from L. Weis, M. Sellers,

Beyond Black + White

(originally from Making + Molding Identity in School)

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ANN LOCKE DAVIDSON

Marbella Sanchez

On Marginalization and Silencing

MARBELLA: Well, a Mexican is someone who knows how to depend on himself. And he has to have a different character from other people.

INTERVIEWER: How is that?

MARBELLA: Well, it's a . . . it's a strong character. It doesn't let itself get vanquished very easily. For example, if someone says "I am going to be a doctor," and if another person, or other people say to him "No, don't do that because it's a very long path, very complicated" or something, well, he mustn't let himself be discouraged by what they said. If he wants to study that, he has to do that. And not give up because other people told him "No, don't do that."

The sizzle and smell of garlic fill the air. It is "Lab day" in foods class at Explorer High School. I lean against the hard steel corner of a stove, listening to Marbella Sanchez, a sophomore Mexican immigrant, as she stirs her darkening garlic.

Marbella's teacher approaches. "How are you doing Marbella?" "Muy bien maestra. Me gusta la comida italiana." (Very well, teacher. I like Italian food.) The teacher glances at me, laughs slightly, and tries again. "It looks like that's

about ready. What else are you going to put in there?" "Cebollas, tomates, salsa de tomates . . . qué más?" (Onions, tomatoes, tomato sauce . . . what else?) The look and laughter come again: "I don't understand a thing she's saying."

I am puzzled. While English is Marbella's second language, I know from personal experience that her English comprehension is excellent; I usually spoke to her in English, as my Spanish oral proficiency is low.[1] Moreover, though Marbella spoke to me in Spanish, I have heard her speak English to her teachers and listened to her argue that learning English is the key to success in America. While certainly more comfortable speaking Spanish, Marbella is quite capable of responding to her teacher's queries.

With cleanup approaching, Marbella approaches her teacher, asking for the worksheet that each cooking group is required to complete: "Maestra? Tiene mi papel?" (Teacher, do you have my paper?) Mrs. Everett looks at Marbella blankly. Marbella gestures to a pile of worksheets and Everett, reading Marbella's movement, hands her a paper. Now, I can't contain my curiosity. "Marbella," I laugh, "Why don't you ask her in English?" Marbella smiles and laughs back. "Tenemos una regla. Los martes y jueves, hablamos puro Español." (We have a rule. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we speak only Spanish.)

Over the time that I came to know Marbella, I discovered that she and her small group of friends have many rules. Some, such as that above, serve to support the group as they struggle to assert their identity in a country where they feel pressure to conform. Others help them as they work to achieve academically as part of proving that being Mexican gives one the "strong character" that facilitates resilience in a new society. Marbella's conformity to these rules is reflected not only in scenes like that described above, but in high academic achievement. During her first three semesters at Explorer High School, Marbella earned all As and Bs, with one 3.67 and two 3.5 GPAs. During the second semester of her sophomore year, Marbella's mother was diagnosed with a tumor. As a result, Marbella missed twenty-three days of school, as she and her sister took turns staying home to provide basic health care. Still, Marbella maintained a 2.67 GPA. In short, Marbella demonstrated that, for her, part of being Mexican is having a strong, oppositional character that enables academic success. Further, Marbella manifests aspects of the ideology others have described as typical of immigrant minorities (Gibson 1987; Ogbu 1987). Voicing faith in the American opportunity structure, Marbella believes academic achievement will result in future economic success: "It's to learn English, that's what's necessary to triumph here. To know English. And to succeed in school" (ES50STEN: 795–808).

Yet oppositional character and manifestations of immigrant identity were not all I saw during the months I knew Marbella. Over time, Marbella revealed a fearful, sometimes resigned and frequently silent self equally connected both to her sense of ethnicity and immigrant status, a self that has emerged as Marbella has realized her marginalized position and encountered disciplinary technologies (Foucault 1979) at her high school. This, Marbella's separatist self, shrinks from asserting its rights and fears interaction with American-born peers. Emerging in relation to the structure of the high school, this aspect of Marbella's persona reveals links between institutional practices and the construction of school-based identities.

Drawing on the notion that the selves youth create are embedded in disciplinary relationships laced with power and meaning (Kondo 1990; Foucault 1983), this chapter considers Marbella's ideology and shifting manifestations of identity in relation to guiding social and institutional relationships at the school level. I will argue that Marbella's behavior must be located and interpreted not only in relation to her historical status as an immigrant youth, but in relation to institutional mechanisms and power dynamics that work to nurture and sustain public "silencing" (Fine 1991; Weis and Fine 1993) at the school. The data presented emerged from interviews with Marbella, field observations at her high school, and interviews with adults at Explorer, collected as part of a larger study focussed on the social construction of ethnic identity among diverse youth (Davidson 1992, 1996).[2]

Stepping Back: Marbella's Voice Contextualized

Before moving forward with the specifics of Marbella's case, I step back briefly to locate her voice in a long-running and developing theoretical discussion that cuts across the fields of anthropology and sociology. This chapter can be read as one of several recent efforts (Davidson 1996; Raissiguier 1994; Weis 1990) to encourage movement beyond purely "culturalist" perspectives on schooling. My purpose, therefore, is not only to detail the particular story of a particular youth, but to move beyond predicting and explaining student ideology and behavior in terms of social class or minority status characteristics. Here, I first outline the poststructural approach to power and identity construction taken in this chapter, and then situate this approach in relation to a culturalist perspective.

A concept central to the forthcoming analysis is the poststructural notion of power as an "action upon an action" (Foucault 1983, 221). Power does not

determine others but rather structures the possible field of action, "guiding the course of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome" (Foucault 1983, 220). Power is conceptualized as being embodied and enacted in both personal and institutional relationships. At the same time, individuals are not inert objects; rather, individuals can and do resist the meanings they encounter even as others seek to push them towards comprehensible categories.

At the institutional level, disciplinary technology (isolating, ordering, systematizing practices) and serious speech acts (truth claims asserted by an expert in an area) are factors that work to enact power relations, primarily through contributing to a definition of what is "normal" in advance. Both can therefore be viewed as practices that teach, or "discipline" participants to the meaning of institutional (and social) categories such as prisoner, soldier, teacher, ESL student. In schools, for example, the taken-for-granted, "objective" division of students into academic tracks can be viewed as a disciplinary technology that highlights differences and disciplines students and teachers to particular conceptions about the meaning of high and low achievement in students. Likewise, because youth may view certain adults (e.g., guidance counselors or teachers) as privileged authorities with specific knowledge about higher education, life chances, and so on, their assertions may be viewed as serious speech acts: knowledge to be studied, repeated, and passed on to friends. A network of serious speech acts may come to constitute a system that works to control both the production of discourse and the conceptualization of persons.

