Prologue

As I sit at the handsome pine desk in the Whiteley Writing Center, surrounded by almost obscenely stunning island beauty and feeling nourished by the energy of the creative artists who have occupied this space before me, ready to embark upon the book that I believe must be written, it hits me: The last thing that I want to do is to write this book. I struggle against my emotions until my phone, set to silent mode, flashes at me. It is my friend and anthropologist colleague, Rachel Chapman. Grateful for a temporary reprieve, I slide through the French doors to stand in the silent tall grasses by the water’s edge and hit the answer button.

“But you want to tell this story,” Rachel exclaims. “What’s going on? Is there something getting in the way of the story you want to tell? Do you feel some kind of conflict?”

And there it was. I am, indeed, deeply conflicted. I am conflicted, as every English teacher, teacher educator, school administrator, and language policymaker should be, about my participation in the project of the global spread of English. I am conflicted about contributing to the international dominance of English, associated as it is with Whiteness, wealth, power, and cosmopolitanism, arousing in all of us around the world acute and entrenched desires for all that it has come to represent—and stirring these desires surreptitiously, so that we often don’t even quite know what our longings are for or from where they emerge. The teaching of English is frequently represented as a neutral enterprise or even a benevolent one, one that promotes equity and access, arming learners with skills that allow them to escape poverty, to deploy identities of privilege and power, to move ahead socially. These representations bear truth, and the proliferation of English does indeed open doors and further futures. It is undeniable that around the world, English and opportunity walk hand in hand. However, I have begun to see that as English is spread, it carries other effects. It reinforces colonial divisions of power and racial inequalities. As English is increasingly commodified, racialized, and globalized, it is implicated in the persistence of racial inequalities, in cultural and economic domination, in heritage language loss, in the extinction of less-commonly-spoken languages and their inherent epistemologies, and in inequitable distribution of global wealth and resources. English changes the ways in which we view the world. So now, more
than ever before, I am struggling with the question of how I as an English-teaching professional come to terms with my practice.

I wasn’t always conflicted. When I started teaching immigrants on a voluntary basis, as a late-night escape from the fast pace and acquisitive culture of wealth accumulation that I lived at my day job at an economic consulting firm, I experienced the imparting of English as unequivocally valuable, munificent, even generous. The ways in which the profession mimicked patterns of colonization escaped my attention. I frequently taught my students turns of phrase accompanied by comments such as “This is how you can sound more like a native speaker” and “This is how an American would say it” without giving any critical thought to the assimilationist effect of my words. I often tried to help my students be more American-like without giving thought to the fact that for many of them, it was American-like political action, economic practices, or military intervention that had made it necessary for them to leave, or even flee, their homes and immigrate to the United States. In my later work at a community center for undocumented immigrants, after having quit my job and returned to graduate school to embark upon a career teaching English, I constructed the learning of English on an individual level as a crucial process and separated it, to some degree, from the more global effects of wide-scale English teaching, the English teaching industry, and unequal distribution of capital. Who knows? Perhaps it might even have sounded far-fetched to me to hear it suggested that the teaching of English is somehow tied up with the inequitable allocation of resources internationally. Even after developing some awareness of these patterns, supported by the work of, among many others, Vandrick (2002), Grant and Wong (2004), Kubota (2004), Lin (2008), Tinker Sachs and Li (2007), Varghese and Johnston (2007), Canagarajah (1999), Morgan (2004), Kouritzin (2000), Pennycook (1998, 2001), and Phillipson (1992, 2009), I was comfortable with my constructed argument: “The spread of English is inevitable. That train has already left the station. English is going to continue to gain power, either way, and at this juncture our task as educators is to equip students with a critical awareness of not only the benefits of learning English but also of the larger-scale, global effects of English language spread so that they are in a position to make their own decisions about their own acquisition.” My prepackaged argument also made a distinction between contributing to the importation of English in postcolonial or English-as-a-lingua franca contexts and teaching English in, say, my current context, the United States, where its acquisition seems to be more of an unquestionable necessity.

