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Racialized Spaces In Teacher Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Place-Based Identities In Roche Bois, Mauritius

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RACIALIZED SPACES IN TEACHER DISCOURSE:
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PLACE-BASED IDENTITIES IN ROCHE BOIS
MAURITIUS

A Dissertation Presented

by

ELSA M. WIEHE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
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School of Education

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ELSA M. WIEHE

Approved as to style and content by:

Theresa Austin, Chair

Jacqueline Mosselson, Member

Krista Harper, Member

Christine B. McCormick, Dean
School of Education

DEDICATION

Pour Yasser, Yara,
Mile, Mam
et Pap

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Completing this project would have not been possible without the support of friends, family, colleagues, and my committee. I would like to first thank my chair, Theresa Austin, for her continuous support and oversight throughout the design, research, analysis, and writing of this dissertation. Theresa spent much time discussing the intricacies of my project, helping me discern questions of scope and breadth, and always challenging my analysis for a greater attention to the multiplicities of truths and interpretations. She has provided life-long training for me on the ways research “struggles” for claims to knowledge amidst the messiness of empiricism. I am also deeply indebted to my committee members, Jacqi Mosselson and Krista Harper. Jacqi’s vast knowledge of social theory and cultural studies, with an empirical attention to international settings and an incredible attention to clarity of expression have greatly furthered my thinking and writing. Krista’s expertise in environmental politics, social change, and her awareness of challenging methodological questions in ethnography have also tremendously supported me throughout this project.

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ABSTRACT

RACIALIZED SPACES IN TEACHER DISCOURSE: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PLACE-BASED IDENTITIES IN ROCHE BOIS MAURITIUS

FEBRUARY 2013

ELSA M. WIEHE , B.A., MACALESTER COLLEGE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

ED.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Theresa Austin

This eleven-month ethnographic study puts critical discourse analysis in dialogue with postmodern conceptualizations of space and place to explore how eight educators talk about space and in the process, produce racialized spaces in Roche Bois, Mauritius. The macro-historical context of racialization of this urban marginalized community informs the discursive analysis of educators' talk at school. Drawing on theories of race that call for the non-deterministic exploration of race relations as they occur in different contexts and times (Hall, 2000; Pandian & Kosek, 2003; Essed & Goldberg, 2000), I explore the spatial racialization of children in Roche Bois as a process specific to this township and its history. Engaging with Lefebvre's three-dimensional theorization of space (Lefebvre, 1991) as well as the Discourse Historical Approach developed by Wodak and colleagues (Wodak & Reisgl, 1999), I draw on the micro-macro concept of identity construction "strategy" to study 1) how meanings of race play out as an amalgam of various thematic dimensions of schooling, culture, bodies, and work that are spatialized; 2) how meanings of place perpetuate or transform long-standing historical constructions of Creole identity in Roche

Bois. The findings show that repeated patterns of educators' spatial racialization produce and reproduce conceived spaces (Lefebvre, 1991) and yet my research also highlights that banal moments of lived space (Lefebvre, 1991) also exist, as ordinary disruptions of the spatial order produced by patterns of conceived space. While educator discourse for the most part negatively emplaces and racializes the children, one educator's representations of place and race both assimilates and differentiates marginal identities, encourages unity and essentialism at the same time as promotes hybridity. The analysis therefore shows that discourses of place are not totalizing and that moments of interruption can be the basis for thinking of teacher education and practice as a politics of "decolonization" and "rehabitation" (Gruenewald, 2003). Specifically, the findings indicate the importance of reinvesting critical historical meanings into pedagogies of the local.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: Location of the Islands of the Republic of Mauritius, Resource Atlas, 2006, p.3

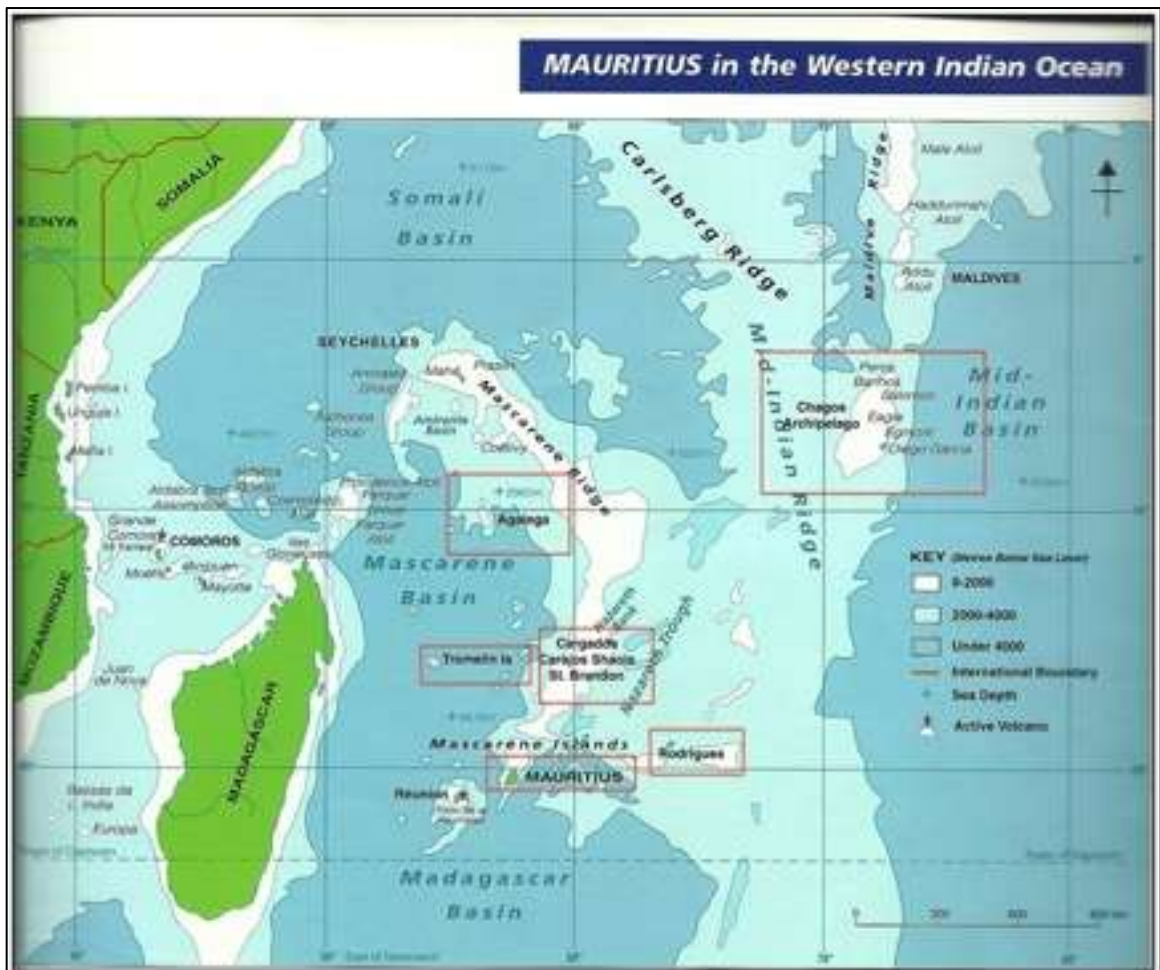


Figure 2: Map of Mauritius, Resource Atlas, 2006, p.20

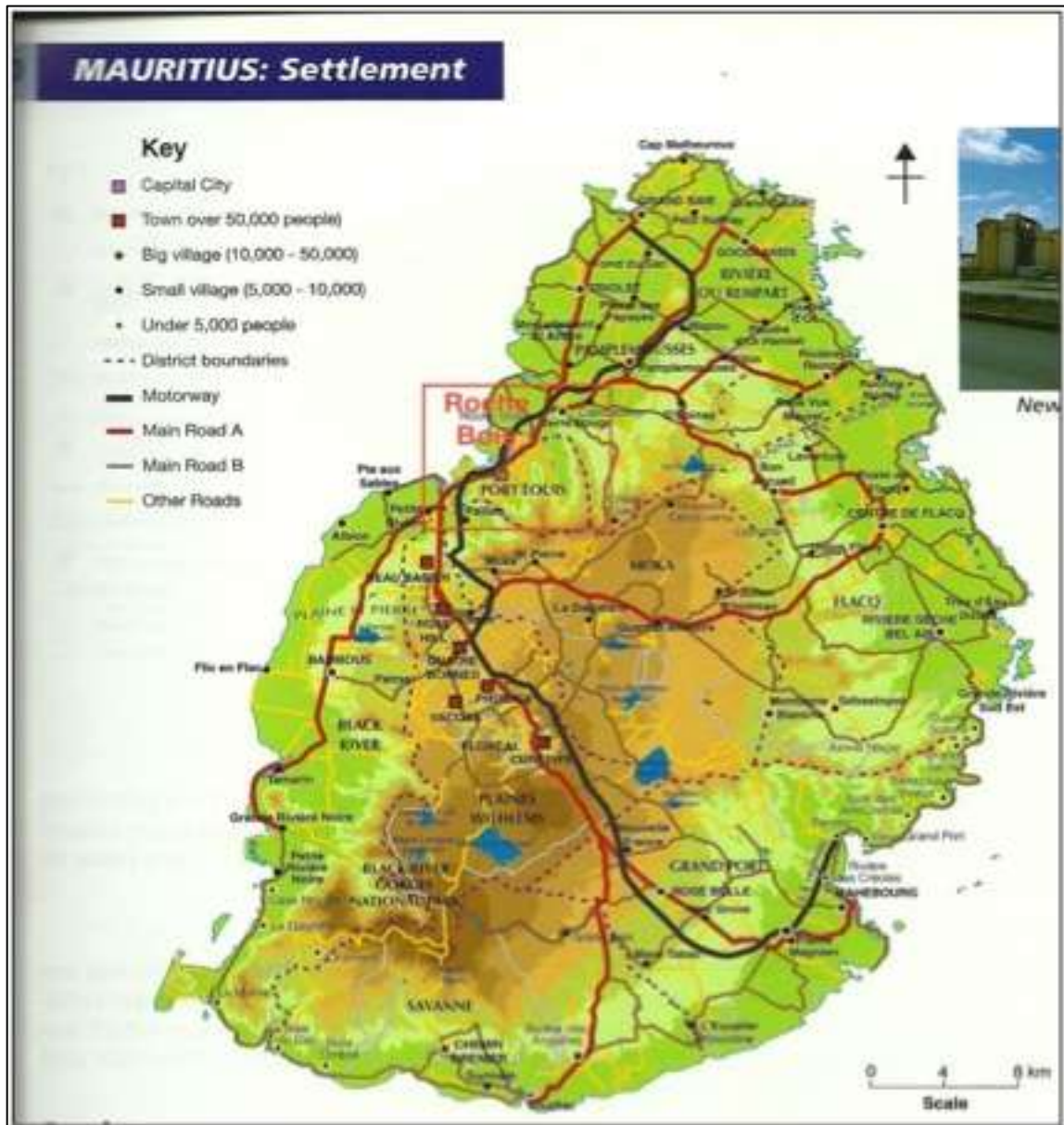
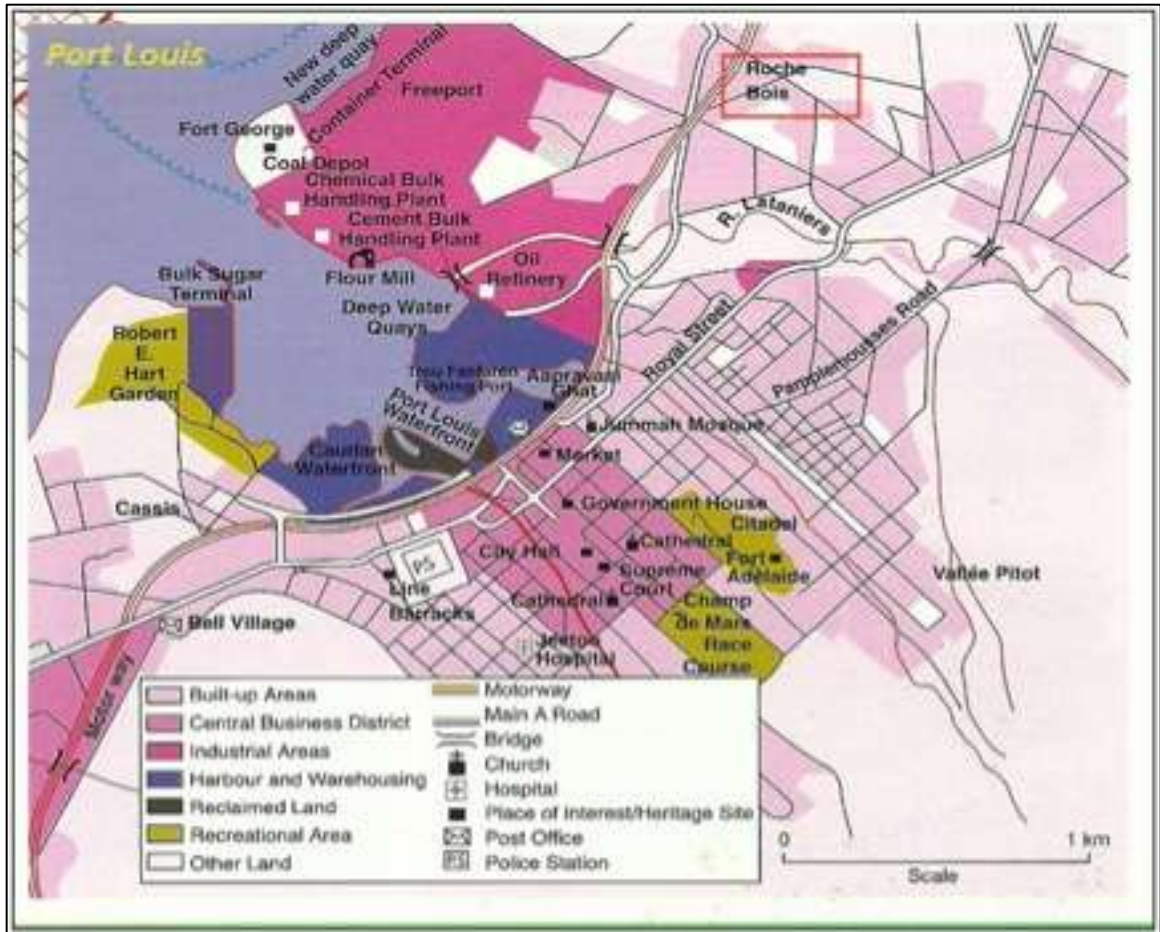


Figure 3: Map of Port-Louis with Roche Bois in Northeast, Resource Atlas, 2006, p.23



1.1 Introduction

During my research in the township of Roche Bois in the Republic of Mauritius, educators I encountered at school often spoke about children's local places. Following are educators' words, gathered during my observations in classrooms, assemblies, and in informal conversations:

Educator on using relevant examples:

It's important that our pedagogy connects with children's realities. (Educator F, Interview, December 2011)

Educator on using place-based examples:

It's important to draw examples from Roche Bois. But there are lots of things that happen here, lots of drugs and theft. But it's a reality. We need to take it as an example. It's hard. Parents sometimes say, "Why do you speak in this way?" because the children talk about it at home. But the parents must surely know that this is a reality. I am not criticizing. It's just that it is real; it's close to them. (Educator A, Fieldnotes, May, 2009)

Educator during lesson on locality to Roche Bois students:

When one lives in Roche Bois, one knows nothing except that there are only Creoles. (Educator A, Fieldnotes, May, 2009)

Educator on teachers' roles with students:

It is through our perception that their identities are created. (Educator D, Interview, December, 2011)

The above quotes show that educators¹ represented students' localities in complex ways while using local examples. When talking to children about their own locality in an effort at making learning

¹ While it is typical to use pseudonyms for participants in qualitative research, this study uses the category of "educator" to refer to adults working at school, including teachers and administrators. This non-personalized terminology is

relevant, on the one hand, following constructivist learning theories, educators practice notions of student-centered learning by grounding learning in local place-based examples. On the other hand, historical and socio-political contexts of colonialism, capitalism, and racialization have shaped and solidified discourses that provide a “grid of intelligibility” (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93) through which the place, Roche Bois, is perceived, including how educators regard the township and their students’ ethnic identities. Thus, the tension between historical discourses of place and educators’ talk about “the local” complexifies the straightforward application of the common-sense tenet of constructivist and place-based education to make learning relevant and local to children.

This dissertation explores this complexity, examining the historical and present discursive shaping of place-based and raced identities in Roche Bois. I examine educators’ talk on the local places of children—for the most part intended to make learning relevant—as a political endeavor that can have effects on children’s racial identities. The study explores the ways issues of place in educator talk might play a role in perpetuating or transforming children’s ethnic identities, in light of a larger history, exploring the discursive construction of what I call, following others (Munif, 2011; Lipsitz, 2011), the “spatial racialization” of children.

Responding to theories of race that call for the continuous and undetermined exploration of race relations as they occur in different contexts and times (Hall, 2000; Pandian & Kosek, 2003; Essed & Goldberg, 2000), I examine the process of spatial racialization as a process specific to Roche Bois, a place that has been shaped through various historical events as a racialized space in Mauritius. In other words, I do not consider the place as an abstraction but instead, I show how considering Roche Bois’ specific history is necessary to arrive at an understanding of the ways

deliberate to avoid highlighting individual teachers’ rationalities but rather to study patterns of meaning found across educators in light of the larger history of Roche Bois. I explain these representational choices in further detail in chapter 3.

children might be emplaced and racialized and show that place is not an abstract, empty container for social processes.

To study the spatial racialization of children in Roche Bois, I put critical discourse analysis (CDA) of educator talk about place in dialogue with postmodern perspectives on space and place (Lefebvre, 1991) in the context of the history of racialization of Roche Bois. First, using CDA tools, in particular the brand of CDA called “Discourse Historical Approach” or DHA (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001), which gives attention to the examination of discourses in their historical political contexts, I carefully study how educators in school represent Roche Bois and the children there. I examine discourses of place and race and the ways they interlink. From this discursive analysis of meanings of place at school, I draw implications for the construction of children’s identities².

To further develop an understanding of historical implications in Roche Bois, I use the DHA tool “discursive strategy,” which analyzes how discourse practices are used to “achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p.73). By connecting present texts with historical structures that have shaped perceptions of Roche Bois, I examine discursive strategies of perpetuation and transformation, which show to what extent long-standing historical patterns of constructions of Creole identity and racialization specific to Roche Bois are reproduced at school.

² My analysis focuses solely on educator talk, although my data collection during fieldwork also involved children’s meanings. The focus on educator talk calls for a follow up research agenda that would examine the ways the children perceive themselves in relation to processes of emplacement at school. This, however, was not within the scope of the present study.

1.2. Conceptual Underpinnings for the Study

The theoretical basis from which this study of racialization through place in educator talk has evolved stems, at a general level, from postmodern conceptions of place, space and discourse³ (Cresswell, 2004; Gruenewald, 2003; Lefebvre, 1991; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999). Specifically, I draw from Lefebvre's (1991) postmodern conceptualization of space as produced socially and connect these constructivist understandings of space with theoretical and methodological insights from Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak, 2002; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). I address the apparent theoretical incongruence in the relationship between space and discourse theories that stems from the modernist separation between the material (spatial) and social (discursive). Lefebvre (1991), although somewhat inconsistent in his writings on the production of space (Soja, 1996), posits spatial and discursive theories as separate.⁴ I suggest that space and discourse are by no means at odds with one another and show that in fact, Lefebvre's conception of space incorporates discursive elements and that the marriage of the two approaches can be mutually productive. Exploring the categories of space and discourse as binaries reifies the modernist belief in humanistic anthropocentrism, which posits humans (and discourse) as central (subjective) actors in a neutral (objective) material world. Understanding how discourse functions to create hegemonic spaces as well as spaces of resistance is an important part of understanding spatial production and the reproduction of relations. Space and discourse function together to create meaning. Critical discourse analysis emphasizes textual

³ I use the two terms "space" and "place" interchangeably in this dissertation, although I am aware that the distinction between space and place has been debated in various literatures (e.g. Lefebvre, 1991; Cresswell, 2004). I briefly review the different meanings of the two terms in chapter 2, as a way to show why the different definitions are not of analytical relevance to this study.

⁴ Lefebvre's writings in the *Production of Space* (1991) are rich and contradictory. On the one hand, he vehemently accuses what he terms "discourse" approaches to neglect the dimension of the spatial. In the process, he reifies the dichotomy between the discursive and the spatial/material. However on the other hand, his tri-fold conception of space inherently incorporates the dimension of the discursive, thus allowing for a dynamic, postmodern production of space through both the material *and* discourse.

analysis, whereas spatial analysis focuses on the material world. Spatial and discourse theories both emphasize the production of space through discursive means, although they differ in emphasis, one on the spatial element, and one on the textual element.

Building upon postmodern critiques of modern notions of place and environment (McDowell, 1999; McLaren & Houston, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991), I define place and environment discursively, as historically and politically situated construction of meanings, instantiated in texts and social interactions. This view follows a long line of scholarship in various fields, including anthropology (Keith & Pile, 1993; Escobar, 1999), cultural geography (Cresswell, 2004) and political ecology (Peet & Watts, 1996) that define place through the meanings people attribute to them, thus becoming a discursive terrain onto which meanings can be contested. Defining place discursively opens the epistemological grounds to understand how hegemonic notions of place might be oppressive to ethnic minority students in public schools. It becomes a category that is easily invested with racial and classed meanings, thus highlighting how place is invested with power in relationship in particular to difference and relationality.

In chapter 2, “Conceptual Framework,” I further provide an in-depth discussion of the conceptual underpinnings of this study reviewed here. I focus on the dialogue between the two approaches, space and discourse analysis, as a way to operationalize the main concepts in this dissertation and provide a rationale of the study of racial identity construction, through the discursive construction of place.

1.3. Research Questions

In order to better understand how the dynamics of representation of Roche Bois in schools construct children's identities, I engage with relevant literature on discourse and space to ask the following central question:

How do educators in school construct children's places in a larger historical context?

To answer this broad question, I examine:

- a. How the space of Roche Bois was historically racialized through key events;
- b. How school educators represent children's spaces during whole-school assemblies and in the classroom;
- c. How representations of place are racialized and how they are manifest discursively
- d. How discourses of place in school perpetuate or transform the historical ideologies associated with Roche Bois as a racialized community;
- e. What implications are to be drawn for educational practice in Mauritius.

1.4. Background

1.4.1. Mauritius: A Peaceful Multicultural Island?

The political territory of the Republic of Mauritius comprises the islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega, Tromelin, Chagos, and St. Brandon in the Indian Ocean (see Figure 1 at the beginning of this chapter). The main island, Mauritius, is a small island the size of the state of Rhode Island and lays some five hundred miles East of Madagascar. Although Arab sailors and Portuguese are said to have first discovered the island, it was colonized in turn by the Dutch, French, then the British before becoming an independent country part of the British

Commonwealth in 1968, and a Republic in 1992⁵. Various European colonizations have shaped waves of migrations to the island and created lasting capitalist economic structures. Under the expanding mercantile capitalist enterprises of the Dutch and French colonial companies in the 17th and 18th centuries, various peoples from Africa were forced into slavery and brought to Mauritius. As the island transferred to English power in 1810, sugar became a primary economic activity, which created increased demand for exploitable labor. At the same time, from the perspective of the British colonial administration and the ruling elites, slave labor had an unsustainable future as abolitionist currents gained momentum. As a resort, starting in the 1830s, the ruling elites brought waves of indentured laborers from India. The late 19th century also saw the migration of Chinese peoples to the island, largely for commercial interests. This brief and schematic history serves to show how today, the Mauritian social topography includes a majority of people of Indian origin, alongside people who trace their roots to various African countries, as well as descendants of Europeans and Chinese.

Contemporary mainstream reports often celebrate Mauritius for its peaceful democratic political structure, and for having successfully transitioned from British colonization to independence in 1968 (Zafar, 2011). Mauritius is often cited as an economic success story, having embraced neoliberal economic frameworks of liberalization, deregulation, free trade, diversification, and privatization (The Economist, 2008). Indeed, the nation is a complex mosaic of ethno-religious identities (Police Michelle, 2005; Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). However, these identities are still the subject of much socio-political struggle (Christopher, 1992) with differential patterns of access to power. In common every-day understanding, five major

⁵ The history described here in this chapter is brief and schematic to introduce readers to the general Mauritian context. In Chapter 4, I provide more detailed and nuanced historical background, including describing the ways systems of racial classification emerged and became entrenched in Mauritius.

groups or “communities” are often referred to in public discourse: “Indians”, “Chinese”, “Creoles”, “Muslims”, and “Whites.” The constitution, however, recognizes only four groups: Indo-Mauritian, Chinese-Mauritian, Muslim-Mauritian and General Population. The General Population is a default category (Benoit, 1985), which regroups descendants of slaves, whites, and people of mixed European, Chinese, African and Indian descent, largely because of a shared religious identity as Catholic Christians and common political interests in the run-up to independence.

Paradoxically, despite recognizing four “communities” constitutionally, the Mauritian state does not query racial categories in population and housing censuses. The four official population categories have not been queried since 1972, whereby it was deemed a breach of privacy and civil rights to inquire about one’s community (Siski, 2012; Christopher, 1992). The 2000 and 2011 censuses gathered religious and linguistic (language of forefathers) data, which partially acts a basis for inferring ethnic information. According to the CIA Worldfactbook based on census data from the year 2000, the ethno-religious composition of Mauritius is broken down as follows: Indo-Mauritian (68% of the population, divided into Hindu (48% of the total population) and Muslim (16.6% of the total population), Sino-Mauritian (3% mostly Catholic and Buddhist), Creole (27%, of African descent, mostly Catholic), and Franco-Mauritian (2%, Catholic) (CIA World Factbook, 2012). I discuss the historical formation of these racial/ethnic categories, and especially the category of “Creole,” in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Mauritius’ population classifications have been the subject of much contestation and have posed great problems for census commissioners over the years (Christopher, 1992). These challenges are related to differing stances toward identity politics and nationalism, as well as the fluidity of ethnic divisions. In post-independence Mauritius, two nationalist ideologies of “*mauricianisme*” have prevailed with differing positions toward the social and political validation of

ethnically-based identities, a process which is called “communalism” locally. The first nationalist ideology, which according to Police-Michel (2005) is of “French-tendency,” primarily promoted by the media apparatus financed by the former colonial elite, is a form of colorblindness that denies ethno-religious identity and celebrates a homogeneous Mauritian identity. This nationalism does not recognize ethnic identification, as it understands this type of identification as being “communalist,” or divisively against civic national values. In contrast, the second nationalist ideology is of “unity-in-diversity” and it coexists alongside the colorblind one. In this view, Mauritian culture can only be understood through the diversity of its cultures. Police-Michel describes this ideology as of “Indian-tendency” and has been actively promoted by successive governments since the 1980s through the celebration of ancestry and diverse ethno-religious identities. More recently in the last five years, a strong “new nationalist” movement along the lines of the first tendency has emerged, advocating for the abolition of ethno-religious “communal” categories in the constitution⁶. The public rhetoric of this movement is of “anti-communalism,” a type of colorblindness. Understood here as the denial of the importance and sociological reality of ethnic/racial identity, one of the effects of this ideology of colorblindness is that it has made it difficult for subaltern groups to voice long-standing grievances on the basis of race/ethnicity.

Amidst these contested nationalist ideologies, whether “Indian” or “French” or the more recent “new nationalism,” one thing is clear - and this fact is often masked in public discourse in Mauritius - is that it is as a result of global European colonialism that racial classification systems, imposed and later appropriated, came to form the current social fabric of the island. And although

⁶ Political and activist groups such as “*15,000 Youth to Save our Future*” and “*Resistans Ek Alternativ*” are at the forefront of this new nationalism, which has coalesced around an international campaign with UNESCO for abolishing the system of “communal” classification required in Mauritius to pose for elections. Except for Lalit (2012), to my knowledge, there are not yet any critical writings about this new movement.

there are varying patterns of access to power, distribution of income according to ethnic group is traceable to slavery, indentured labor, dispossession of land, and other colonial capitalist practices (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

When mainstream development reports of global finance institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank cite Mauritius as being an economic and political success story, these reports measure “success” through growth rates and through indicators of liberalization of the economy. The criteria for success are normative, imposed through a larger global economic framework developed by the Bretton Woods institutions as part of a hegemonic economic world order. More telling of a country’s “success” are analyses of class inequality, through the GINI coefficient. In Mauritius, inequality has grown steadily over the last few years. The latest statistical evidence from 2006-2007 revealed the GINI coefficient to be almost 0.4, indicating gross inequality, whereby the highest 20% of households owned 45.7% of wealth and the lowest 20% of the population sharing 6.1% of the wealth (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

There is no exact data on income distribution per ethnicity in Mauritius but various sociological and anthropological studies (Asgarally, 1997; Srebnick, 2000; Bunwaree, 2002; Chan Low, 2002; Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011) put forth some broad statements regarding distribution of wealth. Generally, these studies explain that although there exists an upper-class Creole elite class, often called “*gens de couleur*,” and the most excluded segments of society certainly do not comprise only of Creoles (Chan Low, 2002), poor working-class Creoles in general have very little political, cultural, social or economic clout (Bunwaree, 2002; Chan Low, 2002) and have experienced slower upward mobility than other groups (Ericksen, 2004). The Truth and Justice Commission (2011) reports that descendants of slaves, however nebulous that social category may be in the current social topography, are the most marginalized in terms of access

to housing, literacy, employment, political power, public representation and self-perception. The lack of statistical disaggregation of income levels on ethnic terms in Mauritius is an issue underpinning all the studies cited above, which are unable to draw on recent, national-scale data regarding the distribution of wealth and opportunity along ethnic lines.

An earlier study conducted in 1997 by a team of Mauritian researchers already debunked the optimistic economic perspective of mainstream reports. Further more recent studies (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011; Bunwaree, 2002; Boswell, 2006; Asgarally, 1997) converge to the same conclusions. Focusing on four localities in the island, including Roche Bois, the “*Etude pluridisciplinaire sur l’exclusion à Maurice*” conducted by several sociologists, socio-linguists, and historians (Asgarally, 1997; Bunwaree, 1997; Andre, 1997; Pudaruth, 1997, among others) highlights how some areas of the island and some people, including many Creole, have been “excluded” from development. Pudaruth, one of the researchers in this study explains:

The general view is that Mauritius has achieved tremendous progress since independence in 1968. [...] Unfortunately, there is another side to this picture. The attentive observer knows that significant numbers of Mauritians are only marginally touched by all this progress. They are being left behind. They are not the actors or the beneficiaries; they are the unhappy spectators and often the helpless victims of “progress.” They do not fully participate in its process and in its fruits. They are almost “excluded,” and so are their children (Pudaruth, 1997, p.128).

While the concept of “exclusion” used in this study does not capture the political economic processes at work in capitalism which deploy the systematic marginalization of the working class in the form of low wages and exploitative labor, the pluridisciplinary study nevertheless highlights some major social issues related to Roche Bois, education, and Creoles of low socio-economic status. I will turn to these themes below as I describe the background of Roche Bois.

1.4.2. Roche Bois

Roche Bois is a working-class urban township located on the Northern outskirts of the capital Port Louis. It is delimited in the North by the Muslim cemetery road, the East by Route Nicolay and in the South by the *Latanier* River, popularized by the song “*Mo Passe la Rivier Tanie*” which is deeply rooted in Mauritian culture (Fanfan, 2000). Populated by almost 25,000 inhabitants, it is ranked 83 out of 145 wards on the island in the 1999 Mauritius Poverty Index (Boswell, 2006).

Poverty in Roche Bois has myriad origins related to the history of colonialism and capitalism, unemployment or exploitation by the neighboring factories of the Export Processing Zone (EPZ), and rapid urbanization. There are unfortunately no recent comprehensive mixed-methods studies of poverty Roche Bois except for the pluridisciplinary study published in 1997, already cited above (Asgarally, 1997; Andre, 1997; Lau Thi Keng, 1997). While it is clear that social dynamics may have changed in the last 15 years since this publication, I nevertheless cite the findings here as they align with my observations and provide contextual background on some of the issues that have been salient in Roche Bois. The study notes that signs of poverty in Roche Bois include the gap between the national and local levels of home ownership, whereby 86.3% of the nation owned their homes in 1997, in contrast to 72.3% in Roche Bois (Lau Thi Keng, 1997). In addition, educational achievement in Roche Bois is lower than the national average, with 57% of heads of households not having successfully passed the 6th-grade national examination compared to slightly over 33% nationally (Lau Thi Keng, 1997). Other more visible indicators include a significant number of people living in situations of squatting, with a lack of access to electricity, running water, or regular trash pick up from the municipality.

In addition, Lau Thi Keng (1997) analyzes the perception of Roche Bois as a space lying “outside” of the nation. He cites the perception of this locality by local authorities as “*zones-dépotoirs*”

(trash zones), where insufficient and inadequate waste management policies are a most visible aspect of exclusion and dehumanization. For each of the four excluded regions focused on in this 1997 Mauritius study, Lau Thi Keng analyzes the cumulative incidence of three main poverty factors: housing, education, and income. He reports Roche Bois as exhibiting the highest incidence of poverty symptoms out of all four regions.

Hindus, Sino-Mauritians and Creoles form part of the diverse social fabric of this locality. However, as I will explain at length in chapter 4, Roche Bois is imagined as an ethnic Creole enclave (Boswell, 2006; Fanfan, 2000). Lau Thi Keng (1997) explains that the diversity of Roche Bois is erased in the national viewpoint to make way for a flattened image of the place as homogeneously Creole. “Non-Creoles who are from the excluded regions [including Roche Bois] are in the end often perceived as being Creoles; the practice of mixed marriages also augments this perception” (Lau Thi Keng, 1997, p. 34). The national perception of Roche Bois as a poor space representing Creole identity is thus entrenched. The historical making of Roche Bois into a racialized space and events of resistance, are considered in more depth in chapter 4, “The Historical Making of a Paradigmatic Space.”

1.4.3. Schools and Teachers in Roche Bois

There are several public schools in Roche Bois, all ranked “low performing” based on the results of the national standardized test, the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), taken at the end Standard VI (Grade 6)⁷. Entrenched patterns of student failure and dropout affect local schools. The average pass rate at CPE was 27% from 2009 to 2011 (Mauritius Examination Syndicate, 2011). In

⁷ In Mauritius, elementary school consists of six levels, Standard I through Standard VI.

2002 already, Baptiste highlighted that pass rates in Roche Bois were some of the lowest in the country (Baptiste, 2002) thus showing a consistent pattern of student failure.

The CPE tests students in five compulsory subjects (English, French, mathematics, science, history, and geography), and is offered in the English language, although the majority of Mauritian children speak Mauritian *Kreol* as their mother tongue⁸. The official language policy for instruction in the upper-primary levels (Standard IV through VI) is English (Lam Hung, 2008), although it is widely documented that teachers frequently code-switch between English, French and *Kreol* as mediums of instruction, with textbook material being in English. Various studies have been conducted on the medium of instruction in Mauritius schools, and most have argued that the reason for the 30% school failure at the CPE every year has to do with the fact that *Kreol* is not being used as a medium of instruction (Lam Hung, 2008). Organizations such as Ledikazyon Pu Travayer, ABAIM, Playgroup, and Bureau d'Education Catholique, among others, have been struggling for years to promote the adoption of *Kreol* as a legitimate and official language in education and other spheres of society where *Kreol* is devalued in relation to French and English. For students in Roche Bois, 100% of whom are speakers of *Kreol* as a mother tongue, this high-stakes test has a dramatic impact regarding their potential future success, as passing the CPE is necessary to secure a place in secondary school (Lam Hung, 2008). If a child does not pass this examination on the first attempt at the end of Standard VI, s/he is placed in what is called the "Repeater Grade." If the child fails the CPE after the "Repeater Grade" year, s/he is not able to participate in formal schooling and is offered vocational training instead. It is widely documented that many children who fail the CPE drop out of the educational system altogether or repeat the CPE class for two years and drop out after they are unsuccessful once again (Pudaruth, 1997). In addition to few numbers of Roche Bois students passing this exam and

⁸ Throughout the paper, I use the non-italicized word "Creole" as to designate a self-defined or imposed ethnic category, whereas I use the italicized term "*Kreol*" to refer to the language spoken by the majority of Mauritians.

moving on to attend secondary school, there is an absence of secondary schools in the township that can also be read as an indication of the lack of opportunities for further advancement of primary students in the area.

For more than a decade, Mauritius has instituted educational reforms to attempt to address the achievement gaps among schools, including categorizing low-performing elementary schools as “Zones d’Education Prioritaires” (ZEP). Schools are designated ZEP if they have a Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) pass rate of less than 40% over five years (Lam Hung, 2008). The elementary schools in Roche Bois, as well as the neighboring school in coastal Baie du Tombeau, are classified as ZEP schools. The ZEP classification indicates sustained patterns of problems of educational achievement and retention in these regions. The ZEP model does not, however, acknowledge historical and political economic details or national policies as factors in why patterns of student failure are so high in these schools (and in fact can contribute to further stigmatizing schools and this region as problem areas without an understanding of the context). Nonetheless, once designated ZEP, schools are intended to employ specific programmatic strategies. These include maintaining low teacher-pupil ratios (although this was not the case from my observations where class size was on average 35). In addition, ZEP schools are encouraged to seek partnerships with the private sector and the religious institutions (in the case of Roche Bois, this is the Catholic Church). These external institutions participate in school life through financial and material donations, including financing support staff salaries, among other types of support. The ZEP model does not problematize these partnerships as a form of privatization of public education.

Despite reform efforts, state policies regarding teachers’ placement have contributed to patterns of deficit thinking about children in Roche Bois (Pudaruth, 1997; Asgarally, 1997). As early as 1997, Pudaruth explained that teachers—of diverse ethnic origins—had typically been placed in

Roche Bois by the state and were not from the area. This is still a current practice, whereby the ministry allocates school placement for teachers in a given regional zone. Although teachers are typically given financial incentives to teach in these schools, they tend to exhibit low morale and there is a high incidence of teacher absences, which I documented during my research during interviews with educators. Speaking to these same issues in 1997, Pudaruth documented that many teachers considered their posting in this region as either punishment, discrimination against them, or “bad luck.” These patterns of teachers’ views extended to how they viewed their students’ parents and community. While some teachers expressed interest in understanding parents’ perspectives, many teachers saw the parents as the problem of their students’ lack of achievement (Pudaruth, 1997). Bunwaree (1997) also reflected on how teachers participated in patterns of racialization toward Roche Bois children, including ways teachers differentiate between students of Asian and African descent. During my research in 2009, I confirmed that these patterns were enduring through observations, informal conversations with teachers, and in interviews.

Perspectives on teachers’ practices and opinions in Roche Bois, however, should be understood in light of the historical, social, and economic factors impacting these communities and teacher perspectives and practices. Thus, examining teachers’ attitudes, in particular toward children of Creole background in ZEP schools such as Roche Bois, and how they perpetuate deficit views of students and contribute to students’ lack of achievement speaks to the importance of engaging and supporting teachers in understanding place and the historical factors impacting this understanding.

1.5. A Review of Key Shifts in the Field: From Environmental Education to Place Based Education

In this review of key literature of postmodern environmental education (Stables, 2001), place-based education (Smith, 2007; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008) and critical place-based education (Gahl Cole, 2007; Running-Grass, 1996; Agyeman, 2002; Gruenewald, 2003; Nespor, 2008), I map key points in the literature in order to: trace critiques of environmental education theory, review how place-based education has been challenged for being uncritical in its central notion of “the local” at the expense of a focus on power, and reflect on how these reexaminations have made room for developing a critical place-based education (CPBE) pedagogy that connects environment and humanity within a context of history and power. Although the educators in this study were not working deliberately within the framework of CPBE, their focus on local examples and local places of children was underpinned by constructivist ideologies of education, which theorize that student learning occurs most effectively when there is a connection to local examples. Thus, exploring the debates on local environment and place by leading theorists in environmental and critical place based education helps situate the importance of the questions posed by this study by allowing for an exploration of the ways the local is spoken about in school.

1.5.1. Critiques of Modernist Environmental Education

Postmodern critiques of mainstream environmental education theory deconstruct notions of nature as a material objective reality outside of human experience; they are a useful entry point into the discursive construction of place because they question modernist foundational categories, knowledges, and epistemologies. This questioning challenges the dichotomy of place as separate from human (social and cultural) meanings. There are many nuances among postmodern

perspectives regarding environmental education.⁹ At a general level, mainstream environmental education critics deconstruct modernist tenets of empiricist science (Bowers, 2001; Stables & Scott, 2001; Bonnett, 2007), the capitalist industrial society (Bowers, 2001; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; McLaren & Houston, 2004), the arts-science divide (Stables, 2001), and a monolithic notion of nature (Bonnett, 2007). Generally, authors argue that current environmental education perpetuates modernist beliefs about science and a singular nature. They argue that environmental education should be reformed to include pluralistic views on nature, a bridging of the science and arts divide as ways to view nature, a return to traditional knowledge, or, in reaction to Western science, admitting that nature carries a certain degree of unknowability. Stables (2001) summarizes the postmodern critique of environmental education:

Environmental education is [...] largely a modernist response to a modernist crisis, it relies on a conception of nature which has little cultural and historical stability, and it is prey both to ideological forces which were generated without concern for the environment and to the potential ambivalence of policy terms such as ‘sustainable development.’ (p. 245)

A critique of humanism is at the center of postmodern perspectives on the environment.

Humanism, as a main tenet of modernity, has engendered a focus on human life (also termed “anthropocentrism”), science, a belief in rationality, and skepticism for emotion. Stables and Scott (1999, 2001) have written several articles that speak to a critique of humanist tendencies in

⁹ The trends in postmodern approaches have been categorized by Stables (2001). He identified three main trends: post-foundationalist, critical realist, and relativist. The critical realist position draws historically from Marxism, assuming that environmental problems are the consequences of a capitalist system that depleted natural resources and distributed them unequally (for example, McLaren and Houston, 2004). Critical realists posit that there is a material world “out there” that is under threat, but provide a structural reading of environmental problems. The postfoundational position, in which Stables locates himself, moves away from a deterministic/structural model but retains the assumption that there is a real nature out there in crisis. The difference is that there are a number of valid ways or truths through which this threat can be understood (e.g., Bowers, 2001). A “fully relativist” epistemological position sees nature as a textual reality, virtual, and socially constructed. Relativists believe that we live in a world of signs out of which we cannot extricate ourselves and which we cannot comprehend. Nature then ends up being simulacra.

knowledge production about nature. In their 1999 article, *Environmental Education and Discourses of Humanist Modernity: Redefining Critical Environmental Literacy*, Stables & Scott define humanism as set of modernist, anthropocentric beliefs concerned with the welfare of humanity, but which were unfortunately conducive to dualistic thinking, i.e., a separation of the arts from science. More centrally, they critique the humanist dualistic science and arts agenda as being concerned with the material benefit to human beings (anthropocentrism), and hence neglecting an important concern with the availability of natural resources, viable ecosystems, and energy.

1.5.2. Place-Based Education as a Response to Environmental Education

A bridging of the dichotomy between the social and the natural is at the center of critiques of environmental education. Many have sought to re-envision environmental education not as education in consideration of environment but as education in consideration of place (Gruenewald, 2003; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). The notion of place for place-based education (PBE) scholars captures more the complexities and dualities of place as material *and* social. PBE emerged in the mid-1990s as a postmodern response to the modernist framework of environmental education. Smith (2007), a leading scholar in the PBE field, describes it as “an educational approach that embraces both human and non-human communities,” within which proponents direct their attention to “both social and natural environments” (p. 190).

David Orr’s (1992) seminal book, *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World*, is a collection of 15 essays that detail his critiques of the way institutions of knowledge production, such as the university, fail to attend to the crisis of nature and fail to promote sustainability. Orr critiques the basis of what constitutes education itself in order to promote an ecological literacy that would shift the priorities of education. He details various uses of the concept of “sustainability,” including the way technocracies have promoted sustainability for

more efficient development (the economic-growth argument) as opposed to promoting an ecologically literate citizenry that can understand global issues related to nature. Orr discusses the ways we should reconfigure education: challenging modes of knowledge production that promote individualism, anthropocentrism, economism, consumerism, militarism to promote knowledge that values ecology and embraces as a central construct (Orr, 1992). This would reinvest meaning into sustainability and move it away from technocratic uses of the term. Like Stables, he recommends bridging the sciences and humanities in a pedagogy that would blend the theoretical with the practical-experiential to design human endeavors that take the limitations of the natural world into account.

As part of its implementation, PBE's main tenet involves an attention and commitment to the local places students inhabit. Smith (2007) cites cultural journalism, expeditionary learning, and contextual learning and teaching among other exemplary place-based practices. Gruenewald (now Greenwood), a major PBE theorist and practitioner wrote an edited collection with Smith, *Place-Based Education in The Global Age* (2008) that emphasizes this attention to the local as a movement of resistance that seeks to disrupt globalizing forces. They write, "...place-based education can be viewed as the educational counterpart of a broader movement toward reclaiming the significance of the local in the global age" (p. xiii). Gruenewald and Smith theorize PBE's focus on the local as a reaction to the global. Global forces include economic globalization under corporate capitalism, of which downsizing and outsourcing are a part. This focus on the local for Gruenewald and Smith also entails reclaiming the disjuncture between schools and their surrounding communities. To them, schools focus uncritically on narratives of nationalism and globalization, and this contributes to a sense of placelessness, of students' disjuncture from their local communities.

