private reported voices. A reading of one student paper is presented, where focusing on reported discourse allows us to hear the different discourses around racism which emerge and the ways that the student gives voice to them and to herself in relation to them. We conclude by suggesting further ways to integrate "hearing voices" into the basic writing classroom.

HEARING VOICES – A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Reading Basic Writers and Writing

One way to describe basic writing is as a site of multiple pulls in seemingly opposite directions. It is, of course, a site of writing. Writing implies a reader, or at least an audience. Who is the reader in a basic writing classroom? In the most conventional of classrooms, the reader is the professor, and the professor represents the academy. She is the gatekeeper (or in some cases she is at least entrusted with the keys to a standardized test gate), and students must acquire enough convention to be read as "in" (or perform enough convention to be read as "bought in") to the academy. Even in less conventional classrooms, where workshopping, peer review, or outside publication is central, ultimately, the professor almost always holds the gate key of

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the grade students must get to pass the course. So basic writing is a site of writing/being read in order to gain access to the academy.

But basic writing is also a site of writing/reading. Students in this formulation write in order to read. By definition, basic writing students' primary discourses are on the borders of the academy. Therefore, the views from within these discourses are sites from which to read academic and disciplinary conventions critically. As Gee notes, to critique a discursive convention is to critique the worldview which attends that convention. Basic writing can be conceived as a valuable location of critique, where the readers are the students, and what is read are the cultural texts of the university and the disciplines themselves.

We are not arguing here that instructors must choose either/or: what is read (student writing *or* the university and its disciplines), who reads (professors *or* students), and what the function of a basic writing course is (to provide access *or* to produce critique). In fact, we would argue that each of these dual pulls is vital to basic writers and writing. The trick is how, on the ground, to do both. Bakhtinian voicing theory, operationalized through an awareness and analysis of reported discourse, has the potential to enhance basic writing classrooms as sites for both access and critique. Reported discourse—the very mundane yet central conventions of quotation, citation, and paraphrase—helps to provide basic writing students with further access to the academy, but it can also be used by students in critical, resistant ways, to speak back to the academy, as we will demonstrate below.

Reported discourse is the nucleus of many of Pratt's literate arts of the contact zone—critique, parody, denunciation, vernacular expression, imaginary dialogue. Pratt describes the contact zone as a site of contested but unequal power relations and representations of self and other. These literate arts allow the less-empowered to re-present themselves, by appropriating and transforming the discourses of (the) power(ful). In a basic writing classroom, a further expansion of the uses of reported discourse is through the addition of private voices, not just scholarly ones, to those students can bring into play in their papers. Service learning is one way to bring focused, critical attention to private experiences. By service learning, we mean pedagogies which engage students in working with local community members and/or organizations in order to meet real community needs. Whether or not the community engagement projects themselves include writing, a crucial part of them—if they are to be effective as learning—is reflection, often in the form of writing. Students get to reflect on themselves, those they worked with, and they get to re-present those representations of self and other back to the gatekeepers in the academic context they are attempting to enter.

Voice and Voicing, Serving and Learning

As teachers of composition and rhetoric, we are keenly aware that many of our actual practices on the ground do not match the theories that we bat around at conferences and in carpools. In particular, elegant ideas concerning discourse as performance, voice as multiple, and identity as shifting and conflicted are revolutionary, fascinating, valuable, and very difficult to integrate smoothly with the parts of our syllabi that we hope will help students to be read as "in."

It is easy to fall back on more comfortable conceptions of voice. In these conceptions, voice is a noun: writers have the power to position themselves, but they can only position themselves through one rhetorical voice at a time. Yes, writers can choose among many discourses, but they must choose, and the discourse basic writers need to be seen as allied with is that of the academy. Students must assimilate, at least on paper. If we believe these ideas, then with the best pedagogical intentions, we easily slip into planning an assimilationist basic writing course, or more subtly, executing assimilationist assignments, activities, conferences, written feedback, or grading rubrics.

A Bakhtinian framework helps to work against assimilationist tendencies by reconceiving voice as a verb. One does not "have" a "voice"—one voices, one is voicing. In this model, writers are authors with skilled awareness of *heteroglossia*. Heteroglossia is the perpetual state of language tension in which any utterance is suspended and to which every utterance contributes.

> Philosophy of language, linguistics and stylistics...have all postulated a simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his unitary and singular "own" language, and have postulated as well a simple realization of this language in the monologic utterance of the individual. Such disciplines actually know only two poles in the life of language...: on the one hand, the system of a unitary language, and on the other the individual speaking in this language... [However] a unitary language is not something given but is always in essence posited—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia. (Bakhtin 269-70)

Bakhtin asserts that writers do not have to choose discourses. In fact, to do so is not really possible, in a Bakhtinian framework: heteroglossia means every utterance of every individual is a site of tension and dialogue, not stasis and closure. Every utterance represents multiple discourses operating. Writers do not have a powerful voice, they have the power to voice—to position themselves multiply

through actively putting various discourses into play, to orchestrate multiple voices. If it is possible to see basic writers as always voic*ing*, then basic writing is not a site of assimilation. It is not a site of identity loss, but identity negotiation, not discourse choosing, but discourse testing, and not the emergence of authentic voice but performance of multiple voices (Parks and Goldblatt; Lea and Street). The challenges are to apply this insight practically and to view basic writers as skilled enough to use all the linguistic resources at their disposal to those ends.

