The Madness(es) of Reading and Writing Ethnography

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In his novel *Terra Nostra* (1976), Carlos Fuentes turns an hidalgo from La Mancha into "a knight of the faith," a knight whose faith originates in reading, but whose faith is also madness.

> The knight would persist in the unique reading of the texts and would attempt to transmit that reading to a reality that had become multiple, equivocal, and ambiguous. He would fail time and again, but every time he would again take refuge in reading: born of reading, he would remain faithful to it because for him there was no other licit reading. [p. 767]

Fuentes takes this madness one step further and decides that he will make this faithful knight *know* he himself is read: "A double victim of reading, the knight would twice lose his senses: first, as he read; second, upon being read" (p. 767).

I come back to this section of *Terra Nostra* again and again, as someone who reads *and* writes *and* knows also that I write about those who read themselves *and* know they are being read. This is losing the senses not twice, but many times over, for just as in each writing (or writing about) there are senses lost and senses gained, so there are in every reading by every reader senses lost and gained.

This article allows me to share my thoughts on some of the readings of *Ways With Words* (WWW)—specifically those of deCastell and Walker (*Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 22(1):3–20) and Assinck (this issue). In addition, I can here reflect on how both I and those who have read themselves over the years have come to face realities that are "multiple, equivocal, and ambiguous." In these reflections, I must point out how the book about the primarily oral cultures of Roadville and Trackton has not destroyed them, as has been the claim of some, who say that bringing a culture into writing both creates the culture as book and destroys it as oral life (Clifford 1986, 1988). To make such claims of groups such as these, immersed within the media and literacy of contemporary life in a modern society, is to overstate the power of writing, academic research, and reading.

A decade after WWW was finished, the people of Trackton and Roadville and I are still part of each other's lives. We chat on the phone, get together for weddings and funerals, call on each other for advice and help, and gossip about people and politics. With the now grown children of WWW's Roadville, most of our talk these days is about their worries

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over jobs, pending marriages, the birth of a first child, or the health of parents. All the children of Roadville have scattered, as have their parents, far afield both within and outside the South, and life with the textile mills is so distant as to be almost forgotten. Kim and Lisa have become school teachers, Martin is in graduate school, and Jed owns a successful electronics store in a southern city.

The grown children of Trackton have scattered also, although most remain in the Southeast. Their lives have not fared so well since the early 1980s, when the bottom fell out of the textile industry in the South and unemployment soared. Many are now on welfare in public housing in cities, ripped away from relatives and old friends by housing rulings that forbid extended family occupancy (Heath 1988, 1989, 1990). Drugs, violence, education failures, and major health problems plague their lives. Only Tony completed high school, and only he went to college. He is married, has a child, and is now an official in a southern state's juvenile justice system; we often worry together over what is happening to his younger brothers and sisters and others of his childhood. Benjy walks with a limp from a gunshot wound inflicted during a drive-by shooting; Lem has been arrested for drug dealing; and Nellie, Zinnie Mae, and Sissy can find only intermittent work and must care for their children alone, with little or no support from the children's fathers or their families. From time to time, they live with Lillie Mae, who works full-time now as a motel maid and worries that the in-and-out movements of her children and their children will jeopardize her status in public housing.

Most of the grown-up children of Roadville and Trackton can no longer find their copies of WWW, I'm sure, and confess sheepishly that they never read more than the few pages they could find in the book that pertained to them. They complained early on about the quality of the book's photographs—theirs and mine—and asked why the cover was not "flashier." In their own states, they say of what is happening in their schools, "Oh, it's OK, I guess." Kim and Lisa, elementary teachers, see their work as "a good job," and they like the individualized instruction mandates of their districts, feeling secure in "knowing what it is I have to do each day." If, when I talk with them, I mention that someone who has read the book in a distant state sees his or her own childhood as very much like that described for Roadville or Trackton, they laugh and respond with "Well, I guess folks all over are more alike than we think."

Readers and Writers Read and Write through Themselves

Knowing they are read and reread matters little today to the children of Roadville and Trackton. Their childhoods, as Fuentes says of his knight's life, continue "to live only in the book that recounts [their] story" (p. 767). It is to others that the readings and rereadings of their childhoods matter now.

deCastell and Walker and Assinck make this point: for those for whom reading books is a central part of experience, we interpret first through our faith in reading, and then through the experiences of life *and* reading that we bring. Students in classrooms, especially those thinking of ethnographic research that will lead to their own writing, read WWW also through a future image of themselves learning, writing, and being read. The conversations we hold inside our heads both during and after reading vary from time to time, because we are inquiring individuals who construct theories about meanings in large part to fit what we see as our own needs—intellectual, sociopsychological, and directly instrumental.