1.5.3. Critiques of Place-Based Education: Nespor and Others

Nespor finds Gruenewald & Smith's dichotomy between the local and the global problematic. In his essay *Education and Place: A Review Essay* (2008), in which he reviews Smith and Gruenewald's work, as well as other PBE theorists Theobald and Bowers, Nespor deconstructs PBE theory's attention to the local as an idealization of "place-as-community;" he finds that when pedagogies of place posit a focus on the local, they reify place as "a stable, bounded, self-sufficient realm" (p. 479). He also writes that PBE theory's dichotomies posit a simplistic narrative of moral decline associated with capitalist industrial culture that creates placelessness. Instead, he explains, (local) place should be understood as traversed by the global, and not as an idealized simple realm of community and commons that stands in opposition to industrial culture. For Nespor (2008), PBE theorists should "distinguish among different historical, geographical, cultural, political, economic, and other dimensions of place construction, or look at issues of strategy, power, cooperation, and exploitation in their uses" and analyze and develop "theory in relation to, say, how changes in specific economic circuits or cultural processes are related to the ways groups work with or against different material and symbolic infrastructures to produce schools, homes, and neighborhoods as intertwined 'places'" (pp. 478-479). In short, Nespor advocates for a more complex notion of place as sites that are interconnected, constructed by globalizing forces, and which necessitate engagement regarding issues of power and difference.

In addition to critiquing PBE theory's notion of place, Nespor raises two other issues regarding PBE. The first is PBE's insufficient attention to questions of difference (i.e., intersections with race, class, and gender). The second involves the possibilities of PBE as a social and educational movement. In terms of questions of difference, Nespor argues that if place is theorized as an ideal realm, a counterpoint to the placelessness of global capitalism, as Gruenewald and Smith

do, then cultural identities will be understood as either distant or close to that ideal of place. This may have the effect of reifying and idealizing indigenous knowledge, and while attending to indigenous knowledge systems is an important political project, theorizing them as a global “solution” to placelessness is problematic. Nespor (2008) writes:

The idea that the knowledge systems of one cultural group can be the ‘center’ of ‘culturally-responsive teaching’ for different cultural groups does not make sense, nor is it clear that the beliefs of indigenous groups could (let alone should) provide general philosophical guidance” (p. 483).

Further, Nespor critiques Gruenewald and Smith’s focus on the local as a lack of systematic attention to ethnicity, class, and gender. While Gruenewald and Smith acknowledge forms of marginality and critique “diversity,” their critique is not careful enough, according to Nespor, and, additionally, questions of difference are not central considerations in PBE theory, as they should be.

In terms of the theory of place as a basis for a movement for change in education, Nespor maintains that a PBE perspective of the local as a site of resistance is insufficient because many “local” problems are produced in extra-local sites and therefore need different kinds of engagements. The imposition of standardized tests in public schools, for example, is a problem that emanates from places outside of the “local.” Another issue raised by Nespor pertains to PBE’s commitment to change individual beliefs by teaching teachers and other educational practitioners to care for the places in which their students live. Nespor instead posits that teachers and others care for the places students inhabit, but that certain kinds of places are hidden from the mainstream view “because of circuits of communication, representation, and education” (p. 487). The goal of PBE could be to unveil the hidden places of “the commons,” which he understands not as an ideal space, but as a network of resources that human beings share and struggle over. And he suggests that PBE theory could benefit from considering indigenous struggles (such as Zapatista protests in the south-eastern state of Chiapas in Mexico) that mobilize local and translocal resources to speak to a system

that denies them access to farmland, education, and other resources.

In addition to Nespor's critiques of Gruenewald and Smith's work, PBE theory has been criticized for its over attention to ecological as opposed to social aspects of place (Gruenewald, 2003; Gahl Cole, 2007; McLaren & Houston, 2004). While this attention stems from PBE's historically close conceptual and practical relationship with environmental education, this ecological emphasis remains a construct that needs to be rethought in light of questions of racial and class differences, as highlighted by Nespor (2008) and others (Running Grass, 1994; Agyeman, 2002).

1.5.4. Critical Place Based Pedagogy and Multicultural Environmental Education

Another body of scholarship called multicultural environmental education (Cole, 2007; Running-Grass, 1996), informed by the environmental justice movement and scholarship (Di Chiro, 1992; Cole 2007), squarely engages with issues of race, gender, ethnicity, and power relations. It is not that ecological issues are dismissed as irrelevant within this perspective, but instead are seen to give primacy to how social relations play out over issues of place and nature, and emphasize the role and importance of culture, history, and power. They put a strong emphasis on social intersectionality, and their views of environment are underpinned by theories of discourse. This view of the politics of nature allows for analysis of the discursive regime of the environmental crisis and sustainable development policies to understand the social and the natural as an inseparable formation and to articulate an understanding of place along race, class, and gender lines.

While Nespor (2008) draws up serious critiques of some of the main workings of PBE theory, an important contribution by Gruenewald *The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place* (2003), now become seminal, foregrounds questions of difference in more systematic fashion, establishing and advocating for educational theory based on considering the relationship between

PBE and critical pedagogy, which he refers to as a “critical pedagogy of place.” Nesor alludes to Gruenewald’s article, but does not engage with it in depth. Gruenewald (2003) begins by critiquing the well-established field of critical pedagogy (Aaronowitz & Giroux, 1993; Giroux, 1988, Freire, 1970/2000) for its absence of ecological thinking. Yet, he also highlights key insights in critical pedagogy that link to PBE theory, notably by drawing on critical place-based pedagogist Haymes (1995); namely, critical pedagogy offers “an agenda of cultural decolonization,” a situatedness regarding local situations that also links to oppressive broader forces, conscientisation as a reading of the world/word as a political text (Freire, 1970), and social justice (Gruenewald, 2003). Place-based education’s important insights, on the other hand, are “ecological reinhabitation;” ecological justice; a focus on the local, lived ecologies as a necessary part of being human; a concern and love for the land (Gruenewald, 2003, pp. 4-6).¹⁰ A critical place-based education perspective, thus links the sociological emphasis of critical pedagogy and the ecological emphasis of place-based education, all the while embracing the political nature of all knowledge as the basis for transformation.

Of key interest to educators and importance in practice are Gruenewald’s (2003) proposed two broad objectives of a critical pedagogy of place, conceived more of an alternative methodology than of a pedagogy. These tenets are decolonization and reinhabitation. Gruenewald (2003) defines decolonization as “learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (p. 9) and, in terms of education specifically, “unlearning much of what dominant schooling teaches”; and he draws on Orr and Bowers in defining his view of reinhabitation as an exploration of humanity’s attempt at “living well” in the places they inhabit (Orr, 1992, p. 130), and ways cultural patterns

¹⁰ Gruenewald’s work seeks to reinvest the locally-attentive place-based education with critical pedagogy’s focus on macro-oppressive structures and a firm grounding in ecological realism. He draws heavily from Bowers (2001) in advocating for a focus on the local bioregion, and the necessity of changing cultural patterns and drawing from non-commodified traditions of pre-modern cultures. These are critiques that Nesor has rightly underlined.

should be conserved or transformed to promote more ecologically sustainable communities (Bowers, 2001). The idea of reinhabitation or “dwelling” is taken from Orr as a way to live organically in a nurturing relationship with a place. Gruenewald recognizes that these views of reinhabitation and decolonization “depend on each other” and infuse a critical pedagogy of place with its purpose to: “identify, recover, and create material spaces and places that teach us how to live well in our total environments” and to “identify and change ways of thinking that injure and exploit other people and places” (p. 9).

My dissertation, informed by aspects of critical place-based education approach described above, as well as analysis approaches that attend to how language and discourse construct place and identity (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009), proposes to ground socio-environmental issues historically in discourse. I explore how dominant notions of place are channeled through education and how these meanings can have effects on students living in marginalized spaces. By asking how and what kind of places are represented by educators in Roche Bois’ school as they engage with the local, and in whose interests are these places produced, my project rejoins postmodern environmental education theoretical insights, multicultural environmental education scholarship, and an expanded view of place-based education theory that includes an attention to critical pedagogy.

Further, Gruenewald’s rich concepts of reinhabitation and decolonization serve as pedagogical-theoretical resources for my examination. By analyzing how place intersects with racial meanings in school, and how this intersection carries the potential to shape children’s identities, this study seeks to, first, understand the workings of place and race “up close” in the micro-specificities of the context of Roche Bois, and second, to draw on these understandings to specify a politics and a pedagogy of decolonization and reinhabitation.

1.6. Significance of Research: Linking Space and Racial Identity Construction through Discourse Historical Analysis

My dissertation is situated at the confluence of the overlapping fields of critical discourse analysis, CDA, (Fairclough, 1992; Wodak, 2002), place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003; Gahl Cole, 2007), critical race theory (Essed & Goldberg, 2000), and spatial theory (Lefebvre, 1991; Cresswell, 2004). I detail the contributions of this dissertation to each of these fields below.

As described earlier, this study engages with discourse and space theories and methodologies, and, in the process of this engagement, I address a disjuncture between discourse and space apparent in the respective theorists' views. Lefebvre (1991), albeit somewhat contradictory on his position on discourse in the *Production of Space*, can be interpreted as positing spatial and discourse theories as a dichotomy. In a conceptual chapter (chapter 2), I put Lefebvre (1991), Fairclough (1992), and Wodak (2001) in dialogue to show that discourse is an important part of understanding spatial production and that this dialogue produces a rich conceptual framework for the study of race and racism. The analysis thus shows that Lefebvre's spatial theory enhances the discourse analytic approach by providing a meta-theoretical framework capable of conceptualizing both social reproduction and potential change. In turn, the discursive approach employed in this study provides a detailed means of linguistically operationalizing Lefebvre's abstract ideas.

There are many CDA studies of racial identity construction and racism, and these have focused on a number of important themes, such as nationalism (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999), and media and psychological effects (Van Dijk, 1984). These studies have greatly furthered scholars' and educational practitioners understandings of the discursive effects of race and racism in society.

However, few CDA studies, with a few important exceptions (Leander, 2002; Modan, 2007) have focused centrally on the roles of space and place in the construction of identity, especially in terms of racial meanings. By analyzing how school educators speak about children in spatial language and evaluating how these spatial designations connect to the social ascriptions they attribute to children, my dissertation explores the power of place as an index for racial meanings, examining how notions of place in discourse can index racial meanings in subtle, yet powerful ways. The use of place as an entry point thus constitutes an underexplored way of examining racial identity construction in CDA.

The well-established trend of environmental education and place-based education discussed earlier conceptualizes the power of places as discursive constructions and thereby as terrains for social struggles related to race, class, and gender (Gruenewald, 2003; Gahl Cole, 2007; Haymes, 1995; Buendía, Ares, Juarez, & Peercy, 2004). This scholarship can be understood as situating place as discursively constructed in a broad sense. However, my searches of the field of critical place based education have not yet yielded studies that specifically use the linguistic tools of critical discourse analysis to articulate issues of place and space in the study of racial identity construction. Thus, this dissertation offers insight into how critical place-based education can evaluate place and race in classroom discourse practices. In addition, this dissertation's engagement with questions of spatial racialization responds to calls from scholars to address issues of race in a central way in environmental and place-based education (Nespor, 2008; Agyeman, 2002; Running Grass, 1994).

A close linguistic analysis of racial identity construction responds to calls in sociological race relations research and theorizations (Essed & Goldberg, 2000) to specify the nature of the ever-changing idea of "race," understood here as a socially constructed symbolic category (Desmond and Emirbayer, 2010). Commonly seen as a trope of "chameleonic" nature (Essed &

Goldberg, 2000) that manifests itself differently at different points in time and in different contexts, “race” is a dangerously malleable modern signifier that urges an attention to its specificities in any given context (Essed & Goldberg, 2000). Ongoing research is therefore needed on the topic of race and race relations in Mauritius, especially in light of what seem like an imbalance in the face of the abundance of rich theoretical and empirical accounts of race and racism in the Americas and in South Africa. This geographical emphasis has made these two regions of the world generative of theories of race, such as the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2007), which considers the hierarchical views established in Latin America based on European colonization. While the coloniality of power is important in terms of global theoretical accounts of race and relations, the danger here is to expand these theories globally to use them as totalizing theoretical frameworks that overlook the importance of continuous research on racial identity construction in its micro-specificities in other geographical regions.

Finally, as previously mentioned, my research makes extensive use of the rich linguistic and discursive analytical methodological tools developed by Wodak and her colleagues (Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999). The type of CDA employed here is the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), which attempts to:

Integrate much available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded. Further, DHA analyzes the historical dimension of discursive actions by exploring the ways in which particular genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change” (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001, p. 35).

While the DHA researchers’ commitment to the incorporation of history in their framework is clear, I build on the rich analytical tool of “discursive strategy” to link present texts to historical contexts. Discursive strategy is a micro-macro concept that can be used to show the functions/effects of language in relation to macro-historical situations. My dissertation theorizes

how history is linked to present language use by analyzing the functions of language as perpetuating and transforming existing (historical) identities.

1.7. Researcher Positionality

This dissertation engages with the ways iterations, constructions, and understandings of place are encoded with power. In light of what Marcus (1994) and others have called the “crisis of representation” in ethnography stemming from the onset of postmodern and postcolonial critiques toward the ethnographic research genre and method, scholars have shown the need for researchers to engage in reflexivity in research. Ethnographers such as Marcus (1994) and Rosaldo (1989, 1993), to cite only a few, advocate for reflexivity in the researcher’s privileged positioning as needed in order to counter the inherent splitting of subject and object in ethnographic research. In his article *On Ideologies of Reflexivity in Contemporary Efforts to Remake the Human Sciences*, in particular, Marcus praises feminist reflexivity as a highly productive form of postmodern reflexivity. He cites Donna Haraway’s (1988) research as an example of research that is committed to objectivity but that admits that claims that objectivity can be attained only through local, partial, and embedded visions of the world, with an open-ended ethics.

Building upon this important imperative discussed by Marcus and Haraway, I situate my positionality in my dissertation research as a way to expose the situationality of the knowledge produced. In the spatial matrix of power relations I explore in this study, I am no innocent or distant subject. Mauritius is home to me: a place of family lunches, old friendships, critical political alliances, class struggle, beloved street food, and beautiful scenery and beaches. However, alongside these meanings of home, my relationship of belonging to the island is also imbued with a long history of colonialism and global European expansion since the 15th century. Nine generations

ago in the 1700s, in the same trajectory of many other Europeans, my family came to the island from the Netherlands. The goal of European migrants like my family at the time was to settle on the island and to exploit the island's resources and labor. Recently, a book published about one of my ancestors, Christian Wiehe, recounts and celebrates this endeavor (Wiehe & Sinclair, 2010). Even though it is clear that many European migrants faced hardships in settling on the island and not all were of the elite (De l'Estrac, 2007), I do not celebrate this past for political ethical reasons. The recognition of the labor of various non-European peoples in the success and enrichment of the European colonial enterprise is a historical reality that has left an enduring neocolonial legacy that still shapes the social texture of the island today, including dynamics that positioned me with power in relationship to the people who participated in this research, which I discuss in more detail in chapter 3, "Methodological Approaches to Research" in section 3.8 "Positioning, Ethics, and Reflexivity." Yet it is this very positioning that shaped my political and analytical impetus to do research on race and racism in schools Mauritius because it brought about the realization of the extreme social inequities that are, in part, the result of European colonization. The purpose of my exploration of the ways educators speak about the children's spaces, at a political level, then, is to shed light on a "slice of reality" of schools in the uneven context of postcolonial Mauritius, and explore whether the creation of hierarchies on the basis of ethnicity is still prevalent in school, despite discourses of multicultural tolerance that are celebrated in the public sphere. While positivists might see it my positionality as a challenge to the validity of my claims, from a poststructural epistemological stance shows that knowledge is relational (Foucault, 1980) and that everything one knows and claims to speak about derives from one's specific social, institutional, historical, and geographical situation. My claims thus emerge from the subjective, intersubjective and institutional interests that position me in Mauritius. There are a number of ethical challenges

that arise from this complex positionality and the specifics of my research in Roche Bois. I discuss the ethical questions raised by my research in chapter 3, section 3.8.

1.8. The Significance of this Research in the Context of Mauritius' Racial Politics

This research is important in the context of Mauritius because it speaks to a pervasive sense of colorblindness in the multicultural public sphere in Mauritius, and it demonstrates that it is not analytically or politically viable to claim that Mauritius has reached a post-racial moment. As I explained earlier in this introduction on the background of Mauritius, several different types of nationalism have been at work in the public sphere since independence (Police-Michel, 2005). The paradoxical balance between multicultural and universal rhetoric in Mauritius and communal affiliation is complex. Simone (2006) suggests that intercultural bridges in Mauritius only go so far so as to not disrupt a firmly entrenched identity politics: “[The cross-ethnic] intersections are valued and practiced as long as they are subject to a discourse that can keep the concrete messiness of such transactions from compromising the reproduction of valued communal orientations” (p.27). On the one hand, different Mauritian groups at large recognize their ethnic/religious or communal affiliations in everyday life and institutional communalism is upheld in electoral politics. To pose for election for parliamentary seats, candidates must declare their communal affiliation for what is known as the “best loser system,” a system that reserves 8 out of 62 seats to be nominated and not elected, this to ensure the representation of minorities in parliament. On the other hand, institutional communalism in the form of electoral politics in turn has created an “anti-communalism” backlash, from groups and individuals across the political spectrum who instead advocate for a colorblind politics, whereby the universal human condition is brandished as an inalienable moral good. This has in recent years become a growing movement that includes leftist

political parties and liberal NGOs. The liberal press has also shown longstanding support toward this colorblind stance. When ethnic affiliation is mentioned in a grievance or a claim, it is often denounced and branded as “communalist” in the press, or by politicians when it is in their interest to do so. Anti-communalism has thus become a well-sedimented discourse in which communalism is denounced as being divisive, racist, and detrimental to democratic nation-building.

My dissertation speaks back to anti-communalist discourse by squarely engaging with the category of Creole as a racial category. I do this because the anti-communalist movement does a gross conflation between racism and communalism. Any ethnic claim is dismissed as “communalist” and therefore not analyzed as a potential legitimate ethnic/racial grievance as a result of institutional, systematic racism. The primary ideological weapon of the anti-communalism movement is colorblindness. By seeking to fight against an (albeit, highly problematic) population classification that is entrenched in politics, the movement erases the opportunity to gain a perspective on major sociological inequalities in a postcolonial context that has largely not dealt with any redistribution of resources along ethnic lines and that is in great need for further research and data on the local racial topography. The struggle against communalism, instead of erasing ethnic categories, needs to advocate for the creation of more accurate categories that capture the sociological realities of a given moment, that can be officially taken up in population censuses in order to arrive at more solid statistics in relationship to differentiated access to power, land, and resources in Mauritius.

By engaging with the category of Creole, my dissertation does not seek to reify it as an essential category, nor does it seek to ignore the fact that racial categories were socially constructed historically by dominant groups for labor exploitation, but, rather, I take up Creole ethnic identification and identity construction as political symbolic categories, and therefore as sociological

realities that deserve unpacking and engagement. My dissertation research shows the active construction of Creole identity in schools, and, as such, this challenges the anti-communalist movement's notion of colorblindness as a possible or viable solution to rectifying racial inequity in Mauritius.

1.9. Conclusion and Plan for Dissertation

This chapter has presented the goals of this research, namely to examine the complexities of educational discourses that link place and race in urban marginalized zones such as Roche Bois. I describe the unequal social context of Mauritius as background to this research as well as a complex population classification that is both upheld officially and inaccurate sociologically in terms of categories that people identify with and use in everyday life. I discussed how Creole are generally understood by scholars as the most marginalized in Mauritius, and showed how Roche Bois was a space that was particularly affected with issues of racialization and poverty. Another contextual factor I described concerns the role of schools and teachers. I noted that the shortcomings of the ZEP school model in terms of its alleviation of achievement gaps across schools, as well as patterns of teacher attitudes in places such as Roche Bois. The chapter also discussed the significance of this research in relation to how existing critical discourse analytic work looks at the issue of racism but fails to explore centrally how various codes such as place can play a role in the construction of race. While there exist other work that interlinks race and place, this work has not utilized the rich micro-linguistic tools of CDA that allow for a look at meanings “up-close.” It also highlighted an area in the Discourse Historical Approach that deserves further specification, namely, the role of history. After presenting the main problems and questions tackled by this dissertation, the chapter describes the postmodern conceptual underpinnings on space and their interlinkages to discourse, a

connection that allows for a discursive study of place and race. As a way to situate this research in educational debates, I traced shifts in the fields from postmodern environmental education to critical place based education, as a way to show how current writings in the field advocate for a more in-depth study of the ways place intersects with race and class. I then described the ways my positionality as a researcher shaped the knowledge produced in this study. The chapter ends with an short but important section: background on Mauritius' paradoxical politics of anti-communalism, and the ways the dissertation's focus on race seeks to shed light on lived processes of racialization in schools.

The next chapter (2) "Conceptual Framework" presents the conceptual framework that underpins this study and discusses the articulations between the three main concepts in this study: race, place, and discourse. In this chapter, using Lefebvre (1990), Fairclough and Wodak (1997) and theorists of race (Essed & Goldberg, 2000; Moore, Pandian, & Kosek, 2003), I suggest that the linking of place and discourse theories allows for a grounded study of race. Chapter 3 "Methodological Approaches to Research" outlines the methodology followed for data collection and for data analysis. It presents the combination of ethnographic methods and critical discourse analysis, more specifically the Discourse Historical Approach, and a focus on the key analytical tool of "strategy" as a means to study identity transformations and perpetuations in history. Chapter 4 "The Historical Making of Roche Bois into a Paradigmatic Space" presents the main findings from the synthesis of historical sources on the ways Roche Bois has been constituted as a paradigmatic space representing Creole identity, and how this framing provides a grounded understanding of teachers' words and meanings. Based on the methodology outlined in chapter 3 and framed theoretically with Lefebvre's concept of conceived space, the fifth chapter "Productions of Roche Bois as a Conceived Space" focuses on the Discourse Historical Analysis of key episodes uttered by

educators during the course of the year. The chapter shows how processes of racialization are contingent on several domains: of work, culture, school, and bodies. As an analysis of conceived space, it primarily explores the reproductive power of schools when it comes to racial identities, even when this racialization is uttered as a means to speak about children's local realities. Chapter 6 "Productions of Roche Bois as Lived Space" is also framed through a Lefebvrian concept and explores strategies of transformation in educator productions of Roche Bois. It highlights moments of possibility and transformation in an educator's practices of spatial racialization in school. An important coda follows, describing findings from reflexive conversations with educators during the course of triangulation interviews. The seventh chapter "Discussion and Conclusions" discusses the implications of the findings for theory and practice, focusing on critiquing the constructivist tenet of the student-centeredness and the place-based education tenet of the local, as well as highlighting particularly the significance of Gruenewald's twin concepts of "decolonization" and "reinhabitation" for teacher practice and teacher education.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: LINKING PLACE, DISCOURSE, AND RACE

2.1. Overview

Metaphors and metonymy, then. These familiar concepts are borrowed, of course, from linguistics. Inasmuch, however, as we are concerned not with words but rather with space and spatial practice, such conceptual borrowing has to be underwritten by a carefully examination of the relationship between space and language (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 99).

Employing the concept of place, or the ways space is imbued with meaning, acknowledges the importance of “situating” human experience in a specific and complex historical and cultural context. Place is created within spaces where a symbolic system and power produce and reproduce patterns of belief and behavior, and, in turn, shape how we define ourselves and others (Martusewicz, 2009, p. 231).

The above quotes point to the importance of linking space/place, discourse, and meanings of identity. This chapter therefore introduces, defines and discusses the three main concepts that I weave together in this dissertation: space/place, discourse, and race. Drawing centrally on Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991), Fairclough and Wodak's discussion of the tenets of CDA (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) as well as Wodak and Reisigl's work on discourse and discrimination (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001), I highlight how discourse and spatial perspectives, while presenting multiple apparent epistemological and ontological incongruities, can be productively articulated for the study of situated racial identity construction.

This chapter first clarifies the differences between the terms space and place, then, situates postmodern understanding of space as a reaction to modernist tenets. Noting that there are tensions between space/place and discourse, I outline Lefebvre's main reproaches toward discourse. I explain, however, that Lefebvre's work, although sometimes contradictory, exhibits remarkable open-endedness. I therefore provide a reading of Lefebvre's position on space and discourse, highlighting that his spatial perspective has important points of congruence with and possibilities for critical discourse analysis. I also build on this rereading to show epistemological linkages between spatial theories and critical discourse analysis. That is, in my review of critical discourse analysis' tenets as defined by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), I show how non-discursive elements are important to CDA, even they are not dimensions that are engaged with explicitly in the field. This makes for possibilities to the two perspectives in dialogue for a critical analysis of social and material life, including racial identities.

In sum, the purpose of this chapter is to propose that critical discourse analysis can incorporate tools and understandings from Lefebvrian theories of space for a study of place-based identity construction, and in particular spatial racialization. The analyses of chapters 5 & 6 later in this dissertation will draw on discourse approaches to study the ways educator talk constructs children's identities in relation to place. In those chapters, I show how the spatial racialization of children at school happens discursively. Given the object of study, I argue in this chapter that a dialogue between space/place and discursive perspectives lays a fertile theoretical terrain for the study of racial identities, and their specific symbolic and material situatedness in places such as Roche Bois. This is a conceptual framework that I hope will foreground 1) the ways discourse and space can be articulated together and in their imbrication, form the identities of people in places and 2) show how place becomes an arena onto which power relations are enacted discursively and

onto which history is constructed, reproduced, or transformed. This arena is a non-determined, non-prescribed terrain of power; it can transform or perpetuate power relations among groups.

The purpose of the chapter is not to provide an exhaustive review of the literatures on space/place, discourse, or race but instead, to draw on selected key works in the fields of cultural geography (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996; Cresswell, 2004) with a special emphasis on Lefebvre, critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; Wodak & Reisigl, 1999; Wodak & Martin, 2008), and critical race theories (Moore, Pandian, & Kosek, 2003; Stoler, 1997; Goldberg, 1993) to provide a conceptual framework for the specific object of study of this dissertation, while defining the dissertation's theoretical contributions as an articulation of discourse and place for the study of identities, including racial identity.

2.2. Place/Space

Place and space are central objects of knowledge in geography. Although there is a profusion of writing on these concepts, as Cresswell (2004) points out, the definitions vary greatly. Consequently, there is much semantic ambiguity around the terms. The same semantic dichotomies and ambiguities prevail in education-related fields that deal with place and space. For example, spatial theories have recently become more popular theoretical approaches in the study of critical educational processes (Sheehy, 2009; Martusewicz, 2009; Helfenbein, 2009) and on the other hand, place-based education (Orr, 1992; Smith, 2007) and more recently, critical place based education (Gruenewald, 2003; Gahl Cole, 2007) have recently become further trends concerned with place- and space-dimensions of life.

2.2.1. Clarifying the Terms Space/Place

The meanings and usages of place and space are at once contested and ambiguous in the various fields they are employed, from human and cultural geography to environmental education and place-based education. Often, they mean different slightly different things; sometimes they are used interchangeably, and at other times, their definitions are in opposition depending on who uses each term. Given the myriad usages of the terms space and place in various fields, clarifying the ways they are employed by various authors is an important first step to situate my own interchangeable usage of the terms in this dissertation.

2.2.2. Place

Some writing in cultural geography (Cresswell, 2004; Agnew, 2002; Tuan, 1974, 1991) and in educational literature that engages with place (Gruenewald, 2003; Martusewicz, 2009) broadly define place as “space invested with meaning.” This conception of place sets itself against the formulation of space as a neutral container, whereby space refers to the physical substratum for the world and place is this same material invested with social practice, meaning, and power. This view comes from a turn in human geography in the 1970s that emphasized the role of meaning and subjectivity against positivist spatial science. Tuan is one key seminal figure in this perspective. He explains the difference between positivist spatial analyst and humanist approaches: “Unlike the spatial analyst, who must begin by making simplifying assumptions concerning man, the humanist begins with a deep commitment to the understanding of human nature in all its intricacy” (Tuan, 1974a, p. 246, in Cresswell, 2004, p. 21). In this view, space is the material world, and place is the ways human experience and meaning shape the space. Place is thus the subjective dimension of space. As additional examples, Cresswell cites place-making activities all over the world such as a

gardener planting a garden, people building a nation, a nation's government projecting its sense of place through the creation of stamps, money, or tourist brochures when place is articulated with people, certain kinds of people, place becomes, graffiti artists put tags throughout the city, and soccer fans sport T-shirts of their favorite national team. In short, places are spaces which humans have made meaningful.

2.2.3. Space

For other theorists, notably, Lefebvre (1991), space is understood as social space, as space produced by social relations, thus inherently in the realm of the sociocultural as well. Lefebvre therefore refers to social space in a very similar way to the way Cresswell defines place. Clarifying Lefebvre's usage of place or space, Soja (1996) maintains that Lefebvre did not use the word "place" because the same meanings were encapsulated in his conceptualization of everyday life and lived space.

This dissertation draws extensively on Lefebvre's theorization of social space and on educational literature that deals with place. In both senses, place/space are understood as the ways the material world is produced by sociocultural meanings, social practices, and social structures. Therefore, I consider the semantic distinction between place and space not to be meaningful in this analysis and I use both space and place interchangeably. This view of place/space as socially constructed is broadly informed by postmodern epistemologies.

2.2.4. How Postmodernity Informs Understandings of Place

This understanding of space/place as socially produced and not as an objective container of physical experience is informed by postmodern ontologies about the material and social world. Modernity, a paradigmatic mode of thinking and of knowledge production that has been shaping the world since the 15th century, has produced fixed categories of thought. Space is one of those fixed categories. The spatial world, for modernity, is “out there;” it is the neutral container for human experience (Richardson & Jensen, 2003); it is immutable and can be measured. The rise of science in the 19th century is closely associated with modern thought on space. Scientific modes of thinking and knowing the world have in turn reinforced the notion of space as object to be understood, measured, and dominated. This process in turn has accompanied and justified the world-historical and ongoing project of European and Western colonization of the world, with its racial, sexual, and labor hierarchies over subaltern peoples of the world and its massive exploitation of material resources throughout the globe. Writers such as Quijano (Quijano, 2007) and Mignolo (Mignolo, 2007), among others have theorized in depth how this modern project was born from the [European] anthropocentric understanding of the central place of [the European] Man in the world, who could intervene in a world in whose people and material goods could be used as resources and labor. The domination of space, territory, and nature included a form of domination over dark feminized exploitable peoples of non-Europe, peoples that were associated with the spaces and natures that were encountered during colonial journeys (Lugones, 2007).

Postmodernity, as a broad current of thinking emerged in reaction to modernity, deconstructs such modern tenets by rethinking the role of the dualism of nature/culture and the dualism of material/idealism (Dear & Flusty, 2002). Postmodern thought understands the material and sociocultural dimensions of life in dialectical relation with one another. Postmodernity

therefore informs a radical view on space and place, whereby space/place are arenas for the production of social meaning, including the representation of peoples, the distribution of resources and the shaping and re-shaping of the material world through social practice.

It is important to note that this view of space as social does not neglect the importance of the *material* dimension of place. A key contribution of Lefebvre's work on social space, which I will explain in depth later in this chapter, is the rejection of the binary produced by modernist thought between materialism and idealism. Instead, Soja (1996) called "a third way" the mode of thinking that avoids dichotomous theoretical closure, but that opens up space to new epistemological conceptualizations of space and discursive representation in dialectical relationship. Places are not entirely a figment of our imaginations and discursive activities. They are real physical entities that structure and ground social activities and meanings. Yet the material is in dialectic relation with symbolic discursive representations. Space is produced through social representations and social practice, but in turn the space itself shapes social practice.

2.2.5. Lefebvre's Trialectic Social Production of Space

Lefebvre is widely considered to be the "harbinger" of postmodern thought on space (Dear & Flusty, 2002). Committed to understanding how capitalism reproduced hegemonic relations, he saw the realm of space is a cornerstone of this understanding. Space for Lefebvre is not just a milieu where politics happen. Space – as knowledge and practice - plays an active role in the constitution of capitalist hegemony.

Lefebvre's insistence that space is never 'innocent'. It always contains traces of the processes that produced it, and subsequently is acted upon by a variety of material and mental processes that provide the context through which know things. Space in this sense, is constitutive of our ontologies and epistemologies; and, space itself is a social product" (Dear & Flusty, 2002)

Lefebvre's rich conceptualization allows for an understanding of the social production of space, and as such, it is a central framework this dissertation. Lefebvre proposes three spatial elements of human experience working trialectically: perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. He also calls these three dimensions of human spatial experience: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces, or what Soja (1996) has called first, second, and third spaces.

1) Perceived space (also called spatial practice) is the space of the material dimensions of life and the social practices that produce it. Social practices interact with material space to form spatial practice. Spatial practice can be analyzed through a reading of people's practices in material space.

2) Conceived space (also called represented space) is the dominant space of representations produced by social engineers, i.e. the state, the school, the media, and other powerful institutions that reproduce the system. Sheehy (2010), quoting Allen (1999) describes this space as the cover story or the dominant narrative people apply to reality. Conceived space acts dialectically with perceived space to make it appear natural. In this way, Lefebvre connects conceived space to Gramsci's notion of hegemony, the process of creating consent as opposed to domination. Conceived space is the discursive representations of perceived space and is primarily concerned with maintaining the status quo, i.e., dominant representations of space that appear natural.

3) Lived space (also called representational space) is the space of people's lived experiences, of alternative conceptions of space, and thus of resistance. Lived space disrupts or interrupts the naturalness of the first two spaces. This space is counter-hegemonic and provides moments of opening, of refiguring the dominant conceived spaces.

In a spatial analysis of educational processes in two classrooms, Modan (2007) engages with Lefebvre's framework. She shows how conceived space (2) tends toward sedimenting hegemony

and power over perceived space (1). Although there is always contestation, over time, conceived space comes to define what is typical/normal of that place and what is not. Although lived spaces are counter-hegemonic, she says: “Even spatial practices that contest dominant ideas about how to use a space may reconstruct normativity in a given place by highlighting the spatial norms that are being transgressed” (Modan, 2007, p. 310). However, she adds, “If such practices continue over time, they may change the dominant order.” Modan’s work highlights the performativity of Lefebvre’s spatial framework and the endless non-deterministic possibilities that it offers. Space is both determining and is determined by practice and discourse.

By proposing a trialectic perspective on space, Lefebvre disrupts modernist philosophical binaries, oppositions, and contrasts. His theorization of the social production of space transcends the materialism/idealism nature/culture dualities so manifest of modernist thinking. Soja (1996) who has drawn extensively on Lefebvre’s concepts, names this critique as one of his most important ideas. Lefebvre rejects all forms of categorical or binary logic and always advocates for an Other-Term (“*l’Autre*”) (Soja, 1996, p. 7). This approach to space disrupts the categorical closure implicit in the either/or logic. As one of the illustration of his trialectic perspective, Lefebvre gives the example of the human body, which plays a central role in his theorization of space because it mediates between the mental and physical realms. The perceived space of the body is our practice; using our hands and our bodies in material space shape it. Conceived spaces of the body, however, are multiple, and emerge out of a variety of scientific/dominant/established schools of thought and institutions, including the medical establishment, the clothing industry, and patriarchal gender relations among other types of representations in various spheres. The third dimension of lived space, on the other hand, does not necessarily align with dominant representations of the body. Lived experience is complex, intimate, multilayered and shaped by culture.

Lefebvre is cautious not to propose this trialectic perspective as a rigid model to apply to reality. Relations between three elements of the triad are complex, unstable and subject to change. Rather, his project is best understood as a three-dimensional analytics that needs to be “tested” and observed empirically for the force of theory to be proven. That is, Lefebvre aims at developing an analytics of space that encompasses the material, social, and mental realms, all historicized in a larger context of capitalism and power relations. His proposition does not want to be a discourse on space but an explanation of the role of space by exposing its production through various kinds of space bound within a single theory.

2.3. Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

Although Lefebvre did not want to reify the polarization established between physical and what he called “mental space” (the space of ideas and language)¹¹, he was very critical of discourse and discursive approaches to social life. I discuss his critique at length in later in this chapter as a way to rejoin discourse and spatial dimensions of social life, but in this section, I turn to an overview of tenets of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to provide the basis for the linking of discourse and spatial approaches. Specifically, the tenets of CDA I discuss are structure, institutions, and the non-discursive context as a way to discuss CDA’s interlinkages to spatial analysis.

¹¹ He asserts that these terms are not disjunctions or schisms, but rather that one presupposes the other.

2.3.1. Elements of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that relate to a Spatial Approach

Critical discourse analysis takes language as constitutive of social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997 as cited in Wodak, 2002) and is focused primarily on the production and consumption of verbal and written texts along with other semiotic practices (for example, gestures) as instantiations of social relations. The primary object of analysis is the text but there are a number of elements of CDA (structure, institutions, and non-discursive context) that point to the importance of space and extra-textual elements.

For CDA theorists, analyzing language allows for a study of power and power relations in society. Critical discourse analysts are centrally concerned with this, and often conceptualize this broad societal power that texts generate by using the Marxist notion of ideology. Ideology is enacted through the discursive mechanisms that enable powerful people to stay in power, through dominance or hegemony. To understand these power relations, it is important for CDA theorists to examine the context of production and consumption of texts: texts are produced in specific places, at specific moments in time, within or in encounter with specific institutions. CDA is the study of language in use, linguistic practices in dialectical relationship to social structures. Language both reproduces social structures and at the same time is the terrain that can change these structures. There are therefore elements of both social reproduction and transformation in the way language is theorized in CDA. Consider this oft-quoted excerpt below from Fairclough and Wodak (1997), which broadly summarizes the tenets of CDA approaches:

CDA sees discourse – language in use in speech and writing - as a form of ‘social practice.’ Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is

constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258, in Wodak 2002 Aspects of CDA)

Wodak and Fairclough point to the importance language-in-use as discursive practice, the constitutive nature of language and its power to change the status quo, the importance of language in structuring power relations between people, and the importance of language in context, that is, how language is produced within specific socio-historical-institutional spaces and circumstances¹². Language is also seen to have material effects. In fact, power relations are to be observed in the materialities that instantiate them, and how they are mediated through language. This points to potential epistemological openings for a conceptualization of space in CDA. I use the term “opening” to refer to epistemological openness in critical discourse analysis (according to Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) that allow for a close and intricate connection of language and the material world, and has implications for the joint study of language and space, which I explore in depth below.

2.4. Putting Discourse and Place-based Approaches in Dialogue

Having defined place as the material invested and shaped by human meaning and discourse led me to pose – and articulate an answer to – an important question: what are the interlinkages between language and place? What are the differences between spatial analysis and discourse

¹² It is interesting to note that the object of analysis for CDA (text/language/discourse) is clearly demarcated here from social structure, institution, and situation. This poses an interesting problem for the analysis of the interrelations between spatial theories and discourse analysis. I discuss this in the next subsection on rejoining discourse and space.

analysis, if any, and how can these two approaches be productively articulated for a study of social space, in particular of racial identities situated in specific places?

In this section, I begin by outlining Lefebvre's vehement opposition to discourse (situated in dialogue with the prominent language theorists of the time Kristeva, Derrida, Chomsky, among others). I show that despite his critique of discourse, the spatial framework he proposes in fact aligns itself with discourse and is in fact dependent on it. The non-prescriptive approach of spatial analysis lends itself well to an incorporation of discourse analysis, a more detailed linguistic operationalization of the working of language and other semiotic elements. I follow by discussing critical discourse analysis' perspectives on space and place, by highlighting epistemological openings in CDA. I end by showing that the two approaches are not as antithetical as Lefebvre claims them to be. This lays the theoretical foundation for the analyses in this dissertation: studying the discursive construction of place-based (racial) identities.

2.4.1. Lefebvre's Critique of Discourse

In *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 1991), Lefebvre expresses awareness of the tensions between discourse and space, and in his attempt at developing a broad encompassing analytics of space, he asked: "Does language precede, accompany or follow space? Is it a precondition of the space or a formulation of it?" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 16). Despite the importance of the questions Lefebvre posed, it is with much surprise that I read his scathing critique of linguistic and discourse analytical approaches to the social. He accused these to remain locked in what he called the domain

of “the mental” and “epistemologico-philosophical thinking¹³.” He criticizes intellectuals such as Derrida, Kristeva, Barthes, and Chomsky among others for over-focusing on language as “mental space,” and for their lack of clear definition around the term. More importantly, he accuses discourse approaches of overlooking the mediation between the mental and the physical. According to him, these scholars’ overemphasis on the mental realm “envelops the social and physical ones” (p. 5) and “springs without the slightest hesitation from mental to social” (p. 6) without any mediation and logical clarity on how mental space connects to social space. The idea of mediation is central to Lefebvre who cannot conceive how social space and physical space be reduced to mental space. Speaking of “discourse scholars” reductive approach to the subject, he says,

It is conveniently forgotten that the practical ‘I’, which is inseparably individual and social is in a space where it must either recognize itself or lose itself. This unconsidered leap from the mental to the social and back again effectively transfers the properties of space proper onto the level of discourse – and particularly onto the level of discourse upon space. It is true that this approach seeks to supply some mediation between mental and social by evoking the body (voice, gestures, etc...). But one may wonder what connection exists between this abstract body, understood simply as a mediation between ‘subject’ and ‘object’, and a practical and fleshy body conceived of as a totality complete with spatial qualities (symmetries, assymetries)... (p. 61).

Although Lefebvre admits that the field of semiotics does attempt to theorize how mental and social are mediated through the body (and bodily gestures, etc.), he maintains that the body is undertheorized spatially and still ignores the gap between mental space and social space, the space of practice, and the space of the material. This is a failure to theorize space adequately for Lefebvre. In addition, this represents a reduction of space to the discursive or to the descriptive, which he claims, space cannot be reduced by. The quote below is telling of Lefebvre’s firm critique on discourse as an inadequate philosophical stance toward the social in space:

¹³ He conflates the domain of “epistemologico-philosophical” with the space of discourse and of the Cartesian cogito.

The strategy of centering knowledge on discourse avoids the particular scabrous topic of the relationship between knowledge and power. It is also incapable of supplying reflective thought with a satisfactory answer to a theoretical question it raises itself: do sets of non-verbal signs and symbols, whether coded or not, systematized or not, fall into the same category as verbal sets or are they irreducible to them? Among non-verbal signifying sets includes music, painting, sculpture, architecture, gesture. Non-verbal sets are characterized by a spatiality which is in fact irreducible to the mental realm. There is even a sense in which landscapes, both rural and urban, fall under this head. To underestimate, ignore, and diminish space amounts to the overestimation of texts, written matter, and writing systems, along with the readable and the visible, to the point of assigning to these a monopoly on intelligibility.” (p.62).

Lefebvre takes issue with the reduction of space to the discursive that one can “read” because according to him, this approach evades history, which he understands as human practice in the material world. The body is thus central to Lefebvre, as a mediator between the mental and physical realms. Moreover, he believes this perspective allows a profusion of ill-defined “spaces” or spatial metaphors to enter scientific jargon: scholars speak of economic, political, social, ecological spaces, and so on and yet these are not well defined and often refer only to mental space. This multiplicity of usages of space aligns with the dominant mode of the production of intellectual labor, which tends to fragment and multiply.

Lefebvre reasserts the importance of a truth of space *in the last instance* to use an expression of Althusser’s, not as a separate realm of human experience but socially produced to maintain hegemony and the social relations of production and reproduction of capitalism. Capitalism, whereby the bourgeois class exerts hegemony over the working class – cannot neglect space and instead actively uses it to maintain its power.

Although Lefebvre might not fully agree with me if he were alive, I explore discourse as an important part of Lefebvre’s threefold approach to space. Despite his outward critique of discourse, discourse is important to a Lefebvrian theorization of space. First, by situating his critique of discourse in its historical context, one can understand better where he was coming from. The

Production of Space was first published in French in 1974, at a time when Foucault's structural view of discourse in *Archeology of Knowledge* was predominant, and social sciences were going through what is now known as "the linguistic turn." His scathing critique of discourse might certainly be informed by a need to defend his position against these structural, all-encompassing totalizing views of language at that time, views that posited discourse as superseding the material. Viewed in this historical light, his project then, becomes to re-assert the importance of space in the context of the dominant approaches that emphasized language. Lefebvre's choice of space is not that he chooses space in order to neglect discourse (although his scathing critiques of "mental space" might lead one to believe this). Rather, discourse is a part of his theorization of space, especially in the two domains he qualifies as conceived spaces (represented spaces) and lived spaces (representational spaces). The dominant conceived space for example, is often a discursive production. Powerful institutions, such as schools, present spatial practice through language or discursive acts that shape the way spatial practices are understood. So, in engaging with Lefebvre, I assert in this dissertation that his contributions to the importance of space enrich discourse analytic approaches with a spatial emphasis, yet without being antithetical to discourse.

Interestingly, in an apparent and contradictory reconciliatory move so characteristic of the *Production of Space*¹⁴, Lefebvre does assert the importance of this joint understanding of social reality:

Space does not eliminate the other materials or resources that play a part in the socio-political arena, be they raw materials or the most finished of products, be they businesses or "culture". Rather, it brings them all together and then in a sense substitutes itself of each factor separately by enveloping it. The result is a vast movement in terms of which space can no longer be looked upon as an "essence", as an object distinct from the point of view of (or as compared with) "subjects", as answering to a logic of its own. (1991, p. 410-411).