Bakhtin[1] points the way toward negotiation, testing and performance of voices with his emphasis on reported discourse.

> Heteroglossia...is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of *the character who is speaking*, and the refracted intention of the author...all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other... (324, emphasis added)

Reported discourse is the dressed-up term for the more pedestrian conventions of quotation, citation,and paraphrase. Bringing in "another's speech"/an Other's language allows the author to bring diverse discourses into contact by orchestrating various speakers giving voice to a range of utterances. These acts of reporting are double-voiced because as writers—students, for example—play their own intentions off of another's, they must be in dialogue with that Other. There is no monologue, no simple expression of authentic, inner truths, when reported discourse is a central convention of a genre, as it is in the university.

In fact, one of the authors, Ashley, conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) in a university setting which suggested that reported discourse was *the* central convention of successful student writing in that context—that is, writing that yielded positive evaluations and good grades from instructors; in short, writing that provided access. It would be easy to take quotation, citation, and paraphrase as a matter of course in academic writing; it is so ubiquitous as to seem intrinsic. However, CDA takes as a central theoretical proposition that

> a particular set of discourse practices and conventions may achieve a high degree of naturalization—they may come to be seen as simply "there" in a common-sense way, rather than socially put there. This is a measure of the extent to which

> powerful social forces and groups dominate a society or a particular institution. (Fairclough 9)

CDA's orientation of suspicion toward naturalized textual features helped Ashley to re-view reported discourse and attempt to explain the material and ideological effects of this particular textual convention.

It might also be easy to dismiss reported discourse as not useful in fostering positive resistance in students (Shor). When students are asked to respond to an author, and they use reported discourse to present their response, aren't they simply parroting, assimilating by impersonating the scholar they have read? How is dialogue or critique possible when basic writing students are often in the position of needing to mirror the ideas and language of academics? The home discourses of basic writing students may be eclipsed by the requisite summary or citation of "the reading." In actuality, every act of reporting another's utterance means changing that utterance. Even a complete recapitulation of something that was said—say, a newspaper reprinting the State of the Union address—shifts the meaning of that utterance because the context is new. A student purchasing a paper off an Internet service and turning it in shifts the meaning of that paper; the plagiarism makes the paper a parody, in addition to a representation of the ideas and ethos in the paper as originally written. These acute examples make the point that the more typical, incomplete acts of reporting that we see in academe—the excerpts, quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and citations that make up a great deal of academic discourse—these too, must be double-voiced. The intentions of the author are, as Bakhtin puts it, "refracted" through these instances of reported discourse, and simultaneously, the author must in some way be aware of the intentions of those reported. Both discourses are changed: the reported discourse and the "reporting context" (the student writer's discourse). As a result, discourses—and the "big D Discourses" which they are a part of (Gee)—have the opportunity to be tested against one another. Through reported discourse, writers, including basic writers, can give voice to a discourse without assimilating into it. This is the radical power of reported discourse. The examples we present below demonstrate some of this discourse testing.

While reported discourse can be used as a tool for testing discourses—literally or figuratively creating dialogues among speakers voicing various discourses and releasing them to critique each other—it is exactly this testing potential that also makes it key to the more conventional goal of basic writing, access. It is helpful to note that a focus on reported discourse operationalizes Bartholomae's insight that "the university...is the place where 'common' wisdom is only of negative values—it is something to work against" (156). Students can be

seen capitalizing on this university value system quite concretely with generic opening lines of essays: "Many people think..." "Society believes..." These awkward introductory lines can be read as literally reporting the discourse of "people," "society." Successful students make the move that Bartholomae has spotlighted as valuable: they deride this popular discourse in favor of a more sophisticated, complex, disciplinary or at least sideways view of the issue. As students progress through the university, these ostensibly more intricate views are voiced through speakers inside particular disciplines, e.g., "Freud claims..." (Walvoord and McCarthy).

Students make their access-building alliances clear through the use of embedding phrases:

- *Freud writes, ". . ."*
- *. . . (Freud).*
- *What Freud is saying is. . .*

Students—as do we as academics, so much so that we take it for granted—embed ideas of authorities and experts in their own papers through the devices of quotation, citation, and paraphrase, and in so doing, ally themselves *against* lay ideas and *with* insiders, professionals, scholars. But even at the outset of their university careers, before choosing majors, even in basic writing classes, successful students position themselves as "in" by deriding the popular and allying themselves with the not-popular, which is often understood in the academy to be the province of the academic.

Thus, through reported discourse, students both perform alliance with scholarly discourses/worldviews and also engage in critical dialogue with those discourses/worldviews. One way to broaden the discourses available for reporting in the academy is service learning. Service learning adds *private* discourses to *academic/disciplinary* ones as an option against which to test the *popular* commonsense. When students are asked to take on vital tasks in the community and to reflect legitimately on those activities, the door to multiple discourse-testing is opened, rather than an austere, not-this-(commonsense)-but-that-(academic sense) type of testing. This opportunity for multiplicity is particularly important for basic writers, who need to demonstrate access-gaining rhetorical moves but are often so far distant from academic/disciplinary discourses as to find them largely inaccessible, and

possibly not very reflective of their worldviews nor useful in describing their experiences.