Previous ethnographies have documented relationships between student identity and academic engagement (cf. Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Suarez-Orozco 1989; Willis 1977). With a few notable exceptions, however (cf. Weis 1990; Raissiguier 1994), such studies have focused principally on links between large-scale economic, political, and historical factors and the identities that youth construct. Reflecting a culturalist perspective, such work places primary emphasis on the ideology students *bring* to school; links between school-based factors (such as disciplinary technologies) and student identity are not discussed. For example, educational anthropologists (Fordham and Ogbu 1986; Matute-Bianchi 1986; Ogbu 1987; Suarez-Orozco 1989) have identified differences between "involuntary" and immigrant minority ideology, accounting for these differences in terms of historical factors. "Involuntary minorities," defined as peoples originally brought to the United States through slavery, conquest, or colonization (African Americans, Native Americans, some Mexican Americans and Native Hawaiians are examples), are said to have a skeptical attitude toward opportunities for gainful employment and social

mobility due to historical experiences with economic and political oppression and racism. This skepticism is manifested in the form of oppositional ethnic identities: cultural differences are presented as markers of identity to be maintained in opposition to the dominant culture. Groups may also develop secondary cultural differences, claiming and exaggerating certain behaviors, symbols, events, and meanings as appropriate for the group because they are not characteristic of members of another population (Ogbu 1987). Among these may be anti-academic behaviors that demonstrate resistance to schooling; thus oppositional identities can enter negatively into the academic process, affecting engagement and motivation.

In contrast, "immigrant" or "voluntary minorities," peoples who moved more or less voluntarily to the United States, are said to be more optimistic about the American opportunity structure, both because they have less experience with its realities and because economic and political conditions in the United States are sometimes better than in the home country. Immigrants may manifest a "dual frame of reference," in which opportunities in the United States are constantly compared and assessed in light of the situation in the country of origin (Gibson 1987; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 1993). Immigrant minorities therefore are said to be more likely to believe that the effort they devote to school work will pay off, and they strive accordingly.

Such work is useful not only for advancing the dialogue concerning differences in ethnic minority group achievement, but also for considering the role that broader historical and economic circumstances play in day-to-day classroom activities. Taken to an extreme, however, a culturalist perspective implies that the meanings, behaviors, and perceptions associated with a specific background are relatively fixed, exerting a constant influence on students' academic work. In telling Marbella's story, this chapter reveals how an immigrant orientation can be weakened and distorted in an environment that offers little to its immigrant youth. I demonstrate how the school works actively to discourage and silence Marbella's pro-academic oppositional persona, disciplining her toward more silent and separatist manifestations of identity. I return now to Marbella's story, beginning with background information that provides insight into the development of her strong oppositional character.

Memories of Mexico: Foundations for "Strong Character"

Marbella, along with her younger brother and older sister, crossed the U.S.-Mexico border in the summer of 1989 to join her mother. The transition was

radical. Marbella left behind not only a familiar language and culture, but the rural lifestyle she'd grown accustomed to in Tecuala, a small agricultural town approximately 800 miles south of San Diego, near the Pacific coast:

> Almost everybody in the town was friendly . . . There were about 600 people. That was as many as could be there. Almost everybody knew each other. . . . where I am from, life is calm, it is like the country. (ES50STAB: 506–28)

It was during her childhood that Marbella learned that being Mexican requires strength of character. Born in 1975, Marbella is one of thousands of Mexican children who grew up during a period of economic crisis ("La Crisis"), a period in which Mexico's stagnant economy, price inflation, drastic currency devaluation, and growing national debt affected countless rural families (Macias 1990). Marbella's autobiographical interview reflects her place in history, as she recounts her mother's struggle to support her three young children after her husband abandoned his family (Marbella was three years old). Marbella recalls how her mother, faced with limited and low-paying opportunities for work, moved the family first to her own mother's home and then to a rented room. For four additional years, Marbella's mother struggled to make ends meet by working at night, but eventually left in search of more lucrative work in Hermosillo, a larger city 570 miles to the north. Eight-year-old Marbella and her siblings remained behind. From third to sixth grade, Marbella saw her mother only once per month.

According to Marbella, her early history is by no means unique. When asked what she and her friends talked about in elementary school, for example, she replied: ". . . we would talk about our parents. Most of us just had one parent; none of us had both a father and a mother. We often talked about that. My grandma always told us that we were too young to talk about those things" (ES50STAB: 327–32).

As Marbella began sixth grade in 1985, her mother's sisters joined the wave of Mexican emigrants leaving for the United States in search of work. Marbella's mother returned to Tecuala to live with her mother and children. Three years later, still unsatisfied with the level of support she could provide, Marbella's mother followed her sisters to the United States. Marbella dropped out of school to help her grandmother, working thirteen-hour days packing mangos during the harvest season. Marbella's mother worked to save the money necessary to bring Marbella and her two siblings to the United States; they joined her one year later.

Despite the difficult economic circumstances Marbella associates with her youth, she retains a positive orientation toward characteristics she perceives as

representative of her culture. She emphasizes interpersonal relationships and mutual aid in her stories and descriptions:

> I don't act like many people here who are American; they act differently than we do . . . for example, like at dances. Our dances and theirs are different. We like to celebrate and I know they do too. But I've gone to some American dances, and they don't dance. When a man goes and asks an American girl to dance and she says no, then it's because he is ugly or something. Well, no [we don't do that], we like to get along together at dances and at parties.
>
> Or if we go out for a day of fresh air, we go as Mexicans. We go out for the day and we like to get along together. Everybody pulls his weight, no? Well, nobody says things like "You didn't work." If somebody doesn't have money and he can't bring anything, well, it doesn't matter that he doesn't bring anything. But he still has to be there, because he's our friend (ES50STEN:153–81).

Enacting these behaviors and norms, Marbella's mother, out of work herself, took two youth (Marbella's close friends) into her home when their mother left for work in another U.S. city during the 1990 recession. Marbella's descriptions and her mother's behavior are in accord with the heavy emphasis on mutual aid and support among kin found in Mexican agrarian communities (Uribe, Levine, and Levine 1994).

Besides bringing memories of economic hardship, Marbella recollects successful, happy days in elementary school:

> Everything was easy in school. The teacher helped us. If we didn't understand, she would explain slowly. . . . I had her for three years, so I thought everything was easy. I liked school a lot. If I couldn't go to school I would stay home very sad. I really liked going to school because I had fun. . . .
>
> Another thing I remember is when I was seven. We were going to go on parade and I was going to carry the school's banner. It was very nice because all the people were there seeing us and I was at the front of the parade. . . . It feels very nice to carry the flag because they choose the most intelligent student. It's a very pretty feeling because when they choose you everyone says "So, you're smart!" (ES50STAB: 30–46, 454–74)

Marbella's descriptions also suggest that her mother (who graduated from high school) and grandmother place high priority on Marbella's education. For example, because of Marbella's exceptional performance during her elementary years, the family pooled its resources in order to enroll her in a secondary private school usually restricted to the elite. The family believed this would provide Marbella with a better education. Marbella recalls the decision:

> There were only two schools there [in Tecuala]. I wanted to go to the federal [public] one, and my grandmother didn't want me to. She put me in the school that I didn't like. That school was only for rich people. It was a school you had to pay for, only for those who had money. . . . Because she had some land, she was going to sell it so I could go to that school. . . . My aunts who were working here [in the U.S.] sent money so I could go.