Then, last spring, I taught a special topics class that I titled Race and Empire in TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) to a group of particularly thoughtful, principled, smart graduate-level students who were mostly relating to race, eminently read. Katie, and Margarita, the pages of this book, and shaping with our own imagination, language supremacy, even to this end. As I taught this class, a TESOL teacher evolution of meta-awareness evolves as they write than notes on the condition unless participation in this back on our quals. Building on my on Su. What sustained me and fine-tuned the prose and hovered in my own ears whether they could simply being kind.

As I made moves, I began asking questions in my teaching (ELT) for English—insulated, sitting down and continue writing. I was no longer.

Writing this language teaching will continue to Must empire an. The challenge I face, question of its responsibility, is to this questio
who were mostly teacher candidates. We read a range of TESOL work relating to race, empire, and postcolonialism. We read about Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret, the four first-year teachers you will meet shortly within the pages of this book (their names, like the names of all other participants, teachers, and students in this book, are pseudonyms). We spent hours grappling with our own and each other's ideas about racial formation, globalization, language minority rights, English as a lingua franca, native-speaker supremacy, evangelism and religious identity, and media representations. As I taught this class, I sought to heed Vai Ramanathan's (2002) call for TESOL teacher education to support in teacher candidates what she calls a "meta-awareness"—that is, a "heightened awareness of how their thinking evolves as they are being socialized into their disciplines" (p. 2). Ramanathan notes that "you cannot, after all, address problems in your existing condition unless you have reflected on them and recognized your own participation in this condition" (p. 2). On the last day of class, as we looked back on our quarter together, huddled in a basement classroom of the Art Building on my campus, one student asked me: "I have a question for you, Sue. What sustains you?". I had a response ready, the one I've been revisiting and fine-tuning since I began teaching. The phrases emerged from my mouth and hovered in the air—"changing the world," "social justice," "critical consciousness"—but they rang hollow and sounded trite and unconvincing in my own ears. Students nodded, but I found myself wondering fleetingly whether they could read what was beginning to feel like insincerity and were simply being kind, concealing doubt in their eyes.

As I made my way back to my office, the exchange stayed in my mind. I began asking myself questions about the degree to which English language teaching (ELT) professionals participate in creating a market for and desire for English—in producing a lack that we then move in to remediate. I realized, sitting down that evening with a leaden sensation inside my ribcage to continue writing my book, that my speeches weren't working anymore, that I was no longer convinced.

Writing this book has somehow changed me. The terrain of English language teaching can no longer seem benign. However, because English will continue to spread, teaching it remains important, life-changing work. Must empire and racism necessarily inhabit the teaching of English? The challenge I face, the same challenge faced by the participants in my study, is the question of how to participate in English language teaching in a way that is responsible, ethical, and conscious of the consequences of our practice. It is to this question that this book seeks to respond.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

So I got the book *Counting in Korea* . . . On the cover, there's a picture of a [boy wearing a] traditional Korean outfit. All the kids looked at it and said, "He looks like you." So he looked at it and said, "He's stinky! Stinky boy." And he pushed it away.

—Margaret, Afternoon Tea, November 1
[Names are pseudonyms chosen by participants.]

Yesterday in the lunchroom [two teachers] were talking about a student who's obviously struggling in class, and Geraldine said that she could spot from a mile off that he has a learning disability, and Mr. Berwick's first question was, "Well, is he Black?"

—Katie, Afternoon Tea, June 19

This one kid flipped through [the school newspaper] and said, "Ms. Fitzpatrick, this paper is racist!" I said, "Okay, why?" . . . And he said, "It doesn't reflect anything about the Hispanic kids; it's all about the American Black kids and their music."

—Jane, Afternoon Tea, April 10

One of my students who's Chinese started making fun of his own language. The Korean student was asking him how to pronounce something in Chinese, and he started mimicking some of the kids who make fun of his language. I said, "Why are you making fun of your language?" . . . He's picked on an awful lot. His accent is very heavy.