¹⁴ See for example Soja (1996) or Dear & Flusty (2002) for a discussion of Lefebvre's multiple contradictions in *The Production of Space*.

Lefebvre thus reasserts the importance of culture to be understood through space, through the importance of transcending the idea of space as a container onto which discourse happens, but rather to intricately connect the two. Soja (1996) also warns his readers not to misunderstand space and cultural-discourse perspectives as a dichotomy:

It is important to note, for it is so easily misunderstood, that this reconnection of spatiality to historicity and sociality was not meant to deny the political and theoretical significance of critical historiography or sociology. It was instead an effort to open up and enrich the historical and sociological imaginations with a long-neglected or persistently subordinated critical approach to spatiality, an explicitly spatial problematic” (Soja, 1996, p. 47).

Revisiting Lefebvre’s work on space and reinterpreting it as a different emphasis in a unitary theory that rejoins space and discourse rather than a all-out opposition to discourse is an important project for it allows spatial analysts and discourse analysts to incorporate each others’ perspectives in an interdisciplinary framework. Lefebvre’s aim is not to reject discourse but to spatialize it.

2.4.2. Spatial Openings in Critical Discourse Analysis

While a spatial approach does not deny the importance of culture, from a critical discourse analysis perspective, there are also epistemological openings for a conceptualization of space. I argue that there is no totalizing theoretical closure operating in CDA but instead that it is amenable to working with spatial approaches. First, I highlight the aspects of CDA that provide for context, structure, space, and non-discursive elements and semiotics.

Some approaches to discourse, such as that of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) see discourse as totalizing. In their view, the material world is subsumed under language and has no meaning or agency outside of discourse. Other discourse approaches, such as the widely cited works of Fairclough (1992, for example), Wodak (1999) and even Foucault (1974), conceptualize the presence of non-discursive elements. To these theorists, social reality cannot be reduced to only

discourse. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) agree that although critical discourse analysis studies the way texts are produced and consumed and constitute the social world in late modernity, “it follows that some social phenomena are not of linguistic character” (Jørgensen & Philipps, 2002, p. 61). They for instance look at CDA’s emphasis on analyzing images, which are extraneous to language¹⁵.

To look closer at the epistemological openings in the specific CDA approaches in this dissertation, I take Wodak and Reisigl’s (2009) definition of discourse as “a cluster of *context-dependent* semiotic practices that are *situated within specific fields of social action* (...)” (Wodak & Reisigl, 2009, p. 89, emphasis added). On first reading, Wodak and Reisigl’s explanation of discourse seems to completely neglect the material world, or at least not engage with it explicitly. However, in this quote, the fact that discourse is defined as a “cluster of context-dependent semiotic practices” shows the strong interdependence between spatial and non-discursive perspectives and discourses.

Later in the same text, Wodak and Reisigl are more explicit about non-discursive elements: “The DHA considers *intertextual* and *interdiscursive relationships* between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as extra-linguistic social/sociological variables, the history of an organization or institution, and situational frames” (Wodak & Reisigl, 2009, p. 90). Here, there is theorization that discourse is connected to sociological variables, institutions, situations, all which suggest that place, situatedness and the material world play a significant role in structuring discourse, in being a terrain for discourse, and shaping our analysis of it.

A second important tenet of CDA is that discourse is conceptualized as a form of action and this action takes place in the material world. In CDA, discourse is constituted by social practice and at the same time constitutes it. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) note that “In CDA, language-as-

¹⁵ Jørgensen and Philipps however explain that there is a tendency to analyze images as if they were texts.

discourse is *both* a form of action through which people can change the world *and* a form of action that which is socially and historically situated in dialectical relationship with other aspects of the social” (JØrgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 62). Action is thus a conceptual bridge that inserts discourse into the material world, and therefore allows for a theorization of place as a terrain of struggle, through practice. The concept of discursive practice (a term also used frequently by Foucault and Fairclough) thus speaks back to an expression frequently used in CDA that “language has material effects.” Material effects are commonly depicted in CDA as uni-directional and deterministic. The choice of the word “effect” can imply a one-way trajectory from discourse to the material world, with the material world being the passive recipient of language’s all-powerful force. Instead, the dialecticism so important to Lefebvre in the concept of social practice and social action captures the multilateral relationships and influences that discourse and the material world have on each other.

Fairclough in particular speaks to the groundedness of discourse. He says that “the discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of people’s ideas in people’s heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted and oriented to real, material social structures” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 66) and as consisting of both discursive and non discursive elements. Fairclough for example cites the example of a non-discursive practice as the physical labor involved in building a bridge in contrast to other forms of discursive practice such as journalism or the stock market.

Another important epistemological opening for space in conceptualizations of CDA is the notion of structure. Structuralism, a broad current of thought that emerged in France with de Saussure’s structural linguistics in the early 20th century and later taken up in various fields - posits that individuals’ actions and words are framed and determined by larger macro societal structures. Frequently used examples of such determining social structures in CDA would be capitalism

(political economy), patriarchy, or racism. Discourse as a structural concept points to how repeated patterns of texts used by people form a truth, a logic, or an episteme. The individual in structuralism is the functional unit that enables the whole structure to reproduce itself. The individual plays an important role in being the determinant of structure. To Fairclough, these structures powerfully shape the production and consumption of texts in late modernity. Fairclough conceptualizes social structure in a way that is outside of discourse. However, Fairclough says that discourse has the potential to challenge the structure. He says “it is important that the relationship between social structure and discourse be seen dialectically if we are to avoid the pitfalls of overemphasizing on the one hand the social determination of discourse and on the other the construction of the social in discourse” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 65). Thus it is important for Fairclough to engage with the dialectical relationship between structure and discourse, studying the ways structures are constituted through discourse with repeated patterns of texts over time, how they then determine discursive events, but also how discursive events help re-shape and transform these very sedimented structures.

Institutions are also systems of significations and practice that Fairclough conceptualizes independently of discourse. As patterns of language settled in repeated practice over time, institutions powerfully structure social action and discursive events. Fairclough (1992) gives the example of the family. Relationships between parents and children are partially discursively constituted but they are affected by concrete practices, pre-existing identities and relationships. These practices were originally discursively constituted but were sedimented in institutions and non-discursive practices.

Non-discursive elements such as structure and institutions are therefore epistemological openings in critical discourse analysis that make it amenable to conceptualizing the importance of

space, place, and the material world. These non-discursive elements are often encapsulated in common CDA parlance as “contexts.” Although sociolinguistic and sociocultural analyses are primarily interested in interpreting texts, these perspectives place much emphasis in situating texts in contexts. Contexts therefore by no means can be neglected in the interpretation of texts. In so far as the contexts of texts consists of material spaces, places, histories, institutions and structures that situate the production of a text, Lefebvre’s framework can be said to be a comprehensive analytics that looks at both text and context as one object (multidimensional) of analysis. Lefebvre’s contribution is that language (text) does not suffice to explain the context. It reduces it. He thus “chooses space” (Soja, 1996). Soja says that his aim is not to reject but to spatialize and that spatialization is employed against theoretical closure and reductionism. The rejoining of discourse and space therefore points to theoretical dialecticism between space and critical discourse analysis approaches, and not an all-out unsolvable opposition.

2.5. Race and Place Discourses

Having clarified the epistemological articulations between discourse and spatial perspectives makes it possible to look at this articulation as a fertile theoretical terrain to study how racial discourses play out in relation to place, and how place is used as a material and symbolic grounding for the enactment and enunciation of racial meanings. Once place is understood as a dimension of social life shaped by discursive meanings, this ontological position allows for an understanding of place through intersectionality: as intricately related to all the dimensions of social life, including race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on. It allows for an understanding of the processes of place-based identity constructions as processes imbued with power, i.e., an economy of meanings which may reinforce hegemonic representations or disrupt them. As the ebbs and

flows of construction of race discourses are articulated with the ebbs and flows of constructions of place through discourse, it is nevertheless important to define the concept of race as it is understood in this dissertation, which is the subject of the next section.

2.5.1. Defining Race

The scientific consensus now defines race as historically constructed categories of meaning about groups of people who are perceived as sharing common physical characteristics, and descending from common ancestry (Law, 2010; Goldberg, 1993). Race however, is not a concept that stands on its own. It needs to be understood through the economic and social mechanisms that allowed for its historical construction and mobilization by powerful groups to other and exploit, and dominate subordinate groups. While race thinking has deep roots in pre-capitalist, pre-modern settings across the globe, current racial categories are said to have emerged through the system of domination and exploitation of the Western colonialism in tandem with the development of Western mercantile capitalism (Law, 2010) and have shaped global racial formations (Omi & Winant, 1999).

The ways powerful groups of people categorize others according to race, i.e. the ways processes of racialization occur, are multifold, complex, and changing; the process of racialization plays out differently in different contexts at different points in time and cannot be theorized globally or in broad brush strokes. Prominent race theorists remind researchers of race and race relations of the need to constantly look at how race takes shape in various settings and times and not to take race for granted (Essed & Goldberg, 2000; Law, 2010). Law (2010) explains that “identifying how race is being utilized and represented and how negative attribution is being articulated in particular situations are the two central problems that social scientists face in

establishing the existence of racism across the globe “(Law, 2010, p.3). The multi-semantic and ever-changing nature of processes of racialization makes the study of race and racism particularly challenging. Race is ubiquitous and elusive simultaneously. As an object of analysis, it must be held under close scrutiny and the articulation between different categories meanings must exposed and explained in each and every context.

The key aspect of racialization that I explore in this dissertation is the articulation of race through its association with other semantic categories in the specific context of Roche Bois. These categories are grounded in the empirical study of the data and include culture, religion, ancestry, work, and the body. In turn these categories take shape through place. I thus study race in this dissertation as an amalgam of different spatialized meanings specific to Roche Bois. Several scholars provide very useful conceptual tools around the ways race fluidly articulates with other categories, including place (Stoler, 1997; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001; Moore, Pandian, & Kosek, 2003). In the paragraphs that follow, I engage with these contributions in order to further highlight the ways race and racism works through spatial categories of meaning.

2.5.2. Understanding Race through Place

In their work on the discursive construction of racism, Wodak and Reisigl (2001) provide a definition of racism as a social construct, as a social practice, and as an ideology that manifests itself discursively. Here already, although not explicitly, Wodak and Reisigl link social practice and discourse. They assert that racism has material and discursive dimensions. More importantly, drawing on Miles (Miles, 1993), they theorize race as an ideology and a discursive practice that function to categorize people through the attribution of various other traits related to biology, culture, religion, language, among other factors. Central here is the idea of *syncretism*. In other

words, race functions through the articulation with other categories of meaning and identity. For the authors, racism is:

(...) both an ideology of a syncretic kind and a discriminatory social (including discursive) practice that could be institutionalized and backed by hegemonic social groups. Racism is based on the hierarchical construction of groups of persons that are characterized as communities of descent and to whom are attributed specific collective, naturalized, or biologically termed traits that are considered to be almost invariable. These traits are primarily related to biological features, appearance, cultural practices, customs, traditions, language, or socially stigmatized ancestors. These traits are explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly evaluated negatively, and this judgment is closely in accord with hegemonic views. As an ideological *mixtum compositum*, racism combines different, and sometimes even contradictory, doctrines, religious beliefs, and stereotypes, thereby constructing an almost invariable pseudocausal connection between-what could be fictitious-biological (genetic and phenotypic), social, cultural, and mental traits” (Wodak & Reisigl, p. 10, 2001).

In this view, race is a category of self that interconnects with other categories of self, such as geography, culture, class, gender, and so on, hence the appellation “ideological *mixtum compositum*.” These categories of self can be institutionalized and harnessed by powerful social actors, such as the ways school educators portray children; they are also enacted in the everyday outside of institutions. In all cases, racism is often articulated with other categories of meaning, including the body, space, geography, religion, culture, and so on.

Some have called the fluidity and multidimensional aspects of the process of racialization “the chameleonic” quality of race (Goldberg, 1993) or described the elusiveness of race as “polyvalent mobility” (Foucault, 1972). Stoler (1997) takes up the idea of polyvalent mobility to emphasize that racist discourse is mobile, that it does not display consistent political interests in all historical situations and that it lacks thematic unity. The chameleonic nature of race and its articulation with other categories of self, meaning, and identity is often attributed to a distinction scholars make between a racism that was more blatant and overt in the past and which focused on somatic, biological characteristics, and a “new racism,” that is nuanced and that uses cultural codes

(Gilroy, 1987; Stoler, 1997). In this view, racism has reconfigured itself away from explicit normative judgments about the body and physical/biological characteristics and transferred itself to the cultural, more intangible realm. Stoler (1997), however, does not find the distinction between old and new racism important, as she believes it is predicated on a reductive belief that old racism was simple and unilinear, seen as unproblematically natural. She further explains that this view does not necessarily show how some racisms draw on past differences to represent future utopias (such as Nazi Germany), and that now, racism is complex and denaturalized. Her point is that whether race manifests itself in its “old” or “new” version, race is precisely so resistant because of its chameleonic ability to survive time and reconfigure itself.

One of the ways race continues to enact its power is because it does not have any precise definition, thus depending on other categories. Place, including nature and the built environment can be a mechanism through which race is enacted. In a theoretical introduction to the edited collection *Race, Nature, and the Politics of Difference* (2003), Moore, Pandian & Kosek lay out theoretical grounds for a politics of nature and race. To the authors, race and nature work together, in different forms and mutations, in powerful ways. They deliberately use the notions of work, terrain and power as political and conceptual categories to show the cultural politics of race and nature. The idea of cultural politics is central. Culture is taken as a site of political struggle with material effects. And nature is not the material substratum, the container for racial relations but is instead historicized and productive, just as race is historicized and productive. They explain this dual articulation clearly:

Nature is not merely the material environment, nor is race merely a problem of social relations. Race and nature are both material and symbolic. They reach across this imaginary divide, acting at once through bodies and metaphors. Natural character is written into discourse and expression but is also worked into flesh and landscape. Racialized discourses mark both living beings and geographical territories with the force of their distinctions. We

take both race and nature as historical artifacts: assemblages of material, discourse, and practice irreducible to a universal essence” (Moore, Pandian & Kosek, 2003, p. 3).

The emphasis on “working together” draws theoretically from post-Marxist version of the notion of articulation (Hall, 2000). That is, race and nature are articulated together at specific moments. There is a non-essentialist reading of the articulation of race and nature as formation or a global order, following Winant (2001). They explain, drawing from Hall (2000) that, “the shape of this formation, the effectiveness of the linkages established among its elements, and the impact it will have on cultural, social, and political processes is historically contingent, not able to be “read” off from an underlying structural logic” (Moore, Pandian & Kosek, 2003, p. 3). The ways race articulates itself with nature and place, therefore cannot be assumed. It needs to be demonstrated with an attention to the local and the specific articulation of race/nature, depending on history and context.

There is a theoretical (and a necessarily historical) open-endedness in the process of studying the process of racialization as it plays out in different places and times. It cannot be read according to some underlying meta-logic. To describe this open-endedness, the authors critique the deterministic articulation of 1970s structural Marxism, as exemplified by Althusser, and instead propose Gramsci’s notion of the “terrain of the conjunctural” to show that the ways racial formations take shape, their efficacy and function are historically contingent, and this can be both dangerous and liberating. In other words, the process of articulating race and place can have both the potential for transformation and the ability to perpetuate and reinforce racial domination and hegemony.

2.6. The Articulations of Space, Discourse and Race in this Dissertation

This chapter has shown that although Lefebvre has critiqued discourse approaches to social life in favor of a spatial approach, discourse is in fact an important aspect of theorizations on space, namely, how powerful actors and institutions use discourse as a way to produce conceived spaces, and in turn how actors engage in discursive practices that produce lived spaces that disrupt the dominant conceived spaces. In turn, the chapter has also shown that Critical Discourse Analysis' tenets of structure and institutions, understood broadly as the "contexts" for texts are in dialectical relationship with texts and thus point to the importance of the material/non-discursive aspects of social life. The apparent dichotomy between discourse and space created by Lefebvre can thus instead be seen as a productive theoretical ground to understand how racial identities are discursively constructed through spatial meanings. Although race relations play out globally, they are enacted locally in various syncretic ways. The study of race, therefore, must not be taken for granted or assumed, and instead must be grounded in the specific histories of places.

This dissertation rejoins discourse and place allows for an analysis of the ways educators use categories (bodies, places, cultures, aesthetics) and invest them with racial meaning in the specific context of Roche Bois. It studies race not as an *a priori*, given category in an abstracted context, where a place is nameless and ahistorical, but rather studies current meanings of place as they play a part in the construction of the specific history of this place. I explore how actors participate in producing meanings of Roche Bois and how this participation may reproduce or transform historical meanings. This makes Lefebvre's ideas on the trifold production of social space a central articulating theory throughout the dissertation.

The first element of Lefebvre's trialectic, namely perceived space, threads through the entire dissertation. It consists of the production and reproduction of the relationships between

peoples and things, the particular location where these processes happen, that includes the actual context of the school in Roche Bois, the myriad educators' practices there and the meanings they invest in the space and the various identities they create for themselves and others, and the materialities of Roche Bois' environmental injustices, poverty, and histories of racialization. In short, perceived spaces are the *thick texture* of social reality that I captured through fieldnotes and observations. They are the totality of social processes that allow for the meanings and materialities of Roche Bois and its various identities to "work" as a mechanism. I do not engage with perceived spaces as a separate section of this dissertation, because it is a spatial dimension that is difficult to analytically disentangle from the next two conceived and lived spaces.

The second element of Lefebvre's trialectic is conceived space, understood here as patterns that produce an "order" that is imposed on meanings and identities at the school in Roche Bois. It overlays the other two perceived and lived spaces, although it is the dominant façade of those spaces because it consists of patterned interactions. As educators engage in repeated patterns of perceived space (spatial practice), I explore how they contribute to the production and reproduction of an order that becomes naturalized and hence, hegemonic. I analyze how this order takes shape discursively, what are the categories of meaning that it uses, and how it reproduces/perpetuates dominant ideas of Roche Bois for the children. The second element of Lefebvre's trialectic is explored specifically in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 engages with a long history of sedimentation of racial meanings of Roche Bois, and sets this history as an important context that dialectically structures educators' present meanings of Roche Bois identities. This historical context is central because it has an effect in the present. Although the relationship between the past and the present cannot be said to be causal, the history of Roche Bois racialization that I explore in chapter 4 shows how dominant meanings are created in Mauritian society about this space, and how these meanings

may shape, structure, and support the meanings educators make of place-based identities in school, which I analyze in chapter 5. Without this framing, educators' conceived spatial practices in chapter 5 might at best be understood as a lack of educational or pedagogical resources, and at worst through individual intentions. The historical context of the production of conceived spaces is thus a pivotal element of the analysis that allows educators' words to be understood sociologically through the larger societal forces that they are a part of.

The third element of Lefebvre's trialectic is lived space. This element overlays perceived and conceived spaces. Lived space disrupts the naturalness of the other two spaces; it imagines space differently and thus can transform the status quo. I explore how educators, oftentimes the same educators that produce conceived spaces, also provide place-based images and symbols that stand in contrast to the dominant conceived spaces and interrupt them. Lived spaces in this dissertation are explored as moments of transformative possibility, however banal. I reflect on them as the basis for reimagining educator training and practice as decolonization and reinhabitation, the two tenets of a critical pedagogy of place advocated for by Gruenewald (2003). My analysis thus attempts to highlight that analyzing discourse and space, or text and context as one unit of analysis make for a productive study of the ways children's racial identities are situated and being re-situated in place.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methodological approach in the study, including data collection tools I used and analysis techniques. After restating the research purpose to remind readers of the goals of the study, I give a broad description of the ways ethnographic research allows for a linking of micro and macro spheres of social life, then I describe how the Critical Discourse Analysis tenets of criticality, discourse and discursive practices, multiple approaches, and ideology inform my analytical approach to this study. Then, the chapter turns to the population studied, making the case for the analytical category of educator, describing the data collected and timeframe, and the methodology for data selection and reduction. The Discourse Historical Approach of Wodak and her colleagues (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2009), which I used as an instrument of analysis is the subject of the following section. A discussion of the limitations of this study ends the chapter.

3.1.1. Research Purpose Restated

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways educators construct children's places in a larger historical context. To do this, I examine how the space of Roche Bois was historically racialized through key events as a way to contextualize educators' present meanings. I then examine how school educators represent children's spaces during whole-school assemblies and in the

classroom, and how representations of place are racialized. Finally, I evaluate whether discourses of place in school perpetuate or transform the historical ideologies associated with Roche Bois as a racialized community. By studying representations of Roche Bois by educators in school, my purpose is to understand the intersection of two discourses of place and race, and understand the ways place potentially acts as a code for racial meanings.

3.2. Methodological Approach

Approaches are “systemic yet dynamic (...) social scientific formations that provide loosely defined structures for conceiving, designing, and carrying out research projects” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 17). I use the term “approach” here following Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) over the commonly known “methods” or “methodology,” which “falsely connote rigid templates of sets of techniques for the proper conduct of research” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 17). My approach to research benefited from previously developed frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis, and more specifically the Discourse Historical Approach for the study of racial identities (Wodak, 2002; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001; Wodak & Reisigl, 1999) as well as ethnographic tools of data collection, including thick description (Geertz, 1973). In the following two sections, I describe in more detail how my research approach adapted ethnographic and discourse analytic understandings for capturing elements of social life in the specific study of educator talk in the context of Roche Bois.

3.2.1. Ethnographic Approach as a Bridge between Micro and Macro

Ethnographic research examines the ways people create, reproduce, or contest meaning through their words and their practices. In this dissertation, I map the “systems of meanings and

practices” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005) that educators create about the place of Roche Bois. To do this mapping, I use the key theoretical-methodological concept of discourse, which allows for a bridging of the micro words and actions of educators, with the macro historical political context of race relations in Mauritius. At the micro level, I look for patterns of meaning across educators’ practice. The creation of meanings about the place of Roche Bois is on the one hand an intangible discursive activity that produces language and representations of a place. The everyday interactions that produce place therefore constitute the myriad micro moments that create history. The macro level consists of the historical economic and political contexts out of which micro meanings emerge and which they help create and reproduce. As the next chapter will show, this dissertation’s attention to the formation of place and race in its broader macro-historical context as well as its micro instantiations in schools engages with the historical racialization of Roche Bois, its situation as a poor vulnerable community near the harbor and the industrial zone, in light of the broader history of workers in Mauritius.

3.2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis Approach

I analyze data collected using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, and specifically, the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), a type of CDA (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Before delving into the specifics of DHA tools, I outline several basic principles that broadly undergird CDA as a field as these principles inform this dissertation research.

3.2.3. Discourse, Discursive Practice, and Interpellation

A common definition of discourse in CDA is language as social practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Language in this sense is productive and constructive of social

realities, rather than being descriptive of a true reality “out there.” Discourse consists of language and actions that form a system of meaning, or a frame for seeing the world. As systems of meanings, discourses constitute the world, rather than being mere representations or reflection of it. The notion of discursive practice captures the “in-the-worldness” of discourse.

As discussed in chapter 2, the relationship between discourse and the world is dialectical: a discursive event “is in dialectical relationship with the situations, institutions, and social structures which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them but it also shapes them” (Wodak, 2002, p. 8). In this dissertation, the main discursive events are the discursive practices of educators at school (how they speak and act in school), and how these speech situations dialectically interact and help shape larger historical formations of Creole identity anchored in the specific place of Roche Bois, which discourse constructs as a symbolic space representing this identity, and in which, in turn structures continued patterns of meanings about the place. As such, my research examines discursive events as a process of linking of present words and practices to a larger sociopolitical context. I posit that the meanings educators generate about places can have important material effects on children’s lives, bodies, aspirations, actions, and identities. While I do not examine the children’s meanings directly, I study the kinds of identities children are “solicited into” by school educators through the process interpellation (Althusser, 1971). Althusser uses this term to explain how people are subjectified by ideological systems of representation. He explains that through the simple act of someone hailing someone else in the street and the hailed person turning around, a subject is constructed. The hailed person is transformed into a subject by discourse. When educators speak about children in places, they form categories for children to identify themselves with (or not). They establish systems of representation for children about their own identities. While children have the power to resist the established views on themselves, they also are subjected

to them. As such, studying educators' discourse on children of Roche Bois is an important, yet partial, aspect of understanding possible modes of interpellation and consequently of possible identity construction for children.

3.2.4. Ideology

CDA studies the ways language use constructs the world. As such, language is the site of power and ideologies. Ideologies here are understood, following Wodak and Meyer as “hidden and latent types of everyday beliefs which often appear disguised in conceptual metaphors and analogies,” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8). I emphasize here the latent aspect of ideologies mentioned by Wodak and Meyer: the ways they are enduring and powerful. The hidden nature of ideologies renders them neutral, and ideologies therefore are reinforced through this seeming neutrality. The very fact that they are hidden calls for an attention to language as discursive practice. If discrimination was always outward and explicit, there would be no need to look closely at linguistic utterances. However, since discrimination often takes shape through a variety of meanings, a close linguistic analysis is needed. This dissertation explores how racial ideologies take hold through recurrent thematic patterns that are realized linguistically through analogies, metaphors, and references to place, among other linguistic features. Using spatial meanings, for example, may allow speakers to diverge from direct discriminatory somatic meanings. Space therefore can become a dominant discourse, seemingly neutral, but which powerfully carries processes of racialization as ideological effects of discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

A caveat concerning the question of ideological “hiding” is in order here. While Althusser assumed that ideological representations are a system of masking and distorting the true relations of power between classes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), my purpose is not to uncover any more

profound truth behind educators' words. Rather, taking a poststructural ontological stance toward discourse, I understand the world as a collection of competing and related discourses that shape space and that are shaped by space. The question is not to unmask the truth behind these discourses but to understand their ideological conditions of emergence and how they work to enable and constrain access to resources in larger systems of power in specific contexts.

More importantly, I seek not to explain people's intentions, rationalities or desires behind discourse, but rather, I take educators as caught in the discursive "grids of intelligibility" (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93) that are cultural, and structured in society through history and through daily practice. While educators have the power to transform these meanings, they also can reproduce them. The systems of discourse are present beyond the educators' lives, in the histories of colonialism and capitalism that have shaped the place of Roche Bois and its inhabitants' lives.

3.2.5. Criticality

The term "critical" in CDA entails a paradigmatic stance toward the social world: in contrast to theories and methodologies that seek to describe a world as an objective reality outside of human experience, a critical stance seeks to change the world by exposing and explaining issues of power (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). In that regard, CDA is squarely political and admits its own positionality. By exposing and understanding power relations, critique seeks liberation and emancipation for oppressed groups. As a critical study, as described in chapter 1, I tackle the issue of the construction of race and place in school in Roche Bois precisely because of the urgency of addressing long-standing issues of race and racism in the postcolonial context of Mauritius, and of the conflation between communalist identity politics and colorblind racism. The topic is not chosen

randomly: it responds to this important and yet unaddressed issue of marginalization of Creole children in schools (Bunwaree, 2002; Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

3.2.6. Multiple Approaches in CDA

Although the tenets of discourse, criticality, power and ideology are common throughout most approaches to CDA, real differences exist between different approaches (for a thorough overview of various CDA approaches, see Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002 and Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This study delves into the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) used by Wodak and colleagues in various studies (Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Wodak, 2002; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001; 1999). The DHA framework lends itself particularly well to this study because it incorporates tools for the study of how people and places are referred to, as well as how identities are constructed discursively. Past studies concerning the discursive construction of racism and antisemitism (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001) and the discursive construction of national identities (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999) are particularly related to the subject in this study, because they engage with questions of nationalism, territorialization, exclusion, and discrimination in a larger historical context. The Discourse Historical Approach is therefore the primary analytical framework used in this study. I outline the specific steps I employed with the DHA framework in Section 3.6 below, after describing the setting, school, and the educators I studied.

3.3. Setting, Population, and Sample

3.3.1. Participants: Using the Analytical Category of “Educators”

This dissertation studies the ways eight educators in a school speak about the students’ locality, for the most part, in an effort to make learning relevant to children. The eight educators are adults who have daily contact with the children at school, in the classrooms, schoolyards, and in daily whole-school assemblies. The group I chose for this study does not aim to be representative of a larger population of educators in ZEP schools or nationally. Rather, the population studied is chosen as a case because of their situation as educators in a school in the particular town of Roche Bois, a place that carries important historical weight as regards the racialization of Creole people. The study makes claims on thematic patterns seen across educator talk (see Appendix C for an overview of thematic patterns across educators) but also highlights moments of divergence in these patterns. Although the study does not make generalizations about ZEP schools or Mauritian schools at large, the thematic patterns that thread through eight educators’ talk out of fifteen educators at the school can be said to be representative of systems of meaning at this particular school. In turn, these patterns could be indicative of larger cultural patterns of racialization at this school in relation to this particular township.

My choice of the category of educator here is deliberate for theoretical, methodological and ethical reasons. At a theoretical level, I follow a poststructural ontological stance toward the subject and its relation to discourse. In this perspective, there is a dialectical relationship between individuals (as subjects) and discourses. Following Foucault (Foucault, 1976/1978) and other CDA analysts (Fairclough, 1992), I use discourses as autonomous systems of meanings that constitute the world, including knowledge (concepts) and people’s identities (subjects). In this view, subjects are

not originators of discourse. Rather, subjects and discourses exist in dialectical tension: people have agency in shaping discourse, and discourse at the same time produces subjects' identities. This stance reconceptualizes the human subject as produced in the interplay of various discourses (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). Indeed, "[f]or postmodern, poststructural critical theorists, the subject is neither autonomous nor coherent nor teleological in nature. Instead, the subject is constructed within various 'discursive systems' or discourses that normalize what it means to be a subject in the first place" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 48). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis' description of the subject's construction within discourse shows that discourses have normative and productive power over subjects.

I employ the category of "educators" to describe the eight research participants. Taking a view of subjects as constituted by discourse, and yet taking up discourses in contradictory ways that can challenge and transform powerful discourses, I highlight common themes and similar representations across educator talk, and in the analysis in chapter 5, I chose to foreground specific representative examples. Because I examine patterns with adults who have institutional power in school, the study assumes that as a group, educators produce meanings that have strong power of interpellation for children. Educators may shape children's experiences and understanding of themselves since educators determine the schedule for the day, the ways curriculum is imparted on children, the ways children are praised or sanctioned, and the meanings that children hear about themselves. When children encounter educators' patterned meanings at school, these meanings may become the "picture" of the school for the children. The category of "educator" is therefore a form of abstraction in order to study patterns across educators and the ways their meanings would potentially shape children's identities.

Using the category of educator ensures that I “displace the locus of rationality from the mind of the subject” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 48). I thus refer to educators using a lettering system (A, B, C) and not a system of pseudonyms which are more typical in qualitative research. This lettering system describes the eight adults, a group which includes teachers, administrators, and school support staff. While this type of naming flattens the distinctions that could be made between their various roles within the school, their various types of rapport with the children, and the power dynamics among them, including seniority and position at the school, the choice of a lettering system versus pseudonyms stems my own reflection as regards the power of naming, and the kinds of ontological stance the use of pseudonyms presumes.

As I was reflecting on my representational choices, it became clear that pseudonyms have personalizing effects and that these effects may solicit a psychological-intimate rapport between the reader of a name and the person named. Using personalized pseudonyms might have reduced the problem of spatial racialization to a narrow, psychological dimension of the subject, and reduce the thinking about possible solutions to technicist approaches of individual change through teacher training, for instance. If I used pseudonyms like “Nirma,” “Bernard,” or “Shakuntala,” to refer to educators, readers of my representation of the educators might be drawn to think about the problem of spatial racialization in terms that involve the personal life-backgrounds and psychological dimensions of the educators’ practices, including their inner dispositions toward their students, or their level of training. These are life dimensions that I deliberately chose not to explore with the educators who participated in my study because I do not posit them as individually responsible for the larger societal discourses that their practices and words are caught in. This study does not hold individual educators responsible for the ideologies constructed at a societal level. This dissertation’s attention to the macro-historical making of Roche Bois into a racialized space is

designed specifically to provide the historical-sociological-political context for understanding ideologies in educators' words.

In sum, at a methodological level, the choice of the category of "educator" is an approach that helps me respond to my research questions which seek to analyze how *discourses* of place are connected to children's racialization in educator talk and not *why* educators personally chose certain discursive stances. As discussed in the above paragraphs, the main unit/object of analysis is the interconnection between place and race at a discursive level in a broader context of history, and not the individual teachers' and principals' psychologies, intentions, degree of voluntarism, or cognitive or developmental patterns. This stance toward discursive practice rather than the individual is important because it avoids an analysis that confines itself to individual solutions to the problem of spatial racialization in urban marginalized contexts and rather situates the understanding of educator discursive practices within their political historical context.

However, to be consistent with poststructural theorizations of discourse as a system of meaning yet open-ended and undetermined, and also being cognizant of examining practices that could disrupt larger patterns, my analysis is cautious to not assume that educators are all the same, and I thus refer to them individually using a lettering system and the instances where I use their words are contextualized and dated within the various lessons, assemblies, and textbook units they are located in. Also, so as to not to paint a monolithic and predetermined picture of educators' meanings of race and place as solely reproductive of negative societal ideologies, in addition exploring patterns across educator talk, my study also explores critical moments that are outliers to the norm. Chapter 6 analyzes these discursive practices to show moments of opening, disjuncture, and unpredictability, and further, to point to areas of transformative possibility.

Finally, a reflection on the ethics of research and the protection of confidentiality of my participants confirmed my use of category of educators as an additional layer of anonymity. Because of the contextual specificity of the study in Roche Bois, (as discussed in Section 3.3.2 on place anonymity below) and because the study of race and racism is a sensitive subject, I opted for a representational stance that depersonalized their identities by not using pseudonyms. As additional measures of protection, I use a pseudonym for the school, I do not mention participants' positions or roles at the school, and I have randomly switched their genders when I speak about them in the analysis narratives (chapters 5 & 6). When I analyze classroom discourse, I do not mention the grade level and rather situate the practice in a more generalized category of upper-primary.

3.3.2. Reflections on the Anonymity of Places and People

As mentioned above, pseudonyms are generally used extensively in social science research. Hiding the names of places, institutions and people is usually taken for granted and the ethics and implications of this obfuscation are a given. Researchers usually believe that anonymizing places and people is a way to protect participants from any harm in research. Nespors, on the other hand, argues that using pseudonyms, especially in the case of places has political consequences (Nespors, 2000). He points out that using pseudonyms is not a neutral practice; rather, it carries certain assumptions about the ways social scientists represent the world. Specifically, he explains that making places anonymous is linked to a theoretical stance that seeks to generalize across cases and examples, being "movable," standardized, and decontextualized from the geographies and histories that make the dynamics of places. He aligns this mode of theorizing space in its abstraction with the reshaping of the public sphere into increasingly privatized zones, where deliberation and public debate is mitigated. By anonymizing places, their specific histories are decontextualized and

reduced to the private abstract world of the researcher, thus delinking them from an important anchoring in time and space of the publics. Nespors suggests that place anonymization should be reconsidered in qualitative research, not by simply naming places for the sake of naming, but by incorporating the naming process into the reshaping of relationships of people with places, including distant readers and writers. In other words, he argues that the very act of naming exposes how places are constructed through various interconnections among people, including the researcher and the researched. This presupposes a conception of place that is socially constructed, porous, open, and democratic.

As mentioned above, to protect the identities of my participants, I have taken a number of measures, including choosing to use the anonymous and generic analytical category of “educator” to speak about them, switching genders, and not mentioning classrooms or roles within the school. When it is necessary to distinguish between participants, I use letters to differentiate who is speaking, as in Educator A or Educator B. I also use a pseudonym for the name of the school where the research took place.

However, I opted not to anonymize the research locality of Roche Bois. Following Nespors (2000), this choice is guided by the importance of anchoring the study in grounding geographies. Roche Bois plays a key role in the Mauritian racialized imaginary and its specificity is therefore important. This study therefore anchors Roche Bois in the specific histories of the social textures in the larger postcolonial context of Mauritius.

3.3.3. Gaining Access

3.3.3.1. Access To Roche Bois

My entry into the Roche Bois community was greatly facilitated by a local Non-Governmental Organization, *Mouvement pour le Progrès de Roche Bois* (MPRB). When I arrived in Mauritius in November 2008, I wanted to meet families and children in Roche Bois, before the school year started in January 2009 because understanding the context of Roche Bois society was important. MPRB is an active organization in the community and runs a variety of educational programs for hundreds of children, including literacy sessions and parent education classes. I built rapport with four female fieldworkers of MPRB whose responsibility was to conduct educational sessions with the children, to visit to their homes and families, and to act as mentors for children and parents. The fieldworkers were a key entry point for my access to Roche Bois. Together, we visited fifteen to twenty families to have tea and talk about their children and lives, education issues and daily challenges. The fieldworkers also led me to the Roche Bois waste compacting facility, known as “*Robis*,” a landfill where many parents and children spent their days rummaging for metal parts, plastic bottles and other items that might be of use for resale or consumption. I went to the “*River Camp*,” an encampment of tin shacks on the embankment of a river below the highway, where several children lived. I familiarized myself with the topography of Export Processing Zone factories in the area and found out about parents’ difficult employment conditions and low wages in these factories. I observed children playing soccer in the vacant pieces of land in Roche Bois. I saw them use sticks and build traps, hunting for *Tang*, a type of hedgehog commonly eaten in Mauritius in popular classes. I went to visit the deserted coastal conservation area where I found park officials sleeping on juxtaposed chairs waiting for tourists and/or locals to visit the site. I accompanied the fieldworkers on a field trip with the children up to the center of the island, on the high plateaus, to

visit a crater called Trou-aux-Cerfs and then picnic and play games at the lush Botanical Gardens nearby. My relationship with the four fieldworkers and my familiarity with their work with families and children opened up my knowledge of the community of Roche Bois, its struggle with negative perceptions and histories of racialization, and environmental justice concerns. Some of the observations of Roche Bois that are presented in chapter 4 are partially based on copious fieldnotes of conversations and observations from these experiences during the nine months of my research in Roche Bois.

3.3.3.2. Access To The School

I secured official permission from the Mauritius Ministry of Education to do research at a school by sending a letter that included a synopsis of my study and a sample informed consent form. I received written notification from the ministry that I was allowed to conduct research at school for the first two trimesters of the year, from January 2009 to July 2009. The ministry deemed that my presence at school at the third trimester (August-November) might be disruptive to teachers in light of preparations for the high stakes testing that wraps up the school year in November in 6th grade (Standard VI).

My rapport with many children of the school had previously been facilitated by my contact with MPRB and my visits to the Roche Bois from November 2008 to January 2009. When the school opened for a new academic year in January 2009, many children already knew me and rushed to greet me at the gate, to say hello, or to walk with me to the classrooms I was observing that day.

My rapport with educators did not benefit from the same head start as with the children and was built gradually. I had initially designed the study to focus on one classroom because I had

wanted to study children's place-making practices¹⁶ and one classroom would have provided sufficient data for this inquiry. Toward choosing a focal classroom, I observed and took notes in the six upper-primary classrooms (two fourth grades, two fifth grades, and two sixth grades). Focusing on upper-primary grades seemed appropriate to my research topic as questions of locality and place are taught more explicitly in these grades as part of the science, history, and geography curriculum. In addition, higher stakes are attached to teaching these subjects at these grade levels because students are preparing to take the national Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination. From January 2009 to March 2009, I rotated between classrooms three mornings a week (from 8:30 AM to 1:15 pm) to gain insight into as many classrooms as possible. I also observed twice daily whole-school assemblies, one starting at 8:30 AM and the other at 1 PM. All teachers, administrators, and school staff were welcoming to me and invited me to their classrooms, even at times inviting me to substitute for teacher absences. After the first approximately three months of rotation between two fourth grades, two fifth grades, and two sixth grades, I chose to spend more time in a one classroom because I already knew children from my visits to Roche Bois families with the NGO fieldworkers, although I continued to occasionally visit other classrooms as well. The remaining months of my research were spent almost solely in this classroom, as well as in daily whole-school assemblies. The educators remained flexible about my presence in their classrooms and at daily assemblies throughout the seven months at the school.

¹⁶ In addition to educator talk, I had initially intended to analyze children's active place-making practices. To do so, I was on the look out for a pedagogical atmosphere in which children were encouraged to react to what was taught (in order to more easily document student productive work). However, the six classrooms observed had a high number of students (on average 35 to 40). The high teacher-to-pupil ratio as well as the focus on testing made for highly teacher centered pedagogical styles. I faced difficulty in documenting student creative words and work, even if I conducted student group interviews. This study therefore focuses on educator talk at school, and not on the learners' experiences

3.3.4. School Setting

The focal school is a first through sixth grade school (Standard I through Standard VI), which enrolls approximately 400 children. It is classified as an Educational Priority Zone (ZEP) school within the public school system. Schools enter the ZEP classification if they are low-achieving, that is, if they have a pass rate at Certificate of Primary Education examination (CPE) of less than 40% over five years (Lam Hung, 2008). All the elementary schools in the area, which include Roche Bois' elementary schools, as well as the neighboring schools in Baie du Tombeau, are classified as ZEP schools. The ZEP classification indicates sustained patterns of issues of access and achievement in education. As a result, ZEP schools have certain programmatic distinctions designed to support student learning. For example, ZEP schools provide food to students. In addition, they are encouraged to partner with corporations in the private sector and other non-governmental organizations, who are solicited to give material supplies, or pay salaries for support staff. The ZEP model is designed to have lower pupil-to-teacher ratios to allow more focused attention to the students. All the classrooms I observed in the school however, had thirty to forty students per teacher. Teachers in ZEP schools receive a special monetary allowance for their placement there, as the placement is deemed more undesirable than others. At the school in this study, all teachers had undergone the same teacher training at the Mauritius Institute of Education. As is custom in the Mauritian educational system, no teacher was there by choice; all had been placed there by the state. Two out of fifteen staff lived in or were from Roche Bois. Others were from neighboring and sometimes distant towns.

3.4. Data Collection Strategies

I collected data in Roche Bois from November 2008 to July 2009. Further data collection occurred in June 2010 and December 2011 when I did follow-up and confirming interviews. Over the course of the first two trimesters of the 2009 school year from January 2009 to July 2009, I gathered three main types of data: (1) participant observation data in the form of field notes and audio recordings of educator talk during classroom lessons and during whole-school assemblies, (2) interviews with educators and community people, (3) archival and literature searches of Roche Bois' urban history. The analyses of educator talk in school in chapters 5 and 6 are based mainly on participant observation data, while interviews and literature searches are used for the historical context in chapter 4 and for confirming of major findings. I describe each type of data in the sections below, and Table 1 (in the next section) summarizes the main data types and collection schedule.

3.4.1. Participant Observation in Classrooms and Assemblies

From January to March 2009, I rotated between six classrooms. I spent three mornings a week at school and at each visit, I rotated between two fourth-grade, two fifth-grade, and two sixth-grade classrooms during lessons on science, history, and geography. In each classroom, I arrived at school begin (8:30 am) and left shortly after the second daily assembly at 1:15 pm, or sometimes earlier at the lunch break at 12:20 pm. I observed and “thickly described” (Geertz, 1973) educators and students' daily interactions and behaviors, paying attention to the content taught and the ways it related to the children's places. Thick description was an important way for me to document the level of “perceived spaces” (Lefebvre, 1991) or spatial practices, which were the totality of material practices and social relations that made up the spaces and relations of school in Roche Bois. I wrote

about the ways educators led the assembly, how they stood in front of the children while the children were in ranks, how they spoke about Roche Bois. I wrote about educator routines in the classrooms, the number of students, the content of the lessons, the textbook exercises, and the language people used.

In terms of the amount of data collected, during this time of participant observation in various classrooms and in daily assemblies, I accumulated thirty pages of hand written notes and ten hours of recording of classroom interactions. From April to July 2009, I spent more time in one of the six classrooms I had visited during the rotations, although I continued to visit other classrooms as well and attend the daily-whole school assemblies. During this time, I gathered fifty pages of fieldnotes and twenty hours of recorded classroom interactions. Throughout the two trimesters, I attended the twice-daily whole-school assemblies, led by various educators, which lasted approximately fifteen minutes each. The results of this observation are twenty pages of notes and four hours of transcripts.

Table 1: Summary of Data Collection & Schedule

Location	Type of Data Gathered	Time Frame	Number of Sessions	Data Volume
Six upper-primary classrooms	Fieldnotes	Jan – July 2009	27	30 pgs.
	Audio	Jan – July 2009	27	10 hrs.
One upper primary classroom	Fieldnotes	April – July 2009	30	50 pgs.
	Audio	April – July 2009	30	20 hrs.
Whole school assemblies	Fieldnotes	Jan – July 2009	57	20 pgs.
	Audio	Jan – July 2009	57	4 hrs.

3.4.2. Translation & Transcription

As described in chapter 1, the way that languages are used in Mauritius, and especially in Mauritian schools, is complex and shaped by colonial language policies, ideologies of legitimacy and high culture regarding French and English, and *in situ* use of the lingua franca *Kreol*, mother tongue of most Mauritians. While the curriculum, textbooks, and standardized examinations are in English, instructors in all schools typically code-switch between French, English, and *Kreol*, with *Kreol* being the most frequent language used. During my transcription of educators' multilingual speech, I kept educators' code-switching in its integrity. However, to present and analyze the data in this dissertation, I translated educators' speech to English, even if this was not the actual language used in the classroom. Code-switching practices are therefore not apparent in the data I present. I am deeply aware that this is a reductive move, because language use throughout the school is an important layer of social reality for both educators and children, and the codes chosen channel ideologies in and of themselves. Many power dynamics and identity positionings occur through speakers' linguistic moves. However, exploring these linguistic choices and patterns was not a level of analysis within the scope of this current analysis.