Marbella also describes her mother's continued efforts to support her children's transition to their United States high school, despite her long days doing janitorial work:

> Sometimes when we have bad grades she says to us "What happened?" and "What went wrong?" and we tell her and she helps us with that. And she talks to the teacher, and she tells him that we need him to give us the work again to see if we can do it well.
>
> My mom really likes to be informed about how we're doing. Sometimes, well, if we are doing poorly in school, perhaps she can help us with something . . . she studied, she studied a lot in Mexico. Sometimes neither I nor my sister understand algebra and well she—very rarely—but she helps us. Sometimes she can't help us because like she's working. She works from six in the morning to four or five in the afternoon; she arrives at five, takes a bath and she's gone at seven at night and she goes out [to work] until two or three in the morning and she doesn't have time. (ES50STC: 1189–1247)

Like her daughter, Marbella's mother believes that learning English and graduating from high school are essential first steps to "become someone."

Marbella's memories of economic struggle, her successful elementary and middle school history, and her mother's support are relevant to understanding Marbella's drive to succeed and readiness to challenge those who doubt her intelligence. At the same time, her positive memories of Mexico and positive orientation toward norms and values she associates with Mexican culture are relevant to her desire to resist pressures to assimilate. I turn now to consider these aspects of Marbella's persona.

Marbella's Gamble: An Oppositional Self

> It's like a bet to be here. It's like a bet that we ought to win because we need to demonstrate to other people that we indeed can make it. That it's not because we are Hispanic we can't make it. At times they [Americans] are

> treating you badly, right? Then you say to yourself "I am going to demonstrate to those people that I indeed can be something, and that I have the capability to be something. It's not because I'm Hispanic that I can't make it." At these times, they give you desire to study more and become someone more quickly, so as to demonstrate to all the world that it is not because you are Mexican you are going to stop below. (ES50STEN: 441–63)

Gambling on academic success, Marbella manifests a public ethnic identity that is both pro-academic and oppositional. In a one hour interview focusing on the meaning of her ethnicity, Marbella speaks of becoming someone ("llegar hacer alguien") three times, "being something" twice, and succeeding four times. Marbella's drive appears to stem as much from her desire to make a public political statement about her Mexican origin ("to demonstrate to those people") as to advance her self-interests. Further, while willing to work hard to succeed in school, Marbella resists pressures to conform, asserting the linguistic aspects of her ethnic identity.

The pro-academic aspect of Marbella's public identity reveals itself in the strategies she has adopted to achieve, in her readiness to assist fellow immigrants with academic work, and in her stubborn attacks on institutional roadblocks that impede her educational progress. It was reflected, for example, in the rules Marbella and her peers created to maintain high standards for the group: holding parties at six-week grading periods and allowing only those with As and Bs to attend, going to the library at lunch to study as a group when a test is approaching.

It showed in physical science class, when Marbella yanked a desk from under the feet of two male immigrant peers, ignoring their yells of protest and chastising them for their boisterous classroom behavior: "Quiet! I can't hear anything."

It was revealed during Marbella's freshman year, as she resisted her school's efforts to channel her into low-level mathematics. Approaching her school's vice-principal of guidance, Marbella argued for recognition of her academic abilities: "She wanted to leave me in basic math, but I talked a lot with her until she let me go to pre-algebra. The only thing you do in basic math is what little kids do: addition, division, and multiplication" (ES50STD: 458–66).

The premium that Marbella places on her education can also be seen in the severe critiques she reserves for teachers that she perceives as failing to respect the intelligence of her and her peers:

> Now we have not advanced in the book. We haven't done very much, the teacher uses up all the time explaining and we don't do anything. Sometimes he spends one whole week on one page. We don't feel comfortable because he treats us like if we were kindergarten kids. We feel bad, the teacher feels that we don't understand even the simpler concepts. I don't like the teacher treating us like little kids. We understand, the problem is that he is not consistent in his explanations. (ES50STD: 831–50)

Among her teachers, Marbella is recognized for her academic efforts and friendly, almost radiant persona:

> SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER: If I were to have an image of what I thought a nun [was like]. . . . Goodness just comes out of her. And she would be like, she would be an excellent teacher. She would be an excellent teacher for children. . . .
>
> In my social studies class, she did *well.* She didn't do barely passing. She *did* well. . . . The writings that she submitted to me, the sentence structures were well written. In Spanish, of course. The structures were good. Her thoughts were good. When we had to construct thought to go beyond, [like answer] OK, why. The why question was answered, completely. Some kids might do one sentence, she would do a full paragraph on the why questions.

> SCIENCE TEACHER: Sparkly Marbella . . . real concerned about her grades, starting off the beginning of the year. And wanted to be sure she had everything done right, that all the points were there.

> COMPUTER LITERACY TEACHER: She's an excellent student. She knew her keyboard when she came in and she always does her work. Sometimes when she finishes her assignments she will go back and do some more practice work.

Marbella is perceived as both cooperative and hard-working, "excellent," "concerned," and thoughtful.

While clearly conforming to academic behavioral norms, Marbella simultaneously resists pressures to assimilate. It is clear, for example, that the majority of her teachers want and expect Marbella to speak English. Yet, as previously mentioned, Marbella resists by choosing to speak Spanish on particular days of the week. Marbella and her friends have also worked together to engage in more public forms of protest against such pressures:

> INTERVIEWER: You said that the woman who drives the bus now is very nice. Was there another person before?

> MARBELLA: Yes, before there was a woman who spoke Spanish. It seemed like she didn't like us speaking Spanish. She said that we were not civilized, and all kinds of things. She said that we should speak English, since we were in this country we shouldn't speak Spanish. We came to talk to the office to say that we didn't like her anymore. (ES50STD: 218–40)

Marbella also demonstrates resistance to assimilationist pressures by insisting that her American-born acquaintances make some effort to cross into her social world. When, for example, Marbella spied an advertisement for study in Mexico during a visit to a university, she ripped it from the wall and urged me to enroll so I could improve my Spanish.

Marbella describes herself as having carefully selected friends who support both the pro-academic and oppositional aspects of her identity: "Well, you know, I don't have a lot of friends because I am selective. Because I won't hang out with a person who doesn't like to study" (ES50STA: 507–11). Like her, Marbella believes that her peers are oriented toward "becoming someone" and behaving in a serious, rather formal, manner:

> My friends, they think that a Mexican is someone who goes forward, someone who becomes someone, who has a career and who can triumph in a country that is not his own. And also, they think that speaking—or perhaps character—that speaking correctly is one of the most important things. Because if you speak like, I don't know, like a "cholo" [a person linked to a local gang structure] or something like that, well, that is not good. If you speak correctly you can get a better job than someone who does not speak correctly. (ES50STEN: 578–95)

Marbella compares her orientation and behavior to that of her fellow immigrants, whom she describes as oriented toward socializing rather than academic achievement:

> Well, I only have a few friends, only a few true friends, five only. We are always together because we share the same ideas. For example, we don't use bad words when we talk like the other girls here. Also, they [other Latina immigrants] invite us to leave school early [cut class] with them. That is why we don't have many friends. We come to school to study, not to go out. Also, they don't like us because our grades are better than theirs [are]. . . . We usually fight. They said I am crazy. And not too many talk to me anymore. (ES50STB: 270–84, 300–302)

Confirming Marbella's description, the school's English as a Second Language (ESL) resource teacher describes a general trend toward academic

disengagement among Explorer's immigrant students. He points out that while many youth enter with a desire to succeed, their desire dampens over time:

> The students that come here tend to be just arriving from Mexico, and they still have a lot of high expectations that you can build on. When students have been here a few years, that rubs off. And they kind of lose their enthusiasm, and their spirit, and their hope. . . . Some of them had unrealistic dreams, and so when you first come here you think you can do it, and then you realize "Well, maybe I can't." (ES090ST1: 438–61, 744–61)

In the context of the description above, Marbella appears both resilient and somewhat unusual, resisting a more general trend toward disengagement from the educational process.