—Alexandra, Interview, May 21

LOOKING AT THE LIGHT

The quotes above represent a glimpse into some of the different challenges faced by K-12 ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) teachers Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret as they journeyed through their first year of teaching. Many conversations and much of the coursework and literature within their preservice experiences had focused on discovering the
most appropriate teaching methods and on understanding the mechanics of language. However, during their first year of teaching, the four teachers found themselves negotiating an unfamiliar set of questions: What does it mean to become an English teacher in a global context in which English(es) carry tremendous cultural and social capital and economic power? How do teachers support their students’ access to privileged forms of English while maintaining a critical eye toward the legacy of colonization and racialization in which the profession is embedded? How is the broader international terrain of the profession relevant to practices within the walls of one individual classroom (and vice versa)? How can teachers negotiate the racialized nature of the English language as they are teaching it, remaining mindful that the historical connection between the spread of the English language and the international political power of people who were identified as “White” has resulted in a messy intertwining of English and Whiteness? How does teachers’ consciousness of their own racial identities become salient in their practice? These were not the questions that Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret had contemplated during their teacher education program, but as the teachers passed through their first year of teaching, they found themselves needing to consider them as they addressed complicated questions about assimilation and racial identification, media representations of language-minority students, shame, and language and accent hierarchies.

In spite of its complex sociopolitical terrain, as the English language has spread around the globe, assuming steadily increasing international political power, the teaching of English has historically most frequently been represented within language teacher education as a race-neutral, apolitical, ahistorical endeavor in which learners work to produce appropriate sounds, master correct grammatical structures, and acquire larger vocabularies. Such a focus on accuracy and form has contributed to the invisibility of the language’s complicated history and has made it possible for teachers to complete their teacher-education programs without ever having an opportunity to engage with the broader social, racial, economic, and political implications of their practice.

If you are entering the English-teaching profession and wondering about the relevance of race in your practice, this book is for you. This book is also for you if you have been teaching for a while and find yourself wanting support in thinking about race and coloniality in ways that are complex, constructive, and practical. I wrote this book for you if you, like me, find yourself wondering, here and there, about differential achievement between language learners and “native speakers,” about hierarchies of languages and language varieties and their connectedness to historical colonial patterns, about the difference between an accent identity and an incorrect pronunciation, about the use of students’ first languages in English classes, about which curricular arrangements should be used in what situations, and about
what advocacy for students learning English might look like. Almost every time I have a conversation about race, I worry that something I say will not sound the way I wanted it to. I am writing this book in the hope that it will be helpful for those of us who want to find more-effective ways of talking about race without fear of appearing ignorant or saying “the wrong thing.” In the United States, the starkly polarized reactions of different racial groups toward high-profile media stories, such as the 1995 O. J. Simpson trial, the 2009 arrest of Henry Louis Gates for breaking into his own home, and the recent trial in which George Zimmerman was found not guilty of murdering Trayvon Martin, have prompted me to think about the divergent ways in which we all read the same reality depending on our racial identity. Through this book, I have attempted to create a space for thinking about how these contradictory worldviews shape our responsibility when we teach students who don’t share our racial identification. This book is written for you if you are looking for, not a list of directions or black-and-white answers about how to teach, but rather a guide for thinking knowledgeably and judiciously through the individual particularities of your practice and making well-informed, agentive decisions about your students and your own personal and professional identities in thoughtful ways.

Developing English-language identities and practices that are consistent with the mores and conventions of public schools is an important part of becoming a language teacher. However, an elusive space exists between competently developing expertise within the culture of schooling and becoming unwittingly indoctrinated into it. In Singhalese, there is a phrase to describe the appropriation of knowledge that feels alien to the learner: අභෝධුනක් අන්ගේන් අඹොධුනක්, or “looking at the light cast by someone else’s lamp.” The metaphor is ambiguous and captures a tension within the process of learning to teach. It can refer to compliant and prescribed learning, in which teachers are forced to gaze upon knowledge that someone else wants them to see, for instance, representations of English teaching tied to particular disciplinary ideologies, knowledge generated by administrators or researchers and disseminated to novice teachers in public schools, knowledge that might be referred to by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997) as knowledge-received. Alternatively, it can refer to knowledge created in collaboration with others, light cast by the supportive scaffolding of fellow teachers, a former graduate community, compassionate mentors, or provocative students and then generated by teachers as knowledge-constructed (Belenky et al., 1997). This book draws from the stories from the first year of teaching of four teachers who, in the face of increasing demands for strict accountability and a context of stifling top-down management of their schools and school systems, sought to generate their own knowledge together, to draw on their own experiences and voices, to embrace their own identities, to light their own lamps. Their process of doing so illuminates for educators the
importance of safe spaces removed from institutions for teachers, positioned as they are as “subordinates at the bottom of the educational hierarchy” (Webb, 2002, p. 47), coming to terms with the messiness and inequities that become evident through the project of teaching English.