3.4.3. Literature Searches & Oral History Interviews

In addition to spending time documenting practices at school, the question of historical background was essential to situating educators' present meanings in a larger context. To gather the most information about Roche Bois' past, I conducted literature searches on the history of Mauritius and Roche Bois to find out how it was shaped demographically throughout the decades, and how it was represented in the past and in the present. I first searched the databases accessible

via the library at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. While I did not find any sources dealing with Roche Bois specifically, aside from a few notable exceptions, Boswell's *Le Malaise Creole* (Boswell, 2006), and Baptiste's (2002) dissertation *A Nation Deferred: Ethnicity and the Reproduction of Social Inequalities in Mauritian Primary Schools*. Several works on the history of Mauritius and Port Louis were available, such as Toussaint's *Port Louis, a Tropical City* (Toussaint, 1973) or Simone's *On the Dynamics of Ambivalent Urbanization and Urban Productivity in Port Louis, Mauritius* (Simone, 2006).

The availability of a few sources in the United States did not allow me to gather sufficient information on Roche Bois' history. Turning to local sources in order to find more detailed background, while I was in Mauritius, I overcame the bureaucratic obstacles to have access to the University of Mauritius library¹⁷. An interesting source I found that dealt specifically with Roche Bois was Fanfan's *Youth Problems in Roche Bois* (Fanfan, 2000) which was the only local source I found that dealt specifically with Roche Bois' history, alongside the more well-known pluridisciplinary study on exclusion *Etude Pluridisciplinaire sur l'Exclusion a Maurice* (Asgarally, 1997) which used Roche Bois as one of the sites to study social marginalization. After my fieldwork, my research also greatly benefited from the later publication of the *Truth and Justice Commission Report* (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011) that outlined a history of Mauritius from a subaltern perspective.

The availability of published material such as mentioned above notwithstanding, the literature on Roche Bois was scarce. In order to further galvanize my knowledge of the histories that shaped the place, I gathered oral testimonies from residents of Roche bois. During one of my

¹⁷ At the time of my research from November 2008 to July 2009, it was not possible for the public to freely enter the University of Mauritius library to browse the stacks. I had to secure permission as well as pay a fee of MUR 500 to gain access to the library for three days. In addition to this bureaucratic hurdle, the Mauritian collection (collection of works about Mauritius) is housed in a secured area in the library, accessible only for reserve for a maximum of two hours.

return trips to Mauritius, I conducted oral history interviews on Roche Bois with elders and community leaders, all people that I had previously met through the NGO MPRB during my research there in 2008-2009. My only criteria for selecting interviewees was that they must have grown up in Roche Bois and have lived there for several decades, enough to have witnessed some of the main events (such as the racial conflicts that occurred there in 1968 or the 1999 riots). In December 2011, I gathered six narratives. Since these interviews were conducted after I had finished the study at school and already had an analysis underway, I structured the questions according to the themes that had been generated in schools by educators such as safety on the highway, issues of negative perception of Roche Bois, and issues of racialization of Roche Bois. The oral history interviews complemented the historical information that I had already gathered about Roche Bois' history. They also confirmed how the themes observed in school at the time of the study resonated with historical patterns. For a complete list of questions asked during oral history interviews, refer to Appendix B.

3.4.4. Confirming Interviews

Ethnographic writing typically involves representing emic perspectives, i.e. meanings expressed by participants, as well as etic perspectives, involving the researcher's theoretical and epistemological frames of reference in academic discourses. Of particular challenge in qualitative representation is the account of emic perspectives, for the very idea of being able to gather and represent participant voices in a "pure" fashion functions on the positivist orientation that it is possible to re-present participants' voices objectively, without the imposition of interpretive/explanatory frameworks which characterize etic meanings. Many have argued that the data collection process itself is already an act of interpretation (DuFon, 2002). Others have called this meta-interpretation of the

world “violent” (St Pierre, 2000). The dichotomy between emic and etic therefore may reify the modernist stance on knowledge and representation of the world as an object outside of human experience. Denzin and Lincoln circumvent the issue of positivist validation by describing triangulation as an alternative to validation:

The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. We know a thing only through its representations. Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation (Flick, 2002, p.227). The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5)

Admitting that representing participants’ voices in pure fashion is not possible in interpretive critical research, which admits its own partiality and (political) positionality, I understand the triangulation here as a process that, while still interpretive, enriches the inquiry, allowing for the convergence of information from different times, social situations, and people. This convergence adds layers to the data collected, and therefore providing a “thicker” knowledge base for the analysis. The triangulation interviews are also important for consistency with my theoretical formulations, as I do not frame educators as a passive recipient and reproducers of discourses, but rather as active subjects who negotiate discourses in creative ways.

To engage in the interviews, I structured the questions around central theme of educators’ and society’s negative representations of Roche Bois. Specifically I asked educators why Roche Bois was frequently represented negatively by teachers in school, and what consequences this perception might have for children. Interview questions with educators are available in the Appendix A. In December 2011, I interviewed four educators. All the interviews were semi-formal and lasted approximately 45 minutes.

In addition to providing additional sources of information for claims, interviews allow participants to explicitly establish their own narratives and as such, are a political move that helps (but does not solve) the issue of representation of participants in research. I chose to address the questions of race and place broadly with educators, without personalizing the question or making any individual accusations. Because of the sensitive nature of my analysis linking place and meanings about race, it was important to me to share the idea that there were patterns in Roche Bois negative presentation with educators and invite them to add their voices to this observation. Each educator reflected and addressed this question and their voices are included in the coda (section 6.6) in chapter 6.

It remains clear, however, that despite this measure to ensure that participants' voices are included, the process of ethnographic representation/writing itself is a level of interpretation "over" participants' voices. Even if interviews are concerned with sharing of findings for more "democratic" knowledge production and representation, they are subject to meta-interpretation by the researcher, especially during the writing process. I acknowledge that even my rendering of educators' perspectives in the coda in chapter 6 is partial and situated. Participants in my study might have different frames of reference to explain the social processes they are part of.

3.5. Overview of Discourse Historical Analysis

My analysis draws from Wodak's and Reisigl's (2001) Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) on rhetorics of racism and anti-semitism as well as on Wodak et al's discursive construction of national identity (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999). Wodak and her colleagues' Discourse Historical Analysis lends itself particularly to the subject of this study as it examines how processes of racist and anti-Semitic othering are constructed through language. I have adapted their framework and discussed the ways history can be incorporated into the analysis through the

analytical concept of “strategy,” which I will describe in great detail below. First, however, I will describe the Discourse Historical Approach as its adherents (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak, 2002; Reisigl & Wodak, 1999; 2001) employ it. The Discourse Historical Approach proposes three main analytical tools to understand the discursive construction of identity. These are: contents, strategies, and linguistic means of realization. I describe these each in turn below, as they are employed by Wodak and various research teams.

3.5.1. Content

The domain of content consists of broad semantic topical areas within a set discourse such as racism, or nationalism. In Wodak and her colleagues’ work on national identity, they distinguish topical areas in such as the construction of a collective political history or common culture. In this study, an example of a content topical area in the discourse of race would be references to someone’s body or someone’s culture as linked to their geographical origin. Content areas also include the historical and political contexts and other contextual aspects that are relevant to the analysis (Blackledge, 2005).

3.5.2. Strategies

Wodak and colleagues also use the notion of strategy as a key analytical block. Here I describe strategies as defined by Wodak (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 2009). Later in section 3.6.2, I discuss how I adapt and build on strategies in my analysis of educator talk. Strategies are a central analytical dimension of the Discourse Historical Approach. In the DHA tradition, strategies are “more or less accurate plans to achieve certain political, psychological, or other kind of objective”

(de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 2009, p. 31). Put simply, strategies are a way to analyze what language is doing; they are analytical interpretive tools to examine how content areas (for example themes of place) become meaningful and what function they achieve in a given setting and time. Two examples (among others) of strategies developed by Wodak in the study of national identity are strategies related to identity are *construction* (how identities are built discursively) and *transformation* (how they change discursively).

The concept of strategy is located between structure and agency. According to Wodak and her colleagues, speakers do not necessarily use strategies instrumentally or voluntarily; neither do strategies come only from larger discursive structures. Instead, strategies bridge both individual intention and discursive structure. Wodak and her colleagues' explain that the concept of strategy is informed by Bourdieu's conception who explains that people engage in actions in ways that are conditioned by their own habitus and the field where they perform their actions. In this sense, strategies are scripts of schemes of action that are both active and passive, determined by actors and by discursive structures at the same time (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999, p. 31). This liminal position simultaneously absolves some responsibility from social actors for the strategies they employ discursively by situating them in a larger discursive-historical context but at the same time, it also "responsibilizes" social actors, because strategies are constructed actively by speakers. Wodak and her colleagues therefore call strategies "discursive products" that have various conditions of origin (structural and individual). Wodak and others have developed several strategies in the context of various studies. In the next section, I will elaborate on some of these strategies as a way to situate and provide the background for the tools I use in this analysis, namely the analytical strategies of perpetuation and transformation that I employ in this dissertation.

3.5.3. An Overview of Various Strategies Developed by the DHA tradition

Two main types of strategies are used in two studies conducted by Wodak and her colleagues (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001). In the article *The Discourse Historical Approach*, Reisigl & Wodak (2009) develop referential, predication, argumentation, and perspectivization strategies. These are “generic language strategies” or what Wodak and colleagues in other work have called “sub-function strategies” (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999). They are generic language strategies because language always refers to people or things (referential), attributes their characteristics (predication), makes arguments (argumentation), and frames them from a certain perspective (perspectivization).

In their work on discourse and discrimination (2001), Reisigl and Wodak elaborate on two of the above mentioned sub-function strategies: referential and predicative strategies. The authors give a lengthy classification of how referential and predicative strategies are used in cases of discriminatory and racist discursive positioning. The referential and predicative strategies that produce racism include collectivization, spatialisation, de-spatialisation, somatisation, culturalization, among many other types of referential and predicative strategies. The strategies elaborated provide a breadth of categories that study how language is deployed to qualify and construct non-dominant populations. For example, a culturalization strategy of racialization might be primitivization, whereby a person is referred to as “barefooted” or “primitive.” A somatization strategy might include a reference in terms of negatively sanctioned habits, such as being drunk or promiscuous. A strategy of spatialization would involve referring to people as foreigners.

The typology of referential and predicative strategies developed by Reisigl and Wodak to study racist references is very broad and provides useful categories to analyze the qualification of people; however, it is not an entirely appropriate tool in the context of the questions posed by this

dissertation. I seek to understand how space and race are linked discursively; the distinction between what Wodak and Reisigl (2001) would call somatisation, culturalization, and spatialization inherently separates processes of spatialization from somatization. In addition, Wodak's category of spatialization is limited to territorialized national identities and does not include other types of spatial representation. In this dissertation, the concept of space is used expansively as a pervasive mode of identity construction that threads through other semantic areas such as the body, work, and culture. While I engage with many of the same categories developed by Wodak and Reisigl, including culturalization, somatization, I explore these as *spatialized* processes of racialization and see them as interlinked areas of meaning.

The second type of strategy that De Cillia, Reisigl & Wodak's (2009) have developed is called "macro function strategies." In their research on the discursive construction of national identity, the authors use the strategies of construction, perpetuation, transformation and dismantling of identity. Because the distinction between various types of strategies can be challenging, Table 2 below summarizes "macro-function" and "sub-function" that Wodak and colleagues have employed in two different studies.

Table 2: Macro- and Sub-Function Strategies in DHA

Sub-function		Macro-function	
Generic language strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009)	Objective	Strategies related to identity construction (Wodak et al, 2009)	Objective
Referential	Discursive construction of people, places, processes, actions, events	Construction	To build and establish a particular identity through particular acts of reference
Predication	Discursive qualification of people, places, processes, actions, events (more or less positively or negatively)	Perpetuation	To maintain, support and reproduce identities; to defend and preserve a certain narrative history; to justify a social status quo
Argumentation	Justification and questioning of claims of truth and normative rightness	Transformation	To transform the meaning of a relatively well-established aspect of identity into another
Perspectivization	Positioning speaker's or writer's point of view and expressing involvement or distance	Dismantling	To demolish existing identities or elements of them
Intensification/mitigation	Modifying (intensifying or mitigating) the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances		

By giving a quick visual overview of different strategies Table 2 illustrates that strategies are interrelated. The process of this interlinkages can be summarized as follows: throughout the

processes of referencing, predication, argumentation and so on, and from the point of view of the analyst, identities are constructed (construction), perpetuated (perpetuation), transformed (transformation) or dismantled (dismantling).

3.5.4. Linguistic Means of Realization

Linguistic means of realization correspond to any linguistic feature that realizes the discursive strategies. These vary according to the production of the text. For example, Wodak explains that strategy of construction of national identity in Austria is typically instantiated by linguistic acts that constitute a “we” group through references such as the use of “we” with the toponomical label “Austrian.” (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999). Other linguistic features might be more salient in other types of meaning constructions.

3.6. Analysis Techniques: Discourse Historical Approach in this Study

Having clarified the ways that Wodak and various colleagues have developed the notions of “strategy” in various studies, I now elaborate specifically on how I adapted the DHA framework to the analysis in my dissertation. I build upon Wodak et al.’s notion of strategy, specifically the on the two macro-function strategies of perpetuation and transformation, and discuss them at length because they are the central theoretical-methodological link to studying the educators’ construction of identity as linked to history. First, however, I discuss the domains of (thematic) content, as a way to show my thematic data reduction process in this dissertation.

3.6.1. Content

The domain of content consists of topical areas covered in a given discourse. Discourses are made up of various texts and thematic components. Studying a discourse uniquely through one text or one topic would impoverish the complexity and breadth of a given discourse. As I reflected on how to choose thematic content that was relevant to my research questions amidst the volumes of data I collected during the course of my time in Mauritius, I proceeded as is described in the following paragraphs.

3.6.1.1. Data Reduction Process

To determine topical areas in educator talk on place from the large corpus of fieldnotes and transcripts gathered observing all educators in various settings (assemblies, classrooms), I first identified sections of texts presenting references and claims to place (step 1), then I determined which of these claims mobilized ideas of race, i.e., which of these references were value-laden/anecdotal (step 2). Place references included all evocations of the town of Roche Bois, including the children's homes, the school, the areas where they played, and the places where their families worked and spent time. I explain these two steps in detail below.

Step 1. I searched all the data (transcripts and fieldnotes of all educators in various settings) gathered during classroom lessons and daily assemblies to identify linguistic units that constituted micro episodes or moments where place was evoked. These linguistic units had semantic coherence around a particular reference to place. The linguistic unit might consist of one sentence, or several sentences. Through this process of identifying areas of texts where Roche Bois was evoked, I found that the following domains of meaning were recurrent patterns (summarized in Table 3).

Table 3: Domains of Meaning Related to Roche Bois

Domains of Meaning Related to Roche Bois
The township (Roche Bois)
Homes (tin shacks, thatch houses, concrete houses)
River
Waste compacting plant/ Waste collection/recycling
Highway and pedestrian bridge
School
Factories of the Export Processing Zone

I found that many of the above-mentioned domains of meaning were not only evoked in educators’ speech but were also mentioned in literature on Roche Bois (such as the significance of the highway as a mode of urban planning that was strongly resisted for its cross-cutting the community of Roche Bois). Across the data set, I used these domains of meaning as the basis for examining meanings of race.

Step 2. After elaborating a comprehensive inventory of references to the locality of Roche Bois based on all data collected in classrooms and assemblies, I proceeded to evaluate all cases to determine whether the language of place, that is, instances where educators evoked Roche Bois, was “anecdotal” or tending toward the objective “scientific.” My use of quotations in the two terms “anecdotal” and “scientific” is purposeful. Scientific is used in quotation marks to caution the reader against the implication that scientific descriptions are objective. On the contrary, postmodern understandings have shown that science is grounded in specific ideologies. The very ideology of science and neutrality carries subjective meanings and thus is the site of power struggles. For example, through the very claims to scientific status, a scientific allusion to space may silence a host of other meanings about that very space, and this silencing can have powerful political effects. This critique of objectivity notwithstanding, I use the term “scientific” here to qualify references to place that carry a non-fallacious factualness that cannot be easily disputed, as in the following example,

spoken by an educator during a geography lesson: “In Africa, there are many droughts. In Mauritius, there are some, but fewer.” Although there are silences and omissions in this statement and the very choice of words is subjective, the content presented cannot be easily disputed for its factualness.

Anecdotal references to place, on the other hand, imply that educators use predicative (qualifying, evaluative) linguistic moves that qualify Roche Bois with adjectives or adverbs of value and morality and by extension, associate the children and their families with these values.

Anecdotal references to place often entail certain value-laden generalizations and often attribute the values expressed with the whole community or whole school rather than an individual. These generalizations can take place metonymically (substitutions of one meaning for another related referent), or metaphorically (substitutions of meaning with another referent). An example of a value-laden reference to place happened when an educator was giving an explanation of the definition of a monument as part of a history lesson in May 2009. The educator said:

“A monument is for memory. At school here too there is a plaque. It says what year the school was built and founded. A monument is a historical marker when people created history. These people did something good. For example, what if someone is a thief. Let’s say, a boy, he steals at school. Since there are thieves in Roche Bois. Do you think that a plaque will be erected for him?”

This linguistic episode consists of several sentences in order to maintain semantic coherence around the reference to Roche Bois. The example of anecdotal reference to place shows that there are values associated with Roche Bois, including a generalization that there are theft and thieves there, and that children might be associated with theft as well.

Through this data reduction process, which aimed at isolating linguistic references to place that carried evaluative racial meanings, I found that 84% of the instances where Roche Bois was mentioned directly or indirectly could be classified as anecdotal (value-laden). In other words, the

large majority of references to Roche Bois were value-laden, thus demonstrating that place, as a semantic trope and category of signification, is a site of power, a discursive terrain onto which dominant and non dominant ideas of society are in conflict, and a terrain onto which ideas of race could be articulated. The critical discourse analysis in this paper focuses solely on anecdotal references to place in order analyze these place-based meanings as racialization processes. I found several value-laden domains of meaning related to Roche Bois. They are summarized in Table 4:

Table 4: Value-Laden Domains of Meaning Related to Roche Bois

Value-Laden Domains of Meaning Related to Roche Bois
Explicit references to Creole identity
Phenotype (hair, hands, skin)
Religion
Culture (clothing, food practices)
Ancestry
Clothing
Employment/economic activities (recycling, use and sale of drugs, factory work, work ethic etc.)
Food practices (food cooked in this locality)
Leisure activities
Deviant activities (criminality, use and sale of drugs, promiscuity, etc.)
Cleanliness and sanitation (skin, household maintenance)
Safety and danger (crossing the highway)

3.6.2. Strategies

I selectively employed strategies developed by Wodak and her colleagues in different studies of the DHA tradition, in relation to the research questions posed in this study. Since my research seeks to understand the extent to which racial identities are constructed through place and whether these meanings connect to historical meanings, I primarily focused on macro-function strategies and specifically, employed two main strategies to analyze educators' words.

- a. How identities are perpetuated (perpetuation)
- b. How identities are transformed (transformation)

I chose to not explore the other macro-function strategies of construction and dismantling that are used by Wodak in her study of national identities, primarily based on the reflection that identities are never constructed anew as *tabula rasas*. The construction of identity always use existing (historic) semantic threads and reconfigure themselves in an act of transformation (rather than new construction). Similarly, my assumption was that identities are never dismantled fully. The very negation of an identity, for example, oftentimes implies its reification. Therefore, I found that strategies of perpetuation and transformation were rich concepts that could capture the breadth of identity processes and were adaptable to study educators' construction of children's place-based identities in relation to historical paradigms of place-based identity constructions.

3.6.3. Exploring History through the Analytical Concept of “Strategy”

The historical context is central to the DHA framework as indicated by its title. Adherents to DHA explain that any available information on the historical context is integrated into the discursive events under study, as well as an examination of how discourses evolve over time.

Wodak, De Cillia, & Reisigl explain that:

[f]irst, the discourse-historical approach attempts to integrate all available information on the historical background and the original sources in which discursive ‘events’ are embedded. Second, it explores the ways in which particular types and genres of discourse are subject to diachronic change, as has been shown in a number of previous studies (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999, p. 156)

While a commitment to the incorporation of history is clear in DHA, I found in my review of various DHA studies that the historical context was usually present to “frame” the study of texts. In this dissertation, I too lay out the historical context in chapter 4 as a way to contextualize the

micro-textual analyses in chapters 5 and 6. However, I also interpret Wodak’s analytical concept of “strategy” to reframe it as an analytical move that allows the linking of current discursive processes with long-standing historical context. In other words, I use strategies as a way to insert time in spatial meanings. In my reflection on strategies as a way to analyze historical transformation in present texts, I found that the two macro-function strategies (of perpetuation and transformation) were particularly important concepts that demonstrate how identities are anchored in history. Perpetuation allows for an examination of how long-standing historical meanings of identity are maintained and Transformation allows for an examination of how long standing historical meanings are transformed into new ones. See Table 5.

Table 5: How Strategies of Perpetuation and Transformation are Related to History

Strategy	Objectives
Perpetuation strategies	To maintain, support and reproduce Creole and Roche Bois identities; to defend and preserve a certain racialized history associated with the people in this place; to maintain the status quo
Transformation strategies	To transform the meaning of a relatively well-established aspect of Creole or Roche Bois identity into another.

The strategy of perpetuation consists of language that maintains and supports identities that are already in place discursively throughout history and does not change them. These identities are present as long-standing historical identities and are maintained through perpetuation strategies. Transformation is a strategy that seeks to change an existing identity, in positive or negative ways, based on existing meanings. The existing identity is transformed, but related to the former one; in other words, although there can be a radical transformation, certain aspects of the former identity remains. The main question I asked to determine which strategy was at work was: how are

educators' words about Roche Bois and the children aligned with public perceptions of Roche Bois historically? As will be evident in the analysis chapters 5 and 6, I found that both strategies were at work in educators' words, in varying degrees. These two macro-function strategies are the main strategies I use to evaluate whether educators' words perpetuate or transform children's place-based identities, and they form the basis for the framing of the narrative analysis of chapter 5 (Perpetuation as a demonstration of the production of conceived spaces) and chapter 6 (Transformation as a demonstration of lived space).

In addition, these two strategies were important links to operationalize Lefebvre's concepts of conceived spaces and lived spaces. Because conceived spaces are produced through repeated patterns that maintain a hegemonic "cover story," the strategy of perpetuation was amenable to examine the discursive production of conceived space. On the other hand, Lefebvre theorizes lived space as banal moments that disrupt the naturalness of conceived space; Wodak's strategy of transformation was therefore an important means to analyze discursive meanings of lived space.

3.6.4. Linguistic Means of realization

Linguistic means of realization for the deployment of strategies of perpetuation or transformation are various and depend on the situation. Most of them focus on the lexical level. Because of the variety of linguistic means at play in the data, I do not provide an in-depth discussion of the features, and instead analyze them at length in the analyses in chapters 5 and 6. Table 6 below provides a brief summary.

Table 6: Linguistic Means of Realization in the Naming of Place and Students

Question	Linguistic means of realization
How are children and places named and referred to linguistically?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pronouns: we, I, you, they • Membership categorization devices, deictics, anthroponyms, ethnonyms • Toponyms/geonyms/dromonyms (highway)/econym (Roche Bois) • Adverbs “here,” by means of prepositional phrases such as “where you live” “in your town” “with me,” “at this school,” etc. • Tropes such as metaphors and metonymies • Verbs and nouns used to denote processes and actions
What characteristics, qualities and features are attributed to children and places?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits (e.g. in the form of adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups) • Explicit predicates or predicative nouns/adjectives • Lexical collocations (association of words that occur frequently) • Comparisons (like, than), metaphors and other rhetorical figures (including metonymies) • Allusions, evocations, and presuppositions

Table 6 delineates the linguistic means that refer to people and places and qualify them. The linguistic devices are associated with referential and predicative strategies, which are sub-function strategies that serve to build the macro-functions, i.e., perpetuate children’s emplaced identities or transform them.

3.7. Limitations

Although I collected a breadth of data over the course many months, there are several methodological limitations to this study. The first limitation pertains the focus of data collection. While I was able to get a broad sense of the processes at work during school assemblies on a daily basis over the course of seven months, I had initially designed the study to focus on one classroom as

well as on the daily assemblies. During the first data collection phase in Mauritius from January to March 2009, I rotated between six different upper-primary classrooms as a means to select one focal classroom. This process allowed me to gather an adequate amount of information about the six classrooms (see Table 1 above for a summary of data collected). The subsequent phase of data collection from April to July 2009 was spent in one classroom, although I occasionally visited the other five classrooms as well during this time. I thus gathered more information on one classroom than on the other five. Because themes of spatial racialization found in one classroom appeared to be found in many of the classrooms and assemblies I visited, later during analysis, I opted to analyze patterns in data collected in various school spaces, which included data from the five classrooms, from the assemblies, and from the initial focal classroom. My reflection was that including data from more than one setting would allow a form of triangulation, i.e., the convergence of information from different sources to strengthen my claims, while at the same time depersonalizing the sensitive nature of findings related to race and racism. I have remedied what could be characterized as a “data imbalance” by making sure that all the educator words I analyze in chapter 5 are representative of patterns across all educators in the six classrooms as well as the daily assemblies (see Table in Appendix C).

The second limitation involves the time I spent at the site. Any researcher in public schools of Mauritius is required to get permission from the Mauritius Ministry of Education to conduct a study. I received formal approval from the Ministry to conduct research during the first and second trimesters of the 2009 school year, and not the third. The reason stated was because students and teachers focus on reviewing the material for examinations during the third trimester. Therefore, the participant observation data I collected from the classroom was limited to seven months, and not the entire nine-

month school year. However, interviews with all participants as well as observation in the community continued throughout the course of the year, and through 2011.

Third, this study focuses solely on educators' discursive practices in school and not on children's words. I chose not to use children's words because of the power associated with my position as an adult researcher/figure of authority at the school as well as the prevalent teacher-centered linguistic routines. As I began observing in classrooms, I soon realized that for a variety of reasons, most often related to the curriculum being taught in English, a foreign language, children were typically solicited to repeat words after adults at school, and as a result, the learning culture was one where students were used to receive information from adults rather than generating it on their own in their mother tongue *Kreol*. In addition, during interviews with children about the classroom processes they experienced and the textbook units they were learning from, children often interpreted my questions as a type of examination; their answers appeared to conform to classroom routines, and personal opinions were seldom shared with me during interviews. My close work with educators may have led some children to believe that I was an educator or authority figure, someone with whom sharing honest views about their opinions of schooling would not be safe. The realization that my positioning as an adult at school might so greatly shape the children's responses led me to abandon the data I collected on children and not incorporate it in this study. In addition, I thought that including data from the children might run the risk to set a simplistic analytical binary: between educators words in school and children's words outside of school. I concluded that children's experiences of place outside would best be analyzed in a separate study.

3.8. Positioning, Ethics, and Reflexivity

In chapter 1, I discussed how a politics of reflexivity (Marcus, 1994; Haraway, 1988) necessitated that I expose my own positioning in the context of Mauritius to foster transparency about the social and epistemological location from which I speak. The long histories of colonialism and neocolonialism have positioned Franco-Mauritians in Mauritius as a privileged group, and this situation of privilege in turn, affected my rapport with educators participating in this study and the ways they viewed my research. In addition, the sensitive nature of my findings, related to the reproduction of race and racism also raises ethical tensions that are important to engage with reflexively. In the next few paragraphs, I will explain how I negotiated the important question of ethics in relation to my rapport with educators, as well as representation of the research.

During my fieldwork, I found that I balanced both distance and closeness with my participants, who knew about my Mauritian background, but often positioned me as coming from abroad. My interpretation of my own changing roles is that white Mauritian women on the island are highly invisible in the public sphere. In settings like Roche Bois, white women are mostly seen conducting charity work in the context of the Catholic church (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). Many educators told me that they had never worked closely with a white person before; many positioned me as an outsider, perhaps related to the general invisibility of white Mauritians and the high visibility of white European tourists throughout the island. An educator in one classroom, for instance, repeatedly stated, “Elsa lives in America,” as an example of a different place to the children. In another instance, a teacher was giving an overview of different jobs in Mauritius, and because tourism is a main economic activity, this description included working in a souvenir shop. The educator used me as an example of a tourist who would come from the United States and go buy products in a souvenir shop. “When Elsa will come to your

souvenir shop, what will you tell her?” the teacher asked the students. “You’ll say: ‘take this little bag Ma’am, take it.’” Later, the educator said that if Elsa wanted to write a postcard to her cousin in England or to her mom in the United States, she would go to a souvenir shop. These examples suggest that many educators, although aware of my dual nationalities, positioned me as an outsider.

In addition, the meaning of “doing research” seemed to be a factor in the ways my project was received at school. My research generally was understood as a distant and vague endeavor, destined to a U.S. audience. I made every effort to explain the purpose of my presence at school and the kind of inquiry I was conducting, but many participants were not used to seeing researchers like me coming on a daily basis to observe practices in school. Although some research has been conducted in Roche Bois (Boswell, 2006; Asgarally, 1997; Baptiste, 2002), it was not common to find researchers lingering for months in the back of classrooms, in schoolyards, and in front of assemblies as I did. Rather, for many teachers, previous experiences with research had typically consisted of answering a brief questionnaire to be handed to a researcher who would rarely be seen again. For this reason, many educators preferred that I unobtrusively participate in their daily practices and activities without engaging them in a larger commitment to co-reflection or co-research. In some cases, participants in my study seemed to find a sense of security in the distance of my project, whose audience was in the United States, a distant place from Mauritius, and as such might have not felt directly involved with issues of representation. The fact that many seemed to prefer my presence to be as discrete as possible points to a larger question of research as an outside activity in settings that are not often researched. Research (and the frequent presence of researchers in schools) is a cultural practice and in the setting of Roche Bois, in-depth qualitative research was not the norm. The disjuncture between research and practice is heightened in settings where there is no culture of research.

Throughout the entire duration of my fieldwork and subsequent years of writing, I struggled with the question of how to represent educators' words and practices. The ethical concerns were related to the political weight of representation compounded with the outsider status of my research project, which inevitably was an act of framing, an exercise of power. This power to represent participants is present even when researchers take precautions to ensure the research is democratic, that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time, and that the purpose and methods of the research are clear to all involved (Madison, 2005). The sensitive nature of my findings related to the ways educators' words positioned the children made the question of representation even more challenging. Because of these challenges and of the importance of being primarily responsible to the people and places studied (Madison, 2005), I negotiated the ethics of representation through the famous ethnographic adage that calls on research to "make the strange familiar and the familiar strange." To study race in Mauritius, especially given the ambiguities of my situation and the practices of racial positioning that I observed in school, a macro-analytical distance became an ethical imperative, and I thus chose to depersonalize my participants by using the category of educator to refer to them, as detailed in section 3.3.1 "Participants: Using the Analytical Category of Educator." This meant that an attention to the historical situating of Roche Bois and of race and class in Mauritius was an important component of my research as a way to contextualize educator practices in a sociological sense and move away from individual and psychological examination of their practices or intentions. Examining educators' words in light of the historical shaping of Roche Bois as a space was therefore key in the ethics of this research. As an additional measure of transparency, I chose to broadly discuss my findings with as many educators as possible as a confirming move for my claims, but also in an effort toward sharing the sensitive claims related to race and racism and include educator voices. During my

conversations with four educators, as detailed in Section 6.6, “Coda: Educator Reflexive Voices,” I found that educators were aware of the representational complexities that educators faced when speaking of children’s local places, thus also indicating keen reflexivity on their part. Finally, my commitment to a reciprocal engagement with my participants and to honor the conditions of access to the school with the Ministry of Education, I will translate the findings of this study into teacher training modules for the Mauritius Ministry of Education. I discuss these intentions and possibilities in section 7.3 of chapter 7, “Discussion and Implications for Teacher Training and Practice.”

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL PRODUCTION OF ROCHE BOIS

AS A SPACE PARADIGMATIC OF CREOLE IDENTITY

4.1. Introduction

“A first approach to the diversity of Mauritius might be spatial” (Ericksen, 1998, p. 2)

In this chapter, I trace the historical making of Roche Bois into a paradigmatic space representing a homogenized Creole identity, beginning with key events the 1960s, a decade generally recognized as marking the beginning of ethnic segregation in Roche Bois (Fanfan, 2000). By gathering and synthesizing historical evidence from various historical and anthropological literatures (Christopher, 1992; Ericksen, 1998; Boswell, 2006; Fanfan, 2000; Easton, 1997; Baptiste, 2002) as well as evidence from my recent ethnographic work from 2009 to 2011, I show how Roche Bois was constructed in the national imaginary as linked to a homogenized ethnic category of “Creole,” a racialized construction that is still perpetuated today.

The history of Roche Bois’ racialization serves as an important contextualization for my discourse analysis of educators’ utterances at school in the following chapters 5 and 6. The history of Roche Bois’ racialization sheds light on the socio-political context that shapes the meaning of educators’ utterances. It forms the conditions of production of educators’ talk about children and Roche Bois: words spoken by educators which link Roche Bois with Creole children are not

pronounced solely out of the educators' own psychological leanings or intentions, but rather are produced within the historical and spatial "grids of intelligibility" (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93) that have built Roche Bois as linked to Creole identity.

I draw the notion of "paradigmatic spaces" broadly from understandings of "paradigmatic cities" in urban geography (Nijman, 2000). A paradigmatic city "may be defined as the city that displays more clearly than other cities the fundamental features of trends of the wider urban system" (p. 135). Paradigmatic cities are typical and salient representations of wider trends and have representational value beyond the space itself. There are two reasons why the notion of paradigmatic space is of value to an understanding of educators' utterances in Roche Bois. The first is that paradigmatic spaces allow for an explanation of how a place's complex and heterogeneous characteristics are distilled and reduced to its most essentialized elements so that the space becomes symbolic of those elements for the wider public and its complexities are hidden. When a space tends toward the paradigmatic through historical processes, space itself can become generative of meanings for the wider nation, thus allowing for dialecticism between spatial historical meanings and present day utterances by educators. In other words, the conceptualization of space as paradigmatic frames the understanding of educators' production of meanings of Roche Bois as a racialized space and helps us understand that educators' meanings in school are shaped through various historical events and solidified into discourses that carry through to the present.

In thinking about the relationship between the past and the present, it is clear that educators' present words cannot be linked in causal or linear ways to past events but the relationship between present words and history should be characterized as "overdetermined" (Althusser, 1969), i.e., produced by myriad forces that are not necessarily quantifiable or identifiable. Educators' utterances are structured by a variety of factors that cannot all be named or

counted. Despite this overdetermination, this chapter argues that historical processes that have racialized the space of Roche Bois nevertheless can be said to inform and “shoot through” present meanings.

The notion of paradigmatic space shaping the racialization of Roche Bois is also of value because any outside observer who might observe a school might not be able to perceive visible differences between educators and children. For the most part, educators and children exhibit the same phenotypical characteristics. The kinds of racialized meanings educators produce about the children’s spaces might therefore come as a surprise if they were not understood in light of larger historically and spatially salient representation of Creole peoples in Roche Bois. The space carries with it sedimented meanings of the past. Those meanings shape the present of Roche Bois.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the spatial racialization of the overarching category of Creole in the national imaginary, and not to do an anthropological study of Creole people at large. I therefore note here that I am using here an overarching designation of Creole to show its political function as a category in the public’s perception, as opposed to understanding the category of Creole anthropologically. From an anthropological perspective, the category of Creole can further disaggregated into many different sub-categories intersecting with various dimensions of class or geographical origin (for extensive and rigorous anthropological work on various Creole ethnonyms and categories, see Boswell, 2006). For example, *Mulatto/gens de couleur* designate the Creole bourgeoisie as opposed to *ti Kreol* which refers to poor working-class Creoles. *Ilois* or *Chagossiens*, on the other hand, designate Creoles from the Chagos islands as opposed to Creoles from mainland Mauritius.

In the next sections of this chapter, I show through several key historical events how Roche Bois has come to be understood in the national imaginary as a paradigmatic Creole space. First, I

begin by reflecting on issues in Mauritian historiography, namely, the Eurocentric nature of historical narratives and the scarcity of sources that write history from the perspective of the subaltern. After this brief reflection, I situate the larger context of Mauritius' colonial histories and link them to the semantic evolution of the production of the ethnic/racial category of Creole, showing how colonialism shaped a system of racial classification whereby the signifier "Creole" shifted to designate inferior groups in the social hierarchy concurrently with the construction of whiteness. After setting the larger historical context of French and British colonialisms in Mauritius, I turn to describing Roche Bois' real and perceived changing demographics through four major historical events, from the 1960 Carol Cyclone to the 1999 revolts, and the accompanying perceptions of Roche Bois as a negatively racialized space today.

4.2. Reflections on Mauritian Historiography

In every day understanding, Mauritian history is understood schematically, divided by epochs that are aligned with ethnicities. As the Mauritian Truth and Justice Commission Report (2011) points out, Mauritian history is often simplified and tells the narrative of Africans slaves coming under French rule, and Indian indentured workers coming to work the plantations under British colonialism. This unsophisticated historical schema creates a schism between populations of African and Indian descent, whereby narratives of victimhood and oppression compete against one another and the role of European colonization put in the background in the process. Popular imaginaries of history neglect that European imperialism played a central role in the exploitation of these various peoples in the creation of Mauritius. Recent historiography has debunked simplistic narratives to uncover the complexities of Mauritius' waves of migration over the last five centuries (De l'Estrac, 2007; Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011; Chan Low, 2002). For

example, it is clear now that there were slaves who came from India as well as indentured workers from Africa. In addition, not all Europeans belonged to the elite. Unfortunately, these understandings have not yet penetrated the public sphere in ways that might have re-shaped the nation's historical imaginary to address the role of European colonizations more centrally, the formation of whiteness and white supremacy, and the nuances in various waves of migration to Mauritius.

Representations in Mauritian historiography have generally focused for the most part on the elites (Chan Low, 2002), whereby the stories of European men such as Mahe de Labourdonnais and Pierre Poivre are foregrounded and the stories of the various peoples who labored under and for the colonial powers are placed in the background. Some historiography also tends to fall into an apolitical relativism, whereby all ethnic and religious groups are posited as relative to one another and the historical power dynamics between various groups in the context of capitalist expansion are hidden. One recent work published recently by De L'Estrac (2007) exemplifies this relativistic trend. For example, De l'Estrac takes care in his volumes on Mauritian history to depict the struggles of every Mauritian ethnic/religious group on the same plane. He writes in his preface: "Au delà de la question des races, ce livre remet en perspective la contribution de chaque groupe et cherche à présenter le rôle de chaque composante du pays naissant" [Beyond the question of race relations, this book offers new perspectives on the contributions of each group and seeks to present the role of each population segment in the formation of the country] (De L'Estrac, 2007, p. ii). Some important historical work, however, that while still not always critiquing capitalism and imperialism directly, nevertheless squarely engages with the histories of oppressed groups in Mauritius and writes history from the perspectives of the marginalized/non-elites, drawing from a wide variety of historical reports. The recent Truth and Justice Commission report (Mauritius

Truth and Justice Commission, 2011), the result of collaboration between numerous historians, anthropologists and sociologists, is an example of this kind of historiography that, while being analytically rigorous, is squarely political.

4.3. Background on Patterns of Migration During Dutch, French and British Colonizations in Mauritius

Mauritius was produced in the folds of European colonial expansion. Part of a broader geological group of islands called the Mascarene islands, Mauritius' location in the middle of the Southern Indian Ocean made it a strategic port for spice trade routes in the context of an expanding European imperialism from the 17th through to 19th centuries. Although Arab sailors are said to have discovered the island as early as 1502 (De l'Estrac, 2007), and Portuguese landed in 1507, Dutch, French and British powers successively settled the island, instating labor systems that ensured the pursuit of profits through almost three centuries of colonial administration.

Prior to European settlement, the island was uninhabited. It is known to have been a natural haven for various birds including the (now extinct) dodo. Dark ebony trees proliferated (Grove, 1995). As of 1507, the Dutch, settled for a little over five decades. In 1598, they named Mauritius after their prince Maurice of Nassau. Introducing sugar cane, what would later become a major crop under the British, the Dutch's principal productive activity during that time was ebony wood trade (De l'Estrac, 2007), although they had envisioned making Mauritius a major slave trading port (Chan Low, 2008). As a result, Dutch settlers forced Malagasy slaves to labor on the island, this group becoming the first group of African peoples to live under slavery in Mauritius. Slaves from the Indian subcontinent and Asia were also forcefully brought to Mauritius (Chan Low, 2008). In 1642, slaves rebelled in what was to become a significant rebellion resulting in the

successful escape of sixty people. Several other waves of rebellion occurred after this initial rebellion (De l'Estrac, 2007). Finally, the Dutch colonial administration ordered the island to be abandoned in order to focus on the Cape of Good Hope and by 1710, the last Dutch had left the island (Ericksen, 1998). Interestingly, the anthropologist Ericksen (1998) commented in his historical background on Mauritius that, “small groups of fugitive slaves (...) may have remained in the forested hills of the south-west and south-east; their hypothetical descendants, if they could be identified, would be the aboriginal population of Mauritius” (Ericksen, 2004). If this were correct, the free experience of the African populations who remained on the island would not be long-lived.

Determined to settle on the strategically located island and consolidate their trading presence in the Indian Ocean along with neighboring island Bourbon (now Reunion), the French began to arrive in 1710, renaming Mauritius “Isle de France.” A colony was formally established with the arrival of governor Mahe de Labourdonnais who had office of governor from 1735 to 1745 (De l'Estrac, 2007). Labourdonnais is attributed the founding of capital, Port Louis, supported by the intense labor of African slaves (Nagapen, 2008). Because mercantile capitalism was the dominant paradigm at the time, French colonization focused on developing trade, including slave trade, with minor, not always successful attempts at developing sugar production. Thus, thousands of African peoples were forced as slaves under the almost hundred years of French colonization. African populations were brought primarily from Madagascar and East Africa, although a small number also came from West Africa. During this time, freemen also came from France, the Indian subcontinent, and Bourbon, and included skilled workers, traders, and noblemen, among others. Others who came during this time included indentured Africans, indentured Indians, and Indians who worked as slaves as well (De l'Estrac, 2007).

In a famous battle in a South East port of Mauritius in 1810, the British captured *Ile de France*, reverting to the Dutch appellation, Mauritius. The transition from French to British rule and the abolition of slavery in 1835 would prove significant historical events that would greatly reshape the island's demographics. Britain did not seek to rule culturally but instead strove a balance with the existing white elite to govern Mauritius administratively, which included development of the sugar industry. As slavery was abolished, the British sought other forms of cheap labor to work on the sugar plantations. This resulted in a process of bringing indentured workers from Africa, and mostly, from India, in effect drastically changing shifting demographics to Indian-origin numerical majority, still today. Bhojpuri-speaking Indians came from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in the North, and Tamils came from Madras, Marathis from Maharashtra, and Telegus from Andhra Pradesh. Bhojpuri, Gujarati, and Urdu speaking Muslims, mostly Sunnis, also came from Northern India. Chinese peoples (Mandarin and Hakka-speaking) also came to the island (Srebnick, 2000).

4.4. The Historical Production of Racial Categories in Mauritius

One central process related to colonialism, imperialism, and capital exploitation that shaped society over the years was racism and white supremacy. It is clear that Europeans who came to Mauritius were not all rich just as not all Africans and Indians were slaves and indentured laborers. Recent research has debunked these stereotypical narratives to add nuances and historical accuracy to the experience of various groups coming to Mauritius (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011; De l'Estrac, 2007). For example, 50% of the Europeans in 1835 were *petits blancs* (poor whites) who held menial jobs. Slave owners at the time of emancipation, another example, were *gens de couleur* (people of color), Indians, and poor whites as well as white sugar

plantation owners. This latter elite category, however, owned the majority of slaves (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

These historical nuances notwithstanding, it remains clear that over the years, colonial discourse shaped a system of racial classification, where whiteness became a desirable category of identity with its related subaltern non-white others in a hierarchical configuration¹⁸. The TJC reports about the period of transition between French and British colonialisms in Mauritius: “Whiteness was a condition that was imposed on all European, whether they wished for this or not”(Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011, p. 135). In fact, although alliances of solidarity may have existed between non-whites and poor whites, these alliances drove the poor whites away from the White elite, and thus poor whites’ interests shifted and it became more advantageous to associate with the category of whiteness.

The “racial order” (Frederickson, 2002) that emerged and was shaped under colonialism clearly produced whiteness as a more valued identity category than blackness. In this context, the linguistic anthropologist Police-Michelle provides a valuable diachronic analysis of the semantic evolution of the term “Creole” at the level of colonial discourse, postcolonial discourse, and current global discourse in Mauritius (Police-Michel, 2005) Linking the term “Creole” as a signifier specifically attached to colonial life in islands, she starts first with a schematic depiction of the production of racial categories under colonial logics, explaining how it is possible to consider Creole spaces such as the Caribbean and Indian-oceanic islands as intermediary spaces where Europe encountered its Others. The resulting social texture that were created through colonialism in these spaces can schematically be depicted as white European colonizers at the top, an Afro-black

¹⁸ Not many historical sources frame Mauritian history by foregrounding the role of colonial racism or white supremacy in shaping the social topography of Mauritius. One exception is the Truth and Justice Commission Report (2011).

population at the bottom of the hierarchy, and an intermediary group of “freemen” who were neither white nor black.