Authors also reread their own works, both through their accumulations of life after the writing and through what others say of their writing. Both deCastell and Walker and Assinck led me to see features of WWW that I had not seen before. Their rereadings came through their own experiences as well as those of their students, and in the case of deCastell and Walker, through their knowledge of literary theories and cognitive psychology not known to me at the time of the writing of WWW. Both their summaries of WWW materials and their insightful analysis of literary tropes opened for me several new and useful perspectives on the book.

deCastell and Walker revealed to me how much influence my own literary background had on the writing of WWW. They point out stylistic features of the book that enable readers to read the work as "a romance of the child" with the expectation of disenchantment, and also as Bakhtin's "adventure novel of everyday life," where the hero or heroine is the everyday observer. They bring out the power of certain tropes, such as the rising and setting sun, that encircle at particular points in the work the larger theme of successive cycles. These literary tropes lay outside my awareness during my writing; yet the strong influence of my early academic majors in English and Spanish literature clearly shaped my rendering of field data.

For example, I avowedly denied that WWW could meet central criteria of the genre of "story" (a narrative of beginning, middle, and end) by calling it "unfinished," reminding readers that individuals of the book would go on leading their lives beyond my pages of characterization. Yet, I also wrote their lives into an encompassing story of repeating cycles of fate, human will, and classical struggles of power between individuals and the forces of a capitalist economy and the state. The final paragraph of the book portrays my own sense of powerlessness within this conflict. [For a telling analysis of this theme, see Rosen 1985.]

deCastell and Walker and Assinck (and Rosen) see the lack of power within the "fishbowl" dilemma and the difficulties (and hazards) of flipping ourselves out of the waters in which we must swim to survive. If one attempts participation in any research situation to the greatest extent possible, several subjectivities come into play in the writing of

that work. During the research and writing of WWW, I was ethnographer/academic in the communities, teacher's aide in the public schools, and concerned parent of young children. Stepping entirely out and away from any of these roles and their associated value systems was impossible, as was any strict separation of these roles. In addition, as we are fond of saying in cultural anthropology, the researcher is instrument, and that means that we all bring along to the field our age, sex, and physical limitations and capabilities, as well as our mental strengths and weaknesses.

Ethnographer/Academic

Bakhtin points out that the observer of everyday life "descends to the very depths of common life" (1981:121). (Note the implicit subvaluing of the everyday life here.) For those who read WWW thinking of me as an academic researcher, my hours of chopping wood, gardening, and being part of Trackton and Roadville life could be interpreted as "descent." For those who read me as a participant whose early bicultural childhood (WWW, p. 5) had presaged the living, working, and playing of my fieldwork, such participation involved a return, a re-cycling. deCastell and Walker draw from Bakhtin's description of the metamorphosis of the hero of the adventure of everyday life who moves through guilt, punishment, redemption, and blessedness (1981:111–113). deCastell and Walker point out a possible intentionality in any intervention that can result from the returned observing participant's efforts to reformulate the "depths." Bakhtin further suggests that novels of this type actually fuse the course or direction of an individual's life with the paths of wanderings taken (p. 120).

During the collection of data for WWW, my own wanderings were affected by my early socialization, training as a teacher, and concern as a parent of young children. Nepotism laws at that time prohibited full-time employment by state institutions of both husband and wife. Since my husband then was employed as a professor at a state college, I wandered between two states, employed part-time by colleges in both states, and I worked also as a teacher's aide in several public schools. (I have teaching certification in four subject areas in five states.) Hence, at the same time that I was living, working, and playing with the children and their families and friends in Roadville and Trackton, I also moved in and out of classrooms, participating and observing with teachers and thinking about the relationship of what I saw in those classrooms to my own children. The portion of the book entitled "ethnographer doing" resulted from this schizophrenic existence and, as deCastell and Walker suggest, came also from the fusion of the course of my own early life with circumstances during research for the book.