ENGLISH AS A “CONTRACTION”

“The light cast by someone else’s lamp” also serves as a metaphor for the multiple possible ways for us to think about the acquisition of English. Let’s pause for a moment to consider the variety of meanings that are associated with English and consequently English acquisition. When you close your eyes and think about English, what images and ideas come to mind? Whom do you imagine when I say “English speaker”? The language is more than a collection of words and phrases that get stuck together in instrumental and possibly grammatical ways so that we might convey meaning, as in “Pass the salt.” It is imbued with a history and undertones and associations that reach far beyond the actual mechanics of the system. I’ve always been a little bemused by the wide variety of attitudes that I see expressed (and indeed experience myself) toward English learning: commitment, hostility, desire, ambivalence, resistance, longing—sometimes within the same individual, sometimes at the same time. And no wonder, with the multitude of meanings, positive and negative and everything in between, that are ascribed to English itself.

On one hand, the English language carries enticing meanings and is connected to social advancement, opportunity, modernity, wealth, enlightenment, Whiteness, and cosmopolitanism. Those learning English do so with the assumption that the language will allow them access to certain possibilities and identities. English comes to take on positive meanings in many ways. For instance, for many years in the United States, immigrant parents were encouraged to speak only English with their children so that this new language would replace heritage languages and increase the children’s chances for success. It seems that these efforts were particularly successful with English learners in the United States, who acquired the language wholeheartedly—Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut (2006) note that more bilingual immigrants have moved to the United States than any other country in the world over the past 3 centuries, but for a variety of reasons, while immigrants to other countries often managed to maintain their bilingualism, most language minority immigrants to the United States lose their heritage languages rapidly, typically within two generations, despite ample research evidence detailing the benefits of bilingualism (Cook & Bassetti, 2011). Another attractive characteristic of the idea of English is the associations it carries with class status around the world. For instance, the South
Korean mothers in So Jin Park and Nancy Abelmann's (2004) study wanted their children to learn English because they perceived the language to be representative of class prestige, cosmopolitan identity, and educational opportunity. English is often related to the trendy, the up-to-date. For the teen-aged Arjun Appadurai (1996) living in Bombay, English language books and movies represented modernity and seemed to promise to help him realize his wish to become modern. In my own family history, my great-grandparents living in Sri Lanka understood English monolingualism to open up opportunities, and they made the decision to use English with their children and loosen their hold on our heritage language, Tamil, several generations ago. Although not everyone thinks of the English language as raced, Gail Shuck (2006) helps us understand that English is evocative of racial identity through her analysis of discursive processes that associate Caucasian identity with English and that mark nonnative speakers of English as non-White and foreign. English's tight connections to Whiteness are also made evident by the frequency with which language schools in non-English-dominant countries advertise for teachers who are "White, native-English speakers." The female Japanese sojourners in Sydney in Kimie Takahashi's study (2013) associated the English language with their imaginations of desirable "Western" identity, often represented by a gaijin (foreign) boyfriend. Ryuko Kubota's (2011a) participants, students at informal conversation schools in Japan, saw the learning of English as allowing them proximity to internationalization and global identities. As the language travels around the globe, it is imbued with a variety of meanings and connotations, many of which present English as attractive and desirable and promising to rescue those who might otherwise be doomed to provincial lives of ignorance and poverty.