The semantic usage of the term Creole greatly evolved over the years, and had a downward movement that cascaded down the social hierarchy (Police-Michel, 2005). During the French colonial period, the term Creole was used by metropolitan Europeans to negatively refer to white colonizers born in the colonies, as well as Indians. During the British period, large-scale social transformations occurred with the abolition of slavery and the massive immigration of Indians to Mauritius, which resulted in a tightening of racial categories and closure of different ethnic/religious groups onto themselves. Drawing on Arno and Orian (Arno & Orian, 1986), Police-Michel proposes four factors to explain the solidification of racial categories: 1) the tensions between whites and freemen for possession of land as the island transitioned from a port-based economy to a elite, 2) greater access to education which was formerly limited to the white elite, 3) the rejection of blackness by the intermediary group of freemen (later to become *gens de couleur*) because of the latter’s newly formed association with the whites and 4) the great influx of Indian indentured labor representing a threat to the existing black population. With these dynamics, white colonizers used the term Creole in two senses: first to positively identify themselves, and second, to negatively refer to the mixed intermediary population or to blacks.

Police-Michel further details how postcolonial discourse, starting in the early 20th century shaped the further usage of the term Creole and allowed whites to shed the use of the term as a self-designator. The independence movement in its early stages in the early 20th century was not bound by any ethnicity. Contestations to the colonial power were led by a mixed intermediary group of *gens de couleur* and the Hindu bourgeoisie (a process which led to Independence on March 12, 1968). However, the term Creole in this anticolonial context is abandoned by the white bourgeoisie and

begins to designate non-white people. This process of separation of the term creole from a geographical affiliation to the island and in favor of an ethnicity thus can be characterized as the solidification of whiteness and of its others. During the early 20th century, the term Creole is positively re-appropriated by the bourgeoisie *de couleur*, descendants of freemen of the colonial era.

In the later part of the century prior to independence, the designation of Creole would include Afro-descendants of slaves. In contrast to the first phase of anti-colonial struggles which included multiple ethnicities, the second phase of anti-colonial struggles saw the Hindu-led labor movement making great strides. This second phase, however, becomes ethnicized as the white Franco-Mauritians begin fearing Hindu domination, and entangle the *bourgeoisie de couleur* in those same fears. This period saw the rise of the PMSD (*Parti Mauricien Social Democrate*) party which consists of descendants of whites, freemen, and slaves, for the most part Christian, thus forming the basis for the political distinction of “General Population” which will later become written in the constitution as a specific category of population. In this context, the term Creole is appropriated by the *gens de couleur* as well as by Afro-descendants of slaves.

As described in chapter 1 “Introduction,” in the late 1960s, and into the 70s and 80s, Police-Michel notes that post-independence Mauritius was characterized by the struggle for ideologies of nationalism. On the one hand, a white-dominated nationalist ideology promoted a universal Mauritian identity that did not allow for the claiming of any ethnic identity or difference. This ideology, according to Police-Michel, allowed whites, a powerful oligarchic minority, to remain invisible in the public sphere. On the other hand, an Indian-led nationalism promoted unity in diversity, a politics of multiculturalism celebrated the role of ancestry in the building of identity and in the process, denied cultural groups the right to refer to themselves through local identities produced in the colony. In this latter form of nationalism, the African-ness of Creoles is emphasized,

as part of a general politics of celebration of ancestry and the local-ness of Creole identity neglected. In the midst of these conflicting nationalist ideologies that either denied Creole identities or valued their African roots, the term Creole did not always retain its Afro-attachment and instead solidified itself as a local racialized category to refer to people of mixed, African or Malagasy descent, which includes *gens de couleur* and Afro-descendants of slaves.

4.5. The Historical Making of Roche Bois Into a Racialized Community

Historical colonial processes imbued negative and racialized meanings to the signifier Creole and locked the emerging sovereign nation into a racialized topography. While racialized identities in Mauritius are always in the making and identity categories are always shifting, the overarching term Creole has shown semantic durability in the post-independence decades and is still used today to designate mixed peoples of African descent, Chagossian, Rodriguans, and people of mixed ancestry, with various class backgrounds. As historical evidence will show in this section, the racialized national topography has spatial implications. That is, the ways meanings of race are channeled, received, imparted, created, appropriated, transformed and contested by various actors and institutions depends on a material reality that is shaped through location, township, and place. Roche Bois, as historical accounts will show, has become paradigmatic of Creole identity. As a starting point to illustrate how meanings of place and race are interconnected in the national imaginary, a framing of Roche Bois by Boswell (2006) in the context of an ethnography of Creole identities demonstrates that there is an entrenched stereotypical perception that Roche Bois is associated with Creole identity and that is also evokes crime, drug abuse and prostitution.

“Roche Bois [...] is often spoken of by outsiders as a ‘no go’ area, where the threat of violence is high and where social problems such as drug abuse and prostitution are prevalent. In the media and development literature, it is often discussed as a working-class

settlement or the crucible of Creole identity. Outsiders encouraged me to do research there, if I wanted to see ‘real’ Creoles. In other words, they tend to assume that ‘real’ Creoles are people who either live in places where there are drug abuse and prostitution problems or, are the *kind* of people who live in such places” (Boswell, 2006, p.136).

Boswell’s remarks about Roche Bois’ negative perception by outsiders captures the essentialization of place and race that are deeply-rooted in outsiders’ perceptions of Roche Bois. The fact that outsiders consider Roche Bois as the crux of “real” Creole identity is symptomatic of the condensation of meanings of place and race in the context of this locality. In turn Roche Bois is associated with a host of negative, illiberal behaviors and practices, in effect, constituting an outside, inside the nation.

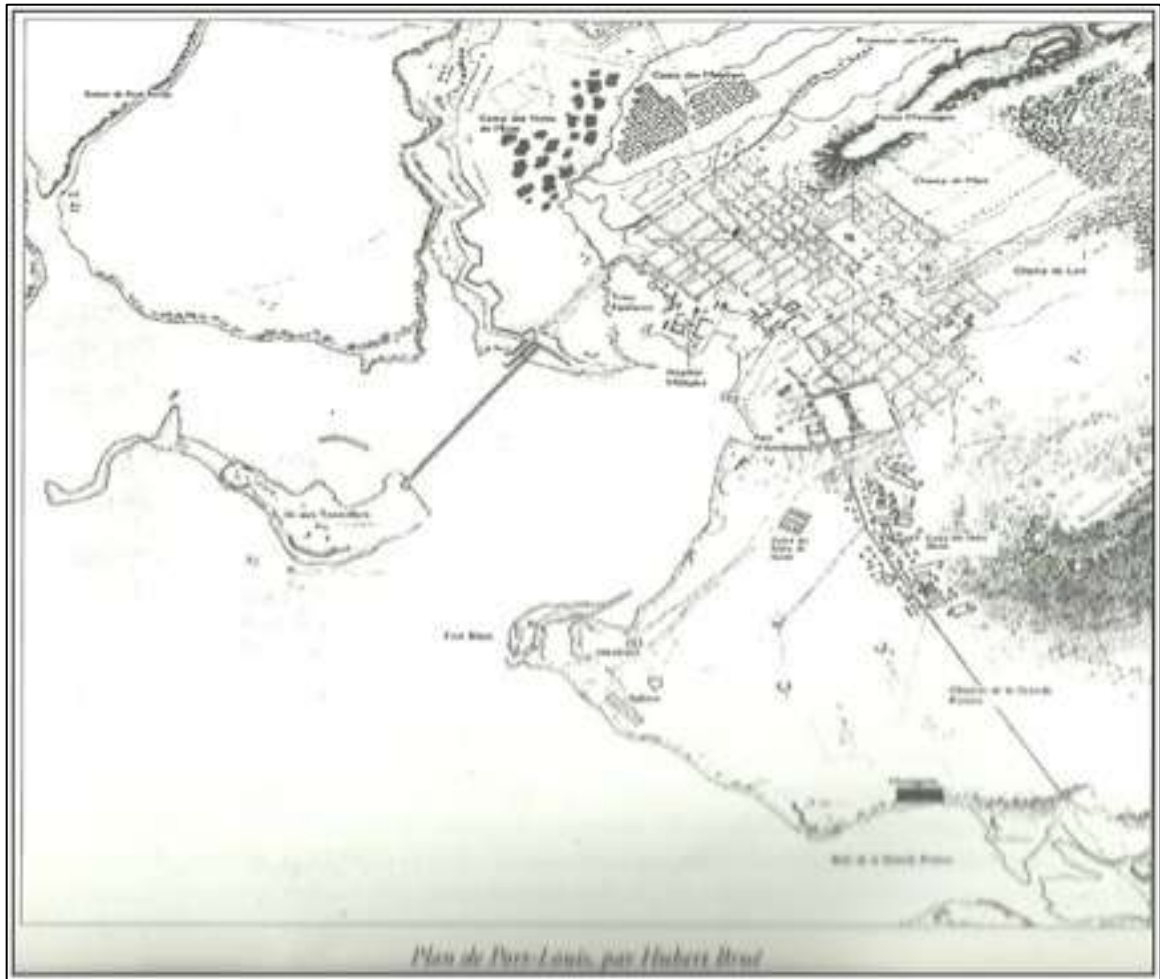
Roche Bois is not the only place in Mauritius that is thought of as ethnically homogeneous. Because meanings of race often take shape through place, many different places in Mauritius become codes for racial meanings. Ericksen’s quote that opened this chapter: “A first approach to the diversity of Mauritius might be spatial,” indicates the importance of space to understanding racialization in Mauritius, in particular in the context of Port Louis. Understanding Roche Bois through its relationship with other segregated suburbs in the context of an anthropological study of Mauritian nationalism, Ericksen (1998) describes Port Louis as a segregated town, where space is divided along ethnic lines. “All the major ethnic categories of Mauritius except the Franco-Mauritian are represented in one or several distinct neighborhoods” (Ericksen, 2004, p. 2). He goes on to detail various neighborhoods, including the Western area dominated by lower middle class Creoles, which gives way to ethnically mixed areas and then Hindu dominated areas, as well as the Chinese quarter, and the Muslim quarter of Plaine Verte. He describes Roche Bois lying in the North East of Port Louis as “a largely Creole and Rodriguan area” (Ericksen, 1998, p. 3). Although Ericksen might be right that Roche Bois’ population is primarily Creole, other scholars have noted that Tamil Hindus, Muslims, and Chinese groups live in Roche Bois (Boswell, 2006; (Lau Thi Keng,

Integration/Exclusion, 1997). Ericksen's framing of Roche Bois as Creole thus glosses over its ethnic diversity and might reproduce the homogenization of identity associated with a place that has become paradigmatic of Creole identity.

4.5.1. Early Perceptions of Roche Bois

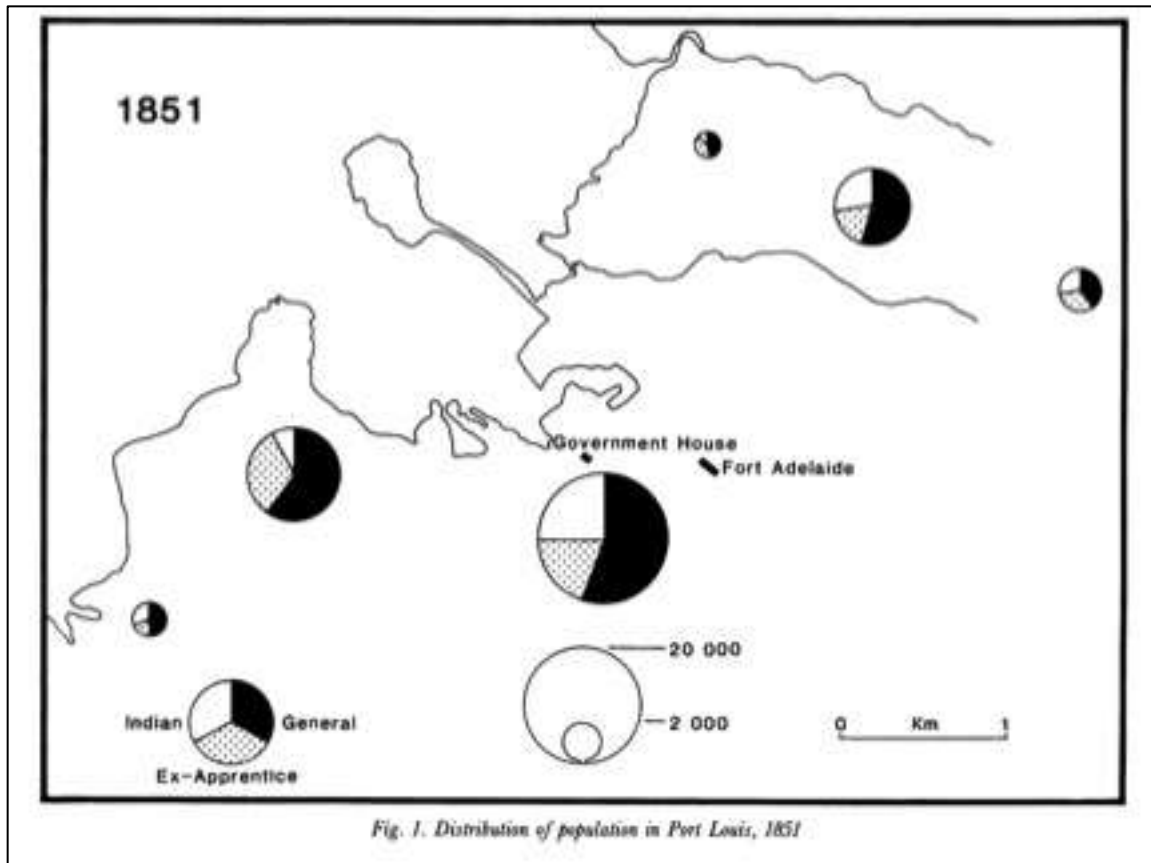
Several historical moments have shaped the perceived racialization of Roche Bois as a paradigmatic Creole space. Originally named after its physical features, being a dry parcel of land with dense indigenous groves (Fanfan, 2000), three accounts attest to its early ethnic diversity. First, an early account from Milbert's "*Voyage Pittoresque a l'Île de France*" in 1812, cited by Nagapen (2008) (see Figure 4 below) reproduces a plan traced by Brué of the Napoleon port where several segregated camps of forced laborers can be discerned in the Northwest of the capital, and in particular the "Camp des Noirs de l'Etat" (Camp of Slaves of the State) and the "Camp des Malabars," (Camp of the Indians, commonly designated through their geographical origin of Malabar) between the Pucelles Creek (Ruisseau des Pucelles) and the Lataniers River, in parts of the Southwest of present-day Roche Bois.

Figure 4: Plan of Port Louis by Brué (1812) from Nagapen (2008)



In addition, a map synthesizing data from the 1851 census by geographical ward in Port Louis shows the early diversity of Roche Bois (Christopher, 1992). The pie charts placed Northeast of Port Louis show that while the general population was the majority in those areas, residents also included ex-apprentices and Indians.

Figure 5: Distribution of Population in Port Louis, 1851 (Christopher, 1992)



Although clearly both peoples of African and Indian descent inhabited the area, their quarters were separated under the colonial administration, already indicating how colonial logics shaped socio-spatial forms of segregation. A later source from Pike's (1873) travel journals also attests that Indians inhabited the area of Roche Bois, although spatial demarcation is was not clear in this account:

The temple at Roche Bois is about a hundred feet square with a large dome in the centre and ornamented with minarets painted in different colours. [...] Thousands of Indians were assembled on the grounds with their yellow pink or scarlet robes wrapped in graceful folds around them The men had massive gold or silver ear toe and finger rings anklets. The women wore the same with the addition of large necklaces often of heavy coins bracelets half up their arms many of them with a blaze of jewellery in their jet black hair twisted into the curious one sided knots

that seem de rigueur in an Indian belle's toilet and soaked in gingeli or other oils”(Pike, 1873, p. 224)

These early sources attest to the co-existence of various peoples in Roche Bois. Both Pike’s and Milbert’s historical accounts relate to the fact that the Roche Bois area was populated by various peoples of Indian and African origin and was therefore not homogeneously Creole as current perceptions suggest. It also indicates that the colonial administration’s policies of divide-and-rule (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011) were demarcated through forms of socio-spatial segregation. Other later research shows that prior to the 1960s, Roche Bois was still perceived as a diverse place. In a study of youth in Roche Bois, Fanfan interviewed older residents who celebrated Roche Bois’ diverse past. “For the resident, Roche Bois was the rainbow nation in miniature. (...) Roche Bois was a region with easy access to the capital city and simultaneously to jobs in different sectors” she explains (Fanfan, 2000, p. 5). Oral history interviews I conducted in 2011 also describe Roche Bois as previously more diverse than it is imagined today. One informant explained: “Yes, there were many Hindus in Roche Bois at one time. It was about half the population. I think that Hindus left when they were able to” (December 2011).

4.5.2. Housing Developments in the Wake of Cyclone Carol in 1960

While there may have been many historical events that began to shape Roche Bois into a space representing Creole identity, the first event that stands out is Cyclone Carol in 1960. The tropical depression, still evoked today in national consciousness as one of the most violent cyclones, had caused widespread destruction of homes all over the island, including Roche Bois. In response, the Central Housing Authority built “*cités*” throughout the island to re-house thousands of displaced peoples who had lost their homes (Nagapen, 1996). *Cités* are a type of low-income government

housing, which usually consists of a basic four wall-house made of cement for one family. A large parcel of vacant land in Roche Bois on the side of the sea was used to build a *cité*. Many refugees who had lost their homes relocated to this area of Roche Bois. One long-time resident interviewed in December 2011 explained her family's relocation to Roche Bois in the early 1960s:

“After the cyclone Carol, all the houses in Port Louis were destroyed. We had been living in an iron sheet house. That's why we were able to get a house in the cite, around 1963 or 1964. We came. I was eleven years old. When we came, we were the first owners of the cite. All of the cite was empty! We played hide and seek in the houses and ran all around.”

This family's experience echoes the many who relocated to Roche Bois in the 1960s in the midst of rapid urbanization. It is not clear the extent to which the major relocation consisted of Creoles. However, the perception of this relocation by outsiders was that it was Creoles who benefited from the welfare system. Boswell (2006) explains:

“The cyclone Carol changed lives of Roche Bois residents, including the homes of those living in Roche Bois. Afterwards, the government built flats to accommodate those who had lost their homes. Since then, when talking about Roche Bois, outsiders mention the fact that Creoles had ‘everything done for them’ and use this as an explanation for their assumed passivity” (Boswell, 2006, p. 137).

Cyclone Carol and the subsequent low-income housing provided by the state became grounds for stereotyping Roche Bois as an area consisting primarily of Creole peoples who were perceived to be inactive and reliant on social welfare.

In 1965, another infrastructural development would continue shape Roche Bois' demographics toward becoming predominantly inhabited by Creoles. The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund (SILWF) built two hundred apartments inaugurated on July 19th, 1965 (L'Express, 1965, as cited in Fanfan, 2000, p. 6). Prior to the advent of Bulk Sugar Terminal (also called *VRAC*) in the 1970s, which allowed for sugar produced in the factories to be directly deposited in bulk from the truck to the ship, dockers were employed to carry bags of sugar on their backs. Predominantly of Creole backgrounds, dockers had had a long history of labor struggles against the

sugar industry, starting with a general strike in 1938 and another one in 1971. The Dockers' Flats built by the SILWF in 1965 must be read in light of the tenuous relationship between dockers and sugar barons. In the context of Roche Bois, however, the new constructions became another agglomeration of predominantly Creole inhabitants that shaped the perception of the locality (Fanfan, 2000).

4.5.3. Forced Relocation of Chagossian People

Although this initial perception of Roche Bois as a space representing a certain ethnicity was created in the early 60s as the population of Roche Bois was rapidly increasing, the township nevertheless remained a diverse one. Later in that same decade, a second event acted to shape the perception of Roche Bois as a homogeneous space in the public discourse. This was the forced and illegal relocation of thousands of people from the Chagos Islands, an archipelago north of Mauritius that was formerly a part of Mauritian territory when it was under British colonial rule. At the dawn of Independence in 1965 in covert talks with British colonial administrators, Mauritian leaders negotiated a secret deal with the colonial administration to dismember the Chagos islands from Mauritius as a precondition of Mauritian independence. The dismemberment of the Chagos islands goes against the United Nations' ban on the dismemberment of colonial territories prior to independence. What was not known at the time is that the British and United States governments had for years prior to 1965, been developing a strategic plan for the islands, which involved the leasing of the biggest island on the archipelago, Diego Garcia, to the United States for the purposes of setting up a large military base to fulfill what was considered to the imperial powers "a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean" (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). For this to happen, the inhabitants of Diego Garcia, some several thousand people, needed to be removed. Chagossians

were initially secretly forced out of the islands by the British, often by not being allowed to return to their homes after trips to Mauritius or the Seychelles, which they took frequently to seek healthcare, for marriage, schooling, and other reasons. By 1971, there were only 35 remaining islanders. In September, the *Nordvaer*, the archipelago's supply ship, arrived in Mauritius and the last Chagossians were forced onto the ship and had to leave their possessions behind (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). Chagossian narratives at the time tell of great despair and destitution, as they left their homes behind while the British and United States gassed their pets and other animals that were left on the islands.

Chagossian people are of African descent and were originally transported to the Chagos archipelago at the end of the eighteenth-century by the French colonial powers as a way to quarantine people suffering from leprosy and other ailments. When Chagossian people were forced to leave their home to go to Mauritius in the 1960s and early 1970s, they were racially classified as Creoles because of their African ancestries. Many went to live in Roche Bois because of established networks between Chagossian living in Roche Bois and incoming Chagossians. Out of the 1328 Chagossian in Mauritius, 874 chose to live in Port-Louis neighborhoods, including Roche Bois (Fanfan, 2000) because of bonds of parenthood and other contacts between Chagossians. The second type of housing in Roche Bois was mandatory whereby the government accommodated the refugees in the newly constructed *cit * and dockers' flats. Another violent cyclone Gervaise in 1975 compounded the urgency of the housing for the Chagossian and imposed this type of accommodation on them.

While Mauritian Creoles did not readily associate with Chagossian Creoles, an association of the two peoples nevertheless was constituted in dominant modes of public thought and discourse. The perception of Roche Bois as a Creolized space thus became stronger. In addition, the Chagossians' arrival in Roche Bois contributed to the increased perception of Roche Bois as a poor

and destitute space. For the most part, Chagossians were people who were at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, had little political clout, and faced many obstacles integrating into Mauritian society. These factors, coupled with rapid demographic increase resulting from Cyclones Carol and Gervaise solidified the public perception of Roche Bois as an urban ghetto.

4.5.4. Ethnic Conflict at the Dawn of Independence

In 1968, two months prior to independence, a third event occurred which helped to give Roche Bois its Creole identity in the minds of Mauritians, despite it being inhabited by many Muslims as well as Creoles. In the night of Saturday, January 20th 1968 to Sunday January 21st, 1968, race riots broke out Creole and Muslim of Roche Bois, causing the relocation of many Creoles of neighboring Plaine Verte to Roche Bois, and the exodus of Muslims of Roche Bois to Plaine Verte. As a result, dozens of people died and the British army intervened to maintain peace. Three thousand refugees were registered in Port Louis, two thousand of which having left their homes and possession. Of the two thousand, one thousand had found refuge in the La Rue Magon school (now Notre Dame de la Paid RCA) and another thousand at the police Line Barracks (L'Express, 1968, as cited in Fanfan, 2000). The Madal Ul-Islam welcomed 1,300 Muslims and over eight hundred Muslim families found refuge in families' houses (Fanfan, 2000).

The historical reasons for the riots have yet to be explored in depth. There is a scarcity of sources that formally describe these conflicts and when I asked people locally, no one seemed to be able to say what was their exact cause. As Simone (2006) notes, "the riots of 1968, the year of independence, were about many things" (p.27). One version, detailed in the press (L'Express, 1968, as cited in Fanfan, 2000) explains that ethnic tension had to do with gender politics. In the

face of British decolonization, many Creoles had aligned themselves with anti-independence groups, while Indians were seen to be the primary force behind the push for independence. Muslims of Port Louis (in the twelve wards of the city) had also voted against independence, as they were worried that Hindu dominance would constrain Muslim mercantile interests (Simone, 2006). However, in the context of these interethnic rivalries and an unstable political context, Simone maintains that the riots were about gender politics, in particular relationship to women in the urban sphere, which has always constituted an unbridled space for female sexuality, and in turn a space to struggle over for patriarchal control. There had existed rivalries between Muslim and Creole prostitution syndicates, and when a Creole syndicate was able to secure the services of a Muslim woman, this event ignited riots throughout the city. This rivalry between prostitution clans was compounded by the formation of ethnic gangs (Fanfan, 2000). Another version (Nagapen, 1996, as cited in Fanfan, 2000) details how the riots began as a result of masked gangsters who put the screen of the well-known cinema Venus on fire on January 14th, 1968.

The lack of historical documentation about the cause of the riots notwithstanding, what is clear is that the riots affected some demographic change in the suburbs of Port Louis, causing many Muslims from Roche Bois to migrate to the neighboring area of Plaine Verte, and some Creoles from Plaine Verte to migrate to Roche Bois, thus leading to the increasing perception that Roche Bois and Plaine Verte had become racially homogeneous communities. One Roche Bois resident's story during an oral history interview in December 2011 echoes this account of segregation and homogenization:

“Even in the house where I lived [in Roche Bois] was inhabited by a Muslim. With the “bagarres raciales, they [the Muslims] left. When the Creoles destroyed all their houses in Roche Bois, on the other side, Muslims destroyed Creole houses in St. Francois especially. So all the St. Francois people went to live elsewhere. Muslims moved in. And here, in Roche Bois, all the Muslims who lived here sold their houses. There are no more Muslims in Roche Bois.”

Baptiste (2002) also confirms that the riots affected a significant change in the housing and racial landscape of Mauritius. Following this ethnic conflict, people left what had previously been diverse neighborhoods to settle in more ethnically homogeneous communities leading to what Baptiste has termed the “racial ghettoization of Mauritius” (Baptiste, 2002, p. 69).

Lau Thi Keng (1997) also concurs that Roche Bois’ racialization increased after the riots noting that in addition to the racial dimension of the event, a class dimension was integral as well:

The racial conflicts of 1968 reconfigured not only the ethnic topology of Port Louis but also the socioeconomic hierarchies. Migrations out of the ethnically marked régions of Port Louis (Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot, Sainte Croix, Roche Bois, and Tranquebar) also had a socioeconomic dimension, because the least privileged Creoles (economically, or in terms of their socio-professional situation) who left the predominantly Muslim régions tended toward migrating to other cities like Beau Bassin, Rose-Hill or Quatre Bornes, leaving the least privileged in suburbs such as Roche Bois. A parallel process can be observed for Muslims. It is also important to emphasize that these are not the only two groups who have been affected. Chinese- and Indo-Mauritians previously living in ethnically homogeneous régions left for Plaine Wilhems.

De même, les bagarres raciales de 68 ont reconfiguré non seulement la topologie ethnique de Port Louis mais aussi les couches socio-économiques. Les départs des régions ethniquement marquées de Port Louis (Plaine Verte, Vallée Pitot, Roche Bois, Sainte Croix et Tranquebar) avaient aussi une dimension socio-économique, car les créoles les moins défavorisés (économiquement ou en terme de situation socio professionnelle) qui ont quitté les régions à forte concentration musulmane ont eu plutôt le réflexe de migrer vers les villes comme Beau Bassin, Rose Hill ou Quatre Bornes, laissant aux plus défavorisés les banlieues comme Roche Bois. Il en a été de même pour les musulmans. On doit aussi faire ressortir que ce ne sont pas uniquement ces deux groupes qui ont été affectés. Le départ vers Plaine Wilhems des sino-mauriciens et des hindous des régions ethniquement homogènes a aussi été l’une des conséquences de ces événements. L’une des conséquences majeures de cette localisation géographique du phénomène de l’exclusion est sans doute de donner une plus grande visibilité sociale à celle-ci (Lau Thi Keng, 1997).

Lau Thi Keng’s lengthy descriptions of the various relocations that occurred as Port Louis’s neighborhoods were being ethnically polarized highlight one key element of paradigmatic space construction. That is, one of the effects of the various relocations was that marginalized zones (such as Roche Bois) acquired greater social visibility, and thus became paradigmatic of certain ethnicities.

Thus Roche Bois became known both as Creole and poor, and this visibility became representative of Creolity at large in Mauritian society. The events of 1968 thus solidified the perception of Roche Bois as a Creolized enclave.

4.5.5. The 1990s Discourse of “*Le Malaise Créole*”

The discursive terrain for the racialization of Roche Bois was intensified with later events that occurred in the 1990s. In 1993, a Catholic priest, Roger Cerveaux, denounced a host of social issues, including unemployment, crime, and low educational attainment faced by the Creole community, which he described as “*Malaise Créole*” (Creole plight). This complaint regarding social problems in the Creole community also articulated with a long-standing perception that Hindus dominate state and civil service positions such as the police force and the teaching profession. The Truth and Justice Commission Report (2011) clarifies this position:

For long, the Creole population had not had any pressure group worthy of its name. For too long, their natural aspirations have been assimilated to the whole Christian community or the ‘General Population’ where they were included with descendants of French colons and the Gens de Couleur. However they, (as the Indian Christians), have a specificity inside the General Population and inside the Catholic Church, which was not recognized (p.382).

The term *Malaise Créole* was immediately taken up by the press as well as various leaders and spokespeople of the Creole community and the Catholic Church. As a discourse, it both formalized and helped shape long-silenced grievances of the Creole community. Many groups emerged around this time such as the Federation of Mauritian Creoles (FCM), or the Diocesan Committee of February 1st, to cite only a few. Although the Organisation Fraternelle (OF) under the leadership of the Michel Brothers had been arguing since the late 1960s for the specificity of Creole identity and its recognition in the public sphere, it is the *Malaise Créole* discourse that brought these claims to the fore (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011).

4.5.6. The 1999 Revolts

The *Malaise Créole* became part of a discursive terrain that helped to shape the way the subsequent riots of 1999 were interpreted and contextualized. A fourth event in the racialization of Roche Bois, the origination of the riots in Roche Bois and their ethnic character shaped the perception of the town as a homogeneous Creole enclave and further entrenched its association with violence, unruliness, and crime. Beginning in Roche Bois, the protests rocked the island of Mauritius after a widely-known, charismatic Afro-Creole singer from Roche Bois, Joseph Reginald Topize, more commonly known as “Kaya”, died in police custody after being arrested for smoking marijuana in public. The police claimed he had died of an epileptic fit. It was widely believed and argued later in a series of disputed reports, that Kaya had been killed by the police. Originally from Roche Bois, Kaya’s music blended the local Creole Sega music with reggae, in a musical fusion whose lyrics promoted both universal equality and Creole people’s recognition and identity (Chan Low, 2003). The riots, initially an expression of anger by the population toward the police and by extension, a Hindu dominated state, quickly turned ethnic in character. After Roche Bois erupted, widespread looting, destruction, and ethnic violence between Hindus and Creoles rocked the island from Bambous to Goodlands, culminating in the government declaring a state of emergency for three days and leaving six people dead and hundreds others injured (Eriksen, 2004).

4.6. Continued Negative Racialization of Roche Bois

These four historical events and the discourse of the *Malaise Créole* thus solidified the perception of Roche Bois as a homogeneous Creole space in the national imaginary. In this next section, I draw from my current research and observations to show how in addition to having been historically constructed as racially homogeneous, present-day Roche Bois struggles with issues of

representation that perpetuate its paradigmatic association with Creole identity and with stereotypes of illiberal behavior, crime, poverty, promiscuity, drugs, and sanitary issues.

Residents from the area have faced a number of socio-environmental issues in terms of the representation of their locality. The national study on exclusion cited earlier (Asgarally, 1997) demonstrates this through interviews with local inhabitants who highlight a number of injustices that contribute to the negative perception of the place. In the following paragraphs, I will trace these issues, which continue to structure perceptions of Roche Bois as a racialized space, as well as the experience of living there.

4.6.1. Public Perceptions of Roche Bois

In the media, Roche Bois is frequently associated with drugs, crime, and poverty. As one of the community members I interviewed in December 2011 said, “the bad reputation of Roche Bois is glued to our backs.” When Roche Bois is discussed in the media, problems with drugs and poverty are often the main focus. In 2009, for example, three online media reports were published representing Roche Bois negatively and depicting sensationalist pictures of the garbage compacting facility. Two of these online media reports used the soundtrack from the movie ‘Slumdog Millionaire’ to show entire families rummaging for goods at the dump, with their children. I knew one of family who was filmed in the reports. After the reports came out, I spoke to the mother who typically would bring her three-year-old to the garbage facility while she rummaged for recyclables. The mother expressed feelings of betrayal by the media’s intrusion into her life and powerlessness regarding the negative representation of herself and her children. Elsewhere, I have analyzed these three media reports to comment on the symbolic role the garbage compacting facility of Roche Bois plays in public perceptions of Roche-Bois-as-Wasteland (Wiehe, 2011).

Negative self-perceptions of the township by its own residents are also widespread, thus showing, in line with theorizations of space (Cresswell, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991) that space is not a neutral container of the social but shapes the social as well. Andre (Andre, 1997) comments on the role of spatiality in shaping people's identities, and cites Roche Bois as a space highly charged with negative meanings, which in turn structures residents' sense of themselves.

People have negative perception of Roche Bois. Since I was a child, I know that people think poorly of the place. I am ashamed. People don't like Roche Bois. In Roche Bois, people like to fight too much. Really, it's a strange place. There are drugs, fights, theft, prostitution, and lots of other things.

Banne dimoune pense mal de Roche Bois. Depi mo ti zenfan mo cone dimoune mal pense de Roche Bois. Mo senti moi honte. Dimoune pa conten Roche Bois. Roche Bois, dimoune trop content laguer. Vraiment RB, li ene lendroit li bizar terib. Ena la drogue, la guer, voleur, prositution tous sa la (Andre, 1997).

In addition to negative images residents evoke in Andre's research, the author points out that Roche Bois is viewed as a space where it is not safe to wander into alone. Roche Bois is often perceived as a lawless place, outside of the normative space of the nation that is ordered and organized through laws (Andre, 1997). The residents interviewed by Andre do not deny this lawlessness. Rather, in her study, they expressed guilt and shame in not being able to deny the claim.

It could be that residents are unable to form counter-narratives to the representational issues that plague the dominant public perception of Roche Bois in part because there are material struggles that are taking place concerning the state of the locality. For example, the waste compacting facility is often spoken about in the literature as an area of struggle (Boswell, 2006; Lau Thi Keng, 1997; Easton, 1997) and was also cited by community members during oral history interviews I conducted in December 2011. In the national study on exclusion (Asgarally, 1997), residents complained of the compacting facility causing nauseous fumes and polluting the air. They explained:

Why do we have smells of dirt, cattle, pigs; why do we have the Shell dump nearby? Do you know what danger that Shell represents for Mauritius, or only for Roche Bois? Here people come to burn all kinds of garbage. When you put your clean clothes out to dry, you can see they are covered with dirt.

Ki fer nou senti lodeur malproprete, bœuf, porc, nou gagne shell, ou connne combien danger sa shell la represente pou maurice ou bien zisse pou Roche Bois. Ici vinn brule tout qualité dechet. Ou mette ene linge sec dehors, ou trouve saleteinne vinn pose (Andre, 1997).

Thus the garbage transfer facility can be said to have become a symbolic space representing

Roche Bois' dehumanization in the national imaginary (Andre, 1997; Wiehe, 2011).

Because of its symbolism, it has become a visible aspect of Roche Bois topography in the eyes of the nation, and as such, shapes the perception of Roche Bois as a dumping ground.

Another well-researched struggle has involved municipal sanitation policies aimed at abolishing traditional ways of raising livestock (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011; Boswell, 2006). Boswell (2006) has written about the common Creole practice of raising livestock in backyards. The keeping of pigs had social, cultural, and economic significance to some residents of Roche Bois. The livestock was a means of subsistence in lean times. Backyards livestock enterprises were often tended by several families, and until recently, the pigs used to roam freely in the neighborhood in search of food. In the early 1970s, over 300 hundred heads of household in Roche Bois and Pointe aux Sables were raising pigs and this practice constituted their main source of income (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). With rapid urbanization and the incorporation of Roche Bois into Port Louis, the government passed new sanitation laws allowing those who did not tend livestock to solicit sanitation officers' legal authority to remove the animals (Boswell, 2006). This legislation also made slaughtering of animals on private property illegal. These state maneuvers further encouraged pig owners to rent sties, pay for feed and contribute to the upkeep of a farm far from Roche Bois, opening opportunities for private companies to make

profit over feed and animal raising, and stripping the residents from cultural and economic benefits of raising pigs at home.

4.6.2. Roche Bois Space Structured by Capitalist Labor Exploitation Imperatives

In addition to struggling with public perceptions in the media, the shaping of Roche Bois by neoliberal economic structures has contributed to its perception as a poor space where labor is cheap and readily accessible. A nearby Export Processing Zone, developed by the government in the 1980s as part of the drive towards creating an export-led economy, employs many adults from Roche Bois. Export Processing Zones are labor-intensive industrial areas established next to what are considered “underdeveloped” areas, understood here from the perspective of neoliberal planners as pockets of poverty. They are spatially set up next to poor communities because of the profit-oriented motives of capitalists and the need for cheap and abundant labor to produce surplus value. At the same time, capitalist entrepreneurs rhetorically coat the justification of the implementation of such zones in these types of geographical areas as ways to attract investment and create employment. Many Roche Bois families are employed in the Mauritian EPZ. The factories, in addition to being exploitative of the labor of Roche Bois residents’, are a source of pollution (Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011). Residents complained to me informally about the tuna fisheries’ smells and the waste polluting the rivers. Children told me about the games they played in the very same rivers. When I asked parents why they did not organize themselves and challenge the presence of the factories in their area in terms of pollution, low wages and dire working conditions, many parents explained that they preferred to have a job than no job, even if that jobs offered little remuneration.

4.6.3. Other Challenges in Roche Bois

Other infrastructural problems continue to contribute to the negative perception of Roche Bois. Many families do not have access to adequate health care facilities, electricity, or running water. There is no adequate public transportation that transverses the township, there are few neighborhood grocery stores, and residents lack access to basic health services and secondary schools (Andre, 1997).

The highway in particular, is still a source of great discontent for residents. In the 1980s, a highway linking the North to the capital divided the community in two, disrupting topographical landmarks, people's usual paths, and a sense of wholeness in the locality. In addition, it created a dangerous high-speed vector in the middle of a highly residential community. Complaints from residents include the speed of the vehicles, the noise, and the inaccessible overpass to two-wheeled cycles, strollers or people using wheelchairs. When I asked one elder how residents have struggled against the highway, she explained that residents had not been aware of the negative implications of construction of the highway as it was being built. It is only after the fact that Roche Bois residents realized how the new highway would affect their lives. Interestingly, the highway was one of the main sites of residents' confrontation with the riot police during the 1999 revolts, thus perhaps constituting a symbolic borderland for Roche Bois to assert its identity.

4.7. Conclusion: Linking Racialization and Spatiality in Roche Bois

As the quote from Ericksen at the beginning of this chapter indicates, a first approach towards capturing the diversity of Port Louis (and Mauritius) might be spatial. Indeed, the spatial segmentation of Port Louis into various ethnic enclaves sheds light into the logics at work in the construction and maintenance of racial identities. While it is clear that poverty and exclusion do

not solely affect the Creole community (Lau Thi Keng, 1997; Mauritius Truth and Justice Commission, 2011), poor people in the Creole community are more adversely affected by various structural and cultural factors that make them a vulnerable group in Mauritian society. As the report on Poverty in Mauritius (1998) indicates:

Poverty, multi-faceted, cuts across all communities. It is an extremely difficult exercise to pin-point what is its exact link with slavery. However, what can be said from studies done on this subject from structural trends and indicators, as well as field studies [...] is that an aggregate of indicators show more massive marginalization processes affecting Creole communities.

The various historical events that have racialized Roche Bois in the larger spatial context of segregated Port Louis, have made of it a key space that represents exclusion and co-constructs this exclusion as marginalization for people of Creole identity. Thus the notion of paradigmatic space employed here as a way to understand how spatial segregation, as well as perceived dominant perceptions of a space as representing Creole identity, shape people's racial identities in the national imaginary. Lau Thi Keng (1997) has commented on the role of spaces of exclusion in the construction of Creole identities:

The linking between the zones considered exclusion zones and ethnic concentrations within Port Louis space plays a role in the construction of perceptions of exclusion linked to ethnicity.
Le regroupement entre les zones qu'on peut considerer comme des zones d'exclusion et les concentration ethniques sur l'espace portlouisien jouent sur la perception par les principaux concerne d'une coloration ethnique que revetirait l'exclusion (p.34).

Lau Thi Keng (1997) explains that non-Creoles, and especially people of mixed ethnic religious background who live in marginalized zones, are perceived as Creole because of where they live. Space thus plays an agential role in this framing. Zones of exclusion such as Roche Bois, then, play a key role in building the perception of the linkages between exclusion and race. The racialization (as Creole) that is experienced by many inhabitants of Roche Bois is a homogenizing process. Even

non-Creoles who live in Roche Bois are subsumed within this dominant “grid of intelligibility” (Foucault, 1976/1978, p. 93) that produces racialized subjects as a result of a distinct historical process of socio-spatial identity construction.

CHAPTER 5

PRODUCTIONS OF ROCHE BOIS CONCEIVED SPACES

5.1. Introduction

Using Wodak and colleagues' Discourse Historical Approach analytical tools of contents, strategies, and linguistic means of realization (Wodak & Reisigl, 2009; de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Wodak & Reisigl, 2001), this chapter analyzes data that was identified according to the data reduction strategy outlined in chapter 3 "Methodological Approaches to Research." To recall the process of data reduction briefly, I identified all instances where Roche Bois was evoked directly or indirectly by educators at school. Then, I assessed whether these mentions of locality were value-laden. I determined a statement to be value-laden if it carried direct or indirect evaluations of the children's culture, religion, body/phenotype, hygiene, humanity, or families' employment. Having found that approximately 85% of linguistic instances mentioning Roche Bois carried value-laden meanings, I proceeded to typologize the type of values invested in place-meanings. The categories of value-laden place-based meanings pertained to religion, culture, bodies, ancestry, and work. The present chapter analyzes these meanings, and finds that educators use the category of Roche Bois in several ways: to transform negative meanings into positive ones; to repair previous negative connotations with the locality; to draw from the students' realities in a constructivist framework (for example to create an inventory of available jobs for Roche Bois children); or to express concern over the children's health and bodies.

However, the discourse historical analysis of various representative instances of educator talk shows how educators' use of local place-based examples may have racialized the children and

stigmatized them as “other.” In contrast, other instances where educators drew on children’s place-based realities, however, reflect the power to transform the homogenizing effects of previous tendencies and instead positively racialized the children as hybrid and multicultural beings. I analyze these instances in chapter 6.

Theoretically, I use Lefebvre’s notions of spatial production (Lefebvre, 1991) to explain the two contradictory tendencies (of negative racialization with simultaneous moments of transformation). Lefebvre’s idea is that “conceived space,” the dominant representation of space (and thereby what is considered true and normal) by social institutions, contribute to the reproduction of society. In contrast, Lefebvre’s concept of “lived space” highlights the everyday counterpoints (which are the subject of the next chapter) to the dominant production of conceived space. Lefebvre theorizes that these two levels of production of space can happen simultaneously and be practiced by the same actors. This understanding of space as defined by Lefebvre contributes greatly to this study’s findings—his theorization illuminates the reproductive function of schools in terms of race-place identities and at the same time points to moments of possible transformation.

5.2. An Educator’s Attempt at Transforming Negative Meanings Reproduces the School-Community Gap

In this section, I use Educator B’s words spoken at an opening speech at a PTA meeting in the second trimester of the school year as evidence of educators’ awareness of and commitment to repair negative connotations of Roche Bois and to offer the locality a sense of normalcy. Yet the analyses of two units of data from her speech below show that although educators attempt to transform negative historical meanings, the negative connotations of the township are in fact

reproduced; and Roche Bois, as a result, is discursively located as a place outside the norm, while the school is discursively located as outside of the Roche Bois community.

Every trimester, a PTA meeting is held at school and all parents are invited. The purpose of the gathering is to provide an opportunity for educators to communicate school events and issues to parents and for parents to express school-related grievances to educators. Approximately fifteen parents were present at this meeting, which was led by two educators. As we prepared to enter the room, Educator D discreetly shared his concern with me, saying, “I am a bit nervous about the [parents’] questions. It’s like a courtroom in there (pointing to the room). The questions are of sensitive nature” (Educator D, fieldnotes, March 31, 2009). This expression reflected tension that often existed between educators and parents during meetings; however, the two educators made it clear to me they wanted to approach the meeting in the hopes it would run smoothly and as non-confrontationally as possible. I first provide the beginning of the speech in its entirety, and then focus on discourse analysis of two critical sentences (in bold) using the approach described in chapter 2 (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Speech at PTA Meeting, March 31, 2009

It's the second school where I am honored to address parents at the general assembly. I used to be in another school, and then, when I came to Roche Bois, people told me it would be a bad environment and that it would be difficult. People told me, "You are going to Roche Bois, then you'll have trouble." But then I was transferred, and I did not have any problems—seriously, absolutely no problems. It is in the big schools that you have problems, not the small schools.