In sum, Marbella presents herself as highly motivated, eager to attain bilingual skills, and determined to maintain and assert her ethnic identity. For Marbella, being Mexican means having the strength of character to succeed academically. Marbella believes that such success, through enabling her to "become somebody," will enable her to mount an effective challenge to negative stereotypes.

A Second Look: Marbella's Silent, Separatist Self

> INTERVIEWER: Is there tension between the Hispanics and Americans?
>
> MARBELLA: No, the groups don't mix.
>
> INTERVIEWER: The groups don't mix?
>
> MARBELLA: No, because they try to humiliate us . . . to many of us, including me, they call us things.
>
> (ES50STA: 407–14)

> MARBELLA: I avoid fighting in the school, because I know I am the Mexican, and in a fight between a Mexican girl and a white girl, the Mexican cannot win.
>
> (ES50STA: 444–49)

Ironically, Marbella is at once determined to challenge and infiltrate, yet resigned to her marginalization and segregation, hopeful about her future chances yet pessimistic about near-term prospects. These seeming contradictions are manifested most clearly in Marbella's interview transcripts, as her

optimistic statements are paralleled by an emphasis on the importance of remaining silent in the face of discriminatory actions, an affinity for some segregationist practices that shield and protect, and expressions of skepticism about whether her immigrant voice is being heard. Thus, coexisting with Marbella's opposition is a passive, silent and separatist self far different than the persona described in the preceding section.

This is the self who, having been hit by a group of American peers, fell silent and turned away: "I have a P.E. class, and there are some Americans with me, and so, it was my turn, it was my turn to play basketball. Then—well because in Mexico they gave us some basketball classes so I know a lot and I always beat them—they got mad. . . . Later they stopped me, and one of them hit me. . . . I paid no attention to them. . . . My classmates asked me, 'Why are you afraid of them?' . . . 'Why bother? [I said]. It is not worth the trouble'" (ES50STA:434–49).

This is the self who rationalized her isolation in P.E. during her sophomore year (90 percent of the youth in Marbella's class are Latino, most of them immigrants). "It's probably better that way. Because they [Americans] treat us badly."

This is the self whose English voice falls silent because of a European American peer: "I want to talk to her [my teacher] in English, but there is always a gringo named John there, and he is very mean. . . . That's why I don't speak in English with Mrs. Bryant anymore. Since she understands Spanish, I talk to her in Spanish" (ES50STD: 991–1006).

This is the self who expresses futility about bringing actions she perceives as discriminatory or disrespectful to the attention of powerful adults in her environment:

> We go to Mr. Acevedo [the principal]. Then, because none of us can communicate well with him, and they [European American peers] can, they tell him what they want to. And so it sounds like we are the ones who don't respect them. "How can that be?" I ask. "If they don't respect us, how are we going to respect them?" (ES50STA: 490–98)

Marbella believes that the silent, separatist aspects of her persona are the product of her location in a social system in which she and her peers are viewed and treated as inferior. Concluding that European American youth do not respect her, Marbella shrinks from social interaction:

> They think that they are better than us. They think that because we are in their country, we are underneath them. That makes us afraid to talk to them in

> English because we think they will laugh at us. . . . If we are talking in English, they look at us like they disapprove of our speaking English. They look at us funny and giggle. (ES50STD: 939–71)

These meanings structure Marbella's behavior in ways that are somewhat antithetical to the goals and beliefs she expresses. For example, Marbella emphasized her conviction that English mastery was essential to her future: "It's to learn English, that's what's necessary to triumph here. To know English. And to succeed in school" (ES50STEN: 795–808). Yet Marbella often falls silent in integrated settings, not speaking unless spoken to. During the days I spent with Marbella at school she spoke to just two culturally different peers: the first a Filipina immigrant, the second a Spanish-speaking European American who volunteers as a tutor in Explorer's ESL classrooms. Marbella explains:

> In the [one] class where I have contact with Americans well, I simply don't speak to them. The only one where I'm around them is Link Period [homeroom] and [there] I apply myself to my homework and don't pay attention to them. But, if they speak to me politely, I speak to them. But if not, well, I just ignore them and do my homework. (ES50STEN: 866–75)

Marbella describes herself as profoundly hesitant to engage in the casual, everyday conversation necessary to achieve English mastery, to engage in linguistic activity that would enable her to begin to "demonstrate to other people that we indeed can make it" (ES50STEN: 442–43).

For Marbella, being Mexican necessitates a certain resignation to actions and procedures meant to silence or degrade, a certain degree of distancing behavior in order to protect herself from psychological harm. In the quote which opens this chapter, she speaks of the importance of struggling against efforts to vanquish. Yet, at a basic level, Marbella expresses a feeling of powerlessness relative to her European American peers and succumbs to their efforts to silence her.

I turn now to Marbella's school experiences, focusing on identifying and naming practices that enable the "structuring of silence" (Weis and Fine 1993). I first consider school-based factors that discipline Marbella and those around her to a set of beliefs about what it means to be Mexican, marginalizing immigrant Latino youth and removing much of the force from their achievements and voice. To understand Marbella's hesitancy to demonstrate her bilingual and academic competencies, one must consider the value placed on such competencies by those around her. Second, I consider discipinary policies and relationships that act upon and constrain Marbella's ability to critique and resist.

The latter provide additional insight into Marbella's tendency to remain silent in the face of insult or acts of discrimination.

Sorting Mechanisms: The Marginalization of Marbella

> Marbella: Later we will be in the medium classes, but since we don't speak English, we are in the lowest classes. (ES50STA: 149–52)

> Huberto, ESL Aide: Most of the things Explorer is doing, they never think, you know, they never talk to [immigrant] students, "Hey, Explorer is doing a tutoring program, an awards program." We're the last to know. They never call us, they never tell us about what the school is doing for the students, you know. . . . They seem—they don't care about us. That's why they—most of the students—want to quit school. Because they feel discriminated [against] or isolated. And it's really sad when someone doesn't care for you. (ES105ST1: 196–224)

The first set of practices that work effectively to silence Marbella can be located in disciplinary mechanisms that marginalize youth based on linguistic status and delegitimate immigrants' academic accomplishments. Marbella, like her fellow 355 Latino students in need of language assistance (25.3 percent of the student body), was placed in the ESL track as soon as she arrived at Explorer. Here, Marbella was effectively segregated from the remainder of the school population for the academic day. During her sophomore year, for example, Marbella attended English/reading ESL, algebra, P.E., physical science, computer literacy, and foods. Of these six classes, five (foods being the exception) were composed almost entirely of immigrant youth (almost all of them Latino). Thus, Marbella's only consistent opportunity for contact with language-proficient youth occurred during five-minute passing periods, the lunch hour, and a thirty-minute "link" period (homeroom) following lunch.