At the same time, I can think of numerous ways in which the spread of English has been conceived of as having adverse consequences or as shaping identities and futures in negative ways. These are complicated representations but are also worth contemplating. Researchers have asked whether English contributes to the gap between the rich and the poor globally, whether it somehow manages to transmit messages through its teaching, whether it makes promises it then fails to deliver on. The term linguistic imperialism, coined by Robert Phillipson (1992), describes the dangers inherent in the global dominance of English, including its role in increasing economic disparities and in the extinction of other languages, especially those languages spoken by only a small number of individuals. Pattanayak (1996) has highlighted the role of English in maintaining inequalities around the world, noting the ability of the language to accentuate the divide between rural and urban populations and to underscore the dependence of "non-English cultures" on "English and English-speaking countries." (p. 150). The economic effects of the increasing dominance of English are highlighted by Yan Guo and Gulbahar Beckett (2007), who point out that the spread of English
increases class inequalities because in most contexts worldwide, access to high-quality or effective English instruction requires wealth. In numerous countries, including Pakistan (Tamim, 2013), Egypt (Warschauer, El Said, & Zohry, 2004), and India (Sandhu, 2013), students typically receive more-effective English instruction in private schools than public schools, and wealthy parents are better able to afford private schools, after-school “cram lessons,” and a period of immersion in an English-dominant context, all of which often lead to admittance at English-medium universities or colleges. Joseph Sung-Yul Park (2011) describes the ways in which workers in South Korea learn to internalize the logics of capitalist markets as they invest in English competence, which is typically required for white-collar positions and therefore shapes the investments and motivations of individuals despite the fact that they will rarely or perhaps never use English on the job. He critiques the ideal image of the neoliberal worker, committed to constantly upgrading skills and accepting personal blame when he or she falls short of the standard of proficiency, the criteria for which are an unattainable moving target, increasing every year.

A common assumption in the United States is that children from homes in which English is not the first language are less likely to make it to college. Although it is true that English language learners (ELLs) in U.S. high schools participate significantly less frequently in any postsecondary education than do non-ELLs, Yasko Kannno and Jennifer Cromley (2013), using a detailed quantitative analysis of a 12-year study sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics, demonstrated that it is not so much inadequate English proficiency that holds learners back as other disadvantages, including academic underpreparation resulting from schooling that provides inequitable experiences for ELLs and non-ELLs and the absence of effort by schools to involve immigrant parents. Researchers including Jacqueline Widin (2010) have reproached universities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in English-dominant countries for marketing English as a key to social mobility while developing systems that ensure that revenue to be made by the English-teaching industry is generated for the profit of what Kachru (1990) has termed “inner circle countries” (p. 3) such as Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. If the loss of heritage languages follows the learning of English, it also implies the loss of epistemologies and philosophies particular to the language. Harbert, McConnell-Ginet, Miller, and Whitman (2008) highlight the numerous ways in which English operates in a complicated relationship with indigenous languages around the world, with opportunities to move away from poverty being connected to competence in English.

Why does this matter? If languages aren’t widely spoken, why don’t we just let them die out? Seonaigh MacPherson (2003) explains that languages carry within them worldviews, ways of conceptualizing reality, and that
the loss of a language may be more far-reaching than most linguists can understand. She offers by way of example the introduction of a medical psychiatric discourse to a community of refugee Tibetan Buddhist nuns, some of whom had been tortured. The language used by health workers visiting the monastery, including terms such as “post-traumatic stress disorder” and “biochemical,” was incompatible with the mind-science-based language underlying Tibetan monastic education, which relied more on meditative technologies and viewed the relationship between the mind and the body in more-proximal terms. Language shift to the English terms would have implied a parallel shift to new ways of thinking about health. MacPherson thus illustrates that as English replaces other languages, it can also replace other, perhaps deeply valuable, ways of understanding the world. The desirability of nonnative-English-speaker identity, too, is shaped by the social meanings attributed to the category. Carla Chamberlin-Quinlisk (2012) notes that depictions of nonnative English speakers in U.S. media, including newspapers, popular television shows, and Hollywood films, portray them most frequently as “laughable,” “disempowered,” “menial,” “unmotivated,” and “lazy,” constructing accented and nonnative-English identities as shameful and undesirable. The widespread nature of these images contributes to the embarrassment that students in this study experienced about their placement in ESOL, including a student of Margaret’s who pretended not to know her when he passed her in the presence of classmates in the school hallway in an effort to disassociate himself from ESOL, and a class of Alexandra’s who asked that the blinds be drawn in order to conceal their presence in the classroom that was known to house ESOL students. (Both of these incidents will be examined in further detail in Chapter 3.) Ofelia García and Leah Mason (2009) have noted the ways in which the shaping of Spanish as a language of poverty serves to create a foil for English, constructing it in contrast as a language associated with wealth and spoken by people with financial means.