This school, we don't call it Roche Bois school anymore; now we call it by its real name "Marable School" [a pseudonym].

This is a school just like any other school, the children are just like any other children, and the teachers are just like any other teachers who work here or there. However, there are a few small problems here, and if we do not solve them, our school will not be the same as the other schools. Our kids are the same as all the other kids. Except that there are a few small problems here in Roche Bois... a socioeconomic problem. Moms are gone; children do not know their dads. No mothers, no fathers. You parents present here, you have kids; I urge you to listen to this message: if you could make sure to watch over your neighbor's kids, to help them. It's not easy, but try to do it, because otherwise we'll have problems. Children of Roche Bois and children of other places, they are the same, except that there, parents provide support for their children.

Educator B's speech continued to address miscellaneous items related to the PTA budget and to open the floor for parent questions. In the opening of her speech, meanings of place are prevalent. In particular, the question of renaming the school and the comparison with other schools are two salient tropes in the production of place, which I explore in the discourse analysis of the two excerpts below in Table 7.

Table 7: Changing the Name of the School, March 31, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>We don't say "Roche Bois School" anymore. We call it by its real name "Marable School" [a pseudonym].</p>	<p>Perpetuation of a previous negative signifier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deitic "we" ● Negative declarative sentence ● Present tense ● Deictic "we" ● Reverse metonymy

In colloquial parlance, the school had often been referred to as "Roche Bois School." The school had an official name, but it had been infrequently used and was not associated with the township. By condemning the common practice of referring to the school as "Roche Bois School," Educator B tries to transform the negative meanings attached to Roche Bois. The renaming constitutes a form of abstraction. By giving the school a seemingly more neutral, "displaced" name, the educator appears to give it a sense of normalcy and change the negative values attached to the formerly located school.

Who (which actors) are involved in the text in this case? Although Educator B pronounced the speech, the first two sentences start with a deictic "we." Deixis is a linguistic term that suggests a word can only be understood within the context of the utterance. Here, the pronoun "we" implies the speaker and a normative inclusion of the attending parents, reinforced by the use of the present tense in "we call [the school]." It could also be read as a more inclusive (and therefore normative) "we" that includes children, educators, school staff, and society generally.

Regardless of who is included in the "we" who will now be calling the school by its original name, the discursive abstraction that is occurring through the collective renaming functions as an

opposite metonymy. Metonymy refers to the substitution of a word or phrase by another to which it is closely associated. In this case, the reverse is occurring. The school, by virtue of its designation being formerly associated with a location, is being “displaced” from this specific location (Roche Bois) and “replaced” as a less “located” location through the application of a generic school name. This is a political move that effectively removes the “situatedness” of the school and re-inscribes it as abstracted from the negative connotations of that situatedness. Discursively, the location of the school shifts by the use of a different label that indexes, or rather, should index, new meanings.

By implication, it is clear that negative meanings were previously attached to the school because its designation emplaced the school in the township of Roche Bois. Although the educator never confirmed the intended strategy in replacing the label, the effects of this replacement (and displacement of the school), without being causal, can be said to reinforce the negative values attributed to the township, as the township’s name is deemed to be best not spoken or associated with the school.

The educator’s move appears to be an attempt to dismantle negative meanings attributed to the school and to offer the school a sense of normalcy that is equated with other schools. In the next excerpt of the same speech, the educator attempts to deconstruct the exceptionalism of the school associated with Roche Bois, yet the discourse analysis reveals that Roche Bois’ exceptionalism is reified as she seems to impose conditions parents must meet in order for the school to be transformed (see Table 8).

Table 8: Educator Comparing the School, March 31, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>This is a school just like any other school, the children are just like any other children, and the teachers are just like any other teachers who work here or there. However, there are one or two problems and if we don't solve them, the school won't be like other schools.</p>	<p>Attempted Transformation of negative valuation of the school into a neutral label Perpetuation of negative valuation of the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comparison; simile (school, teacher, children vs. others) ● Comparative adverbs of place (here and there) ● Contrasting conjunction: however ● Declarative sentence with "there is" conjunction + existential verb be ● Conditional: if ● Negative

Table 8 shows that Educator B attempts to construct a relation of equivalence between Roche Bois School and schools in other localities. Yet, simultaneously, the educator is imposing certain criteria for this relation of equivalence. Through the use of the comparative adverb "like," and the toponyms "here" and "there," the educator provides a series of comparisons to explain that the school, children, and teachers are no different than any other school. This use of comparison can be read as a move to integrate the school with other "normal" schools and to move it away from a referent associated with a specific exceptional location to which negative predications are attached.

The condition imposed is that the Roche Bois school can only be equivalent to other schools if the problems are solved. This reifies the relations of difference between the Roche Bois school, "here," and other institutions, "there," and establishes Roche Bois as an exception. There is a clear condition imposed in the second sentence that starts with the conjunction "however" and culminates with the conditional conjunction "if." The educator uses the deictic "we" one more time, which appears to refer to the school and the parents as agents responsible for fulfilling this

condition. In the context of the opening of a PTA meeting, however, it could appear that the deictic “we” is an interpellation, an invitation, a warning, or a threat to Roche Bois parents. Conditions are imposed onto parents for the negative meanings of the Roche Bois school. Only under certain circumstances can this school redeem itself and not be isolated as a deviant school. The stakes for changing the negative associations of “Roche Bois School” are therefore high, and the responsibility for change is placed on the parents.

The two above excerpts (Tables 7 and 8) are indicative of Educator B’s commitment to reframing, renaming, and de-exceptionalizing Roche Bois School for the parents, and the use of the deictic “we” can be read as inclusive of parents, that is, as an effort to invite parents in the process of change. Both instances show that at a discursive level, the negative indexing of the Roche Bois school is reproduced despite educators’ efforts. As a result, “Roche Bois School” does not equal the other schools; it does not integrate nor compare.

However, while being a space implicated as separate from the norms of the other schools, my observations of the area around the school reflected that the school was disconnected from the Roche Bois community itself, like an island in the middle of the Roche Bois ocean. Indeed, school policy discouraged parents from entering the schoolyard. And, in casual conversations with me, parents shared that they did not feel welcome at the school. There were a number of instances during my research in which I observed that parents physically would not cross the spatial boundary of the school gate. Instead, they stood outside the gate that separates the school from the town, talking to their children through the iron bars before the bell rang. Educators, on the other hand, expressed wishes for parents’ increased involvement. One educator shared that he wanted parents to be more involved in their children’s education, during an interview during the second trimester

in May 2009, citing the low attendance rates at parent meetings. Two other educators reiterated this same wish this during interviews in December 2011.

5.3. An Educator's Engagement with the Complexities of Culture and Identity

Educators attempted to transform the negative meanings associated with calling the school by its location signifier, Roche Bois School, and throughout the year, they also engaged with the difficult intricacies of the various Mauritian ethnic/racial/religious/ ancestral identities. As a representative instance of patterns in the ways educators spoke about culture, in this section 5.3 and subsections, I analyze the ways one educator, (A), spoke about culture and identity to the children during a History/Geography unit on locality in the second trimester, at from May 26 to June 16 2009. I analyze three examples taken from a total of five lessons I observed in Educator A's classroom during this time. The unit on locality had several sub-modules: 1) looking at localities in the past and in the present (in terms of jobs, infrastructure, type of housing); 2) present buildings in one's locality (banks, libraries, and so on); 3) places of worship; 4) monuments and museums; 5) urban vs. coastal localities; 6) past and present shops and occupations.

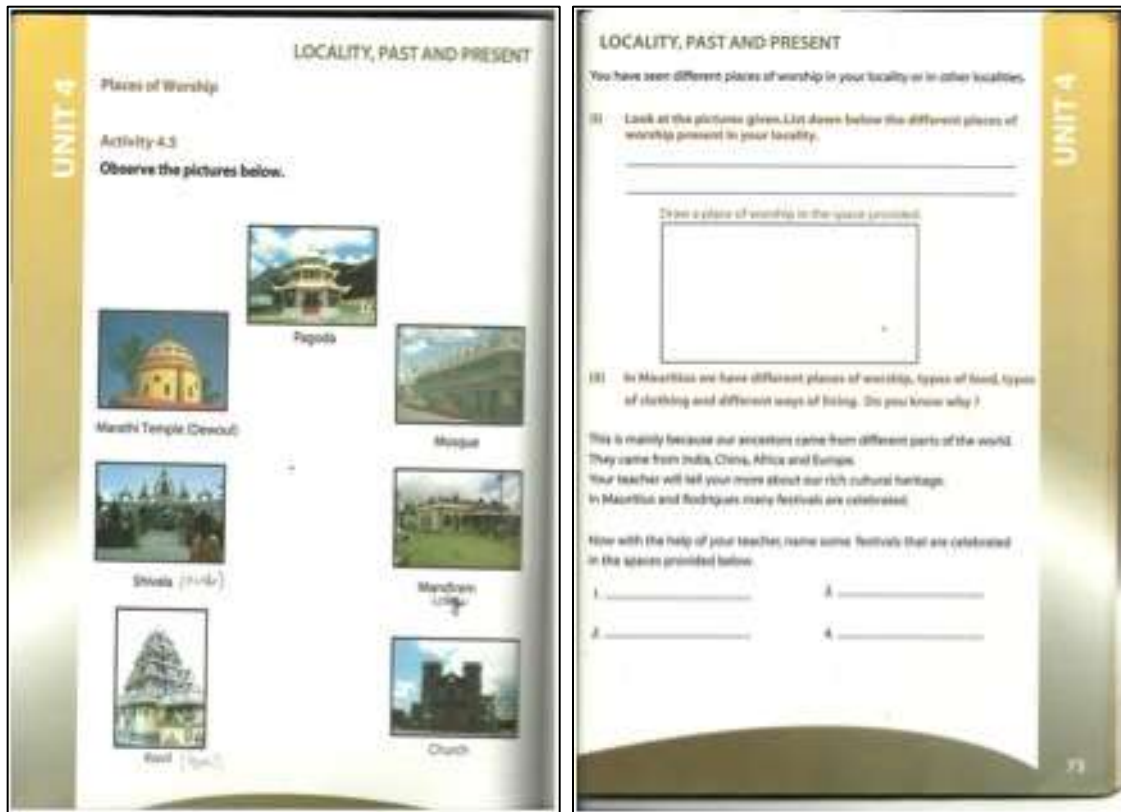
Across all three examples analyzed below, a discourse historical analysis of Educator A's words shows that while trying to make learning relevant to students in line with tenets of student-centered teaching, scaffolding, and a focus on the local, Roche Bois was represented as an essentialized homogeneous cultural unity, associated with fixed identities. In this fixed social topography, all Mauritian identities are relative to one another, a perspective that removes power relations between groups. By and large, the discursive strategies observed in the utterances analyzed are the perpetuation of Creole identities that are associated only with the Catholic religion

and Africa. The Discourse Historical analysis shows that the utterances may deny children a broader repertoire of representations of themselves, and of possibly being able to think of themselves as diverse and cosmopolitan.

5.3.1. “In Mauritius there are different ways of praying”: Including Local Examples Creates Sameness across Identities

As a way to introduce Mauritius’ multicultural topography for the first time to students, Educator A had presented brief examples of the multiple religions of Mauritius in an attempt to be inclusive and draw from students’ personal experiences on May 26. A few days later on June 1st, after a brief review of the meaning of places of worship, Educator A continued the lesson, following the textbook exercise below. These are the only two pages of the textbook submodule on places of worship.

Figure 7: History and Geography Textbook on Places of Worship



As the discourse analysis below will show, the language shows that one of the key aspects of spatio-cultural identity construction of children by this educator was the creation of a relative social topography that created sameness across identities. All Mauritian identities are presented as similar in terms of social and other leveling factors and aspects of various groups' differential histories and the power dynamics between them are rendered unimportant through the trope of relativism.

Table 9: Educator Speaking about Different Religions, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of realization
Usually in Mauritius, there are different ways of praying, different ways of eating, different ways of living. Why do you think that is? Why? [...] Why does Danny go to pray in a church and I go to pray in a temple? Why? Is that the same ?	Perpetuation (of the idea of fixed religious/racial identity)	Toponym Mauritius Adjective different x4 Oppositional pronouns: she vs. I, he vs. I.
No (students together)		
Why? Each person has his religion. Anabelle, when she will go to her parties, she will wear a short skirt, I will wear long clothing. Why are our ways of dressing different? (slight pause) Because she can do this in her religion, whereas in my religion, I cannot.		Pronoun “each person” Pronoun “she” Pronoun “I” Indicating comparison Pronoun “our” Adjective “different” Comparative conjunction “whereas”

In Table 9, the educator depicts a world in which religion determines a set social positionality with its associated cultural practices (clothing for example); this positionality appears immutable. Three discursive patterns reinforce the immutable social locations and differences: a) the word “difference” is used four times; b) the interplay of oppositional comparative pronouns “I vs. she” or “I vs. he”; and c) the comparative conjunction “whereas.” Historical reasons for religious/cultural differences are not stated, yet the educator attempts to explain them to students. In this attempt, a tautological answer is presented to learners: cultural-religious differences exist because of religious differences and all religions are relative to one another, with a circular logic.

The educator is drawing on students’ life examples to show religious affiliation and culture. The explanation incorporates real-life, local examples from the children’s backgrounds. Yet in the educator’s presentation of different identities to students, a stark contrast is created between him

and the students through pronouns: I/We versus you/them. In addition, presenting different Mauritian identities in relativistic terms has the consequence of depoliticizing these very social categories, rendering them as being natural and anchored immutably in history. Absent are representations of the powerful Franco-Mauritian minority, for example. There is no discursive opening to rethink how these categories were constructed in the legacy of colonial encounters and their accompanying racial hierarchies. The uneven and various histories that have led to these constructions are also hidden behind the cultural relativist tenet. By presenting the Mauritian social texture as an inventory of relative identities, the unevenness in access to and distribution of symbolic, cultural, and material resources is hidden.

It may be that the educator was trying to simplify a complex social landscape for the children. However, the trope of cultural relativism (of creation of sameness) rests on two ontological assumptions about identity that can be reconnected (and recontextualized) to the ways Mauritian public perception conceptualizes fixed identities. First, it assumes that identities are fixed and unchangeable. In this view, a Creole is a Creole and a Chinese is a Chinese and children are presented these identities as determined categories that cannot be challenged or disrupted. The second point builds on the first: the notion of fixed cultural identities implies that there cannot be any cultural mixing or complexity in the form of Creole-Hindus or Chinese-Muslims for example. The idea of “*metissage*,” or cultural mixing, so prevalent in Mauritius and which formed the very basis of the construction of the category of Creole, was not addressed in this classroom or any other classroom, thus leaving no room for students to imagine nuances in ethnicity, syncretism, or hybridity. Through this language, students can be led to inscribe themselves within an identity framework that posits monolithic identities as the norm.

5.3.2. “See, you are getting to know the many races in Mauritius”: Lessons on Multiculturalism Produce Fixed Spatialized Identities

As he continued the same lesson on locality while discussing places of worship on June 1st, Educator A associated each picture depicted of place of worship depicted in the textbook with a specific people. He went on to explain that Telegu people go to pray in a Mandirum, and Marathi people pray in a temple called Deool. After presenting Mauritius’ multiple religions, the educator told the children that they were learning about identities beyond the ones that they knew already, suggesting that this information would expand their cultural repertoires. However, the language use for the summary of the children’s learning, in addition to the fix religious topography he constructed prior to this utterance may have the consequence of fixing children’s identities spatially, as analyzed in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Educator Linking Roche Bois with Creole Identity, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of realization
See, you are getting to know the many races that exist in Mauritius. Other than Creole. When one lives in Roche Bois, one knows nothing except that there are only Creoles.	Perpetuation of Creole identity associated only with Roche Bois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present continuous tense “are getting” ● Lexicon “many races” compared to “Creole” through the comparative conjunction “other” ● Abstraction: one knows ● Negative: nothing ● Adverb: only

The educator’s utterance above may indicate the assumptions the educator had about the children’s notions of religious diversity in Mauritius. The educator made statements about what children knew and do not know about Mauritius, religion, and multiculturalism. This is evidenced through expressions like “when one is from Roche Bois, one knows nothing else” and the intensifying noun “nothing.” The linguistic features of these utterances highlight how children are

positioned as associated with Roche Bois, used reductively through the pronoun “nothing.” In the first sentence, the educator says, “you are getting to know.” This present continuous tense verb may imply that children did not know about religious/racial diversity in Mauritius prior to the lesson. The school lesson is posited as the generator of this knowledge for children. In the process, the children are posited as if they did not know this diversity existed in their community prior to the lesson; they know only, as seen in the second sentence, knowledge of Creole people. The third sentence solidifies the denial of their knowledge of diversity by introducing the spatial element of Roche Bois and the verb “knows nothing.” Thus, children of Roche Bois are positioned as solely Creole and ignorant of any other religion or ethnicity in Mauritius.

It may be that the educator saw his role as one of broadening the children’s cultural repertoires and knowledges, although I did not have the opportunity to for confirmation of his understandings of this particular role. However, the discourse analysis shows that the educator explicitly links place and race. Creole children are guided into representations of their identities as Christian/Creole and potentially locked into monolithic representations of themselves. In these utterances, children may be denied possessing knowledge of anything but their place (Roche Bois), their own religion (Christianity), and their race (Creole). This may have the potential effect of shutting down openness toward a multicultural consciousness and hybridity. The strategy at work here is the perpetuation of negative fixed identities associated with Roche Bois; and, through this perpetuation, children are not constructed as multicultural and hybrid beings, or capable of being complex and having various identities. The fixity of identity linked with the space of Roche Bois further solidifies Roche Bois as a paradigmatic space representing Creolity. In this space, cultural complexity is reduced and essentialized to a singular Creole identity.

5.3.3. “For Catholics like you, your ancestors came from Africa”: The Simplification of Complex Identities through the Use of Local Examples

Shortly after fixing Creole identities in Roche Bois as seen in the previous example, that same day in the same unit, Educator A offered a perspective of the Mauritian social tapestry to the children. Although he grappled with the complexity of phenotypical difference, of ancestries and countries of origin, and of religion, he offered generalizations without attention to details of difference or important historical factors. This could be posited as a necessary pedagogical simplification in light of the complex Mauritian history and diversity. However, as the discourse analysis will show below, it also may condense complex Mauritian cultural, ancestral, religious, and phenotypical identities to create an amalgam.

Table 11: Educator Speaking of Mauritian Ancestries, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>Why does a Chinese person look a bit different? Because his ancestors, his great-grandparents come out of another country, China. Whereas a Muslim, maybe his ancestors come from Saudi Arabia or another Arab country. For Marathis, they come from a part of India. Hindus, normally, our great great great parents, our ancestors come from India.</p> <p>For Catholics like you here, normally your great great grandparents come from some African countries. That’s why we say Creole, yes or no? Persons from Africa are persons whose great grandparents and grand parents come from African countries; that’s why they are Catholic. For us, our ancestors come from India; that’s why we are called “Hindu.” Now, Marathis, they go pray in a temple that’s called Dewoul.</p>	<p>Perpetuation of fixed identities linked to ancestry and condensed complex identities</p>	<p>Adjective “different” Verb “come from” x7</p> <p>Us = Hindus, “our” You = Creole/Catholics</p>

The educator makes reference to ancestry and religion to define and condense identities in the above example. The use of ancestry in the classroom follows linear conceptions of descent and ethnic/religious belonging. The direct linkages between Africa, Christianity, and Mauritian Creoles follow hegemonic modes of thought about ancestry in Mauritius, whereby every ethnic or religious “community” of Mauritius is associated with one unique geographical origin, and the connection to ancestry is a necessary part of defining oneself as Mauritian (Boswell, 2006).

In this case, multiple geographical origins are not used in the discourse the educator promotes about multiculturalism in Mauritius. This process constructs children as belonging to one country and one continent. Children are taught that all difference devolves from religious difference, which devolves from a unique ancestral geographical and cultural origin. In the above example, ancestry is the master signifier, alongside religion, used to explain and justify differences, and it is also used in particular to explain phenotypical and religious differences. The use of pronouns here again clearly delineates who is “us” and who is “them”—the educator (us) is Hindu, while Chinese, Creoles, and Marathis are them. The educator emplaces all children “here” in the category of Creole/Christian. The use of the word “here” here could be read as “in this school/classroom” or “in Roche Bois.”

It is also possible to recontextualize the educator’s reference to ancestry in the larger context of the ways Mauritians focus on the term. Ancestry is the dominant recurrent mode of defining cultural, religious, or ethnic identity in Mauritius. Recent anthropological scholarship has discussed its uses and abuses in the Mauritian social topography (Boswell, 2005; Palmyre-Florigny, 2003). As a prevalent mode of identity construction in Mauritius, it is no surprise that it is evoked in schools (and in the textbook). More importantly, the reference to ancestry in this instance

contributes to a process of “racializing religion,” i.e., it is made clear that biological difference is explained by religious ancestry. The educator moves from phenotype to cultural and religious difference. In this process, a conflation of race/ethnicity, biology, ancestry, religion and culture is therefore at play. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) offer the useful concept of “condensation of meaning” to explain the kind of amalgamation of meaning that is at work in this example. Condensation here occurs through patterns of equivalences of various identities. A chain of equivalent identities among different elements that are seen as expressing a certain sameness. Creole thus becomes an empty signifier under which Catholicism and Africa get subsumed for the purposes of tracing clear linear ancestries; and here it becomes a nodal point that is capable of fixing the content of a range of signifiers by articulating them through a chain of equivalence. The educator traces clear links between populations in Mauritius and their very singular, non-hybrid ancestries, which de facto collapses/condenses culture, religion, biologically determined phenotype, culture, and race in an authoritative manner. Condensation involves the fusion of a variety of identities and meanings into a single unity. Other examples from earlier in this same lesson support this analysis, as displayed in Tables 12 and 14.

Table 12: Educator Speaking of the Diversity of Religions, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
We spoke about different religions. Max, we said that Mauritius is a multiracial country. What does that mean? What does “multi” mean? It means there are several races here. When we talk about race, we are talking about religion.	Perpetuation (of the idea of multicultural Mauritius) Perpetuation (of the condensation between race and religion)	Mauritius; adjective “multiracial” Race = religion

Table 13: Educator Speaking about Cultural Differences, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>Our ancestry, that means our great great parents, whom you don't even know. Those ancestors come from different countries; that's why you have these different cultures. Why do the Zoulous, the Creoles, do a type of dance? Because your ancestors are used to doing that. So you follow. Why do certain religions, like Catholics, you like the reggae, the sega? If someone tells you to listen to Muslim songs, would you?</p>	<p>Perpetuation (of Creole association with Africa and with the Zulu tribe) Perpetuation (of fixed, non-hybrid cultural identities)</p>	<p>Pronoun "your" in references to Creole and Zulus Verb: follow to indicate following of ancestral cultural tenets Question, indicating the non-syncretic, monolithic position of identity</p>
<p>Students : No</p>		
<p>No. Because you are not used to it. It's not that you cannot do it, but you are not used to it. Even I, I am not used to listening to sega because it's not part of my religion, yes or no?</p>		<p>Adjective "not used to" to advocate for non-hybridity and purity Question if I</p>

In sum, in section 5.3 and the subsections above, I showed examples taken from one educator's lesson on places of worship to show how culture, and in particular children's Creole culture, was posited as homogeneous, fixed in a relational topography of other identities, and reduced of its complexity. There were repeated patterns of such discursive practices on culture I observed with other educators throughout the year.

5.4. Educators' Concerns about Children's Bodies: Safety and Health

In addition to educators' attempts to dismantle negative meanings of the school, and their efforts to be pedagogically inclusive of children while speaking of different religions and cultures, a pattern I observed in educators' talk on Roche Bois involved a concern for the health, hygiene, and safety of children's bodies. I present an analysis below, however, that shows that despite this concern for children's health, questions are raised regarding ways educators' talk presented dehumanizing meanings regarding the children. Of all the themes of place mentioned by educators throughout the course of the year, the question of hygiene and safety is the one that carried the most explicit negative racialization through its attachment to somatic features.

5.4.1. "She is too dirty": Educators' Concerns about Hygiene and Disengagement at School

Many Roche Bois residents, like people living in many other places in the world impacted by environmental injustices, struggle with health issues related to the environment and poverty. The connection between health, poverty, and environmental injustice has been widely documented by environmental justice activists and thinkers in the United States (see for example, Mann (2011) for a concise history). Some research has also been conducted on the same topic in Roche Bois (UNDP, 2003). Surrounded by factories that produce highly toxic commodities such as fertilizers and matchsticks, many children I observed during my research suffered from skin infections on their hands and feet. These sometimes appeared like mild eczema-type rashes, and at other times seemed to be more serious skin irritations with virulent sores. On average, my estimate is that one out of ten children at school suffered from these ailments. I visited the Roche Bois health dispensary to inquire about the children's skin ailments. The medical staff there attributed these infections to

lack of hygiene, playing in unsanitary environments (such as canals with sewage water), or to polluted conditions. Children indeed play in the two rivers that run through Roche Bois. They report that factories of the Mauritian Export Processing Zone (free trade zone or EPZ) dump refuse in the rivers.

The children's skin infections and hygiene issues did not go unnoticed at school. All the educators I spoke to informally expressed concern about children's health and hygiene, although these issues were not understood structurally through the lens of environmental (in)justice but rather as a child's individual problem, and as a problem related to people in Roche Bois. A common pattern observed is that educators attributed local meanings to the children's skin ailments. Most adults at school were concerned that children did not have "clean" hands in situations where it was not a question of having clean (washed) hands but rather of having developed skin rashes.

Children's hair was also the focus of educators' concern. One story was particularly salient during the course of a year of fieldwork. As I was discussing children's engagement and absences at school with Educator C at the beginning of the second trimester, he spoke about two students whose house was directly across from school. This family, apparently originally from the island of Rodrigues lived in dire conditions of poverty. The educator explained that the father was frequently unemployed and the mother worked in the Export Processing Zone factories. The educator was concerned about the children's disengagement at school. Both in the same grade, they were frequently absent, and during my nine months in Roche Bois, I had never observed either of the children smile or laugh. The little girl, Janelle, always wore a headscarf to cover her hair. In an informal conversation in English, Educator C explained:

This girl only came to school during the first trimester. She lives here across from school, and I've been complaining, she is too dirty. The grandmother was very upset [about my complaints] and said she would go to the radio with this story. These children have skin

problems. And now she is back to school. Lots of family problems; this girl and the other boy are cousins. Big problems. They are not able to write.

I talked to her mom; she said she is not coming to school because it's a burden. How much pressure can you put on a child? The ministry doesn't like it when you put pressure on a child. It's a burden on his head. So you can't. But if you don't pressure the child, how will the child bring books to school?" (Educator C, fieldnotes, April 20, 2009)

This educator's narrative was spoken in English in front of children in the classroom.

Although English is the language of curricula and testing, educators frequently use English when they do not intend to be heard or understood by the child. The switch of language here may clearly be explained as a way to exclude and protect the children from this interaction and create a space of privacy between me and the educator.

During my research, accounts of this incident had apparently crossed the school boundaries, because it was brought up by one of the NGO workers with whom I was in contact outside of the school. The NGO had received reports detailing the educator's words about the children's hygiene. Their interpretation was that these words were part of a larger pattern of discrimination against Creoles and their lifestyles. She mentioned hearing people pass by Janelle's house and say, "See how Creole people live!" The incident, which clearly had become a topic of discussion outside the school boundaries, was interpreted in racial terms by the larger community. However, although I did not confirm my interpretation with the educator, the educator's words can be recontextualized within the school system as being part of a larger philosophy of holding children accountable for being clean and bringing books to school. Similar educator talk also occurs in the context of general dissatisfaction with policies imposed by the ministry, which limit the educator's "pressuring power."

5.4.2. “I will make you become humans”: Public Talk of Hygiene during a Routine Disciplinary Measure

While the concerns about hygiene expressed above were related to me during a personal, although not necessarily private as intended, conversation with an educator, there were frequent public instantiations of the same stance toward children’s bodies during daily assemblies. Below I present two examples and discursive analyses.

Example 1. One such instance occurred during the morning daily assembly on May 25 2009. As usual, the assembly covered various topics, including discipline issues with the children, and other moralizing lectures about how to behave as well as a common prayer. The topic that morning did not concern children’s hygiene, but there was unruliness in the ranks of the assembly so Educator G, who was leading the assembly that morning, chose to discipline some children by asking them to stand in front of the assembly. In the process of this disciplinary measure, aspects of the children’s bodies were highlighted.

Table 14: Educator Concern about Children’s Hands, May 25, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>Look at his hand, come over here, come over here, come over here!</p> <p>I will make you become humans here!</p>	<p>Perpetuation (of the idea that Roche Bois children are dirty)</p> <p>Perpetuation (of Roche Bois children’s dehumanization)</p>	<p>Imperative verb “look,” commanding audience to look at child</p> <p>Imperative verb “come” to isolate child in front of audience</p> <p>Verb “make you” indicating force “become human,” indicating sub-human status</p>

In the above instance, Educator G expressed frustration with the children’s behavior because they were not quiet during the assembly. On one hand, the educator points out the child’s

hand infections in front of the whole audience. On the other, she links bodily conditions with the children's humanity by saying, "I will make you become humans here." The discursive effect this sentence may be that children are not human, or not yet human, or sub-human, and this child, having become a public spectacle in front of the other students, is an example of this yet-to-become status. "I" in this sentence could represent the educator herself, or also indicate a possible synecdoche, i.e., the educator standing in for the whole of the institution of schooling. The child is dehumanized through reference to his skin infections in front of the broader school community.

The idea of sanitation and cleanliness is a pervasive trope in Roche Bois in broader national discourses. Earlier in chapter 4, I mentioned that the press, for example, had published three online reports that same year on people who scavenged and searched for goods at the waste compacting facility (Radio Plus, 2009; L'Express Online, 2009; L'Express Online, 2009). The highly sensationalized reports highlighted Roche Bois' residents' poverty and dependence on waste with a musical backdrop taken from the 2009 movie "Slumdog Millionaire." These representations construct a picture that goes beyond the literal meanings of sanitation into the symbolic. Roche Bois is constructed as a dirty place in the Mauritian imaginary; its inhabitants are the source of poor hygiene practices, lacking cleanliness and tidiness. This reading is corroborated with findings from a study on exclusion conducted through the collaboration of several researchers (Asgarally, 1997; Andre, 1997) that highlights the symbolic aspect of the waste compacting facility and the ways it has come to represent Roche Bois' environmental injustices.

At a macro historical level, issues related to sanitation, cleanliness, and sickness in the tropics were used pervasively by colonial powers to promote justification of European empire expansion via "scientific" and medical presentations that stigmatized indigenous populations in negative ways (Stepan, 2006). Through an exploration of colonial racist logics in visual iconography,

Stepan (2006) highlights how colonial ideologies and medical establishment practices framed tropical diseases as being related to the populations not to climate or other factors. Colonial images were used to produce meanings about the relation between tropical places and (subaltern) race:

[...][T]ropical diseases were diseases of colonial people; the pictures of the sores and other horrible signs of illness shown in medical textbooks were those of Africans, Samoans, and Indians. Many of these pictures circulated beyond professional medical circles to the newspapers and popular publications feeding public interest in empires overseas. (Stepan, 2006, p. 27)

While representations of hygiene and sanitation in Roche Bois at school do not directly connect to questions of tropicity, the processes of racialization associated with publicly depicting children's bodies as sub-human and diseased is related to the historical colonial representations of tropical populations as described by Stepan.

Example 2. While educators were concerned about children's health and educational success, their expressions related to these concerns often placed blame on the children themselves, citing their lack of good work habits and cleanliness, both of which were posited as signs of humanness. One such instance occurred on April 20, 2009 during a daily assembly where children were told that "hard work" and "cleanliness" were going to lead them to "feel free." On the morning the first day of the second trimester, after vacation, as educators welcomed the children back to school, educator B started with a speech (see Table 15 below). However, the example I present shows that in the process of attempting to address concerns with children, Educator B constructs the children's identities as associated with animals.

Table 15: Educator on the Importance of Being Clean, April 20, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>This trimester is an important trimester. All the trimesters are important but this one even more. You need to work hard, you need to come to school, you need to come to school clean. It's very important to be clean. Even animals are clean! Even the pig, the dog, when they roll themselves in the earth, it's actually to remove all the bugs on their bodies. [...] When you are clean, you will feel free.</p>	<p>Perpetuation (of the perception that Roche Bois children are dirty)</p>	<p>Adjective important x3 Modal verb: you need to x3 Adjective clean x4 Intensifying adverb "even" x2 4 references to animals in a comparative construction to children being clean Clean associated with freedom</p>

In the above speech, which should be understood as an introductory speech to the second trimester (i.e. the first formal words spoken by an adult at school after vacation), Educator B evidently aimed at convincing children of the importance of being clean. The adjective clean is mentioned four times throughout the excerpt, and modal verbs such as “you need” are repeated several times at the beginning. To intensify the argument and relate it to the children’s knowledges, the educator chooses to construct a comparison with common animals found in Roche Bois, with the intensifying adverb “even.” The logic is that animals are clean and therefore children should be clean. Interestingly here, animals are posited as cleaner than children, as the example the children should follow.

While it could be understood that the comparison to animals was chosen as a way to demonstrate that everyone and every living thing has hygiene practices, I argue that the use of the animal trope to associate Roche Bois children with animals and uncleanliness was part of a larger pattern of racist constructions involving the children. In fact, the trope of animality had been part of a broader racist discourse concerning Roche Bois residents and Creole people aligned with a

larger history of dehumanization and racism in Mauritius' history of colonization. Scholars involved in the Mauritian national study on exclusion also have affirmed this reading (Andre, 1997; Easton, 1997; Lau Thi Keng, 1997). In addition, the association of subaltern groups of people with animal tropes falls in the trajectory of a long, well-documented history of racism and colonialism in various contexts (Stepan, 2006) and builds on the processes of dehumanization detailed in examples in previous sections.

5.4.3. “In Roche Bois, it is very dangerous”: Educators’ Worries about Children’s Road Safety

Educators’ representations of children’s bodies were not always related directly to bodily cleanliness and hygiene, but sometimes took the form of concern for children’s security on the roads, specifically on the local two-lane highway that bisected Roche Bois close to the school. To analyze educators’ expressions of concern regarding safety on the bisecting highway, it is necessary to consider the larger historical context of what is known as the Northern Highway (“*Autoroute du Nord*”), which crosses Roche Bois leading to the Northern parts of the island. Literature on Roche Bois (Asgarally, 1997; Baptiste, 2002) and oral history interviews I conducted reveal that the construction of the highway crossing Roche Bois over thirty years ago was not well received by Roche Bois residents. From the beginning of this road incursion into the Roche Bois space, residents complained that it divided their township in two. The road would be a danger for their children and their community, and create higher levels of noise pollution and traffic. But these concerns had little impact, and the highway was completed. A pedestrian overpass was built in the most frequently crossed section of the highway, but the overpass has very high steps and was therefore not bicycle-, disabled- or elderly-friendly. Further, Roche Bois extends for a kilometer

(0.6 miles) on both sides of the highway, and building only one overpass did not account for the numerous pedestrians who frequently crossed other areas of the highway. As a result, instead of walking up the highway several hundred meters to cross on the one overpass, residents typically cross wherever it is convenient for them. Perhaps symbolically, the revolts that began in Roche Bois in 1999, which I described in chapter 4, had for primary target this very highway. The demonstrators attempted to occupy this contested space, confronting the riot police by creating barricades.

This historical background notwithstanding, there were dangers in crossing the highway. Educators urged the children to use the overpass, although the lack of accessible safe crossing meant adults and children alike often jaywalked across the highway by foot. The dangers of crossing the highway in this manner were not just abstract warnings from educators. There had indeed been several incidents, including one in April 2009 when a child, upon leaving school, crossed the highway without using the overpass. As he was trying to get to the other side, his drinking bottle fell in the middle of the street. Instinctively, he ran back to pick up the bottle, and a vehicle had to break abruptly in order to not hit the child. Fortunately, the child was unharmed.

This event was witnessed by a number of children and educators standing by the highway and had been reported back to school. It was the subject of a number of different lectures and pedagogical moments by educators throughout the remaining 2009 year in classrooms and assemblies. The manner in which educators expressed their concern for road safety revealed both their deep worry for the children's safety and also their assumptions about the children's intellect, rational thinking, and humanity. Much of the talk of various educators on safety took on civilizing and sanitizing tones during the period of the closely-missed-accident, positing children as needing to be humanized, or cleansed from irrational and unintelligent thinking. For example, Educator D

below, on May 20, 2009 spoke to the children early in the day as they entered their classroom after attending the whole school assembly (which had dealt with the same issue of safety).

Example 1.

Table 16: Educator' Cautionary Remarks about the Highway, May 20, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>We need to be careful not to have an accident. Every morning at the assembly, we tell you that you must use the overpass.</p> <p>Why do we tell you that you need to use the overpass and not to cross by foot? Because there are many cars.</p> <p>In Roche Bois, it's very dangerous.</p> <p>Because the law tells you that a vehicle can go 80 km/h. It goes very very quickly.</p> <p>So you need to think. A car is coming quickly, even if it breaks, it can hit you. The guy driving the car won't be at fault. The law has told him that he is allowed to go very quickly. The ease of driving quickly. But you, what is built in Roche Bois? An overpass was built. Yes or no ?</p>	<p>Perpetuation (of negative perception of children ability to stay safe)</p> <p>Perpetuation (of Roche Bois as an unsafe place)</p>	<p>Inclusive deitic we</p> <p>You (children), object of the principal's telling; you = actors of an obligation must</p> <p>You, object of the principal's telling</p> <p>Adjective = dangerous</p> <p>You (children) object of the law's telling</p> <p>You = actors needing to think</p> <p>You = the object of the car's hitting</p> <p>Passive reference to overpass building in Roche Bois</p>
<p>Students: Yes</p>		
<p>Who is crossing the road? Are dogs crossing the road?</p>		<p>Question implying children. Comparative question implying dogs.</p>
<p>Students: No</p>		
<p>These are humans like you who cross the road.</p> <p>So when we tell you to use the overpass, it's important. Especially for pupils. Not everyone has their dad or mom bring them to school.</p>		<p>Adverb like comparing children to humans; simile</p> <p>You = the object of the educator's telling</p> <p>Intensifying adverb especially</p> <p>You = walking alone</p>

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
So when you are walking all alone on the street, you need to understand the rules of the road.		You = need to understand

These were the first words that children heard that day as they entered the classroom, before starting the lesson. Earlier, they had attended the whole-school assembly that also reinforced the same themes. In this interaction, Educator D’s concern for children’s safety is immediately established when the educator uses the inclusive deictic “we” to ask children to be careful. However, Roche Bois’ is referenced as being a dangerous place through the implied reference to the highway. Then, the children are positioned as passive recipients or objects of the “we’s” ominous words and warnings, or as passive recipients of the law over which children have no control. The “we” and the law thus stand above children’s agency, and are the active actors subjecting the passive children to specific norms of conduct. Children are described as “needing to think,” which assumes they do not always think when crossing the road. They are also positioned as objects of the cars’ actions toward them, once again a passive construction.

In the next utterance, the educator asks the children who is crossing the road and immediately follows it with a comparative question, suggesting or asking about dogs crossing the road. The juxtaposition of these two sentences could imply a comparison between children and dogs. In her rhetorical answer, the educator then compares children to humans through the use of the adverbial clause “humans like you.” This appears to be an attempt to valorize the children’s humanity, although it could be a dehumanized construction of the children as well. By naming a comparison between children and humans, the educator is constructing a relation between them, a relation that could have been a given on the first place.

Example 2. The question of safety on the highway was brought up many other times by various educators during this period. In the following instance at another daily assembly that followed the typical routine, two educators lectured jointly the children about road safety, and in the process also brought me in to reinforce their statements. After first starting with a vocabulary lesson about defining the meaning of the word safety, followed by an admonishment that children did not answer in full sentences, and then details about how children would be committing an infraction if a car hit them, they recount the story of the child who ran back to fetch his water bottle (see Table 18).

Table 17: Educators on Safety, May 7, 2009

Speaker	Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
Educator B	The child went back on his steps to get his water bottle. What would you have liked to lose? A water bottle or your life? Raise your hands.	Referential (the child, the children) Predication Perpetuation (of negative perception of children's ability to stay safe) Perpetuation (of negative perception of children's ability to think)	Question about children's preference to loose Comparison between bottle and life
Students (simultaneously)			
Educator E	You see? (turning to me standing next to the assembly) They do not even want to live.		Addressing other audience (educator + me) through question and use of deictic pronoun "They" Intensifying adverb even
Educator B	The water bottle has more importance than life		Comparative clause: More... than
Elsa	I am not sure they realize what was asked and what they are saying		Addressing others through use of pronoun "they"
Educator E	They did not listen		Addressing other audience through use of pronoun "They"

Speaking out of concern for the children's safety, the educators' utterances in this passage achieve several effects. After describing the incident about the child in the middle of the highway, Educator B presents the children at the assembly with two choices: choosing the bottle or life. The bottle could be interpreted as a euphemism for death, especially when juxtaposed with the familiar opposite in the dyad: life. Some children reply with the intended answer, "life," while others, socialized into the typical genre of answering an authority figure's questions for the purposes of getting the "correct," or expected, answer without real engagement in the meaning or content of the questions, answer "the bottle." The group of children that answered, "bottle," quickly realize that they have provided the wrong answer, and immediately self-correct and say "life." By then, Educator E has already commented on their answer. Through the use of the exclusive deictic pronoun "they," spoken in front of the whole assembly, Educator E turns toward the adults grouped at the front of the crowd (myself, and several other educators) and condemns the children for their answer before the children self-correct. The intensifying adverb "even" is key in this condemnation. Educator B agrees with Educator E's words, while I attempt to offer explanations for the children's answers. Educator E acquiesces, but attributes the children's answer to their lack of listening.

The educators' control over the turns for utterances, as is typical of teacher talk, in this case have set up a tight discursive configuration that leaves the children very little room to maneuver. The topic at hand is safety on the road, which represents a higher moral goal: no one can contradict the importance of that theme in schools. However, the first educator chooses to present the children with a death/life dichotomy, pronounced in the typical school genre of educators asking routine procedural questions for which there is a definite right or wrong answer. This seems

to catch certain children off-guard, who, for the purposes of fulfilling their obligation to answer and perform the procedure, choose the first word “bottle.” Then, the educators at school use excluding language (the exclusive pronoun they) in front of the children to blame them for choosing their wrong answer. This has the effect of dehumanizing them even more, as they are blamed for not even wanting the elemental desire to live and survive. What appears like a simple cautionary lesson on road safety may have the effect of excluding children from the very responsibility and desire to self-protect. A liability such as the highway cross sectioning the space of their lives has therefore become a mechanism for children’s exclusion and subjectification to negative images of themselves.

5.5. Educators’ Drawing on Examples of Local Professions in Roche Bois

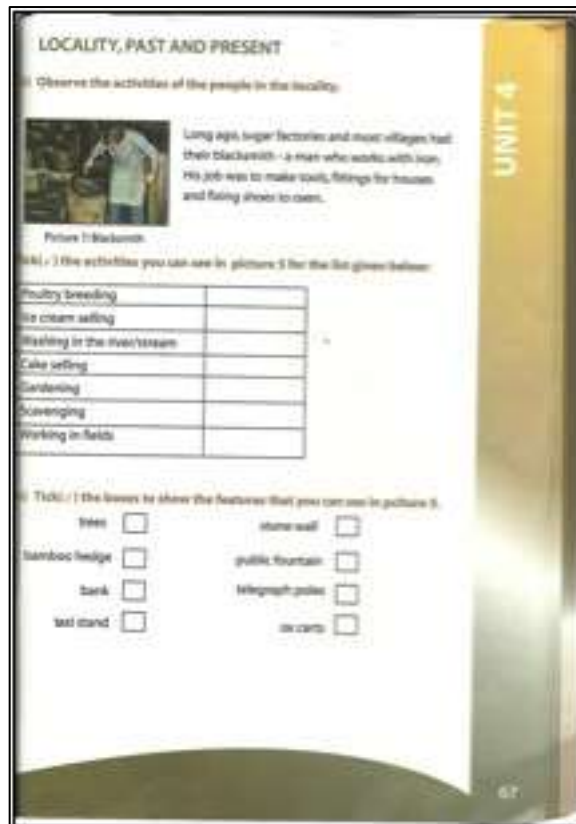
A final and no less important dimension of educators’ representations of children in Roche Bois involved work, economic activity and work ethic, and employment. Many of the examples used by educators were examples intended to be relevant to the local experience of the children as part of a larger framework of drawing on local examples. However, because all the examples that were cited in classrooms were representations of working class/poor economic activities and lifestyles, I argue through evidence presented in this section that Roche Bois children are constructed as future laborers of the working class, and that from a macro-perspective, the meanings educators’ employ at school contribute to the reproduction of the laboring class.