Segregation ostensibly enables students to receive academic content in their native language. However, Marbella had only one teacher during her first two years of high school that spoke Spanish. In reality, for many second-language learners, segregation has at best allowed for reduced class size (25–30 youth versus 35), bilingual aides, and slowed speech on the part of European American teachers with little or no training in second-language instruction.

At times, it was difficult for me to find justification for Marbella's segregation. For example, in Marbella's computer literacy course, thirty immigrant students learned word processing and typing skills. When asked what made this an ESL class, the teacher explained that in reality, the only difference was that she did not test the students for speed. Though initially planning to integrate ESL vocabulary into student work, the teacher said she had received little cooperation from teachers in the form of vocabulary lists.

Likewise, though P.E. is officially integrated, Marbella had just two European American classmates out of a group of approximately thirty youth in her class. This goes against school policy. However, according to the vice-principal of curriculum, grouping policies at the departmental level (along with "scheduling difficulties") permit resegregation to occur: "It's not purposeful. . . . Now what may have happened, they may have regrouped the kids out there. You get a hundred kids, and half of them may be Hispanic. They may regroup those kids. . . . And they are supposed to be regrouping by skill level" (ES072ST2: 688–701). In Marbella's case, "skill level" correlated with linguistic and ethnic status, a relationship that went unquestioned by those around her.

Policies both amplify and attach status to Explorer's academic differentiation. Most importantly, high-achieving ESL students are shut out of the honor society because they cannot take the classes that qualify them for admission. Though students like Marbella were recognized at a year-end awards banquet, the banquet was held in the evening and only ESL students and their parents attended. The achievements of immigrant youth were thus not made part of the public school discourse, keeping evidence of their existence hidden from European American and English-speaking Latino peers.

Academic segregation is augmented by policies that distance and separate youth, fostering social segregation by socioeconomic (and thus linguistic) status. For example, students such as Marbella who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch must line up inside the school cafeteria for hot meals. Lunch lines for youth who buy hamburgers, pizza, and other popular fare are located in the outside courtyard. As a result, youth of color dominate the dimly lit cafeteria, while groups of European American youth dominate the area outside. (During the ten days I ate lunch in the cafeteria, I and a group of special education students were the only European Americans present.) Because of the strong relationship between immigrant status and income, a great many of the youth hidden from public view are second-language speakers. Marbella feels that academic and social segregation combine to contribute to her isolation: "Most of the students I've met are Chicanos, not Americans, because there are

no Americans in my classes. Only Chicanos. . . . Since last year almost all the Mexicans get together in the cafeteria and the gringos meet outside . . . since the very beginning" (ES50STD: 1058–76).

The necessity of English comprehension for social participation is also communicated in a daily speech event: the posting (and occasional reading) of the school bulletin. The bulletin advertises school activities and scholarship opportunities. It is read and posted in English, despite the complaints of the school registrar:

> REGISTRAR: I fight like crazy to get a lot of things in Spanish. It's very hard to make sure that a lot of these fliers that go out, for instance for the kids—I feel that the kids are being left out of student activities. The Hispanic kids. Because like all of the announcements are always in English . . . aren't they? Every day, have you ever heard them? Yeah, they're in English. The daily bulletin is in English. How are they going to hear anything? And I don't know, maybe in their classrooms the teachers are translating them but I seriously doubt that. You know, telling them about information.
>
> INTERVIEWER: What is it that makes it hard to do that [get things translated]?
>
> REGISTRAR: I don't know. We've got the personnel here who speak Spanish. There shouldn't be any reason why the daily bulletin should not be translated into Spanish, every single day. . . . I've asked. I've said, "Why don't we tell them in Spanish? I think it's a good idea." I don't know, maybe they are trying to encourage the kids to learn English. (ES117ST1: 164–97)

The regular posting of the daily bulletin becomes a speech act that structures access to information by linguistic status.

In the context of this social system, Marbella has become increasingly aware of her marginalization. The quote which opens this section indicates that she knows that ESL classes are not looked upon in the same way as other classes at her high school. Marbella's perception of her marginalization is also reflected in her assessment of her academic experiences, summarized below:

> I think my teachers should learn another method of teaching, because the one they use is not very effective. I also would like them to realize we are intelligent, that we can do things, would like them to not discriminate against us, to treat us like civilized persons, not like some sort of objects. (ES50STC: written protocol)

Consistent with the meanings the broader institutional environment transmits concerning the marginalized status of immigrant youth, Marbella feels that

many teachers also misjudge their students' abilities: "I have seen some who, because they see that you are Mexican, they don't give you something that . . . something difficult that really you can do. They make it very easy for you. And for the Americans they make it a little bit more difficult. Because they think that, I don't know, that you can't do it . . . that you are not intelligent, or maybe, I don't know" (ES50STEN: 1040–70). At the same time, Marbella feels relatively powerless to challenge the school's efforts to channel her into courses characterized by low expectations: "I guess the only area in which I have control is in my understanding of the subjects. But not in the manner of choosing them" (ES50STD: 606–10).

According to Marbella, no one interviewed her about her prior school history upon her arrival at Explorer. Rather, she was given a schedule and told what she would take after being tested for English and Spanish language comprehension. Though she successfully resisted her placement in basic math, Marbella found herself in a clothing course during her freshman year, and was placed in foods rather than continuing computer literacy as a second-semester sophomore: "I liked computers better, but I had to take cooking. . . . I wrote down two choices, first computers and then cooking. But in computers there wasn't room for anybody else, so they had to put me in cooking" (ES50STD: 285–93).

Disciplinary Policies and Technologized Relations: The Pacification of Marbella

> Dave Santos, ESL Aide: To me, the biggest problem that I see at this school, [is] that the kids aren't listened to. I mean, they're crying for help, and no one is out there. (ES106ST1: 125–30)

In the preceding section, I described practices that both marginalize Marbella and diminish her accomplishments. Here, I describe disciplinary relationships that control and pacify Explorer's student body, thereby working directly to structure and ensure Marbella's silence.

As a ninth grader, Marbella moved into an environment caught up in significant social change. Prior to court-ordered desegregation in the mid-1980s, Explorer's student body was 81.8 percent European American, with the majority of these students middle and upper-middle class. By 1990, when Marbella was a sophomore, the enrollment of youth of color had jumped from 18.2 to 58 percent; of these, 30.6 percent qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. The

majority of Explorer's new students were of Mexican descent; in all, Latino students made up 40.6 percent of Explorer's student body in 1990.

Increasing concern and anxiety about these new students have paralleled this diversification. According to the principal, fear, doubt, and outright skepticism about the feasibility of working productively with these youth have been clearly expressed:

> The faculty feel "We had a perfectly good school, look what they've done to us." . . . The faculty frustration level has risen by leaps and bounds. . . . Teachers who've been here for years and now have different kids . . . a lot are old and have no capacity to change. Teachers have been used to lecturing and leading the lesson. They aren't getting satisfaction from kids' achievement now, because they aren't achieving. (ES06801: 257–61, 164–75)

Teacher worries reached their height soon after Marbella's arrival at Explorer, when a stabbing incident confirmed teachers' general impressions that the school was out-of-control. Worries about low skills, student hostility, parental investment, and immaturity are themes that run through the interviews carried out with thirty faculty members at Explorer, and nearly 60 percent of the faculty listed disrespect for authority as their primary concern in a survey carried out by the administration in the months following this incident.