Hearing Private Voices

Concretely, private discourses are utterances voiced through speakers known intimately or at least personally by the author: "my uncle," "my neighbor," "the kids I worked with at the shelter," "my project partner," even "I" (the student author him/herself). Students bring in private discourses through detailed reporting of what occurred during their service encounters, including the things they themselves said, thought and did. This rich data collection provides students with additional "characters" to invoke (with their attendant discourses) in order to address the topics of their papers, voices other than the scholarly insiders they have read in the course. They can make the Bartholomae-access move of knocking down a popular commonsense, but the innovative view on the topic may not emerge from the academy. It may emerge in whole or part from a private/community discourse. Local/community/private discourses have standpoints to speak about the topic at hand that are often different from the mainstream discourse, as well as different from the leading scholarly discourse.

Another qualification is in order here. We are not claiming that service learning is the only way that students can effect both access and critique. Other pedagogies, such as those that emphasize narrative, memoir, ethnography, or cultural studies, can also open the door to discourse testing while not neglecting access-providing moves. For instance, the following example emerges from a course entitled "Investigating Experience," a general education course designed to follow the first-year composition course at our university and teach research writing skills while integrating memoir, interview, and observation into students' papers. One white woman in the course wrote her final paper about her own continued coping with anorexia. Her skilful paper included memoir, interview, and significant library research on the topic. Her draft was workshopped in class. After the paper was read aloud, there was a great deal of praise, yet several students asked questions such as "Why would it make you feel bad if your mother told you you had cellulite on your legs? Maybe she was just stating a fact." "How many calories is 1,000? Is that a lot or a little or what?" "What was so important about being a size zero? I just don't get it at all how you could starve yourself like that." Students may sound insensitive here, but in fact, Ashley, who was the course professor, noticed a pattern to the questions—or rather, the questioners. The women (the class was over three-quarters female) who "just

didn't get it" all self-identified as African-American or Latina, while it was the white women (and men) who took for granted that the writer wanted to be tiny, that she knew how to track the number of calories she consumed, and that she had a mother who was critical of her weight.

The discourse of "fat as undesirable" played out as a white discourse in this class. The students of color brought their private community discourses into contact with that commonsense and called it into question. Ashley was able to point out the racial/ethnic divide in the understanding of weight and what it means by immediately "reporting" back to the students the dialogue as it had occurred moments before, but she overtly raced the speakers. One Latina student said, "Yeah, that is true, because I noticed that white guys want you to be small, and Latino guys want you to have a little butt but be big up top, and black guys like girls to be big all over." This set off a round of affirmative chattering. While reductive, the student's affirmation from her private experience still pushed the discussion further forward. Ashley asked the student whose paper was being workshopped whether the scholarship she used had labeled eating disorders as a race-based phenomenon. She replied that they had not, and said that she would be interested in returning to the literature to check into that idea.

Two types of discourse-testing occurred in this instance. It was an example of how bringing private discourses into the academic examination of a topic can help to push against a popular "universal" commonsense—in fact, relabeling that popular notion as a private and partial one, one attached to a (white) community, rather than a generic—"truth." Private discourses of the women of color in the class also pushed against the scholarly discourses brought in by the secondary research in the student paper, persuading the author to expand her investigation.

Practices that bring in the "I," like memoir and service learning, provide students with an opportunity to see how their own private/community discourses are part of a particular set of popular/commonsense notions which get called into question when they butt up against a different community discourse. This is why "private" is used throughout this article, rather than "personal." The label "personal" grants experiences asylum from critique—personal experiences are unique, individual, apolitical, one's "own." "Private" reminds us that perceptions, preferences, desires, even bodily sensations are not simply our own, but are shaped and constructed socially, in discourse (Bourdieu). If experiences are private, not personal, then the "I" that has them is also shaped in discourse. Instructors bearing this in mind can help students see themselves as Bakhtinian narrators with private positions, rather than Enlightenment authors with personal views.

By noticing and sometimes pointing out what students voice their

"I" as saying, teachers can help students become narrator-characters in their own stories. Rather than needing to assume the distanced and neutral voice of a third-person author, they can reflect on their own discourses by treating their "I" as a speaker of reported discourses, too. Bakhtin suggests that just the existence of a narrator ups the heteroglossic ante:

> All forms involving a narrator or a posited author signify to one degree or another by their presence the author's freedom from a unitary and singular language, a freedom connected with the relativity of literary and language systems; such forms open up the possibility of never having to define oneself in language; the possibility of translating one's own intentions from one linguistic system to another, of fusing "the language of truth" with "the language of the everyday," of saying "I am me" in someone else's language, and in my own language, "I am other." (314-15)

Where there is no completely removed, third-person author, all averrals take on the status of radical uncertainty. Caldas-Coulthard defines an averral as an assertion about a particular state of affairs in the world, and Tadros writes that "a basic assumption is that the writer avers the opinions and ideas of the text so long as s/he does not specifically detach him/herself from the embedded propositions expressed" (74). A narrator may provide detachment. Rather than a particular discourse taking on the status of truth, a narrator-author may begin to observe herself voicing a discourse, performing an identity to which she is not wedded. She may begin to hear herself as a distinctive echo and amalgam of previous voices, rather than expressing a single "real me."