5.5.1. “In Roche Bois, certain people are workers in the factories”: Local Examples Reproduce Roche Bois Class Conditions

A unit on locality in Educator H’s classroom focused on questions of work and economic activity in children’s localities. There had already been two lessons on aspects of localities that

changed from past to present. On the morning of May 27, Educator H continued the lesson on various activities in various localities, and specifically on page 67 of the textbook, which represented the profession of blacksmith as an obsolete profession due to the increased mecanisation.

Figure 8: History Geography Textbook Unit on Locality



As a way to introduce this lesson on the ways localities and histories shape people's economic activities, Educator H began by using local examples of Roche Bois professions as well as neighboring Baie du Tombeau.

Table 18: Educator's Representation of Class, May 27, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>Educator: When we live in a neighborhood, there are many activities people do. For example, at Baie du Tombeau [neighboring costal town] there is the ocean there, most people there, what do they do? Fisherman. In Roche Bois, you will find certain people to be construction workers, certain people will be workers in the factories. Certain people in Roche Bois work, I don't know, in sugar cane fields. There are several professions. Do all people do the same job?</p>	<p>Perpetuation of low class identities</p>	<p>Inclusive "we" Collective anthroponym "people" Econym "Baie du Tombeau" Anthroponym "people" Anthroponyms "people," "certain people" x3 Predicative words: construction workers, workers in factories, cane fields</p>
<p>Students (together): No</p>		
<p>Educator: Certain people in Roche Bois work in Port Louis, in restaurants, or in Port Louis in the city, I don't know, to work in at the movie theater. Now, let's turn to a profession that perhaps you do not know too well. Look at the picture of the blacksmith.</p>		<p>Collective anthroponym "certain people" Predicative words: in restaurants, movie theater, in Port Louis</p>

After discussing the blacksmith as an obsolete profession because of increased mecanisation of the sugar industry, later in that same lesson on the same day, Educator H again evokes Roche Bois as a place of factories (see Table 19), as part of exercise 2 below that required the children to name various people at work in their locality.

Figure 9: History and Geography Textbook Unit on Locality



One of the children had volunteered the word “factory worker” as an answer, to which the educator replied:

Table 19: Educator’s Representation of Roche Bois’ Factories, May 27, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
Educator: Who are the factory workers? These are people who work in factories. So, this is meant generally, when we say factory workers, these people might work in the umbrella factory, in the sweets factory, in the chocolate factory. In Roche Bois, there are factories, no?	Referential Predication Perpetuation (of low-class identities)	Professional anthroponyms : workers, people who work in factories Places: umbrella, chocolate, sweet factories Toponym: Roche Bois
Students : The nail factory!		
Educator: When you are writing this word in brackets, you can write “factory workers” there (in workbook)		

In the two representations above, Educator H, while drawing on local examples that the children could connect to, depicts an overall functionalist view of place. Functionalism plays out through simplistic and linear connections between place and economic labor. The educator claims that a coastal place will necessarily have fisherfolk, for example. In this sense, the children can learn about the situatedness of economic production (fishing) related to the availability and proximity of natural resources (fish). The educator's focus on the local here seems to be "what jobs are available" as opposed to "what jobs could be available."

This logic of local availability in the context of an educator attempting to make learning relevant to students applies to representations of Roche Bois' economic activity. When it comes to Roche Bois, factories are depicted as the sole provision of labor. In that sense, factories are presented as naturalized, as the essential and normal provision of jobs in the area. The examples of factories presented are on the one hand relevant to children (sweet factory, chocolate factory) and on the other, they are also real: there are indeed sweet and chocolate factories in Roche Bois.

This example shows that wanting to make the examples relevant to the realities of children's parents' economic activities could be a discursive process that shuts out other possibilities and imaginings for children. Children are not shown professional occupations such as banking or education, or even skilled technical positions. The only two occupational sectors I observed mentioned during the year were factories and fishing.

5.5.2. An Invited Guest at Independence Assembly Speaks about Children's Future Role in the Factories

The question of relevance of learning material was not the only logic at work when educators spoke of local jobs. The factories do not play the simple roles of providers of labor for Roche Bois children's parents, but also directly intervene in the children's education. This was illustrated on the observation of Mauritian Independence Day in 2009 when an invited guest, the CEO of a neighboring factory in Roche Bois, gave the official speech. I also attended a similar speech the following year in 2010.

Every year on the day of the independence celebration, one or two guests of honor are invited to a whole-school assembly to speak to the children. The guest(s) of honor during both of my visits were managers and Chief Executive Officers of the neighboring factories. In 2009, the CEOs from the fertilizer company and the shipping company attended; and in 2010, the CEOs of an oil company and another shipping company were present. Both years, the same ritual ensued. For days preceding the independence celebration, educators trained the children to stand in a neat semi-circle, with the lower-level kindergarten classes in the front and the higher-level classes in the back. Children were asked to obey whistle blows that prompted them to stand in military poses. When the principal blew the whistle once, they were asked to stand at attention for the raising of the flag, then another whistle blow would prompt them to stand at ease. After the raising of the flag and the national anthem, the CEOs' walked through the ranks of children as military generals would do, read the Prime Minister's independence message to the children of the nation, and then presented their own short speech. Other adults present included PTA members, teachers, and the police.

In 2010, after reading the prime minister's speech, one of the CEOs reiterated the prime minister's focus on the importance of education for the nation and the importance of education as a means to escape poverty. Similar to the speech of the prime minister, the word discipline was used repeatedly. The CEO said that the company had "a long term relationship with the school," emphasized that the company has a particular dedication to this population because they will, through education, stand a chance of being able to apply at the company and to become their employees. In this statement, he directly connected the children's education to making cheap labor available for the factory.

The neighboring factory CEOs' involvement in the school is no random occurrence. In fact, this continues a well-established structural pattern of for-profit companies' interest in the availability of a cheap labor force. Although the Mauritius Export Processing Zone (EPZ) factories are dispersed throughout the island, many are implanted in the Roche Bois area due to its proximity to the port and docks. Since the 1970s development of the EPZ, the availability of cheap labor near the port was an incentive for factories to set up in the Roche Bois area. As part of its EPZ development, the government proposed an attractive package of incentives for foreign investors, which included a cheap labor market.

In addition to the structural importance of Roche Bois to the EPZ, the school system itself has set up a system of interconnections between the public school system and the private sector, particularly in the case of Education Priority Zone (Zone d'Education Prioritaire or ZEP) schools. To recall from the introduction, the ZEP school program was launched in 2003 to improve the performance of schools that have an average failure rate of over 60% at the Certificate of Primary Education examination over five years. To achieve this goal, the ZEP system aims at creating partnerships with parents, community, and the private sector to sponsor the schools. In 2004,

private sector sponsorship intensified as the government appealed to companies to support the ZEP schools in their region (Lam Hung, 2008). In fact, in 2007, the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Mauritian Government to invest in ZEP schools. The presence of the CEOs at school, and their encouragement of ZEP students to participate in the education process so that they may become their labor force is therefore a system design.

The interference of companies in public education is a global neoliberal trend toward increased privatization of public services and dismantling of the welfare state. Already in the 1970s, in their seminal book "Schooling in Capitalist America," Bowles and Gintis (1976) analyze the reproductive processes of schooling and underscore how public education is intertwined with and serves capitalist modes of production. Schooling, in their view, is geared to reproduce the status quo, which includes, training "good workers" who see themselves in working class positions. They state:

The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the workplace, but develops the types of personal demeanor, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social relationships of education--the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students, and students and their work--replicate the hierarchical divisions of labor. (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 131)

Although Bowles and Gintis' were criticized for depicting a unilinear view regarding the reproduction of society, they inform an understanding of how educators' and CEOs' utterances about Roche Bois children may impact the children. Throughout the year, the repertoire of jobs presented generally as options to the children and the children's families, as well as the jobs presented to them as locally available, were almost exclusively in factories and in fishing.

5.5.3. “Especially after the weekend”: Educators’ Adjustment of Tasks in Relation to Assumptions about Children’s Lifestyles

In addition to representing only certain types of employment to children in an effort at being relevant to local realities, educators often adjusted their assignment of learning tasks in relation to the assumptions they had about (Creole) children’s leisurely lifestyles and customs of partying. This depiction aligns itself with a common stereotype of Creole people in the Mauritian imaginary: to be “lazy, careless” and “merry” (Eriksen, 1998, p. 54). Several educators throughout the year said that it was necessary to adapt their pedagogies and practices to students’ (in)ability to handle much of a workload on Mondays or Fridays. Consider the two examples below. The first (Table 20) is a reconstructive fieldnote entry of a conversation I had with Educator C about teaching in Roche Bois in March as I arrived at school one Monday morning and the children were, according to several educators, particularly unruly and energetic. As I asked Educator C why the children had excess energy, she replied:

Table 20: Educator Adjusting Task in Relation to Children, March 2, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
<p>On Mondays and Fridays, I have to be a bit lighter with the program and schedule, otherwise the children cannot follow the lesson.</p> <p>Especially here in Roche Bois after the weekend.</p>	<p>Referential (children, I) Perpetuation of stereotypical Creole practices of excessive partying at the weekend</p>	<p>Comparative adjective = lighter Adverb otherwise, indicating conditional Negative = cannot Adverb especially, intensifying Here in Roche Bois = adverb of place</p>

The second (Table 21) displays educator B’s words spoken to the children in front of the whole-school assembly, again on a Monday at the start of the week, at the beginning of the second

trimester, on the same day where she had talked to children about the need to be clean as a way to be free (see section 5.4.2).

Table 21: Educator Comment about Children's Lifestyles, April 20, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
You seem tired to me. You probably did too many picnics at the beaches this weekend.	Referential (you – children; me – principal) Perpetuation of stereotypical Creole practices of excessive partying at the weekend	Predicative adjective = tired Quantitative adverb = too many, indicating excess Predicative activities beaches at the weekend

Both examples above demonstrate certain predicative features associating children with excessive partying, a common stereotype of Creoles in Mauritius. In the first, the educator confided to me about needing to adjust her schedule. Her assumption was that she needed to accommodate the children's inability to concentrate at the beginning and end of the workweek, because of the partying that usually took place on the weekends in Roche Bois. This is intensified by the adverb "especially," and the adverbial clause "here in Roche Bois." In the second example, at the assembly in front of the whole school, Educator B projected similar assumptions when she noted that children seemed tired, and used the quantitative adverb "many" with the adverb "too," indicating excess.

Both educators start off their utterances with negative predications toward the children (either they cannot follow the lesson, or they are tired) and the cause of these negative references to children is their culture of excessive partying at the weekend. Picnics at beaches are indeed a common weekend activity for Mauritians across the ethnic spectrum. Despite the number of coastal hotels, all beaches have remained public in Mauritius, and many areas are still designated as public beaches. It is typical to see Mauritians flock to the coast during holidays or at the weekend. Whole

families go down in buses and vans or private cars, bringing chairs, home-cooked food, material to hang from trees as shelter from the sun, loud music players, or drums, in particular traditional Creole Mauritian drums ringed with bells called “ravane” drums, which they use to make sega music to sing and dance to often until the sun sets and it is time to go home. These leisure activities cannot be attributed to a specific ethnic group in Mauritius; although one group, the Franco-Mauritian elite, are not associated with these activities as they do not tend to go to public beaches to picnic as many own a second home on the coastline. Notwithstanding the fact that holding picnics at the beaches is typical for Mauritians at large, here, in both cases, the beach activities were selectively associated with Roche Bois as a stereotype of Creole dionysian culture—educators left out the all-Mauritian aspect of this practice.

5.5.4. “There are no banks in Roche Bois”: Drawing on Local Themes of Crime, Drugs, and Violence

Still in the framework of a commitment to speak about local realities, a final pattern I observed in classrooms and in assemblies in all educators’ practices was the portrayal of Roche Bois as a place of crimes, drugs, and violence. In the first example below (Table 22), I show how a unit on locality structured Educator H’s assumptions about crime in Roche Bois and reflected fears typical of the larger population to enter that space. During the lesson on locality, the educator was soliciting children’s input on features of the locality around their school based on the textbook exercise.

Figure 10: Textbook Unit on Locality



The children had to complete a table with the features they saw or did not see in their locality. After inventorying and assessing different generic features of locality in the context of Mauritius, e.g., a pagoda, a church, post office, and police station, a student volunteered “bank” as a feature of the locality of Roche Bois.

Table 22: Educator Responding to Student Example of Roche Bois, May 21, 2009

Speaker	Strategies	Linguistic Means of Realization
Student: Bank!	Perpetuation of negative value of Roche Bois	Introductory pronoun +
Educator: Bank? There is no bank in Roche Bois. People are scared to come to Roche Bois to do banking.		existential verb “There is” Anthroponym “people” Adjective scared Verb of transition between places: “come”

Although the educator is soliciting student input based on local realities, the educator’s utterances are characterized by strong normativity about Roche Bois and a clear drawing of boundaries between Roche Bois and other places and people in Mauritius. These processes play out discursively. The educator turns down the student’s suggestion with a declarative sentence starting with the pronoun “there” followed by the existential verb “is.” There are no nuancing adjectives or attenuating adverbs that might express doubt or subjective thought in that sentence. In this sense, the educator’s first sentence is strong in its factual, quasi-scientific assertion regarding the absence of banks in Roche Bois. To explain why there is this absence, the educator uses the general anthroponym “people” and the qualifying adjective “fear” indicating an undefined but substantial segment of the (Mauritian) population that excludes residents of Roche Bois. The use of the anthroponym “people” defers the ownership of fear to actors outside of Roche Bois and intensifies the feeling of fear by extending it generally to Mauritian people. The externality of “people” is also confirmed by the verb “come” which implies an external agent entering a given internal space. The educator’s two sentences consequently single out Roche Bois as a place where the Mauritian population would feel unsafe and insecure. It also singles out Roche Bois as an outlier in Mauritius, a zone delimited by boundaries of crime and theft.

One of the main events of the school year that further conditioned the talk about crime, theft, and violence involved a theft at the school in April. A new two-story building of eight new classrooms had recently been built and was equipped with electricity, newer model windows and doors than the other buildings, and had been freshly painted. New desks and classroom furniture had been purchased and set in the classrooms, ready for use. The construction of this building had lasted several months. The building had been ready since the middle of the first trimester sometime in March 2009 but had stood unused, pending official permission of the ministry, as well as an official opening ceremony.

One night in May 2009, all of the metal doors, window knobs, electric boxes, and metal wiring were stolen from the school. The theft of metal, metal parts, and fragments had become increasingly common in Mauritius over the five previous years (L'Express, 2007). Incidents of stealing street signs, metal pipes installed by the Central Water Authority, sewage pipes, or colonial-era canons had also been reported (L'Express, 2007). These incidents can be attributed to the increase value of the metal commodity on the market, to Mauritius' emphasis on exports, and also to the increase inequality, inflation, and economic disparities in the island. In Roche Bois, the practice of recuperating metal from small parts is common among adult males. Many children's parents spent time at the dump in Roche Bois, rummaging through old computer parts, crouching around gaseous fires aimed at burning down the remaining plastic parts to extract metal parts and filaments.

When the theft was discovered, Educator B spoke the next day at the morning assembly. To limit the scope of the example, only parts of the speech relevant to the theft are presented in the transcription below (Table 23), which I analyze in terms of referential and predication strategies, i.e., how social actors are referred to and qualified.

Table 23: Educator Speaking of Theft at School Assembly, May 26, 2009

Educator:	<p>You know, yesterday when I came to school, I was a bit angry. [...] Why ? Because someone took certain things that don't belong to them. No one mentioned thief here, ok? Certain people that I do not know, came in; We call that "a break in." No one has the right to enter in a school. I am saying that even for certain children here. It's a bad habit to enter classrooms to take objects that do not belong to you. This is your school. So you should protect your school. But I was angry because we got a nice new building, we were equipping that new building, with electricity and sophisticated machines. And then, certain people come and take things. So we say steal. How to write the verb steal?</p>
Students:	<p>S-T-E-A-L</p>
Educator:	<p>[...] Stealing means to take things that do not belong to us. You, you are children of the area, you should be messengers. Go tell: "Why do you steal from our school? This is our school. We are the ones who benefit from this school; we are the ones who come to school. Why do you need to steal things in this school?" The [ministry] director had called me to tell me the classroom would be operational; I told her, "Madam, I am sending you a fax because all the electrical material was stolen; someone tore all the wiring out as if with rage." Rage to steal, rage to unroot. Who is stealing here? People from this place. So you need to be messengers, children, when you go you need to give a message "Why do you steal from our school?" [...] So yesterday there was a theft. Last time, someone had stolen all the window knobs. That means there are certain people that are not happy that you have a nice building and a good education. We call that negative attitude. Certain kids too imitate those people. They enter into classrooms and steal. [...]</p>

In the above speech, the main social actors represented are the children, the educator (I), "certain people," we, and the ministry director. The most frequently represented are children and "certain people." Looking at the ways children and "certain people" are represented in this speech through referential and predication strategies yields some interesting findings. See Table 24 below.

Table 24: Analysis of Social Actors and Predication in Assembly Speech

Social actors	Predication strategies
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • here; of the area • enter classrooms and take things, • should protect their school, • messengers who go tell • should say “Why do you steal from our school” • benefit from the school • benefit from a good education • who imitate certain people (here) • who enter the classroom and steal
“Certain people” /someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone took certain things, • certain people I do not know • certain people come and take things • someone tore the wiring with rage • people from this place • certain people are not happy children have a good building a good education

The words used to designate the children are various: first, the children are referenced through the indefinite pronoun “certain” which alludes to a vague, undefined group of children among those present. When the educator speaks to “certain children,” in reference to the theft, she is most likely alluding to an incident that had happened several days prior to the theft in the new building whereby several upper-primary students entered the kindergarten to take some dolls and other materials. Although children are not the ones who stole from the new building, she mentioned the children’s stealing in association with the incident at the new building. The second way the children are referenced is through a mode of emplacement, with the geographical prepositional clause “of the area” and the adverb of place “here.” When she uses these predications, the educator seems to be talking about all the children of Roche Bois. Children are also referenced through the construction of ownership of the school “this is your school,” further intensified by the use of

indirect speech. They are contrasted with the undefined group of “certain people” that are not known.

What is known about “certain people” is that they are “from this place,” they “come and take things,” remove the wiring “with rage,” and are unhappy that the children are getting a “good education.” This last comment about people being envious or unhappy of the children’s education has the effect of setting an antagonistic link between “certain people” of Roche Bois on the one hand and the children and their school on the other. Then, positioned as bridges to this antagonism, children are solicited to be messengers to the Roche Bois community. They are asked to relay a moral message to the undefined group of people living in this place. This role of messenger, or relay, has the effect of setting the children as not belonging to the community, but in a position in between two poles: on the one hand, the school, and on the other, the residents of Roche Bois. This represents a divergence from previous modes of emplacing children directly in the community.

However, at the end of the speech, the children’s in-between position as messengers is not maintained. Through the sentence “certain kids imitate certain people,” children are once again associated with residents of the Roche Bois community, and emplaced in all of the amoral behaviors and irrationalities that are represented spatially through the construct of Roche Bois. This speech thus has a double effect: both displacing the children from their community by associating them with the school and with a higher level moral message, and re-emplacing them in that very community as imitators of the amoral and deviant adults.

5.6. Conclusion

The analyses of patterns in educator talk presented in this chapter have demonstrated that throughout the school year, educators frequently evoked Roche Bois in front of children, for the

most part, in classrooms in particular, as an effort to ground children's learning in local examples taken from their immediate experiences. The textbook units on locality were important tools in shaping educators' engagement with children's local realities because the textbook exercises posed direct questions regarding children's lives.

Despite this commitment to the local in curricula and practice, the discourse historical analyses shows how the use of the category of place, and in this case, Roche Bois as a place, indexes meanings of race and as a result may interpellate children's identities in powerful ways. Various topics were linked to place: the negative connotations of the school; homogeneous, linear, and fixed notions of culture and ancestry; concerns about health, safety, and children's bodies; and questions of work and leisure. These topics were evoked either out of concern for the children, commitment to being honest with children's realities, or desire to be inclusive and grounded in the local.

Taken individually, these dimensions do not in and of themselves constitute processes of racialization. Together, however, they show the chameleonic and polyvalent nature of racial meanings that function through the enactment of different types of meanings that are all spatialized in the specific context of Roche Bois. Processes of racialization, therefore, do not necessarily stand on one trait or characteristic. They are systems of signification that need to be specified in each context and in each historical period. At the Roche Bois school, racial significations are anchored in the construction of place, which allows for an multifold deployment of race meanings on the basis of various thematic dimensions.

In this chapter, I have shown that the various dimensions of place were racialized. As a point of evidence here, it is worth recalling that, from the methodological process I employed to reduce a large data corpus to a few representative instances, I was able to identify that

approximately 85% of the references to place were racialized. Sometimes subtly, sometimes more explicitly, spatial racialization was instantiated through various linguistic means of realization.

Another main goal of the analysis was to examine the discursive production of place in terms of strategies of perpetuation or transformation, as outlined in the Discourse Historical Framework (Wodak & Reisigl, 2009). I use the analysis of strategies of perpetuation and transformation in two ways: first, as analytical tools that show the potential effects of discourse on children's identities and second, as key analytical tools that provide links to historical representations. As detailed in chapter 4, race was an operating principle in the historical production of Roche Bois. This chapter has explored whether continuities exist in the making of Roche Bois through strategies of transformation or perpetuation. My analysis of the discursive strategies employed by educators shows that patterns of strategy of perpetuation of Creole identity/stereotypes prevails over constructive/transformational strategies.

In Lefebvrian language, the patterned examples and analyses of educators' words put forth in this chapter therefore constitute "conceived spaces" because they are patterns of reproduction of Creole identities spatialized in the context of Roche Bois that perpetuate historical stereotypes and negative racializations of Creole children. Conceived spaces produced by the institutional power of the school are therefore hegemonic spaces that align themselves with historical constructions. The framing of educators' production of space as "conceived/dominant" spaces is particularly important to show the role educators play in maintaining spatial imaginings that "frame" children in negative ways—despite the good intentions associated with the use of the local—and limit the possible imaginings of their spaces, bodies, cultures, and activities.

In contrast, the next chapter (related to Lefebvre's notion of "Lived Space"), highlights moments of divergence that contributed to establishing lived spaces of possibility for children and

educators. Although these moments do not constitute generalizable patterns, the next chapter demonstrates that the discourses of racialization through emplacement are not totalizing. These discourses coexist simultaneously with moments of discursive opening and possibilities for transformation.

CHAPTER 6

EDUCATOR PRODUCTIONS OF ROCHE BOIS LIVED SPACES

6.1 Introduction

Using Wodak and colleagues' (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999) Discourse Historical Approach tools of contents, strategies, and linguistic means of realization, this chapter analyzes data that was identified according to the data reduction strategy outlined in chapter 3, "Methodological Approaches to Research." In this present chapter, as in chapter 5, I continue to analyze instances of educators speaking about Roche Bois in school in ways that are value-laden. There are however four primary differences between chapter 5 and chapter 6. First, in this chapter, the instances analyzed are not typical instances found throughout the data. Rather, they are unique moments that I have chosen to analyze because of the strategies of positive transformation that they exhibit. The second difference as compared to chapter 5, therefore, is the emphasis on strategies of transformation as opposed to perpetuation. The moments of spatial racialization analyzed here are moments that may interpellate children in transformative ways that disrupt the dominant modes of spatial racialization that are more typical of the patterns observed in the school. The third difference is that the instances analyzed in this chapter are based on data from one educator (Educator A). In my review of the complete data set, I did not identify other moments of spatial racialization that were potentially transformative. This does not indicate that instances did not occur with other educators but rather, that the incidence of these moments observed with Educator A might have been a result of the differential in data collection and classroom observation, since I spent more

time Educator A's classroom. The fourth difference is thematic. The categories of place-based meanings in chapter 5 pertain to religion, culture, bodies, ancestries, and work. Here in chapter 6, the themes evoked by the teachers pertain to language, culture, and religion.

Theoretically, I frame the data analyzed in this chapter through Lefebvre's concept of "lived space" because the spaces produced by educators, albeit not typical, disrupt patterns of production of dominant conceived spaces. They are moments of alternative perspectives, and thus of potential transformation. These moments of lived space are, as Soja (1996) has framed them, "counterspaces,' spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning" (Soja, 1996, p. 68). Lived space, then, becomes a "strategic location from which to encompass, understand, and potentially transform all spaces simultaneously" (Soja, 1996, p. 68). Although the instances analyzed in this chapter are unique and not representative of any patterns, my analysis and subsequent discussion of the implications in chapter 7 shows that they carry potential to transform children's identities and educator-student relationships. Lefebvre's concept of lived space, then, is an appropriate concept to understand these moments of opening.

The data analyzed in this chapter show that although place discourses in school have the power to represent and dominate, and thus to reproduce social relations of racism, their closure is never total. An openness of meaning exists in school. The analysis of the data collected on place and race, while showing an overwhelming number of instances where children are negatively emplaced and racialized, also shows how educators' representations of place and race can encourage hybridity and multiculturalism in terms of questions of culture, language, and religion.

6.2. Possibilities for Spaces of Multiculturalism

In this section, I present a dialogue between Educator A and Educator B during a lesson on the use of local spices as evidence to show how educators' efforts to draw on students' local realities in Roche Bois may represent moments of positive cultural hybridity for children. The children and educators are discussing the use of nutmeg in the children's parents' home cooking and in particular in the dish called *Briani*. The larger cultural context for this interaction is that the *Briani* dish, a flavorful rice dish that blends spices such as nutmeg, cardamom, cloves, mint, garlic, and ginger, as well as some form of meat and potato, is ethnicized as a Muslim dish in the Mauritian context. However, like many other ethnicized Mauritian dishes, the majority of Mauritians enjoy *Brianis*. While lamb or chicken *Briani* is a traditional dish served at Muslim wedding celebrations, most non-Muslim Mauritians typically enjoy *Briani* bought from street vendors or cooked at home. Because *Briani* is known and enjoyed by Mauritians almost universally, this dish, while being specifically ethnic/religious, also conveys universalism/nationalism in Mauritius.

These two tendencies of universalism/inclusiveness and particularistic ethnic knowledge are present in the dialogue between Educator A and B, during a lesson on different kinds of spices from a science textbook unit on edible plants (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 11: Textbook Exercise on Plants and Spices



As a way to make learning as relevant and as experiential as possible, Educator A had brought a number of different spices for the children to smell and taste. Children smelled and rubbed mint between their palms, trying to distinguish the difference between thyme and coriander, and so on. The children were engaged and Educator A's questions drew upon the children's home knowledges of food and spices, with the assumption that the children had prior knowledge of them. Educator A presented nutmeg to the children and affirmed their knowledge of the spice, while Educator B disavowed the relevance of nutmeg to the children's local knowledges and instead posited nutmeg as something the children would not know because they lived in Roche Bois. Consider the interaction in Table 25 below:

Table 25: Educator Discussing Spices, May 28 2009

Speaker	Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic means
Educator A	Look for Nutmeg. Does your mom use this spice at home?	Transformation & Perpetuation	
Students	Yes!!!		
Educator A	What do we put nutmeg in?		Inclusive “we”
Educator B	What’s this? Nutmeg?		
Educator A	Yes, we use this at home.		Inclusive “we”
Educator B	Really? Even here in Roche Bois? No one uses that here, no one uses that.		Negative “no one” x2 Toponym: Roche Bois
Educator A (turns to students for confirmation)	Who uses nutmeg at home? What do you do with it? What dish do you use it in?		Questions
Students	In <i>Briani</i> .		
Educator A	Exactly! I too put nutmeg in my <i>Briani</i>		Simile “I too” Use of pronoun “my” indicating co-ownership
Educator B	I’ve never seen that happen in Roche Bois.		Adverb never Toponym: Roche Bois
Educator A	Yes, but really, we use it in <i>Briani</i> .		Inclusive “we”
Educator B	They don’t use that here, teacher, they don’t.		Exclusive “they” Negative Adverb of place “here”

In this interaction, Educator A takes an inclusive stand toward the children and this position merges his culinary knowledge with that of the children. This process of bringing knowledges together is evidenced by the educator’s inclusiveness use of “we,” three times throughout the dialogue, and the comparative association of himself with children in “I too.” Through his non-rhetorical questions to students about their actual food/culinary practices at home, he defends children’s knowledge of Muslim-Indian Mauritian culture as a form of local culture that children have access to and prior knowledge of. This, in effect, may have the potential to expand their typically assigned, located identities as Creoles/Christians of Roche Bois into multicultural and hybrid identities. Educator A’s

utterances discursively allow children to embrace an identity beyond a narrow definition of Creolity to which is assigned very specific foods and cultural practices. In addition, the inclusive language that draws on local realities creates a “we-ness” between Educator A and the children. In contrast to many instances analyzed in chapter 5, this we-ness can be the basis for forging a new sense of local community: one where educators and students are made close by the sharing of similar multicultural knowledges and one where diverse cultural practices are valued despite ethnic/religious differences. Transformed meanings may thus be invested in this notion of community, where the local is hybrid and shared.

In contrast to Educator A’s inclusiveness in speaking of children’s local knowledges, Educator B’s utterances are exclusive, “othering,” and thus perpetuating of patterns frequently observed at school that negatively racialized children through meanings of place. Through her use of the pronoun “they” twice toward the end of the dialogue, as well as through her use of “no one here” in front of the children as a way to speak for them, the educator is creating a divide between educator knowledge and children’s knowledges. Children’s local knowledges here are confined to an emplaced racialized identity connected only to Roche Bois and being Creole. This aligns directly with dominant unitary tendencies to emplace children in Roche Bois as monolithic identities. Two competing logics are therefore at play in this dialogue: 1) the production of homogeneous identities where children’s local knowledge is uniform and limited (Creoles know only Creole food, and thus cannot know Muslim food), and 2) the production of hybrid identities where children’s local knowledges are shared with educator knowledges and the local is traversed by multicultural practices.

6.3. Possibilities for Spaces of Multiple Religions

Another moment of possible transformation I observed during my fieldwork at the school in Roche Bois was when educator a made positive assumptions about the children’s knowledge of multicultural religions during the lesson on places of worship (see Figure 7 in chapter 5 for reference to the textbook lesson page). In Roche Bois, Christianity is a prevalent religion, and yet, as explained in chapter 4, “The Historical Racialization of Roche Bois,” Roche Bois is not populated solely by Christians. For the most part, educators’ assumption in school was that all children were Christian. Yet in this lesson, the educator posited children as having access to various buildings of religious worship, and thus having knowledge of religions other than Christianity.

As the brief interactional unit between students and Educator A during this lesson demonstrates (in Table 26), Educator A’s words about children’s knowledge of religions in their locality was a discursive practice that could be validating of hybridity in terms of both the place, Roche Bois, and the children’s identities in respect to positive expectations regarding their knowledge of multiple religions.

Table 26: Educator Speaking about Places of Worship, June 1, 2009

Speaker	Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic means
Educator A	(Reading from textbook) “You have seen different places of worship in your locality or in other localities.” (Explaining) This time, the textbook tells you that you might have seen places of worship in Roche Bois or around Roche Bois, right?	Transformation	Affirmative sentence: “You might have seen” Confirming question tag: “Right?” indicating assumption
Students	No		
Educator	No? You never saw those places of worship? You’ve never seen the mosque in Roche Bois? (Reading from textbook) “Look at the pictures given. List down		3 consecutive questions indicating surprise. The consecutiveness may indicate assumption that there is religious

Speaker	Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic means
	below the different places of worship in your locality. (Explaining) There are seven drawings. Which places of worship do you have in Roche Bois? Is there a pagoda in Roche Bois?		diversity in Roche Bois.
Students	No		
Educator	Is there a <i>Deool</i> Marathi temple?		
Students	No		
Educator:	Is there a mosque?		
Students	Yes		
Educator:	Danny says that there is a mosque next to his place. Is there a <i>Shivala</i> ? Yes, there should be one. The <i>Shivala</i> on the highway, next to Jumbo. Is there <i>Kovil</i> ? No. Church? Yes.		

Although the end of the interaction falls in line with teacher talk that tends to frequently make use of rhetorical questions, these consecutive questions nevertheless affirm the existence of multiple places of worship in Roche Bois. The educator expressed surprise when the children said they did not know places of worship in Roche Bois. The assumption that children had access to various places of worship in their locality posits the children as likely having knowledge of Marathi, Muslim, or Hindu practices and spaces. This dislocates children from the more typical patterns analyzed in chapter 5 where they are often posited as knowing only Christianity, which is implicitly associated with Creolity. While the instance presented here is a brief interactional moment in the context of countless others, it tends toward producing Roche Bois children as hybrid identities, affirming multi-religious knowledges and spaces.

6.4. Possibilities for Spaces of Multilingualism

A similar instance occurred in the same lesson on places of worship, this time as the educator highlighted a child's choice of Asian languages as an elective subject. The larger context for this potentially transformative discursive practice is what is known in Mauritius as the "Oriental Languages" (OL) policy at the primary level. As described in the wider linguistic geography section in the introduction, the two official languages of Mauritius are the colonial languages French and English. Both languages enjoy high status in the Mauritian linguistic topography. English is the official language of politics and school, and French is the language of business. In addition, French is spoken at home by a small elite minority of speakers (3.6%). The large majority of Mauritians (84%) however consider *Kreol* their native language and use it in informal settings (Lalit de Klas, 2012). Other segments of the population speak Bhojpuri at home (5.3%), and others, Asian ("Oriental") languages, including Urdu, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, and Telegu (7.1%).

An oft-problematized cultivation of ties to ancestral homelands has prevailed in Mauritius (Boswell, 2006; Baptiste, 2002), with the solidification of this ideology taking shape through the implementation of ancestral language policies in primary state schools. Ancestral languages are defined as languages that Asian migrants spoke at the time of their arrival in Mauritius, and these include Bhojpuri, Hindi, Gujerati, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu (Rajah-Carrim, 2007). In primary schools, students have six core subjects, French, English, Math, Science, History, and Geography. In addition, students can choose to study the following oriental languages as either electives or core subjects for the Certificate of Primary Education examination: Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu. This linguistic ecology in schools in Mauritius is imbued with ethnicized meanings. As Rajah-Carrim explains, "In the multiethnic Mauritian context, the choice of the oriental language is largely influenced by the ethnicity of the pupil"

(Rajah-Carrim, 2007, p. 53) so that “each ethnic group opts for the language with which it identifies itself” (Rajah-Carrim, 2007, p.53). One issue regarding the oriental language policy, which has been the subject of fierce debates in the 1990s and beyond, has been the fact that people of African descent do not identify with any of the languages taught in schools (Rajah-Carrim, 2007), in addition to having to negotiate an educational system where the curricula is primarily in English and the medium of instruction dominated by English and French.

Considering these larger ethno-linguistic dynamics, where language electives in school are ethnicized and processes of inclusion and exclusion tied to language choice, highlights the potentially transformative possibilities of Educator A’s words toward Chloe, a Christian/Creole child of Roche Bois (see Table 27), when the educator refers to Chloe’s process of learning Oriental Languages as evidence of her ability to know about places of worship other than her own.

Table 27: Educator Highlighting the Choice of Oriental Language, June 1, 2009

Utterance	Strategies	Linguistic means
Look at the Mandirum. Mandirum comes from Mandir. People like Chloe here, who are learning Indian languages, you know this, you can ask your [Oriental Language] teacher what Mandirum is.	Transformation	Comparative designation “People like Chloe” Affirming clause: “who are learning Indian languages” Affirming sentences: “You know this” and “You can ask your teacher”

By using affirming clauses and sentences, such as “who are learning Indian languages,” and “you know this,” and “you can ask your teacher,” about one child, and by using this portrayal as a comparative example to others in the classroom, “people like Chloe here,” the educator is disrupting the typical patterns of representing children of Roche Bois as having a monocultural identity who cannot possess knowledge outside of this narrow view of their own culture. This disruption of negative spatial racialization patterns may validate Chloe’s identities as a Creole

Christian child of Roche Bois and as a child who is connected to and able to understand diverse cultural practices in the context of learning an oriental language. Highlighting children's diverse knowledges is thus a potentially transformative practice, in light of the larger historical homogenization of Roche Bois residents and culture.

6.5. Summary

The three examples discussed in the previous sections of this chapter show how strategies of transformation took place in Educator A's classroom practice. These moments frame children of Roche Bois as having hybrid identities, able to know multiple languages, and as having awareness of and access to multiple types of sites of worship and, as such, religions. These moments stand in contrast to strategies of perpetuation discussed in the chapter 5, where educators' words about Roche Bois constructed the children as culturally homogeneous and evoked negative meanings associated with their bodies and their parents' work.

6.6. Coda: Educator Reflexive Voices

The purpose of this coda is to include educator voices from interviews to demonstrate educators' reflexivity regarding processes of spatial racialization in the Roche Bois school, and to set the stage for the next chapter, which discusses practical implications for teachers. As an inclusion of educator voices, this coda is primarily descriptive rather than analytical.

As described in chapter 3, I had the opportunity to engage educators in reflexive interviews on the data I had collected on their practice in December 2011. I interviewed four educators (A, C, D, F) as a way to triangulate my findings. I shared that Roche Bois was often portrayed negatively in school and asked the interviewees what might have affected educators' negative perceptions. I

asked them about the possible impact of teachers' perceptions on the children and discussed the linkages between Roche Bois and race, specifically how Roche Bois was portrayed as homogeneous in school and in the nation's construal. For a complete list of questions asked during these interviews, see Appendix A.

While it is clear that respondents' answers during interviews may exhibit a greater degree of intentionality than in more spontaneous speech situations, such as classrooms and assemblies, where people may calculate what they are going to say to a greater extent (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999); and while it is also clear that the degree of intentionality in speech during interviews may create a gap between talk and practice, I choose here to flatten the distinction between talk and practice as I speak about educators' words during interviews. That is, I do not make salient any disjuncture between talk and practice because I use educators' words, shared during interviews, as a way to highlight how they spoke reflexively about practices and draw implications for the production of positive lived spaces.

Educators' answers to my questions showed much reflexivity regarding their own roles in shaping children's identities, patterns of negative racialization in Roche Bois, and the role of historical events such as the race riots of 1968 or 1999. In addition, educators highlighted the need for critical historical and diversity training. My purpose here is not to evaluate the disjuncture between talk and practice but to highlight moments of educator awareness of spatial racialization that may lay the ground for possibilities of change, whether described or enacted by educators.

In the interviews I conducted, all four educators were aware of the negative labels attached to Roche Bois as we reflected together on this question. In the course of these conversations, I learned that educators were conscious that Roche Bois was stereotypically represented in society as

having a bad reputation. Educator F, for example, highlighted that there was “a story” about Roche Bois and that ideas of Roche Bois circulated “in people’s minds.”

EW: Why is Roche Bois portrayed so negatively? For example, I heard an educator say, “We should not say Roche Bois school, but we should say Marable school (pseudonym).” That struck me. Why was this said? Why can’t we use the word Roche Bois?

Educator F:

First of all there are several schools in Roche Bois, so to conflate Roche Bois with one school is already a problem. But that’s not the issue here. It’s Roche Bois’ bad reputation. It’s in people’s minds. Roche Bois is a difficult place. The story goes like this: there are dangerous people there, it’s not safe in Roche Bois, especially in the afternoon and the evening.

Two out of the four educators I interviewed mentioned, without any prompting, the role of historical events such as the riots of 1999 after the death of the singer Kaya or the race conflicts of 1968 as events that shaped the real and perceived racialization of Roche Bois. For example, later, in the same interview, Educator F continued her description of how Roche Bois’ reputation was shaped historically and anchored in the nation’s imagination.

Educator F:

It’s in the head of all the people of all of Mauritius. When you say Roche Bois, it’s not a reputation based on the students at the school or the school, it’s the whole environment.

EW: Is it also in the media?

Educator F:

Have you heard about the riots in 1999? But those started in Roche Bois. The singer was from Roche Bois. Everything started in Roche Bois. This affected outsiders’ ideas about the place.

Educator F is keenly aware of that Roche Bois’ has a negative reputation in public discourse. In addition, the historical reference to the 1999 riots is important here, as it shows how history has structured the nation’s sense of the place, including educators’ perceptions. The sense of historical forces shaping perceptions of Roche Bois was present in Educator C’s words as well. Commenting

on the same 1999 events and offering a historical explanation for the perceived or real racial homogeneity of the place, she said:

Educator C:

People of Roche Bois are so negatively labeled.

Elsa: It is also in the media, no?

Educator C:

You know how this came about? Have you heard? How these suburbs were created? In Port Louis, it used to be mixed. Then there was a clash at that cinema...there was a conflict between Creoles and Muslims. The Muslims stayed in Plaine Verte, and the Creoles went to the other side. All the other areas [in the island] are mixed.

Elsa: I have heard about these conflicts.

Educator C:

Yes, I heard but I have not read about them. My mother told me about them. People were scared.

Educator C's and Educator F's historical framing show how events such as the 1968 or the 1999 racial conflicts have shaped the nation's perceptions of Roche Bois. Their referencing of these events also indicates how history may continue to play a role in today's perceptions.

Given educator awareness of the negative labels attached to Roche Bois, I asked all of them how the negative labeling of Roche Bois affected their practice. Each respondent mentioned how the bad reputation of Roche Bois had repercussions on their own identities as teachers *vis à vis* outsiders. For example, Educator C said:

All the people whom I told that I worked in Roche Bois told me, "Huh? That's where you work? That's where you work?!" I had a calendar on my wall at home; it was a Roche Bois calendar. When people saw Roche Bois on the calendar, it was as if I had committed a sin.

Educator F echoed Educator C's comments about negative meanings of Roche Bois affecting teacher identities and feelings and explained:

Already, it's hard for the teachers to come here. It's difficult. When the ministry does the school allocation, there are teachers who explicitly ask not to be sent to Roche Bois. But these teachers have never been here. But just from hearing the name of the town, it's scary to them. It's a kind of social psychosis.

In addition to sharing that teachers suffered from the stigma attached to Roche Bois, three out of the four interviewees mentioned two main factors affecting their practice. First, they shared that negative constructions of the place shaped their perceptions, and second, that the policy of teacher allocation by the Ministry affected educator motivation to teach in Roche Bois. Educator B, for example, explained that educators work in Roche Bois was involuntary. Teachers were usually sent to Roche Bois by the Ministry and did not choose to work there. Educator B cited issues of differential remuneration within the educational system. Although teachers receive the same salaries throughout the island, based on seniority, qualifications, and experience, Educator B explained that teachers in non-ZEP schools typically offer private lessons to students as a way to enhance their students' learning for the CPE test, as well as to gain additional income on top of the salary paid by the government. In ZEP schools, however, according to Educator B, families are poorer and cannot afford to send their children to private lessons with the teacher. Thus the stigma of poverty associated with Roche Bois and ZEP schools already attaches value to the place in the eyes of some teachers and thus in turn affects the quality of their practice.

Educator C:

Teachers with problems get sent to the ZEP schools. A teacher who did not behave well, who had problems, he gets sent there as punitive transfer.

EW: It's the ministry who decides where to send teachers?

Educator C:

No one wants to work there, but no one will admit it. They are too...materialistic. There are no private lessons in the ZEP. But a teacher who works in another school, he/she gets Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 on top of their salary through private lessons.

EW: So that's why teachers do not want to be sent to ZEP schools.

Educator C:

They have already decided in their heads. These are preconceived ideas: "The children are difficult; they cannot learn anything."

EW: In "normal" schools, are private lessons allowed?

Educator C:

In 5th and 6th grades only. In the ZEP, private lessons are allowed as well but parents are poor. So that's why the government gives an additional Rs 3,000 to ZEP teachers as a subsidy. On top of that, there is also a new program in the ZEP

schools where teachers can teach after-school lessons from 3:30 to 5 pm. It's government-funded, Rs 300 per session. That's Rs. 6,000 on top of the additional Rs 3,000. But then teachers stay there without doing anything. They sit and talk among themselves. It's revolting. There are certain teachers who treat these children so wrongly. It's revolting. I see the difference [with other schools], but it's not as if I am going to go tell on them. The children, they are innocent.

Educator C's words highlight the issues of educator perception of Roche Bois as a place of poverty and a place where teachers would receive less additional income; in addition, she highlights that this perception has a negative impact on teacher practice, and ultimately, on the children. Similar to other respondents, Educator C highlighted the role of ministry placement allocation as an additional factor affecting teacher reticence in teaching in Roche Bois and negative perceptions of the place.

The awareness of negative educator perception of Roche Bois and its effects on children was expressed in all interviews. Educator D, for example, linked this perception to processes of negative racialization that were at play not only between teachers and students but also among teachers. After discussing how Roche Bois was perceived primarily as having a homogeneous Creole identity in the larger society, I asked her how this affected teacher perceptions. She answered:

It's really hurtful to see the discrimination toward Creoles. I didn't always see it this way, but I came to realize this later. Even among teachers: when Indira [an Indian name] brings Diwali [A Hindu festival] cakes to school to share, everyone says they are delicious, or when someone brings Indian cakes, everyone says they are delicious, but when Marcel or Sandra [Christian names] bring cakes to school, no one says anything. And this also has to do with children. It is through our perception, our [teachers'] negative perception of Creole children that Creole children understand themselves. It is through our eyes that their identities are created.

Educator D's words highlight a profound awareness of the ways negative attachments to Creole identities shape teacher inter-relations and teachers' capacities to shape children's identities.