In the context of this situation, adults at Explorer have invested new and concentrated efforts in controlling and pacifying the student body. The current disciplinary system emphasizes reconnaissance, surveillance, and adult control, enabled by the monitoring of student activity during passing periods and lunch time and an identification of students operating as "key players" in the environment. Students' movements are closely monitored and strictly controlled by the discipline principal and two campus assistants. The campus is patrolled by assistants, who communicate by walkie-talkie. Adults in these roles generally do not communicate with youth during the lunch hour and passing period, but rather watch and monitor student movements. Youth seen on campus during classroom hours are subject to immediate referral to Saturday school. Describing the atmosphere, one high-achieving European American youth observed, "It's like a police state really sometimes. All these guys buzzing around with walkie-talkies. . . . This year I tried to walk from the library to the locker room in middle of eighth period to change [for track]. Two people tried to give me Saturday school."

Though these tactics affect all students, certain policies make clear that the administration is particularly concerned about the activities of Latino youth. Soon after the stabbing incident, certain colors associated with Latino

gangs were banned from campus. Students wearing two or more pieces of red or blue—the colors associated with rival Latino gangs—were called into the discipline office and given one warning. According to the disciplinary principal, this "colors campaign" was integral to an effort to identify "major players" on campus. Based on the students who visited his office, the discipline principal compiled a list of names. Defiant youth were quickly expelled, and the remainder were watched carefully. Statistics lend insight into the impact of such policies. The absolute number of youth suspended after such policies were instituted at Explorer increased by 50 percent. Almost all of this increase came about due to increases in the number of youth of color suspended. In 1990–91, 54 percent of the youth suspended were Latino, though they made up just 40 percent of the total school population.

Explorer's system of school-level surveillance has been complemented by classroom disciplinary mechanisms that insure quick removal of youth perceived as disobedient from the classroom. First, teachers have been given the perogative to remove any student from the classroom at any time, sending them to "in-school suspension." Second, youth sent to the discipline principal's office due to classroom conflict face likely reprisal, typically "Saturday school" or in severe instances suspension. This principal (Mr. Joyce) describes himself as a "traditionalist"; this, he explains, means that he is likely to support a teacher before a student and does not believe in giving second chances. Explaining further, Joyce adds:

> I'll sit here, and I'll listen, and I'll point out what I think the school's position is on their particular behavior, what I think their parent's position is, and then I'll drop the bomb on 'em. And a lot of kids think, well he's listening, he's explaining, I'm going to get off. And then boom! I'll put them on the hook. It's a surprise but they've accepted it. I guess that's a sort of a traditionalist approach. (ES100ST1: 127–84)

Six of the fifteen Explorer youth interviewed compared Joyce unfavorably to the previous vice-principal of discipline. Most often, students complained that Joyce refused to trust or listen to youth: "Mr. Joyce, whatever the teacher said, that must be right, 'cause teachers don't lie, so . . ." (African-American male); "He must fancy himself like a Stalin figure because he'll see you and come up to you and 'Where are you going?' He is so much more disciplinary than the guy last year and as a result I think people are more rebellious. He won't trust you with anything. It's like a police state" (European American male).

Consistent with the descriptions above, references to fears about going

unheard and the futility of protest run through much of Marbella's discourse. In three of our five interviews, Marbella describes incidents in which she felt immigrant youth were first mistreated, and then their protests ignored or discounted. Typically, as in the incident below, Marbella perceives linguistic and ethnic differences as relevant to the eventual outcome of these conflicts:

> I don't like that class because the teacher is very racist. We have Hispanics, or actually Mexicans [immigrants], and there are some Americans there. Sometimes he chides us a lot and he doesn't say anything to them. Like sometimes we have to wear a blue and white shirt. If you wear a sweater, you have to wear the sweater underneath and the shirt on top.
>
> Yesterday this—I have a friend named Bernardino. He was wearing his white shirt underneath a black sweater. And there were two Americans who were also dressed like that. Then the teacher said a lot of things to the Mexican, Bernardino. And he made him take it off and put it on top of the sweater. And he didn't say anything to the two Americans. Because of that, we all got mad because he didn't say anything to them. And he has to be equal with everyone.
>
> He told him that he was going to throw him out of that class, because he didn't like stupid people who don't follow the rules in his class. Like he [Bernardino] knows English well, so he [the teacher] asked him "Why is it like that with you?"
>
> [Bernardino asked] "Why didn't you say anything to the rest of the students? . . . Because the rest of them are American?" And he [the teacher] told him "That has nothing to do with it. Here it has nothing to do with Mexican or American. Here, it has to do with how we come dressed. You are nobody to tell me anything. I am the teacher and you are the student." (ES50STC: 406–49)

Logically, the school disciplinarian would assist in the resolution of these and other conflicts. However, based on her observations, Marbella doubts whether Joyce would intercede on behalf of herself or peers such as Bernardino. Further, she believes that Joyce is not impartial when weighing the testimony from members of different ethnic groups:

> INTERVIEWER: Can you talk a little bit about Mr. Joyce's discipline?
>
> MARBELLA: Well, I remember mentioning [before] that sometimes he is not so good. He can be a little bit racist with us, the Mexican students. For instance, about a week ago we had a pep rally here in the gym. . . . A gringo and the Mexican had a fight outside the gym. Mr. Joyce didn't tell him anything, he didn't say anything to the gringo or the Mexican. Later on, inside, the

> Mexican was making noise over where the seniors were. The gringo was where the juniors were and shouted "Fuck your mother" at him. Of course the Mexican got mad and went over to where the gringo was. Mr. Joyce grabbed him, took him outside and threw him out of school for three days, but he said nothing to the gringo. All the Mexicans there were very upset, so we started shouting and he got mad. Most of us went outside the gym. . . . I think most of the Mexicans now purposely don't behave because they don't like Mr. Joyce. (ES50STD: 750–91)

In sum, Marbella does not view the disciplinarian as a likely ally in her struggle.

Though situated in a disciplinary system focused on efficiency and control, Marbella could speak to other adults in the environment. However, Marbella's descriptions suggest that she does not have the types of relationships that facilitate the voicing of concerns and it appears that the responsibility for reaching out has been placed on her shoulders. For example, Marbella's homeroom teacher is responsible for monitoring her students' academic progress and conferring with students about course selection. (There are no counselors at Marbella's high school due to budget cuts.) This teacher speaks Spanish and Marbella describes their relationship as good. However, though she attended this class daily, Marbella did not have a serious conversation with her teacher about her courses. As Marbella sees it, "She is always busy, she doesn't seem to have time" (ES50STD: 481–83). Likewise, Marbella knows that the vice-principal of guidance has information about colleges and careers. She, too, appears busy: "I went once and she was busy that day. She is always busy giving tests" (ES50STD: 553–54). When Marbella's pattern of attendance changed substantially during the second semester of her sophomore year due to her mother's illness, those charged with monitoring attendance did not ask Marbella where she had been. Finally, despite her "sparkly" personality and model behavior, Marbella does not draw attention; neither the vice-principal of discipline nor the vice-principal of guidance recognized her name.[3] The latter spoke fluent Spanish and monitored the cafeteria where Marbella ate everyday during the lunch hour.