Uniqueness and authenticity are not eliminated in a Bakhtinian framework; what is unique in a subject is that a particular set of discourses meet and find expression. A Bakhtinian narrator in academic writing does not have to be unified, unconflicted, and singular but instead can be "interanimated" with and by other voices. In fact,

> The verbal dominant may shift to the reported speech....the reported speech begins to resolve, as it were, the reporting context, instead of the other way around. The authorial context loses the greater objectivity it normally commands in comparison with reported speech. It begins to perceive itself—and even recognizes itself—as subjective, "other person's speech." (Voloshinov 121)

Voices overlap, interrupt, double, and masquerade as each other in dialogue, never quite complete or finished, portraying worldviews that

are never total because they are constantly interrupted by "another's language" and "another's voice." For this interruption to occur, there must be a rich well of diverse utterances from which to draw to discuss the topic at hand. It is therefore important that the practices that bring in the "I"—e.g., service learning—be integral to and integrated with the course work in some way, rather than a quick add-on, and that students have opportunities to gather rich linguistic/discursive "data" from their experiences and bring those data into their writing for the course.

HEARING LINDSAY THROW HER VOICE(S)

Course Context

The public university where we were teaching operates an Academic Development Program, through which students who would not normally be admitted to the university based on their SATs and grades are provisionally admitted; they are required to attend a six-week summer "academic boot camp," as many of them refer to it, and are provided with additional academic and social support throughout their first year. All of them take the university's basic writing course, either in the summer or the fall, and then they progress to the first-year composition course. Typically these courses are not different from mainstream developmental or first-year writing courses, except that they are usually slightly smaller and students are required to meet with a tutor on a weekly basis for additional support. Tutors and professors tend to have highly collaborative relationships, meeting throughout the semester to discuss student progress and issues.

At the point that the final paper which we examine in this section was written, Ashley and Lynn had been working together for two semesters, summer and fall, Ashley as the professor and Lynn as course tutor. Lindsay, who asked us to use her real name for this article, had been with another professor/tutor pair in the summer for her basic writing course, so we met Lindsay in the fall. Part of the Academic Development Program summer session includes collaborative work among all of the tutors, which includes math, speech, and reading as well as English. This was done both in the formal setting of weekly meetings held for the group of tutors and informal meetings between individual tutors. In this way the needs and concerns of students who were particularly resistant were discussed in terms of how to improve tutoring methods. During a number of these informal discussions throughout the summer session, Lindsay's summer English tutor spoke with Lynn regarding her concerns about Lindsay's passivity towards

learning and her reluctance to explore new concepts. Lynn continued to work with Lindsay's summer tutor during the fall semester, so the dialogue was able to continue in a way that was beneficial to both Lynn and Lindsay in regard to addressing her resistance. Although Lynn did work closely with other students as part of the Academic Development Program, the opportunity to gain another's perspective on Lindsay and to closely observe her growth as a writer and a student over this period was in some ways unique due to the close interaction of the tutors involved with her in the sequenced courses.

In the fall semester, Ashley's first-year composition course design emphasized the use of voicing as a way to support a central claim. For example, the first paper asked students to interview one other student in the class about that student's experiences on September 11, 2001 (a project modeled after oral history example essays), and to write the narrative in a way that also supported a claim. Many students at first struggled with and then reveled in adopting the voice of their interviewee. However, some class discussions focused on questions about voicing such as, "What if my interviewee has views I don't share?" or "What if my interviewee cursed a lot?" This challenging assignment provided practice in the use of a voice other than one's own to support a thesis, growing a thesis "from the bottom up," and utilizing another's private voice as expert to describe and analyze a familiar situation. The second paper was a more traditional analysis of effective rhetorical strategies, but the reading assignments were bell hooks's "Killing Rage" and Gloria Steinem's "Ruth's Song," both strongly "personal" essays which explicitly recognize their public elements (i.e., racism and sexism, respectively).

The third and final major paper gave students the option to complete and write about a "community engagement project." Ashley prefers the term "community engagement" over "service learning." "Service" connotes a one-way, somewhat paternalistic charitable act, with the only benefit to students being a "learning experience." "Community engagement" conveys more of a two-way engagement in a shared community. However, we should note that many students were already familiar with service learning and used that term in reference to their projects. Students who took this option (many did) were encouraged to work in pairs and to write their final papers in pairs. Before, during, and after the project, they wrote guided journal entries, individually, which were focused on "re-viewing" their "selves" through the eyes of the community members, as well as re-viewing community members' actions and words. For example, the journaling prompt before students began asked questions like, "Am I eager or reluctant to begin this project, and why?" "What do I expect will happen or what do I hope to get out of it?" "What will I do if...?" "What images do I already have about...?" The three journal entries during the project

asked students to "recount the experiences in your journal, so that a reader might experience the moment as intensely as you did. Sketch details, sensory impressions, emotional associations, and social allegiances that these moments contained for you." It also asked them to do "reflective and reflexive writing" after each "recounting." The three prompts for each successive entry were, "How do I perceive my self in this situation?" "How does this self perceive others who are involved in this situation?" "How do others who are involved in this situation perceive me?" Students followed these prompts and used them to reflect to quite varying degrees, but all of the students began to structure their reflections toward greater reflexivity.