Given the four educators' awareness of the ways that Roche Bois has been indexed with racial meanings, the role of history in the construction of these negative connotations of Roche Bois, and the potential impact of these meanings on the children, I asked three out of the four educators about the ways they spoke about Roche Bois to the children and how they attempted to make learning relevant to children's local realities and histories. Educators' responses varied on this question. Educator C spoke generally about teachers' difficulty and discomfort about speaking about Roche Bois, while Educator A highlighted the importance of being "real" and admitting that there were "issues" in that place. Educator F, in contrast, spoke of teaching practices he believed addressed the children's local realities and histories. I start here with Educator C's sharing:

EW: I noticed that often, instead of saying Creole, teachers say "Roche Bois."

Educator C:

You see correctly.

EW: How do teachers speak about Roche Bois then? When they have to teach history for example?

Educator C:

They speak generally, no? If they work in Roche Bois, they will never say, "Roche Bois was like this; Roche Bois' history was like this." No, no. Teachers would speak very generally without many details.

Educator C here highlighted that teachers use Roche Bois to index meanings of race.

Educator C notes that as a result, teachers may be uncomfortable to speak about the children's local places due to their negative meanings, although in this interview her question to me ("They speak generally, no?") might indicate that she was looking for my confirmation of this assertion. In contrast to the discomfort that Educator C spoke about, during an informal conversation in May 2009, Educator A spoke about teachers' need to squarely engage with local meanings, even if those were expressed uncritically. He explained (as quoted in chapter 1 at the beginning of the dissertation):

EW: So how do you speak about Roche Bois in your classrooms?

Educator A:

It's important to draw examples from Roche Bois. But there are lots of things that happen here, lots of drugs and theft. But it's a reality. We need to take it as an example. It's hard. Parents sometimes say, "Why do you speak in this way?" because the children talk about it at home. But the parents must surely know that this is a reality. I am not criticizing. It's just that it is real; it's close to them.

Educator A here speaks of the need to talk about local issues and histories, but his words carry the assumption that Roche Bois is a place of negative meanings. Regardless of what themes Roche Bois indexes and whether these are perceived as problematic by the parents or the children, Educator A's references to Roche Bois seem limited to negative constructions although he emphasizes the need to speak about local *realities*.

In contrast to the negative framing typical when referring to Roche Bois, in response to my question about how educators spoke about Roche Bois to the children, Educator F highlighted the role of music as a practice that is able to address children's local histories. She first explained her belief that ZEP schools' curriculum should be different. In particular, she thought it would be important to include music and the arts in the standard curriculum. She emphasized that music played a central role in community life in Roche Bois and that children were very responsive to any musical activity, especially involving drums like the *djembe*. Then, she explained how she had incorporated music in her teaching as a way to make learning about local history relevant while at the same time promoting cultural hybridity:

There are also songs I do in school. Songs like "We Shall Overcome." There is this label that has been put on the Roche Bois school, like "You are from Roche Bois, and you cannot achieve in life." So I tell my students stories; I tell them the story of the slaves, so then they can understand the meaning of the song. They even learned it in Hindi. I much prefer songs like that with values in them.

Educator C thus chooses to employ a freedom song to highlight perseverance in the context of oppression (slavery), which may be relevant to the children's experience of overcoming their

own sense of marginalization, and she shares how songs such as this one have emerged specifically from the history of oppression of African peoples in the United States, which may encourage the children to connect to their own history in Roche Bois. In addition, she points out that the song may be sung in Hindi, perhaps reflecting how songs connected to specific contexts can be shared cross-culturally.

In sum, educators' responses to what it means to speak about children's local realities vary greatly, but the synthesis of their responses allows three main ideas to be discerned. First, Educator C's responses reflect ways educators are sometimes uncomfortable speaking about Roche Bois, highlighting a need to develop teacher resources and training that can equip teachers with specific historical knowledge of Mauritius and various localities. Second, Educator A's responses stress the importance of incorporating aspects of children's localities in educators' pedagogical practices but to do so in ways that do not construct or perpetuate negative meanings related to place, thus highlighting a need for educator training that explores engaging with and understanding students' local realities in more depth. Finally, Educator F's responses show how educators need to incorporate practices that relate to children's local realities, in this instance the practice of music, to both engage the children and address issues related to their sense of place and history, indicating a need for educators to assess and append the standard curriculum to better attend to children's interests and histories.

Given the varying responses to the question of speaking about local realities, I asked two educators what resources or support they might need to better address questions of race, ethnicity, and history in their practice. Educator F responded that she deplored the lack historical knowledge of Mauritius and that there was great need for teacher training on Mauritian history and diversity. She noted that educators were not equipped with historical and sociological knowledge regarding

Mauritius, adding that teacher training focused solely on questions of child psychology and pedagogical techniques, “We were never taught to engage with questions of ethnicity, race, and religion at the Mauritius Institute of Education,” she said. She explained that even coursework one might expect to address these issues did not: “There is a course at the Mauritius Institute of Education that is called ‘Sociology,’ but this unfortunately is not related to education. It’s a study of different groups in the population, what are the social problems, etc. But it does not influence teachers. It’s quite superficial.” Speaking of educators’ negative conceptions of Roche Bois, she said, “It’s not educators’ fault, it is what they were taught by their group (their ethnic community) since their young childhood.”

Similar to Educator F, Educator A, during an informal conversation in a classroom in March 2009, lamented the fact that the children did not even know about basic historical events, such as Mauritian independence. “Here in Mauritius, we do not know history,” he said, which I interpreted to mean that there was a void of access to historical knowledge in education, not only for the children, but for teachers as well. Later, in December 2011, this same educator reiterated: “Here in Mauritius we do not learn history. Even I am not used to reading history books. I don’t really know history. So to explain this or this theme, I try to get books. I refer to those books, I read a bit, just to be able to know a bit of background and all.” Educator A thus echoed Educator F’s comments that teachers should be better equipped with historical knowledge and highlighted how teachers had to go beyond the formal aspects of their training to seek historical resources that could help make learning relevant.

Overall, the conversations in the interviews with educators showed that they were reflexive regarding issues of place-based identity constructions in school—they were aware of the historical legacies of racialization of Roche Bois, the negative stigmas associated with the place, and

the ways these might shape student identities. In addition, two educators referred to the need for more historical/sociological resources, at the ministry level, as changes that would help teachers to be able to speak to students' local realities in ways that are more historically grounded. In the next chapter, I explore these implications in terms of their potential to counteract practices that perpetuate Roche Bois as a conceived space and instead realize Roche Bois as a lived space.

CHAPTER 7

POSSIBILITIES FOR PEDAGOGIES OF DECOLONIZATION AND REINHABITATION: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Overview

After reviewing the findings from the analysis and research of the three previous chapters (4, 5, and 6), this chapter explores their implications for critical place-based education's twin concepts of "decolonization" and "reinhabitation" (Gruenewald, 2003). In my summary of the findings, I will first review the key historical events that contributed to hegemonic narratives on the racialization of Roche Bois as a space representing Creole identity and highlight how the historical context matters to understanding educators' present meanings; then, I will summarize the ways educators speak about the spaces of the children in the process of drawing on local examples. I revisit how educators' process of speaking about local places contributes to the hegemonic narrative of place and its peoples. I also review moments whereby an educator speaks about the children's places through strategies of transformation, and explore these as potential transformative micro-moments. The chapter will discuss the implications of these findings for theoretical understandings of race, place, and discourse, and more practically, for pre-service and in-service teacher training, by specifically examining how Gruenewald's critical pedagogy of place tenets of "decolonization" and "reinhabitation" can be deployed in the context of Roche Bois schools and how the ideas of "community" and "the local" can be reinvested with critical historical meaning.

7.2. Research Questions Revisited

To recall from the design of the research, this study examined how educators in school spoke about children's local places and how this speech was situated in a larger historical context. I first examined Roche Bois contextually by exploring how the space of Roche Bois was historically racialized through key events; then I analyzed how educators represented children's spaces during assemblies and in classrooms, how representations of place were racialized, how this racialization was manifest discursively, and finally, to what extent discourses of place perpetuated or transformed the historical ideologies associated with Roche Bois as a racialized community. In the following three sections, I summarize how my study responds to these questions. Each sub-section summarizes in turn chapters 4, 5, and 6.

7.2.1. Roche Bois Historically Constructed as a Paradigmatic Space

To respond to the question of how Roche Bois was historically racialized and to situate the larger context for educators' words on Roche Bois, in chapter 4, I gathered historical and anthropological sources to trace the construction of a hegemonic narrative of Roche Bois and to show that this locality was racialized through several key historical events. I argue that this historical context, albeit overdetermined (i.e., related to myriad events) is key to understanding how educators' words are produced within a historically constructed racialized spatial paradigm. This hegemonic construction of history can shape the meanings that educators will produce in such localities.

The historical production of Roche Bois as a racialized space involves several key events. Having been a diverse place since the early days of French and British colonizations, embryonic perceptions of Roche Bois as a space representing Creole identity were formed after the cyclone

Carol in 1960 which contributed to the relocation of many Creoles who had lost their homes into the newly built government *cit  *. Many outsiders saw the Roche Bois *cit  * as a place where Creoles “had everything done for them” (Boswell, 2006). Then, the forced relocation of many Chagossian people – racialized as Afro-Creole - to Roche Bois from the 1960s up until 1971 augmented the perception of Roche Bois as an ethnically homogeneous space. The dire conditions under which Chagossian people lived contributed to the increased perception of the place as poor and destitute, with many accompanying stereotypes of promiscuity, crime, violence, and illiberal behavior. During that same period, two months prior to independence from the British as ethnic tensions had mounted in Mauritius, clashes erupted between Muslim and Creoles of Roche Bois and Plaine Verte, known as the “*bagarres raciales*.” There is much lack of historical documentation regarding the reasons for these clashes but the outcome was that many Muslims of Roche Bois moved to neighboring Plaine Verte, and many Creoles of the boundary area of St. Francois, moved to Roche Bois. This process contributed to increase the percentage of Creole population of Roche Bois as well as contributed to shaping the *perception* of Roche Bois as Creole. Finally, in the 1990s, the *Malaise Creole* discourse and the subsequent revolts of 1999, which started in Roche Bois, were key moments that solidified hegemonic narratives about Roche Bois as paradigmatic of Creolity. Today, it is a community that still struggles with environmental and social injustices that continue to shape the nation’s imaginary.

I argue that Roche Bois’ historical trajectory, while not directly related to the educators’ lives and subjectivities, nevertheless has created a dominant discourse of spatial racialization in Roche Bois (in Lefebvre’s terms, a “conceived space”), which forms the basis for my understanding and analysis of teachers’ words and meanings. This chapter sets the historical-political context to show that despite educators’ intentions toward the children, and despite their commitment to

speaking about the local in ways that are relevant to children's realities, hegemonic meanings of spatial racialization shape (albeit indirectly) the meanings they produce about Roche Bois children.

One important finding is to be derived from the analytic excursion into Roche Bois' history is that places are not innocent. They can be generative of meanings. Because the meanings of places have been structured through larger historico-political processes, what happens in a given place at a given time, then, occurs as one moment in the collection of meanings that were produced prior to that particular event. That one moment is the result of the sedimentation of meanings that have been produced over time. Educators referenced some of these historical events through interviews, as presented in the Coda section of chapter 6. This indicates that history matters in the meanings that are produced in school today. We thus need to understand present words spoken by educators as linked to the space that carries meanings that were created historically. A dialectical relationship between place, discourse, and history is thus in order.

7.2.2. Educators' Talk about Roche Bois: The Production of Conceived Spaces

Taking this historical context into consideration as the construction of a hegemonic narrative of place that has constructed a "grid of intelligibility" that shapes perceptions of Roche Bois, chapter 5 of this dissertation examined teachers' words about the local places of children. I inquired about the relationship between meanings of local place and processes of racialization, or in other words, the possible "spatial racialization" of children. First, the data reduction process to arrive at several representative instances of educator talk on Roche Bois revealed that the category of place was for the most part racialized. That is, it carried value-laden meanings related to children's school, religion, and culture, as well as their bodies, and their parents' employment. Looking more closely at each of these thematic domains using tools from the Discourse Historical

Approach (de Cillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999), and in particular, using the DHA notion of identity construction strategies, I found that for the most part, the themes that were evoked exhibited strategies of historical perpetuation of Creole children's negative racialization. In the process of analyzing and reflecting on the educational incentives for these meanings, I found that educators wanted to shed the historical negative meanings of the township of Roche Bois by renaming the school. In this renaming, educators were attempting to transform sedimented meanings. My discourse analysis however, showed that this very process of renaming contributed to perpetuating the negative meanings of Roche Bois and of situating the school as not belonging to the Roche Bois community, as an island-space inside the locality.

I also found that educators were keen to engage with the complexities of local culture and identity, in particular because the history/geography textbooks had chapters on the topic of "locality" that solicited local examples from the children's lives. Educators were aware that speaking about the local might carry negative meanings, as an informal conversation with Educator A in May 2009 indicated. In the process of engaging with children's local culture in an attempt to be inclusive and trying to explain this local culture in the larger (albeit complex) context of multicultural Mauritius, educators produced a topography of relative cultural identities, fixed in space and time, and simplified of their complexity. Analyzed through the DHA tool of strategy, I observed that the process of engaging with local culture perpetuated negative historical meanings associated with Creole identity.

My analysis also showed that educators were concerned about children's bodies in various ways: they were worried about their hygiene practices, in particular as regards the skin ailments that many children suffered from and their link to disengagement with school. Educators were also concerned about children's safety on the local nearby highway, a site that has been contested by the

local population for decades since its construction. In the course of educators' worrying about children's bodies, the role of education was posited as a humanizing and civilizing one. In the process, educators reproduced notions of animality and uncivility that were associated with Roche Bois and Creole people.

Finally, educators also spoke about children's future opportunities for employment. Educators and invited guests at the yearly Independence celebration made a repertoire of several jobs available to the children in their discourse, but these jobs were all menial, low-paying, and low-status jobs. The construction of Roche Bois as working class must be understood in light of the larger economic structure of the Export Processing Zone factories that are interspersed throughout the area who employ adults in the area and for whom the area represents a source of cheap, exploitable labor. Educators, in addition, represented Roche Bois as a space that the rest of the Mauritian population feared: by explaining the absence of banks in the locality because people would be scared to come to Roche Bois to do their banking. Analyzed through the notion of strategy, I found that these meanings were perpetuating of negative stereotypes of Roche Bois.

In sum, chapter 5 shows that processes of spatial racialization iterated by educators coalesce around the themes of employment, culture, bodies, and meanings of locality. I argue that, syncretically, these dimensions of the construction of Roche Bois may constitute processes of negative racialization of the children that align with larger historical sedimentation of negative meanings about Roche Bois. Four important related findings are to be kept in mind as regards this claim: the first is that the ways race takes shape through various spatialized dimensions of work, the body, and culture follows theorization of race in the literature that explain race as a chameleonic signifier (Essed & Goldberg, 2000), that takes shape through different domains of meaning that are not always explicitly related to somatic features. The analysis in chapter 5 demonstrates that the

various thematic domains through which racial identities are constructed are all spatialized themes that take meaning through the idea of Roche Bois. Second, theorizations of race in the literature (Pandian & Kosek, 2003; Essed & Goldberg, 2000) urge scholars to not take the category of race for granted. That is, researchers and activists must not assume that race and racism exist, but necessarily must explore if they exist, and what shape they take in different contexts and times. Chapter 5 demonstrated that it was necessary to understand processes of racialization through various thematic domains that were all spatialized in Roche Bois. That is, Roche Bois is not an abstracted spatial category that functions as an ideal-type for other processes of racialization elsewhere. The study posits that Roche Bois, as a unique locality, structures specific forms of racialization.

A third finding of this chapter is that educators were keenly engaging with children's local realities, as a way to draw on local examples and make learning relevant to children. The chapter showed that educators' speech about children's local realities is invested with value-laden meanings and assumptions, and thus the ways that teachers are trained to deal with "the local" must be further specified (for a further discussion of this implication, see discussion section below).

A final finding of this chapter is that the school can be a powerful institution of social reproduction. In my assessment of whether strategies of perpetuation or transformation were at work in educators' discursive practices, I concluded that for the most part, educators' words, despite their keen engagement with children's local realities, were strategies of perpetuation of negative notions of Creole identity, which is a logic that aligns with a larger historical narrative of Creole identity associated with Roche Bois.

Because the instances analyzed in chapter 5 were by far more numerous than other transformative instances (analyzed in chapter 6), I argue that the processes of racialization in school

contribute to the reproduction of hegemonic conceived spaces. Lefebvre proposed the notion of “conceived space” to explain how capitalist societies and spaces reproduced themselves, and specifically, how the bourgeoisie was able to maintain hegemony, mediated by powerful institutions such as the police and schools. The key to producing conceived space is an act of identification. Educators have the power to identify, or to name the meaning of the space, and that act produces Roche Bois as a conceived space. However, Lefebvre’s notion of conceived space does not preclude the ability of people – including educators - to resist and produce different kind of knowledge – anti-systemic knowledge- hence his theorization of concurrent “lived spaces” of resistance and disruption. Through his multifold theorization of space, Lefebvre resists the proposition of a clearly defined totalizing space, and prefers to theorize space in its multiple contradictions and openness. Lefebvre’s proposition helps highlight the contradictions at work in school, and shows that schools are not determined mechanisms, but have transformative, open, and undetermined capabilities.

7.2.3. Educators’ Talk About Roche Bois: The Production of Lived Spaces

In chapter 6, the analysis focused on the same questions as chapter 5, namely, how educators in school spoke about children’s local places, to what extent representations of place were racialized, and how this racialization was manifest discursively. In contrast to chapter 5, however, chapter 6 analyzed moments of spatial racialization that carried transformative possibilities (analyzing whether strategies of transformation were performed discursively). I highlight moments whereby educators, while speaking of the children’s local places and experiences, construct children’s identities as hybrid and open, in terms of three main domains of language, culture, and religion. In this construction, educators identified children of Roche Bois as capable of knowing cultural practices other than the assumed cultural practice of being Creole, or being able

to speak multiple languages, including oriental languages, and of having access to and knowledge of multiple religious sites in their locality. In addition, in one instance, Educator A used an inclusive deitic “we” that formed a notion of community that rejoined teachers and students in non-antagonistic relations. Given the focus of the study on educators, it is not clear whether these practices were actually transformative for students, especially because they were not frequent. However, the data I presented and analyzed in this chapter shows that practices of positive spatial racialization exist in the context of Roche Bois schools and can be built upon for the purposes of designing transformative practice in teacher training and reimagining what pedagogies of critical place based education might look like.

The analysis in chapter 6 shows that discourses of spatial racialization are not totalizing. Rather, they are fraught with “fissures” that allow for moments of disruption of the status quo. I understand these moments through Lefebvre’s concept of “lived space.” These moments are not dominant but can form the basis for thinking further what a critical pedagogy of place might look like. This critical pedagogy of place would serve Roche Bois children and educators and point to directions of operationalization of Gruenewald’s (2003) twin concepts, namely “decolonization” and “reinhabitation” in a critical pedagogy of place. In the following section below, I present a discussion of the findings of this study in relation to these two concepts.

7.3. Discussion and Implications for Teacher Training and Practice

7.3.1. Decolonization: Reinvesting the Local with New Meanings

The use of “the local” as a means to solicit student knowledge and connect to student realities has become a commonsense tenet across educational schools of thought, from Deweyan

constructivism to critical pedagogy and critical place based education. For example, Freirean critical pedagogy asserts that “reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continuously reading the world” (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p.35, cited in Gruenewald, 2003, p. 5). This pervasive focus on the local implies that teachers across settings are taught to interact with learners on the basis of their present immediate realities and local experiences and they attempt to draw knowledge out of students from that standpoint. In this view, teachers are generally facilitators of the knowledge generated by learners in the present, and history should be drawn out from those present meanings, which include the meanings educators’ invest in their framing of the local. In Mauritius, although educators did not work within the framework of critical pedagogies and did not reference constructivist thinking explicitly, they generally tried to draw on students’ local realities to make learning relevant. Their approach was broadly underpinned by textbook exercises that set up questions designed to draw on the children’s places and experiences.

This study found that the local was generally unproblematic for educators. That is, educators took generalized assumptions about Roche Bois and the children’s realities that shaped the way they were drawing on those experiences. One finding then, is that the local was imbued with racialized assumptions that were shaped historically. In other words, educators’ process of speaking about local places in Roche Bois was invested with racial meanings and, aside from a few important exceptions, disinvested of critical histories of place that would take people’s socio-environmental struggles (present and historical) into account.

Based on the data analyzed on educator talk in school Roche Bois, the findings in this dissertation point in the direction of reinvesting the local with critical historical meaning that would confirm grounded, yet open-ended identities. The need for historical knowledge was also confirmed in educator interviews, whereby two educators mentioned the need for historical

support in teacher training. Although teachers are usually trained to draw on students' realities to populate their pedagogical practice, and although Freirean anti-banking pedagogy also urges critical educators to follow this tenet, the use of students' local experiences as a means to be relevant needs to be specified at length in teacher training for the local runs the risk of being subject to larger historical sedimented meanings that structure learners' places.

Further, a pedagogy of decolonization would point to a way of critiquing what I term here "the pedagogical present." That is, the focus on local experiences as a way for teachers to construct student knowledge is highly imbued with the immediacy of present realities and assumes that students' present realities are the most important cognitive factor for further learning. This constitutes a form of reification of the present that needs to be rethought. Educators instead should not be taught to draw solely on students' present realities as a means to populate their classroom practice, but instead, learning about critical histories of place as a form of decolonization would mean that educational resources would be made available so that teachers are able to learn multiple perspectives on the places they teach in. The specification of what these multiple local perspectives looks like needs to be determined according to the dynamics of each place and time and cannot be predetermined through national standardized education systems. Therefore, speaking about the local as critical pedagogy of place scholars urge practitioner to do, must be specified in each context, and teachers must be supported in building critical knowledges of the places they teach in.

A critical pedagogy of place, called for by Gruenewald (2003), advocates for the twin concepts of "decolonization" and "reinhabitation." Gruenewald envisioned a pedagogy of decolonization as a deeply political practice that, drawing on the critical pedagogy struggle, would involve learning how to recognize injury and oppression in places and unlearn these histories and narratives to practice more socially and ecologically just ways of being in the world. Thus, one

main implication regarding pedagogies of the local is that they must be reinvested with critical histories of place as a way to decolonize knowledges that have been shaped historically. Rethinking educators' focus on the local so that educators are equipped with knowledges of place that are informed by local community histories and awareness of the links between place and identity could be a form of decolonization advocated by Gruenewald (2003).

Concretely in the context of Mauritius, this pedagogy of decolonization would urge the Ministry of Education to make resources available at the school level for educators to learn about local histories of people in marginalized places and learning critically about the relationship of these marginalized places with the rest of the nation. Two educators I interviewed seemed to agree with the proposition of learning about history, as detailed in the coda in the previous chapter (section 6.6). Educators of Roche Bois thus are aware that there is a great need for sociological awareness in education, which includes knowledge of history and ability to be comfortable speaking about Mauritian diversity in ways that are relevant to local places.

The proposition of supporting teachers toward critical historical awareness of place might be implemented in two steps. First the Mauritius Institute of education could include mandatory classes on the history of Mauritius from a subaltern perspective (for example, using the recent Truth and Justice Report (2011) as a basis for this curriculum or mobilize critical historians who work on local histories), as well as sociology of education and multicultural education classes in teacher training nationally. A second step would be to rethink the structure of the Mauritian educational system that trains all teachers uniformly and instead advocate for regional, differentiated instruction based on the localities teachers will be placed in. The national teacher training system currently produces teachers that are trained to teach one standardized curriculum,

applied to all primary children throughout the island in the same way and in English, with the goal of passing the CPE examination (also administered in English).

One of the ways to rethink this monolithic structure underpinned by colonial language ideologies would be the creation of differentiated place-based teacher knowledges through teacher-community dialogue circles at the school level. These meetings could be envisioned as a where teachers could bring the issues that are relevant to them based on the locality they teach in, and liaise with active community members in a concerted effort to reconnect community and school, and learn about the histories of the locality. These findings and recommendations echo the calls found in the literature for rethinking an uncritical and pervasive focus on the local in critical pedagogy and critical place-based education (Nespor, 2008; McInerney, Smyth, & Down, 2011; Gruenewald, 2003). Nespor (previously discussed in chapter 1) highlighted that the local is not problematized enough in critical place based education because place is treated as a stable, bounded entity, when in fact the local is traversed by a variety of forces, including global flows of meaning and issues of difference, including, race, class and gender (Nespor, 2008). A more recent article written by McInerney, Smyth, and Down (2011) echoes Nespor's critique and specifically addresses the need for critical place based education to engage more in depth with the key notions of place, identity, and community. While these authors focus on the ways the students connect with the local, my study focuses on the ways teachers bring assumptions about the local based on present racialized meanings that were constructed historically and thus offers another critique of the local in critical place based education. This critique highlights that the existing critiques of the local do not focus on the meanings that are invested in the local by educators, and thus indicates the need for a discursive, situated theorization of the ways the local is taken up by teachers in various settings.

7.3.2. Reinhabitation: Reenvisioning A Pedagogy of Hybridity and Community

This study found that although there were frequent moments of negative spatial racialization of children, an educator on several occasions used a pedagogy that drew on multiple perspectives in the classroom. The analysis in chapter 6 details the ways these multiple perspectives were employed, specifically, by drawing on hybrid notions of identity and place, and creating discursive openings for students to imagine themselves as complex multicultural beings who are knowledgeable about various cultural/religious identities of Mauritius. An additional way I found this educator disrupting dominant monolithic perspectives on race and space was a way of creating solidarity associations between teachers and students. The use of the deictic “we” to refer to both teachers and students as one category was an important discursive means to create potential inclusive and validating effects for students’ identities in Roche Bois.

One important finding, then, is that although educators generally reproduced discourses of racialization, these discourses were not totalizing. That is, moments of discursive opening exist as possibilities for transformation. These moments can indicate possible directions for a pedagogy of “reinhabitation” called for by Gruenewald (2003). Gruenewald defines reinhabitation, following Berg and Dasmann (1990) as the process of learning how to live well in places that have been disrupted or injured. Reinhabitation for educators of Roche Bois would entail learning to practice a pedagogy of hybridity that teaches against the essentialization of places and people, that would promote groundedness in place, and would also invite children’s knowledge of multiculturalism.

In addition, a pedagogy of reinhabitation would be inclusive of the interconnections between teachers and students as a “we” group. This in effect, would reinvest new meaning into the concept of “community,” a term that the literature critical of the field of place-based education has sought to specify. Specifically, scholars (Nespor, 2008; McInerney, Smyth, & Down, 2011) have

shown that community tends to unproblematically be treated as a bounded stable entity. Community is often conflated with place, and therefore the benign attributes of community are attributed to place and this creates a flattened, idealized version of place. Moreover, the notion of community, according to Nespor, is an empty signifier that makes it easily brandished by a wide variety of audiences with varying interests. The findings in this study show that a potential way of operationalizing reinhabitation would be to think reinhabitation through a renewed notion of community as inclusive of teachers and students, as a multicultural, hybrid and open group that would disrupt the entrenched position of the school as an “outside” to the Roche Bois locality, and Roche Bois as a racialized “outside” to the nation. Concretely in the context of the Mauritian educational system, reinhabitation as the process of practicing a politics of hybridity and reinvesting community with inclusive meanings might point to the need to provide resources and incentives for teachers to engage in cultural circles with local parents and community people with the goal of finding commonalities and sharing histories. Reinhabiting Roche Bois in this sense, then, means reinvesting its textures with new meanings and new social relationships.

What follows from this study, then, is that although discourses are techniques of social reproduction, they are not totalizing and contain discursive elements to transform existing discourses into new ones and propel transformation of spaces and practices in space. Specifying the critical place based education tenets of decolonization and reinhabitation becomes an important distillation of this discursive openness and this has important implications for subaltern populations that have historically struggled with negative racialization such as in Roche Bois. On the one hand, decolonization of knowledge, and on the other, reinhabiting the meanings and relationships that make up the texture of places, and specifically, the encounters of meanings between educators in students in contexts such as Roche Bois.

7.3.3. Possible Limitations Related to Resources

The implementation of pedagogies of decolonization and reinhabitation as described above is contingent on at least two daunting conditions: the political will and interest to work toward systemic change to incorporate such modules, and the availability of financial and knowledge-based resources within the Mauritius Ministry of Education school system. The Mauritius Ministry of Education is not immune toward change. It has made some structural revisions to the system in the last fifteen years, indicating that structural change is possible (e.g. the implementation of “oriental language” policies in the 1990s and the abolition of “star schools (elite public schools), the creation of the ZEP model in 2002, increased partnerships with the private sector and the Bureau for Catholic Education (BEC), increased rhetorical openness toward considering the *Kreol* language as a medium for instruction (Mauritius Ministry of Education 2020 Education Plan, 2010), and increased openness toward abolishing the Certificate of Primary Education Examination (CPE)). This ability to change notwithstanding, finding the resources to support change toward pedagogies of decolonization and reinhabitation would be a challenge. For instance, the Ministry of Education and the Mauritius Institute of Education would need to work in partnership to make resources available for teacher trainers who could work with teachers on critical histories of place in various localities on the island. To support the development of such a module, it would be necessary to solicit the expertise of critical historians who work on Mauritian history from subaltern perspectives. In addition, given that educators in this study posited that financial incentives were important mobilizing factors for teachers, paid time would need to be budgeted for teachers to be willing to participate.

These requirements may make it seem that changing the school system is impossible, but steps toward such change could occur if the issues of spatial racialization involved in localities such

as Roche Bois were brought to the fore, as a way to shape the political will on the part of government and non-governmental actors to begin with a grant-funded pilot project to work with teachers in such localities. Toward this end, and as a fulfillment of the conditions of my access to school for this research, I will share my dissertation's findings with the Ministry of Education. The findings of this dissertation can support curriculum developers and teacher trainers in better understanding the challenges teachers face in addressing children's realities and in reflecting on the possibilities of working with teachers on a small-scale, at the school level.

While it is also clear that the path ahead of such systemic change is daunting given the scope of the issue of spatial racialization that extends beyond present meanings into larger historical societal patterns, this study nevertheless can be the basis for teacher educators to rethink the knowledges and practices teachers should be equipped with to teach in settings such as Roche Bois.

7.4. Theoretical Implications

One of the theoretical challenges encountered in the analysis and representation of the data was working with Lefebvre's threefold conception of space as a theoretical tool. As detailed in chapter 2, Lefebvre conceptualizes space as a trialectic: the first space is "perceived space" that includes various locations and people's practices that produce and reproduces the space. The second space involves the conceived "representations of space" which constitute a discursive order, produced by powerful institutions, the façade that maintains power relations and reproduces them. Finally, the third level is the level of "lived, representational spaces" that function as an underground, a "creative interruption" (Sheehy, 2010) that contests the naturalness of the first two spaces. The three levels of space operate in dynamic ("trialectic") relationship with one another.

One of the main challenges that this dissertation confronted is that perceived space (spatial practice),

due to its complexity as jointly a material, discursive and performative space (embodied together in the term “practice”), was very difficult to categorize or delimit analytically, and consequently, difficult to represent as an object in a narrative (for example, as a separate chapter). In her work on classroom literacy practices through the lens of space and time, Sheehy (2010) highlights this analytical and narrative difficulty: “Lefebvre’s theory is difficult to work with because it is difficult to explain all three spaces simultaneously. One has to choose a method of describing each while also representing the trialectic” (Sheehy, 2010, p.14-15). The method I chose to engage with Lefebvre’s trialectic is to assume perceived space (spatial practice) as the space which threads through the practices of educators in the classrooms and assemblies I observed. Perceived space (spatial practice) is a spatial layer that I captured by describing the visible through “thick description” in fieldnotes and observations of educators’ practices and talk. It comprises the relations between educators and students, the spaces of the classrooms and the assemblies, the school yard and buildings, the town of Roche Bois, the content of the lessons taught about the town, the textbooks and artifacts used during lessons, and the historical relations that have made up the place. In sum, by defining the level of spatial practice as a thick slice of reality that I captured through fieldnotes, I was able to focus specifically on the other two levels of conceived and lived spaces and how through patterned repetitions, they functioned to reproduce or disrupt the status quo.

In doing so, I found that, in turn, Lefebvre’s levels of conceived and lived spaces were very amenable to a methodological linking with two of the discursive strategies of perpetuation and transformation developed within the framework of DHA by Wodak and colleagues (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001; Wodak & Reisigl, 2009). The “marriage” of the DHA micro tools with Lefebvre’s broader theoretical tools allowed me to conceptualize through strategies of discursive perpetuation of identities how the production of conceived spaces happened through micro-level patterns. This

theoretical-methodological rejoining of Lefebvre's ideas of lived space with DHA tools of transformation enabled me to conceptualize banal moments that constituted a break in the more typical patterns of conceived space.

As a result of my choice to focus on the levels of conceived and lived spaces in chapters 5 and 6, the analysis may appear like the reconstruction of a binary that Lefebvre's entire body of work sought to avoid. On the one hand, chapter 5 examines conceived spaces of Roche Bois by educators at school as the dominant patterns of meaning that both produce and reproduce the space (and meanings of the space) for the children. On the other hand, chapter 6 explores several unique, banal moments in teacher practice that intentionally or not, seek to disrupt the naturalness of the order that was presented in conceived spaces. These two levels, and in particular, the level of conceived space, contribute to shaping the level of spatial practice and perpetuating the relations that more typically reproduce the status quo, but also interrupt it. As Lefebvre highlights, it is precisely the dialectic between perceived and conceived space that contributes to capitalist reproduction, whereas the third level of lived space is conceptualized as banal moments of interruption of reproductive patterns. So, while my analysis of the two levels of conceived space (representations of space) and lived space may appear like a neat dichotomy, it is important to remember that the all pervasive level of perceived space (spatial practice) is the practice of relations that operates trialectically with the other two spatial layers, and as such disrupts the binary that might be imagined between conceived and lived spaces.

Another aspect of Lefebvre's theory that clearly disrupts the binaries one might think are constructed was the "location" of conceived and lived spaces. Focusing on conceived and lived spaces practiced by actors within a specific school year shows that these are not temporarily delimited phases that can be read chronologically nor are they delimited by specific individuals.

That is, the contours of conceived space that I trace in the analysis took shape in various classrooms, in many daily whole-school assemblies, and at various points in time. Similarly, the lived spaces I analyze are not represented through the practices a specific person to whom that level of analysis is attached. Rather, the moments of lived space that I share in Educator A's spatial practices coexist alongside moments of production of conceived spaces. Ultimately, instead of a binary, these two levels indicate the messiness of social life, and relatedly, the openness of Lefebvre's theoretical foundations on space, its elements of undecidability, and its non-determinism. Some theorists have critiqued this openness as being utopian and "endlessly open" (Harvey, 1998, as cited in Sheehy, 2009). Sheehy explains that Harvey critiques Lefebvre for being *too* non-deterministic, and although he conceptualizes change that happens constantly, this change is not seen to be organized toward a specific (intentionally organized) end, and therefore does not point to a "way out" of the oppressive reproductions of capitalism. Clearly, the question of intentionality is at play here. When social actors practice moments of lived space, as seen in my analysis of Educator A in chapter 6, these moments are not necessarily intentional. And yet, these moments exist as openness in the otherwise more sutured, closed-nature of conceived space. What I have learned from the use of Lefebvre, then, is that although perceived spaces are difficult to analytically delimit, the analysis of conceived spaces and lived spaces allows me to explain the social processes at work in the production, reproductions, and potential transformation of spaces.

In this regard, I have worked in this dissertation to keep Lefebvre's theory in its integrality, contrary to much scholarship, in particular in education, that has taken up one part of the complex trialectic, namely, "Thirdspace" (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995; Soja, 1996; Moje, 2004). For

the most part, these studies have taken up Lefebvre's third level of lived space¹⁹ as analytical and political project to point to potential ways of re-imagining of the oppressiveness of educational spaces. In contrast, my work's theoretical emphasis connects with other studies that have taken up and worked with the three levels of Lefebvre's trialectic, although with varying emphases on perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, due to the analytical difficulty of working with the three levels (Sheehy, 2009; Leander & Sheehy, 2004).

An additional theoretical challenge that I faced in the analysis is the interlinking of discourse and spatial theories. Because Lefebvre wrote against discourse perspectives on social life in such adamant words, I had to solve the apparent disjuncture between spatial analysis and discourse analysis. I employed two methods to resolve this disjuncture. The first is to critically re-read Lefebvre's thinking on discourse and situate his critique within its historical context, where discourse approaches were dominant, and at the same time reflect on the level of conceived space as a space that is a level of codification of social reality, and thus highly discursive. That is, conceived space is produced through the words and meanings of actors in institutions, who contribute to the production and reproduction of a status quo. A second method I employed was to provide a reading of main tenets in the field of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and show how its epistemologies call for conceptualizing aspects of the non-discursive in the form of institutions and political-historical contexts. This re-reading of the connections between Lefebvre and CDA provides the grounds for the marriage between these two approaches, and an appropriate theoretical lens to show how educators discursively produce and reproduce the conceived space of Roche Bois, and yet also engage in interruptions of lived space. In addition, when marrying Lefebvre with Wodak's discourse historical approach, it is possible to examine how the history of

¹⁹ Except for Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) who use Thirdspace based on Bhabha's conceptualization.

the space of Roche Bois imbued it with racialized meanings that in turn are echoed in educators' present words. This theoretical interlinking can therefore be a way to better study the histories of places and the ways they shape present interactions.

Finally, in using Lefebvre in a dissertation that situates itself within dialogues of critical-place-based education (see the overview of the literature in chapter 1, e.g. (Gruenewald, 2003; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; Smith, 2007; McLaren & Houston, 2004), I noticed that Lefebvre is often briefly cited but never engaged with in-depth. The silence between critical place-based scholarship and Lefebvrian analysis is striking, particularly that CPBE's historical and political underpinnings come from an ecological anti-capitalist critique that seek to disrupt binaries that were created by capitalist modernity (subject-object, human-nature, etc.). My analysis highlights the possibilities of working with Lefebvre as a way to shed light on critical place based educational theory, namely, how analyzing lived spaces can be the basis for exploring the ways pedagogies of decolonization and reinhabitation can take shape.

7.5. Implications for Future Research

Four main directions for future research emerge out of this dissertation analysis. The first pertains to the history presented in chapter 4, as a synthesis of existing historical research on the racialization of Roche Bois. The second stems from a self-reflection on the spatial and discursive methodologies I employed for data collection and analysis; the third is underpinned with a realization of shifting the object of study from adults to children, and the fourth speaks to the theoretical possibilities of linking Critical Place Based Education (CPBE) to spatial analysis.

First, while my primary research in Roche Bois was not directly historical, it is clear from a variety of historical sources that I synthesize in chapter 4 that the historical context is a powerful

element shaping educators' meanings of place (and race). This historical context has imbued the place with powerful meanings. As the history of racialization has gradually produced a hegemonic picture of Roche Bois as associated with a uniform Creole identity, it is a powerful meaning that gets taken up in various ways and for a variety of reasons. Further macro-sociological research in this direction is key to uncover why the signifier of Roche Bois continues to hold such power in the Mauritian imaginary (to outsiders, including teachers) and just as importantly, how the signifier of Roche Bois gets taken up by local inhabitants and people closely involved with this place (insiders, which might also include teachers) as a way to achieve certain political ends, both at a micro-subjective level, and at an infrastructural level in terms of the (re)distribution of resources²⁰.

Second, in reflecting on my object of inquiry during the collection of data, I highlight the need to conduct research on educator practices in Roche Bois with a Lefebvrian and DHA lens central to the research questions, that informs the process of data collection itself. This was unfortunately not my experience. As I began this project in 2008, I was interested in documenting environmental education practices in and outside of school, exploring the multifold environmental realities of children and teachers. As environmental education was not taught formally at the school in Roche Bois, my focus quickly shifted to documenting educators' practices of place. It was after collecting data in the field that I began exploring the various analytical tools which I employ in this dissertation, namely Lefebvrian spatial analysis and Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach. These theoretical-methodological tools were not employed during my data collection, and as such, did not inform my perspective on the realities I was observing. It is upon re-reflecting on those realities that I applied these tools. As such, my analysis of lived space in one educator's practices in chapter 6 makes evident that this is an area that deserves further research. An important project then,

²⁰ I am indebted to Dr. Espelancia Baptiste, who importantly pointed out the importance of studying how racialization, however oppressive, is sometimes turned on its head and brandished for a variety of reasons.

would be to explore lived spaces as a central object of inquiry, to deepen the analysis of possibilities of transformation of the educational system and educator practices. Exploring lived spaces as a central object of inquiry would allow for increased documentation of possibilities of interruption of dominant patterns, and at a relational level between researcher and researched, be more amenable to more horizontal research tools such as Participatory Action Research with teachers.

Third, exploring lived spaces is a line of inquiry that should be extended to documenting children's practices, in and outside of school, as they directly respond to or react to educator practices. To really examine whether lived space disruptions carry transformational possibilities for the objects of educational research, children, it would be important to go back to the field, with the specific theoretical lens of lived space. However, as my research demonstrated, the documentation of children's spatial practices was a major challenge because of children's relationship with me as an adult-authority figure at school, regardless of the positive or convivial rapport that I might have developed with them. During interviews with me, children's answers to my questions about the school were formulaic and it was a challenge to draw out their opinions on their experiences in the classroom. I therefore decided not to include the data collected with children in this dissertation. A second implication for research, then, is that even though many challenges exist in mitigating relations of authority when doing research with children, it is important to conduct research that focuses on spatial practice from the children's perspectives. My experience with children's hesitation in school points to the importance of approaching children outside of school, in spaces where they can speak in less constrained way, and where the researcher is not imbued with institutional authority, associated as someone who works at the school. Such research could also include a more comprehensive examination of families' perspectives on spatial practices in school and their locality.

Finally, as I briefly mentioned in the previous section, one underexplored aspect of Critical Place Based Education scholarship is its relation with spatial theories such as that of Lefebvre (1991) or Soja (1996). While it is clear that there has been a spatial turn in education, and especially in the study of literacy practices (Sheehy, 2009; Leander & Sheehy, 2004; Buendía, Ares, Juarez, & Peercy, 2004; Martusewicz, 2009) this turn has not been articulated with Critical Place Based Education scholarship (McLaren & Houston, 2004; Bowers, 2001; Gruenewald, 2003) in sufficient depth. My use of Lefebvre as a way to engage with CPBE dynamics in this dissertation shows that this theoretical rejoining can be useful to study the reproduction and transformation of spatial practices, which are themes at the heart of CPBE as a political and analytical project as well. I thus hope that my work might join and contribute to the work of other critical place based pedagogues (Gahl Cole, 2007; Gruenewald, 2003; McLaren & Houston, 2004; Martusewicz, 2009) whose impulse it is to imagine and re-imagine how a politics and a pedagogy of critical social place might be envisioned and enacted in learning encounters in marginalized spaces.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO EDUCATORS

1. How long have you worked at this school?
2. Why did you/do you teach here? Did you choose this place in particular? What does Roche Bois mean to you as a teacher?
3. What has been your experience teaching there in comparison with other schools?
4. Roche Bois is often portrayed negatively in school by teachers (and in the media) and children are often part of this negative perception. What affects the teachers' perceptions of Roche Bois?
5. Do you think the children are aware of the meanings associated with their community? How?
6. How do the meanings of Roche Bois affect your practice?
7. In addition to teachers' negative perceptions of Roche Bois, it is often portrayed as associated with the Creole community, although we know there is ethnic diversity in Roche Bois. Why do you think this is?

APPENDIX B

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1. How long have you lived in Roche Bois? How long has your family lived here? How has your family come to live there?
2. What was Roche Bois like when you were a child? How has it changed?
3. From your knowledge, what are the main historical events that have shaped Roche Bois to be what it is today?
4. How was Roche Bois first settled and who settled here? How has this changed over time?
5. Are there common story (stories) told from parent to children in Roche Bois about the place? If so, which ones?
6. When I (Elsa) spent time in Roche Bois at the school and elsewhere in 2008-2009, there were several places in Roche Bois that seemed to be salient in people's lives (for negative or positive reasons).
 - a. The highway
 - b. The dump
 - c. People's encampments (squatters) "*an ba la riviere*" or "*Karo Kaliptis*"
 - d. The ocean (*Mer Rouge*) and restrictions to fishermen's access to the sea
 - e. The estuary/conservation zone
 - f. Questions of health and sanitation

Can you talk about any of these themes? Why do you think these might be important (or not) to people of Roche Bois? What history (histories) might have shaped these places?

7. Roche Bois is often portrayed as predominantly Creole and the children as predominantly Creole in school and in the media (although statistics show that there is ethnic diversity in Roche Bois). Why do you think that is? How has history shaped this perception?
8. What issues are faced by this community presently which might have an important history in the past (transportation, health, education, employment (dockers, etc.))?

APPENDIX C

THEMATIC PATTERNS ACROSS EDUCATORS

Themes	Educator A	Educator B	Educator C	Educator D	Educator E	Educator F	Educator G	Educator H
Transforming Negative Meanings		X		X		X	X	
Relative cultural identities	X	X	X	X			X	
Fixed spatialized	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Condensed identities	X	X	X		X		X	X
Hygiene	X	X		X	X			X
Animality	X	X	X		X		X	
Safety	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Labor	X	X			X			X
Work ethic	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Crime, drugs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Multiculturalism	X			X		X		
Multiple Languages	X			X		X		
Multiple religions	X							

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