In sum, there is no one in the environment that appears to be inviting Marbella or other immigrant youth to voice their concerns. Further, because the school's emphasis is on managing and controlling conflict, it could be risky for Marbella to confront a teacher or peer. At some level, Marbella appears to recognize and act upon this. ("I avoid fighting in the school, because I know I am the Mexican, and in a fight between a Mexican girl and a white girl, the Mexican cannot win.")

Support for Oppositional Identity: Freshman Social Studies

Thus far, I have focused on Marbella's awareness and sensitivity to practices that marginalize and silence. In this section, I change course, describing a classroom that Marbella praised throughout her freshman and sophomore years. Marbella frequently referred to the empowering messages, worthwhile content, and valuable information she encountered in social studies—all factors relevant to the construction to her oppositional identity. In this class, an examination of cultural diversity, Mexican culture and history, and aspects of the American opportunity structure were explicit parts of the curriculum.

Marbella's teacher, Mr. Vargas, is a fluent Spanish speaker and bilingual specialist who chose to return to the classroom after spending seven years in the district office. There, he worked as an ESL resource person, training teachers "how to deal with a tough subject like biology without watering it down . . . and being able to one, have that kid succeed, two, not be frustrated when you're doing it, and number three, make that kid a part of the school" (ES04401X: 177–85). Vargas believes that low expectations for language minority students, reflected in an unchallenging curriculum, are a major impediment to their advancement. Based on this belief, Vargas has created a curriculum that asks students to go beyond memorizing names and places to analyzing how and why historical events occurred. In addition, students are given major assignments that require research outside of the classroom. For example, as a freshman Marbella worked in a group to prepare a five-minute oral report on an ancient culture of her choice. Students were required to prepare visual aides, and to offer both information and their opinion about their chosen culture.

Many of Vargas's assignments parallel those found in Explorer's other English-language freshman social studies classrooms. However, Vargas's students also consider American cultural processes and their implications. Vargas explains:

> I tell them "You can not make it if you don't understand something." They need to understand where they are. And where they are has different values, and different norms, and different situations. And, to do this, then we have to look inside ourselves. And we do this, I have them look inside of themselves. Who am I? And where are we going?
>
> And we looked at rules and regulations, and where did they come from? And can we make a difference in our lives if we had rules and regulations that guided us, ourselves? (ES044ST1: 487–516, 543–51)

Vargas also discusses the existence of racism, not only in America as a whole but also within their high school: "I talk to them about racism, and how it exists, and how it affects everybody, and the black experience. . . . And I told them, you know, to expect it. They [the faculty] will tolerate skin color, they will tolerate everything except the language. I tell them, you've got to learn English" (ES044ST1: 561–68).

According to Marbella, this is the only class where she has been given the opportunity to explore her own as well as others' heritages. When asked how teachers speak of her heritage, Marbella replied:

> It's not spoken about very well—the Mexican heritage—here in the United States. . . . Mr. Vargas is the only one that talks of the Mexican heritage, or that has us look up things in libraries, about Mexican culture and other things. . . .
>
> Last year I was in his class. He asked us to discover how Mexico really was. He asked us to examine Mexican culture; he gave us books bought in Mexico. And he told us that our culture was very grand, and that we mustn't lose it, our culture . . . and that it is marvelous, that culture, no? And also we examined the Chinese culture. And he also asked us to examine the Indians of the past, to explore how they were living and all that. And how they arrived in Mexico, and all that. (ES50STEN: 692–716, 774–87)

Marbella also says that Vargas is the only adult who has helped make the norms and values in her new environment more explicit:

> INTERVIEWER: Has there been someone or something that has helped you in your transition after moving to the United States?
>
> MARBELLA: Yes. Mr. Vargas talked to us about the American culture and the Mexican culture. . . . I learned a little bit. For instance, about some presidents, about the natives who first got here. . . . We also talked about how Americans are, the way they behaved. Mr. Vargas asked a Mexican and an American to stand in front of the class and behave the way they really were, that way we could see.
>
> INTERVIEWER: For example?
>
> MARBELLA: Mr. Vargas had the same conversation with the Mexican and with the American, but the answers [to the questions he asked] were different. (ES50STD: 1300–1343)

As part of his effort to educate his students about the new social system in which they find themselves, Vargas also provides youth with basic information

about the ways and means to varied colleges and careers. For example, Vargas organizes Saturday trips to local universities so that students can learn about higher-education opportunities. According to Marbella, Vargas is also adamant in encouraging his students to take courses with academic content. For example, after lobbying for an ESL science class, Mr. Vargas "told us a lot about that class, he told us that we needed that class. Maybe not exactly as a prerequisite for graduation, but to understand many things about life" (ES50STD: 271–75). Further, Vargas urges his students to avoid classes like clothing and foods because electives such as computers better their chances of college acceptance. Marbella also indicated that Vargas was the only person in her environment who has provided her with information about various career options:

> INTERVIEWER: You mentioned receiving information about careers in Mexico but not here. Have they given you information about different classes here?
>
> MARBELLA: Mr. Vargas is the one who has given us some information about careers. He talked to us about salaries, about the requirements to enter that field, and about what college we have to go to for that major.
>
> INTERVIEWER: When did he told you that? Was it during class time?
>
> MARBELLA: It was in class. He gave us all a book, and he spent about three days talking about careers and colleges. That was last year. (ES50STD: 393–406)

As Marbella sees it, Mr. Vargas "talks to us about life, about what we should do, that we should succeed, and he helps us a lot in our subjects so that we can move forward" (ES50STA: 145–48).

At the institutional level, Vargas has made some moves to counter the disabling messages emanating from Explorer's disciplinary technologies. For example, as a group his students formed a ballet folklórico dance group in order to assert their cultural presence in the school. This later became an elective:

> [In class we brainstormed] What is one way we can have an impact on this school? So we made up a club, the folkloric [dance] class, that's what came from [the discussion] last year. From them! And now, you know, it's taught as a class. But it came from them. (ES044ST1: 516–36)

Vargas also intervened in an incident involving Marbella's best friend, Concha, helping her to resist a disciplinary action that she and he viewed as inappropriate:

> He [Concha's teacher] gave a rule, or he said something, that "If you don't bring your book to class tomorrow, you will be sent to SIS [in-school suspension]." Which, in this case, if you had two SISs, you would go to Saturday school. And Concha, accidentally, or by design by someone else, her book was lost in the locker room. The girl's locker room. Didn't have the book the next day. So that *edict* [Vargas's voice is edged with anger] which Mr., which that gentleman said, you know, "This is an edict and you follow it." She comes in, no book, he knew it, she knew it, boom! SIS. Saturday school. You're dead, right where you are. She came to the only person that I guess she could find, you know, I just happened to be there. Actually no, she did look for me. (Laughs) That's right. She found me, and she said "I'm going to in-school suspension. For no fault." In Spanish. "Can you help me?" And then she explained what happened.
>
> So I took that explanation to the gentlemen, and I asked him "Would you *not* do this? Would you *believe* her? Because I believe her, and I believe what she's saying is true." And he said, you know he said that because, sure. . . . But I'm not sure that he did [believe her]. *I* believed her. When a kid tells me that, when a kid sensitive like Concha would tell me or anyone "This is what happened," you know, I *do*, because I've been in those shoes before. I've been in those shoes before. I've looked at people and I've said "Please believe me, I really did the work," you know. But he didn't believe her. He didn't believe her. (ES044ST1: 295–349)

Because Vargas provides a curriculum in which students have the opportunity to explore cultural diversity, social systems, and racism, because he helps his students gain a better understanding of the ways and means to attend college and to pursue various careers, and because he serves as a resource to assist in fights against attempts to discipline, Marbella views Vargas as a significant and meaningful source of support.