The syllabus described this assignment as an opportunity to "create a focused essay with an explicit argument which uses scrutinized private experience as a central part of its evidence and argument." For many of the students, this was their first opportunity for self-examination in the context of a larger society, a task that often proved daunting at first. Many of the students' initial entries spoke of other people's actions in great detail, but when asked if those same people were reacting to something the student herself was doing, the question became harder to answer. One student, an African-American male, was having trouble fitting into the group where he was volunteering. When Lynn asked him what he thought the difficulty was, he immediately stated that the staff was racist. Lynn then asked him to examine his own behavior while volunteering. This was prompted by the fact that he had a history of skipping or showing up late to tutoring sessions. Although he was always perfectly friendly and even charismatic, he was also more often than not unprepared to do the work in the tutoring session and had little work prepared before the sessions began. Based on this history, Lynn was interested to know if he extended that behavior to his volunteer group and if the behavior might be part of the reason the staff was reacting in a negative way. This possibility had apparently never occurred to this student, and upon reflection he came to the conclusion that, although racism might be part of the problem, his tendency to show up late and need supervision to engage in tasks assigned to him might have an impact on people's reaction to him. This is one example of the ways in which the journal entries allowed the students to begin to see how their actions influenced the world around them and how their own private experiences had an impact on both the people around them and their interpretation of the experience they were having.

Voicing in Lindsay's Paper

Below, we examine the use of voicing in Lindsay's paper. As noted above, Lindsay was a student with whom Lynn worked particularly closely over the course of the term. The topic which her paper addresses centrally and on which we focus our analysis is voicing around race and racism. (For clarity, in the examples of reported discourse below, embedding phrases will be in bold and the content of the averrals made will be underlined.)

When we first met Lindsay, she seemed somewhat complacent with her level of writing and academic ability and resistant to change. At one point she expressed directly to Lynn that she was not interested in having new ideas or changing her point of view. We asked Lindsay to review a draft of this article. After a few e-mailed comments back and forth, she wrote, "I want you to put in the paper whatever you saw of me. Maybe I was resistant to change. Katy [Lynn] would have been better to see that than I would have been able to. If that is what she saw, then by all means, put it in your paper. Freshman year is all about change, and by the time I had my time to spend with Katy I may have been all out of change at that point. It was just something that I found interesting of what other people thought of me. It made me realize that change is not always so bad and to watch how I act around people. I don't want them to get the wrong impression."

Lindsay grew up in central Pennsylvania, a predominantly white, rural, and working-class area. For her community engagement project, Lindsay volunteered at the Police Athletic League (PAL).[2] Like many of the other students in Ashley's three similar classes, Lindsay chose PAL not because she was particularly compelled to work with this organization or its client population, but because it was the easiest choice, being close to campus and an organization that provided transportation to the site. Lindsay ended up working alone on her final paper. This was in part due to the schedule of the tutoring and the fact that Lindsay became a very strong student over the course of the semester. This meant that she was at PAL before everyone else and her experience was very different from the other students. The primary difference was with her relationship to the staff. As she was the only student there and was able to schedule her arrival at a time that was convenient to the staff, she received extensive individualized attention when she began her volunteer time at PAL.

As part of the preparation for visiting PAL, Lynn had Lindsay find the organization's mission statement. Lindsay and Lynn then did a brief textual analysis of that statement to help Lindsay better understand the culture of the organization she would be working with. They discussed what sorts of leadership traits and value systems a "recre-

ational, societal and educational" organization run by the police might try to instill into a group of children and what impact that would have on the families who used PAL's services. By looking at the mission statement, Lindsay and Lynn were able to discuss PAL both in the context of the information she was receiving from the greater West Chester [Pennsylvania] community and in the ways the organization saw itself in relationship to the community.

Lindsay entered the project with several different discourses around the topic of race and racism. One that emerges in her paper and had shown itself earlier in the semester is the discourse that "whites are victims of racism at the hands of blacks." In one classroom discussion, for example, Lindsay talked honestly and animatedly about African-American students in the Academic Development Program (often cited by students and staff alike as modeled after a "family") as snubbing the white students; she used this as an example in a discussion about racism stemming from the bell hooks article. These comments were some of a number she made in class and tutoring sessions, which suggested that the discourse of "reverse racism" was a deep-rooted one for Lindsay.

This discourse establishes itself almost immediately in Lindsay's paper. She states: "The Greater West Chester chapter of the PAL organization is dominantly black and Hispanic." This could be read as a simple statement about numbers and a vocabulary problem (that is, she meant "predominantly"), but we read the use of "dominantly" differently for two reasons. One is the fact that Lindsay mentions here that the make-up of PAL is ""black and Hispanic," but she concentrates exclusively on African-Americans (as clients) in her paper, as well as in one-on-one discussions with Lynn and journal entries. Second, from another perspective, PAL is "dominantly" white—the staff is almost all white; it is the client population that is mostly of color. Lindsay makes a point of this later in her paper, as seen below. Yet Lindsay's description, in direct authorial discourse (not reported discourse, which would signal distancing and greater heteroglossia), portrays PAL as dominated by the people of color there.

But Lindsay immediately begins to contradict this discourse of "reverse racism." She notes early on: "Even though **hearing from the surrounding community** about racism being a prevalent issue within the organization, **I have found my assumptions** of racism to be totally **misguided**." Lindsay gives voice to the averral that "['reverse'] racism is a prevalent issue [at PAL]" through a popular "speaker"—"the surrounding community." She writes in terms of popular assumptions she had heard, but she is not specific about where she heard these assumptions (which would have made them private, in our system of analysis). She then gives her private narrator-self ("I...my...") alliance with these ideas but at the same time critiques them. These ideas

are "misguided...assumptions." The popular commonplace and the private position reinforce, then immediately challenge one another. Lindsay begins to make Bartholomae's access move of critique.