Although I discuss in the prologue the "shift of perspective" (p. 11) between the two parts of the book, I did not begin to recognize the complexities and difficulties of this shift until several years later, when

I began working extensively with graduate students who had been public school teachers and now wanted to "do ethnography" in classrooms. In the course of my advising these individuals, I say again and again, "You must not use data collection and analysis to justify your *a priori* critique of what you do not approve of in classrooms." My own bias toward trying to keep apart what is happening (or what some might call "basic research") from clinical interventions and critiques of individual teachers, curricula, and schools that have the goal of *changing* students (pp. 11–12) has remained. Yet my current level of awareness of the ethical and methodological conflicts inherent in attempts at such separations in research calls for much more examination than is given in my brief mention of the problem in the prologue of WWW (pp. 11–12).

Teacher/Parent/Female

Both deCastell and Walker and Assinck portray these conflicts in their responses to the epilogue of WWW. Both responses show the holding power of the myth that reform should both improve and persist. Yet the epilogue, based on a follow-up look at schools and teachers several years after I left Roadville and Trackton, makes it clear that the optimism and imagination that fueled the innovations described in "ethnographer doing" fell away in the face of state-mandated "individualized" instruction and bureaucratic retrenchments that made innovations in classrooms cause for teachers' possible suspension or loss of job. Other subtexts in the epilogue also provide the context for the falling away of reform efforts of the 1970s. Teachers' initial faith in desegregated schools evaporated as opportunities for creativity and initiative in individual classrooms closed down. Only barely hinted at in the epilogue are the rumblings in the early 1980s of the coming thunder of deep recession and collapse of the textile industry that would hit hardest those Trackton residents who had been the last hired at textile mills and were the first fired in mill closings.

Yet another subtext of the epilogue is the effect of improved professional opportunities for women in the 1980s that opened doors beyond traditional pursuits such as nursing and teaching. In spite of the recession of the early 1980s, many women who had previously been teachers chose to leave the low salaries and demeaned status of education to take up further education or business initiatives. Throughout the 1980s, young women of Roadville, such as Lisa and Kim, chose teaching as a desirable career, a definite step up from their parents' career choices. Meanwhile, young women of the mainstream black and white neighborhoods about which I wrote (chapter 7 of WWW) spurned teaching and chose instead careers areas such as law, medicine, or real estate. These opportunities for women thus cut both directions, giving some women new career ladders to climb while leaving black youths fewer and fewer black teachers as role models. As more Roadville women went into teaching, the rigid patterns of step-by-step learning and standardized

testing became more entrenched at local levels, because the socialization of these women enabled them to feel secure with traditional school-accepted formats and the concept of mastery learning.

The point here is that while some get ahead, others fall behind, and the ethnographer attempting to avoid "taking sides" is right in there in the fishbowl of multiple and conflicting roles and values. And ultimately, there is the powerlessness that any ethnographer (as parent, local citizen, and wage earner) feels as an individual facing the state and macroeconomic forces. The final paragraphs of WWW try to hold out the individual as sometime combatant against these forces. Yet as de-Castell and Walker note, these points are set within the irony I direct toward radical societal reformers. Here contradictions among my triple roles of researcher, teacher, and parent come through in my final indication of choice:

I have chosen to focus on the information and bridging skills needed for teachers and students as individuals to make changes which were for them radical, and to point to ways these cultural brokers between communities and classrooms can perhaps be the beginning of larger changes." [p. 369]

Hedges in this utterance are abundant: my indication that *my choice is only one of many* I could have made, my placement of agency in teachers and students as *individuals*, and my use of *ways* and *perhaps* to show that alternatives exist beyond those promises and disappointments of reform I have outlined.

As researcher, I want to urge the "true" telling of reform paths and outcomes. I want not to romanticize school reform efforts as though once in place, they remain to keep on making things better and better. Such is not the case; instead, they generally have their local effects for a time, transmute into something different or disappear, and leave lasting impressions and convictions on some who continue to carry them out in creative and individual ways. As teacher, I want to announce at once both the ability of the individual and the need to contend with conflicting powers intent on retaining the status quo and the prestige of the mainstream. As parent, I want to hope that, in spite of this imbalance of power, the future for children will benefit from understandings readers may gain from this one account.