Reflections

Marbella is a youth buoyed and strengthened by her ethnic self-conceptions, while at the same time aware and fearful of forces that constrain her movement. While Marbella's ethnicity serves as a source of force and power, it also becomes an eddy she retreats to for protection. Marbella's ability to maintain her particular brand of opposition is impressive, given the array of constraining disciplinary technologies aligned against her. In many ways, she manifests an ability to resist constraints on her academic development—an ability described as characteristic of immigrant minorities (Suarez-Orozco 1989). A culturalist perspective would focus principally on the pro-academic aspects of Marbella's ideology, linking them to her immigrant status. Yet the silent, sepa-

ratist aspects of Marbella's persona also exist. These aspects of her behavior not only slow Marbella's acquisition of the cultural and linguistic skills necessary to assert her rights, but also suggest a certain resignation to disciplinary practices and procedures.

While Marbella believes that educational achievement will result in improved economic opportunities, she is also quite aware that her chances are structured and limited by inequitable academic opportunities. I have linked the silent and resigned aspects of Marbella's persona to her growing recognition of structured inequality, a recognition that has been enabled only with two years of experience in an American high school. In particular, Marbella is aware of and responsive to practices in the environment that work to marginalize immigrant minorities and to pacify youth. With regard to marginalization, academic and social segregation—buttressed by policies and practices that both support its existence and esteem the achievements of English-speaking youth—works effectively to delegitimate Marbella's accomplishments. Importantly, in failing to find ways to incorporate the language and culture of 40 percent of the student body into the official school discourse, and in failing to provide public recognition to its high-achieving ESL students, Explorer misses a prime opportunity to challenge conceptions of Latino students' academic abilities. Further, Explorer conveys the message that the knowledge and skills from students' ESL world are less highly valued and somehow different than those from the world of their European American classmates.

Disciplinary practices and technologized relations work to control and pacify Explorer students, thereby structuring the silent, separatist aspects of Marbella's persona. Easy to overlook, these features of the environment are extremely circumscribing. Without a place for voice, and with an efficient disciplinarian who is quick to assess and dispose, Explorer's immigrant students are effectively silenced. One ESL aide believes that the level of frustration among the youth is reflected in their self-defeating screams of frustration: "You hear a lot of *La Raza* always shouting and screaming, and you try to talk to them and they're real defensive. And I think that's part of the—you get here, you sit down, everyone's talking, no one's really paying attention to you, you don't understand" (ES106ST3: 284–91).

Resource constraints, limiting the ability of so many public schools to respond to diversity, are also relevant to Marbella's situation. With one exception, Marbella has had no bilingual teachers and few teachers with ESL training, despite the fact that she attends the district school designated as the primary receiving ground for newly arrived immigrants. On the whole,

according to one bilingual teacher, the situation for immigrant youth has improved markedly: "They [the faculty] have accepted the growth of ESL from the way it was when I first walked in, where there was ten students and no materials. Nothing, nothing, nothing. To now, where ESL is a big department, big budget by the books. And then people have acknowledged that ESL is not bogus. That was a key operating word four years ago. Bogus" (ES044ST1: 605–14). Yet Marbella's teachers describe themselves as underprepared, inexperienced, and uncertain about how to handle their classroom situation. There were villains in Marbella's descriptions—a clothing teacher who pulled hair to gain the attention of Spanish-speaking youth, the P.E. teacher who would not let Bernardino wear his sweater over his T-shirt. Nevertheless, the majority of Marbella's teachers appeared to be well-meaning yet frightened to take pedagogical risks, patient, yet not sure how to be of assistance. As Marbella put it, "They understand that we are Mexican, and we cannot exactly do everything. They help us as much as they can, the teachers do" (ES50STEN: 957–61). The problem, as Marbella points out, is that adults so often underestimate, so often downscale their expectations, rather than providing scaffolding appropriate to high-level cognitive engagement. Marbella is left marginalized, fighting harder to prevent others from structuring her into a category that she knows is a simple and false social construction.

NOTES

An earlier version of this chapter appeared in Davidson, A. L., *Making and Molding Identity in Schools: Student Narratives on Race, Gender, and Academic Engagement* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

In the text of this chapter, quotations are identified by file code. The file code of the epigraph, an excerpt from an interview, is ES50STEN: 652–72. The interviews are part of a public-use file that will eventually be made available to interested researchers through Stanford's Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching.

1. All interviews were conducted in Spanish by a male European American interviewer. I was generally present as well.

2. The research reported in this chapter reflects one component of a year-and-a-half-long ethnographic study carried out at three high schools. Funded by a Spencer Dissertation Year Fellowhip and the Center for Research on the Context of Secondary School Teaching, the research was designed to explore how youth conceptualize their ethnicity and assert their ethnic identity across varied curricular settings, with the purpose of illuminating school-based factors and practices that work to mold students as they go about making ethnic and academic identities. This investigation, focusing in-depth on twelve diverse youth, was situated within the Students' Multiple Worlds Study

(Phelan, Davidson, and Yu 1993), a broad investigation of fifty-five high school youths that considered factors that impact students' academic and social engagement with the school community. Both investigations relied on ethnographic methods: intensive interviews, carried out over a two-year period; observations of youth in and out of the classroom; and analyses of school (e.g., statistical data on tracking, suspension rates) and individual (e.g., attendance patterns, grades) record data. Faculty, staff, and administrators at each of the high schools were also interviewed. For a detailed account of this study, see A. L. Davidson, *Making and Molding Identity in Schools: Student Narratives on Race, Gender, and Academic Engagement* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996). For more information on the Students' Multiple Worlds Study, see P. Phelan, A. Davidson, and H. Yu, "Students' Multiple Worlds: Navigating the Borders of Family, School and Peer Cultures," in P. Phelan and A. Davidson, *Renegotiating Cultural Diversity in American Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press 1993).

3. Ironically, it appears that model behavior may be partially responsible for Marbella's invisibility. She describes her younger brother, who does poorly and causes problems in school, as relatively well known: "My mother has to call every week, because they told my brother that if he doesn't act better that he was going to have to return to Mexico. And because of that she has to call each week to ask about my brother's education" (ES50STC:1173–87).

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