It is interesting to consider how the narrator is being used here. For example, Lindsay could have written, "Even though I heard from the surrounding community about racism being a prevalent issue within the organization, the assumptions of racism are totally misguided." Why include a narrator who "has found" something? One explanation is that it sets up a narrator-character who can give voice to the heteroglossic views on race and racism that Lindsay was struggling with in the paper and the course. Notice that she guides us toward accepting her current views with the strong metapragmatic "found," which implies evidence and support for her refutation of the popular/private reverse-racism discourse.

Later in the paper, Lindsay more directly declares that she initially agreed with the popular discourse. She states, "Another **assumption** about PAL that **I was sort of concluding to** is that PAL parents and PAL kids could be racist." Again, she uses reported discourse to examine the commonplace as established by both the popular and her own private discourse. Note here that she distances herself from the statement by using the modalization "sort of." She restates her original belief in the idea that PAL families "could be racist [against whites]," while at the same time establishing this belief as a reflection of the popular discourse that she is critiquing in her paper.

Reported discourse serves Lindsay well in these access moves. However, Lindsay also uses reported discourse for a critique of the academic worldview about the nature of current and continuing racism. This worldview/discourse was represented by course readings and class discussions and was privately held by Ashley and Lynn (both of whom are white). We can briefly label this discourse as "active white racism," and summarize it in part as "racism of whites toward people of color is alive and well and predominant in our existing communities." We recognize that to label this worldview globally as "academic" is too simple; however, we represented the academy in this specific classroom context and the readings Ashley chose reinforced this set of ideas about the nature of racism.

As part of her work in PAL, Lindsay interacted with both the children and their parents/guardians. Through talking to one of the grandparents Lindsay entered into a conversation about racism in the local community. Lindsay reports this grandmother in the following way:

> **She was talking** about how we have come a long way with in our West Chester community in the fight against racism. **She was telling us a story** of how she would go into stores and

want to buy something and the sales clerk would not even look at her to help her. **She says** that she has not seen that go on in a very long time.

Lindsay uses the private voice of the African-American grandmother as an expert authority. By paraphrasing this grandmother, Lindsay tests the scholarly discourse of "active white racism" with a private speaker voicing a discourse which says "racism did exist, but that was back in the day—we have come a long way since then." Lindsay subtly aligns herself with the speaker by voicing her in detail but by using somewhat neutral metapragmatics: the grandmother "tells stories" and "talks." The averrals themselves, though, are commanding: it has been a "*very* long time;" there is a "*fight* against racism," and "*we*" are engaged in that fight. The "we" here is ambiguous, but the addition of "our West Chester community" at least implies a united group of blacks and whites together.

This passage is key for two reasons. By aligning herself with the expert but private voice of the African-American grandmother, Lindsay again questions the popular (and her shared private) discourse of "blacks are racist against whites." She actually shows her narrator in a situation of potential contradiction—note that Lindsay calls her white narrator into this harmonious picture with her black interlocutor simply by including "us" in the passage, something she easily could have left out. A second reason why this passage is key is that she is beginning to create a position in the social world and therefore potentially for herself as an anti-racist white person. As she continues to reinforce this subjectivity, she takes greater risks in the way she examines popular and private discourses. This culminates in her ability to more clearly distinguish, discuss, and name the racial make-up of the PAL staff and the population that uses the PAL services. She states: "**I see** this as a mere coincidence that the blacks need the help and the whites are the helpers. This has NOTHING to do with the white race being superior to the black race." Here Lindsay creates a critical position which, while we could say it is privately advocated by both of us, was not a strong part of the academic discourse of this classroom. Lindsay voices her anti-racist white narrator as averring that the "help" received by African-Americans and provided by whites is not inherently about race (it is "a mere coincidence"); this dynamic is, particularly, *not* about racial "superiority." That is, if one reads between the lines, her narrator takes on and critiques racist biological discourses. Also, here, in contrast to other places, Lindsay's private narrator does indeed acknowledge that racism is alive and well, that there still are many whites around who believe that "the white race [is] superior to the black race." Some of these whites may very well be Lindsay's own private home community, as she implied in some tutoring sessions. The decision to type

"NOTHING" in capital letters is an interesting choice and almost suggests a shout at those voices who might aver the opposite. And, finally, while Lindsay is not shouting at us, the representatives of the academy, she is speaking in a clearly critical way to our worldview which often emphasizes, too simplistically, more about culpability and guilt for whites than awareness, potential, and alliance.

In this paper, Lindsay is engaging in voice as a verb rather than voice as a noun, which allows the heteroglossic tension around broader cultural discourses of racism to emerge through reported private and popular voices. Scholarly discourses are addressed as a "dialogic backdrop," to use Bakhtin's label. Lindsay explores the tension she encountered in the lived experience of diversity and brings that tension back to the classroom to speak back to the academy. In this instance, she voices a changed narrator-self—not as a result of forced assimilation, but rather through the active dialogue and testing of multiple voices with each other, which allowed her to engage in identity negotiation rather than identity loss.