Reading in Time and Sequence

Assinck's response brings out ways that current readers use contemporary theories and topical interests to read earlier writings. Feminist theories began in the late 1980s to enable us to reread earlier texts against contemporary ideologies that circulate around matters of equity. Hence, we look in earlier texts for evidence of sympathies with this concern, or at least an awareness of differences of access for females and males. The driving metaphor of *balance* persuades us that we should look, especially

in social science works, for balance in coverage of the two sexes. We apply terms such as "inequality" and "imbalance" out of our own contemporary value systems and heightened awareness to the works we read.

We look for events and relationships that contemporary life puts before us: abuse, crime, and failures, for example. Because these are within our current frame of reference, especially for economically impoverished populations, we expect these to have been also in the perspective of earlier social scientists and to be pointed out as such. But to ask, as Assinck does, for this specific information is to bring mainstream values ever so subtly into our expectations of others. We cannot easily now apply even so apparently neutral a term as *community* without examining its shifted meanings for local residents (Heath, forthcoming). What outsiders call poverty, marital troubles, racism, and crime appear in the communities of WWW, but without comment from me (see, for example, pp. 34, 39, 51ff.). From the contemporary situation of finding drugs, violence, and crime in every nook and cranny of the nation, we find it hard to believe that in the 1970s, any of these occurred as the rare exception and not the rule. Close-knit communities in which everyone knew everyone else's business and older members and women stayed home all day provided, along with an intense environment of religious life, the surest social control on child and spousal abuse, thefts, and the introduction of anything new and destructive into the community.

Just as it is difficult not to expect the negatives of today to have been there when we read of yesterday's disenfranchised populations, so it is that we want to impose our ideals of equity and access on the past. When gender is today recited automatically along with race and class as we outline sources of discrimination, we project our sense of gender inequities back on earlier eras. Assinck indicates her disappointment that WWW reveals "unequal representation" of the genders along with the hope that had conditions of socialization of gender been more balanced for Roadville and Trackton, my portrayals of them might have shown equalities existed for males and females. But neither equal opportunities for employment nor equivalent respect within the home and community existed for Roadville and Trackton women in the 1970s, and to have criticized either for these conditions would have been to impose my own frustrations and views. (Felski [1989] has delineated this dilemma of contemporary feminist aesthetics and cautioned against imposing contemporary ideologies on past literary and ethnographic worlds.) Because of nepotism laws that prevented husband and wife from working full-time for the state, I could teach only part-time, and then only by waiting until after registration each term to see if sufficient students showed up for me to be employed. Teachers, Roadville and Trackton residents, and I often talked about these matters and worried about what the future would hold for our female children; but meanwhile, the same unequal distribution of privileges continued daily within families and

local networks, as well as within business and governmental institutions.

In Roadville, Trackton, and the neighborhoods of black and white mainstreamers, power relations and access between the genders were not equal then and are not today. As a research instrument, I as female also had differential access. Within Roadville, boys—almost as soon as they could walk—spent most of the time their fathers were home with their fathers and not with their mothers. Hence, I had less access to the language socialization of the boys of Roadville than I did to that of Trackton boys and girls, whose worlds of play existed primarily on the plaza. Moreover, in Trackton, where women are "big talkers" even in the company of males, I heard much more debate over values, behaviors, and language learning than I could hear in Roadville, where women were, more often than not, relatively quiet in "mixed company." These *givens* of interaction lie subtly buried in my descriptions of language use in the two communities, and I do not step back to highlight these comparative points for Roadville and Trackton or for the mainstream black and white communities.

Ironically, when I take a comparative perspective without calling specific attention to the fact that I do so, both deCastell and Walker and Assinck take note of this as a disturbing flaw. I agree. Discussion of the spending, saving, and working patterns of Roadville on p. 41 and of Trackton on pp. 54–56 breaks an essential rule of my own current courses in fieldwork and reporting methods: say what *is* happening, not what is *not* happening. On these pages, I reflect the local comparative perspective on both communities without pointing it out as such, and I engage therefore in saying frequently what people *are not doing* as well as what they *are doing*. While Roadvillers push for increased work, they do not decrease their spending; while Trackton residents "pack up" well for the move they see in the future, they spend no money on maintenance of the homes they currently occupy. The negatives here come through as the judgmental statements that circulated in the area about both groups. Unless it is in a specific delimited comparison of events, behaviors, or values held by two or more groups, good ethnography should not describe what people do *not* do; to use such negatives is to suggest that they *should* be doing something other than what they do.