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS: USING REPORTED DISCOURSE IN THE BASIC WRITING CLASSROOM

In order to use reported discourse fruitfully, instructors need to be aware of it and its significance. This is the first challenge, since reported discourse is so ubiquitous in the academy as to seem completely inherent and natural. The following quotation was taken from the introduction to a popular writing textbook:

> Every day, as you talk, write, and work, you use sources. Most of the knowledge and many of the ideas that you express to others originate outside yourself.... The best way to gain confidence and facility in writing from sources is to master each skill so thoroughly that *it becomes automatic, like riding a bicycle or driving a car*. (Spatt vii, x, emphasis added)

By contrast, Voloshinov describes reported discourse not as automatic and natural but as a sketch of "social tendencies" within a particular context:

> What we have in the forms of reported speech is precisely an objective document of [the] reception [of another's speech, which is the precursor to dialogue]. Once we have learned to decipher it, this document provides us with information, not about accidental and mercurial subjective psychological processes in the "soul" of the recipient, but about steadfast social tendencies...that have crystalized into language forms. (117)

This "language form" which often blends into the rhetorical landscape is fairly easily recognized once one becomes interested in doing so. As we have noted, it is most directly signaled through embedding and embedded clauses together, where the averral about the state of affairs in the world—e.g., "The house is red"—can be attributed to someone other than the writer of the text—e.g., "Jane said, 'The house is red'" (Tadros).[3] Writers signal detachment from an averral by ascribing the proposition to someone else, through quotation, as above, citation, or paraphrase, as in: "Jane writes that the house is red," "Jane verified that the house was red," "Jane mistakenly described the house as red." When we begin to recognize reported discourse, we can start to ask critical questions about it as we read student writing. For instance, each reporting of "Jane's" discourse, above, signals a different relationship between the writer (let's say, John) and Jane. Here are further questions which may aid in re-viewing a writer's choices. Because this method of analysis is novel, we will elaborate using this highly straightforward example in order to make these suggestions for analysis more concrete:

- How is the writer using, or not using, the convention of reported discourse at this particular point in this particular piece of writing? That is, do I notice any pattern emerging?

  Generally, has John Student voiced Jane Academic, or K. Scholar, or Jason Local, or himself? Where? How much?

- What purpose is served by having a "character" other than the author aver this particular proposition? Why does the author need to or choose to detach from the averral?

  How would this read if John himself had stated this idea in direct authorial discourse? Where does John have "I" thinking, believing, stating ideas, and where does John frame averrals in direct authorial discourse, in the removed third person? How are the averrals different or similar, in terms of lexis, syntax, etc.?

- Who is the author allying himself with? Who is he not allying himself with? Who is he attempting to ally himself with and critique all at once?

  E.g., "Jane said, 'The house is red'" and "Jane writes that the house is red" tend to signal neutrality, perhaps a recognition of Jane's importance (to teacher/discipline) without too strongly affiliating with Jane; "Jane proved that the house was red" signals deference to Jane's authority, though perhaps some parody or duplicity because John uses and valorizes her exact words but leaves off quotation marks. "Jane was wrong when she described the house as red" signals authority taken up by John, acknowledging Jane's averral but denying its clout.[4]

- Of those who are voiced, are they voiced accurately? Are they quoted out of context, paraphrased sketchily or summarized thoroughly, are they dropped as a name?

  Has John misrepresented/played with Jane's words? Has he simply commented[5] that her words exist, as in "Jane writes about houses," without giving adequate representation of what Jane says about houses? Or do Jane's words pervade throughout John's paper?

- What sort of dialogue does the author and/or narrator seem to be having with those reported? Does the author sprinkle any key terms used by his reported speakers in his direct authorial discourse? Does he voice reported speakers, in paraphrase, with terms which are more likely to emerge from his own mouth? If private speakers other than the author/narrator are voiced in the paper, how do they speak and on which topics?

  Does Jane actually use the terms "red" and "house" or are these John's paraphrases? Perhaps Jane writes about "crimson quarters" or "a cherry apartment." Does Jane's term "red" invade John's direct authorial discourse or narratorial discourse on the topic of houses, without attributing the idea or language to Jane?

- What happens for us as readers when discourses and speakers appear mismatched from our vantage point?

  Does John's paper include thoughtful ideas on the topic of houses and their redness, but voiced through private speakers, such as a parent, a community member, or the narrator? How might our assessment of the piece be changed if John ventriloquated Jane Academic's voice instead?

- Would expanding the repertoire of characters these students are allowed/encouraged to voice in their papers be beneficial to my students? How? How might it be beneficial to the university?

This method is not just an approach for instructors to use in reading student papers. Teaching students themselves to "hear voices" is also useful and possible. We have used attentiveness to reported discourse in peer review and as a tool to help "unpack" complex readings. In peer review of our students' essays on Gloria Steinem's "Ruth's Song" and bell hooks's "Killing Rage," instructions for reviewing drafts included asking peer responders to use a colored highlighter to mark every instance of reported discourse, i.e., every place where another "speaker" was "brought in to say something in the text." (The method had first been demonstrated in class.) On a direct visual level, this helped students to find a balance between simply recapitulating the readings (most of the paper is highlighted) and analysis (highlighted

and non-highlighted portions alternate and mix). It also helped students to see when they were not supporting an analysis with evidence but simply stating an opinion (little or no highlighting, or highlighting is all clumped together, rather than signaling "dialogue"). Finally, it was a helpful tool to challenge students to move from fairly surface readings of the texts—"bell hooks is racist against white people" was a common response (of our white students) to "Killing Rage," for example—to more complex ones. Students attuned to reported discourse could make sense of our responses: "That's your voice. What does hooks actually say about white people? If you want to make that argument, you have to have a dialogue with her, which means listening to her voice, bringing it in, as well as responding." In fact, students in Ashley's courses have sometimes begun adopting the language of hearing voices, asking each other about their "voices" and the "voices" in their peers' papers.