The Powers of Hindsight

Over the years as critics and reviewers have had their say about WWW, I have been surprised that more people have not pointed out weaknesses such as that noted in the paragraph above and others I have come to see. This is my chance to have my say about what I see as weaknesses of the book.

First, the book very much needs an appendix of the sort that Whyte (1943) offered for *Street Corner Society*. Although both Whyte and I had learned our fieldwork methods from Conrad M. Arensberg, Whyte was

brave enough to lay his out in detail in his appendix; I was not. Writing and talking about myself—and consequently, the sort of self-reflection so highly prized by some anthropologists today—do not come easily for me. My inclinations and my training in anthropology and linguistics lie toward fieldwork and not autobiography (Okely 1992). At the time of the writing of the book, it was hard for me to recapture the decade of life in Roadville, Trackton, and nearby mainstream black and white neighborhoods as "fieldwork." Yet clarification of how I collected and kept track of the data, juggled my roles and those of my children, and worked through the analyses of the data could have demystified the work and helped future ethnographers. Moreover, my reflections then might have helped others realize the theoretical links that bring together the anthropologist's "experiential, embodied knowledge" and the continuing resonances with the printed text as it is read and reread (Okely 1992:24).

What might I have included in such an appendix? More of my personal background, ups and downs of my own life in the communities, critical incidents, and settings and situations of analysis and writing would have filled the pages of such a document. The publishers have asked me to prepare such an appendix for the next printing of WWW. deCastell and Walker and Assinck's responses, as well as reviews such as that of Rosen, make it clear that I should have said more about how growing up as one of the few white children in a predominantly black community of landowners influenced my attempts to give some balance in presenting Roadville and Trackton. As an only child, I lived most of my early childhood with my grandmother, who ran the country store at a railway stop that loaded local pulpwood; she and I were often the only whites around on the stretch of dirt road on which we lived. As some have perceived, my comfort level was highest in Trackton where themes, tastes, and smells of life as a child among Trackton-like children played again and again for me. Roadville echoed my encounters with white adults during my childhood. There were relatively few of these, and they took place most often under relatively formal circumstances such as church functions and reunions. My early socialization into the two cultures of a very rural area of the South set me firmly on the path to what some now call "cultural relativism," as did the teachings of my uneducated grandmother, who moved seemingly without effort or judgment in the houses, churches, and stores—black and white—of our community.

Beyond my quarrel with myself over not including an appendix, I would also fault my presentations of recorded language on two counts. First, only in rare cases do I include myself as a speaker within the conversational group; I purposefully omitted those tapes, thinking at the time that my speech was not relevant to the language uses of the "others" I was portraying. But the transcript on pages 87–89 shows why this decision was wrong. Note that in A2, 4, and 14, my speech shares features with that of the children ('dropping the g' in -ing, substituting

/d/ for initial /th/, *yo'* for *your*, etc.). But in B1, 5, 8, 13, and through most of the rest of the "teaching episode" of the transcript, my speech is that of standard English and of simplified talk to children characteristic of teacher talk (see B23, C3). Only near the end (at C8), when we move away from the "lesson" I seem to think I am giving Benjy, does my speech become "normal" again, as it does when I seem to have tired of teaching (at C21).

Some years later, when I was using this transcript in a class on ethnographic field methods and saw this pattern, I pointed out to students the opportunity I missed to include in the book discussion of this pattern of language adaptation. Although Vernacular Black English was almost my mother tongue from childhood and I spoke it in Trackton, I had also learned the vernacular dialect spoken by Southern white uneducated people such as my grandmother. I had also been trained as a teacher and could speak standard Southern English. In this episode, as in thousands of others, I am sure, I slipped back and forth according to roles I played, literally from millisecond to millisecond. It is easy to see that my discussions of how Trackton residents did such shifting, without acknowledgment of my own shifts, reflect the cultural anthropologist's inclination to point out only for others and not for themselves certain universal features of human interactional behavior. I, like others in my situation, adjusted my language based on sizing up the situation and the necessary roles I had to play. My children learned to do the same during their time with me in Roadville and Trackton.

Had I included critical incidents in the appendix, occasions of this shifting on my part—in both Roadville and Trackton—would have been abundant. My behavior and language in both communities when outsiders (such as social workers or visiting circuit preachers) who did not know me were present often opened up subtleties of values and expectations of community members that I could not have otherwise known. I knew well the vernacular dialect of local whites and used this dialect and its discourse styles for daily life in Roadville. But there, where women played their power far more behind the scenes than in Trackton, I had to be more constrained in the presence of males, for fear some humorous use of language or unintentional shift of usage might set off jealousies among the women or judgments of my inappropriate attentions toward their men.

If I could turn back the clock and rewrite WWW, what would I be most likely to change? deCastell has asked me this question from time to time, as have others, and Assinck hints at her own curiosity over this question. I would probably omit the section on "ethnographer doing." (In fact, my colleague David Tyack read the manuscript and advised that I do just that; I foolishly ignored his advice.) That portion of the book contains all the dilemmas of fishbowl, multiple roles, and mixed purposes noted above and in Rosen's review. That portion is more celebration than description, more of what Bakhtin might describe as "redemption."

Although I believed then, as I still do, that my role in the classroom changes of the teachers described there was minimal and that the far more powerful force came from the context and the time, it has become clear over the years, from both teachers and students, that *they* perceived me as a key agent. I was and am still uncomfortable with that ascription, for it seems to me that in most cases, we are far too ready to attribute changes in the behaviors of students and teachers to forces from sources of power outside these individuals. And although I am not so naive as to deny the pervasive influence of external power, I believe also that internal motivations and desires to be something special for someone else empower individuals far more than we acknowledge when we talk of what happens within reform efforts of institutions such as schools. I had no authority over either teachers or students. My primary resource for them was the intimate information I had about the worlds of language from which they came, and they and only they could choose to use this knowledge as they did. I could also offer colleagueship: I was a Southern teacher, a mother, and a churchgoer. I was someone to talk with about teaching, mothering, and living within communal norms.

Aside from the problems with the "ethnographer doing" section and the epilogue that both deCastell and Walker and Assinck point out, I have also been puzzled that this second half of the book seems to have played almost no role in discussions of certain educational reform efforts in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Several examples of teachers as researchers animate part 2, but, so far as I know, these pioneers have had no acknowledgement from those who have recently written about teacher research. Inquiry learning, project-based assessment, and performance-based assessment are new names for the old practices that teachers in WWW used when they sent their students off to be "learners as ethnographers," junior linguists studying formal and informal language styles, and oral history interviewers. Again, as Rosen suggests, it may be that any account of "good practice" in detail is destined to be forgotten and to be looked at only as "reinventing the wheel" (curiously, a much maligned practice). Therefore, since "ethnographer learning," the basic research portion of the book, has had much more influence on research and the thinking of educators, child language researchers, and social scientists than has "ethnographer doing," I would have written a better book had I stuck to writing about the communities and their settings of work and leisure. I left much of this material out in favor of including part 2—a decision I have regretted many times, for in shifting to what happened to the children in schools, I left behind what were for them their "real" lives, where learning and language mattered most.

I wonder also if my omitting the second half of the book might have helped lead more anthropologists to carry out studies such as that of "ethnographer learning." Although reception of WWW has been generally positive and many future teachers report their benefits from reading it, I regret that there have been very few such studies of other commu-

nities comparable to Roadville and Trackton. (For a similar study of an urban area, although without a focus on language, see Anderson 1990.) Clearly, scholars would not need to remain in fieldwork for nearly ten years as I did, held there by personal circumstances and employment laws in the state. But we very much need extensive fieldwork within communities of the United States in order to capture the diversities within diversity that abound with regard to oral and written language acquisition, structures, and uses. Sections on literacy in the book have influenced several scholars to carry out studies of practices of reading and writing (e.g., Fishman 1988; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines 1988), but we still lack within U.S. society detailed examinations (such as that of Miller 1982) of the acquisition of structures and uses of oral language and patterns of language socialization. Currently, we have such studies only for societies in the Pacific (Kulick 1992; Ochs 1988; Schieffelin 1990).

Fuentes made a vow appropriate for all ethnographers who write the lives of those who can read themselves in a book and will be read also by others. deCastell and Walker and Assinck echo his point in their perceptive and revealing rereadings of WWW that, in turn, have enabled me once again to reread my own rereadings. "I shall create an open book where the reader will know he is read and the author will know he is written" (Fuentes 1976:767). The implications of this statement ought, however, to push us more and more to consider how change on the part of both those written about and those doing the reading needs acknowledgement to ensure ongoing openness that is truly open and not merely adhering to current ideological tenets. Or perhaps being "truly open" is only one more such passing tenet?

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