Being taught to attend to reported discourse helps students to unpack complex assigned readings as well. Victor Villanueva's *Bootstraps* is a complex blend of voices itself. Ashley assigns parts of this book in her "Investigating Experience" course, mentioned above. While this is not a basic writing course, in a recent class, many of her basic writing students had followed her into the course, still as first-year students. Beginning with the first chapter, *Bootstraps* was challenging for them. They didn't have a sense of the previous debate that Villanueva is engaging. They couldn't recognize the "commonplace" / popular voices on the "topic" of "students of color and education" that Villanueva is attempting to challenge: "Students of color don't succeed educationally because..." Villanueva tells his story and then reports the discourse of scholars from Bereiter to Heath, charting the common wisdom from deficiency through difference theories, eventually arriving at the recent commonplace much of his book attempts to knock down: students of color can succeed academically if they conform to white, middle-class language conventions. His book is an example and an argument controverting this idea.

Rather than introducing the book to her students with a mini-lecture on the topic of schools and language diversity, Ashley opened with an exercise on reported discourse. A lecture would perhaps have helped students read this book, but it would not have helped them understand how to read other complex material, how to decipher other reported discourse for the work it does. She asked students to work in groups to pick out speakers in small sections of the text and label them as Villanueva's "squad" or "foe." (These labels were arrived at after a laugh at Ashley's expense, because she began with the term "posse" instead of "squad" and was told that "no one says that anymore.") Students were able to sense which speakers Villanueva is setting up an alliance with (who is his squad) and who he is voicing in order to dis-

agree with (foes). They were able to be quite discriminating. For example, the mothers that lived on *el bloque* got labeled as "squad," even though what they voiced could be perceived as adversarial: "you, little Spanish boy...!" (2). By contrast, the class had a sense that "the guy at Thom McCann" whom Villanueva voices with the phrase "Puerto Rican fence climbers" was foe, even though they did not fully grasp the content of the racial slur (6). Similarly, students separated the more academic speakers and their discourses into squad and foe.

This exercise helped students to unpack Villanueva's support for his argument, both private and scholarly. The class eventually arrived at Villanueva's thesis from the bottom up, by looking at a pattern in what squad and foe speakers, as reported by Villanueva, were voiced as saying. After reviewing the list of Villanueva's foes and what they were saying about him and students like himself, one student said, "Those are all people who don't know ALL of him." The class went on to notice that those who were in the squad were people who understood multiple parts of Villanueva. Ashley had put the word "hybrid" on the board at the beginning of class, and students had defined it, primarily in relation to plants. After the squad and foe discussion, the class stated Villanueva's research question as, "How can you be a hybrid and succeed in school AND on the block?" This statement of his thesis and student's understanding of it seems more subtle and complex than a lecture would have allowed.

In the July 2003 issue of *College English*, Joseph Harris argues for demystifying the process of critical writing, making a case for focusing work in composition courses on close attention to revision. While he does not cite Bakhtinian theory, much of his article refers to reported discourse: "to write as a critic is to situate what one has to say about texts or issues in relation to what others have had to say about them..." (578). He talks about students who "are asked to ventriloquize our positions" and ideas "refracted by language" (582). He describes the success of a basic writing course which, in essence, centers on reported discourse. The course centered on "retellings"—"...competing versions of the same text: parodies, remakes, abridged or altered editions, adaptations, excerpts..." (583, 582). We conclude here with this report of Harris in order to point out the way that reported discourse is a constant, powerful but unacknowledged presence in academic writing. Raising our own awareness of it, examining it critically and learning how to interpret its uses in writing, student and otherwise, can ultimately help students to be read as "in." In addition, finding opportunities for students to "legitimately" report private discourses will help push the boundaries in composition courses and throughout the academy. Recognizing private discourses as worthy of report can help us and our students recognize that all utterances, even those that feel like "our own," are a ventriloquist act.

Notes

1. That is, the Bakhtin circle—Bakhtin and others of his contemporaries, especially Voloshinov, for example, in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.*

2. "The basic mission of PAL is to offer young people a viable and constructive alternative to the temptations of 'street life' which can lead to a life of crime, alcoholism, drugs, vandalism, and delinquency. PAL provides the environment to keep boys and girls active, interested and busy through its supervised, multi-faceted recreational, societal and educational programs to develop leadership traits and build good citizens for tomorrow. PAL is dedicated to instilling in our youth a value system that recognizes the need to respect and protect the human and property rights of others and to uphold and obey the laws of our city, state and nation." (PAL Mission Statement, http://www.phillypal.com/)

3. See Ashley and Wortham & Locher for more detailed and complex schemas for identifying voicing.

4. The term for the feature we are exploring in this example is modalization, in the form of metapragmatic verbs (says, writes, believes, argues, denies, etc.) and type and extent of voicing. As a further example, our brief references to Bartholomae in this article signal a different sort of relationship than the extensive quotation of Bakhtin and different again from the simple citation of Lea and Street. How we voice them in metapragmatic verbs and nouns also signals relationship: Bakhtin has "frameworks" and he "points the way"; Bartholomae has "moves" and "insights."

5. See Ashley for further analysis of commenting in student papers.

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