The teaching of English has, in recent years, been connected to neoliberalism. David Block, John Gray, and Marnie Holborow (2012) deplore education’s shifting priorities around the world and the presumption that the primary purposes of schooling to be the individual’s upward economic and therefore social mobility and the promotion of capitalist ideologies. For instance, they focus on the domination of United Kingdom–produced materials within the lucrative ELT textbook industry, demonstrating with text analyses the ways in which textbooks circulate capitalist values and “construct English as a condensation symbol of wealth, individualism and extraordinary professional success” (p. 11). Christian Chun (2009) has similarly examined the articulation of neoliberal discourses in marketing and curriculum materials from an intensive English program in the United States, critiquing the ways in which these materials present English as a commodity to be sold, associated through subtle means with leisure and a high-end lifestyle, and promoting as
obligatory for success within the broader global economy particular "interactional norms" such as communications skills and emotional intelligence. Kubota (2011b) has questioned the legitimacy of discourses of linguistic instrumentalism (Wee, 2008), which promote English language skills as essential for economic and social advancement globally. Linguistic instrumentalism was not confirmed by the learners and managers in her study, who found that other factors, such as gender and geography, were more likely to determine professional success than was English proficiency.

Sometimes representations of English are presented as an unequivocal muddle. For the Tamil-speaking teachers in Suresh Canagarajah’s (1999) study, learning English was a complicated affair, with the language representing both power and wealth on one hand and a history of colonialism on the other. Despite having made a deliberate choice to study English language and literature, the Moroccan university students in Abdellatif Sellami's (2006) study nonetheless associated the language with decadence and veneration of sex, alcohol, and money. Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who wrote for many years in English, in fact has called for African authors to abandon English because it strengthens historical ties to a colonial past and extinguishes creativity in African languages and therefore the development of African language literature.

On one hand, "the light cast by someone else's lamp" could represent the bestowing of English upon those who would otherwise be trapped in lives of poverty in order to illuminate a shining world of opportunity and social mobility. On the other hand, "someone else's lamp" could describe the colonizing effects of English-language spread and might well refer to the magic lantern said to have been brought along by explorer David Livingstone on his travels in order to "blind his African audiences with science" (Holmes, as cited in Willinsky, 1998, p. 3) and to reinforce the impression that he hailed from a civilization that was superior, technologically and otherwise.

These two faces of English have led Kandiah (as cited in Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Mohanty, & Panda, 2009) to label the learning of the language a "contradiction." English is arguably indispensable to those seeking to participate in a global economy, but at the same time "English is accommodating to and constituting a neoimperial, U.S.-dominated world, leading possibly to a global linguistic apartheid." (p. 9). Does either of these "faces" of English resonate with you? As an English-teaching professional, I ask myself what lesson I might take from these contested meanings of English's positioning on the global landscape. Is the lesson that we should choose which "face," which version of English teaching is correct? It would appear that both "faces" hold truth simultaneously. Could the lesson be that we should stop teaching English, learning English, speaking English? Would this not simply create a situation in which those who already know English hold unearned and greater power than those who don’t? Perhaps the lesson instead relates
Introduction

to the importance of a deliberate consciousness that the learning of English remains always situated within and limited by the possibilities and boundaries of the context in which it is taking place. This includes the immediate context—the moment, the conversation, the classroom, the school—and also the broader historical level at which it has taken place (that is, a history of English language spread that has been inseparable from coloniality and racial inequality). In order to ensure that Kandiah’s “contradiction” is amenable to analysis, it must be viewed within the historical terrain in which it developed—that is, in the context of English’s colonial and racialized past.

The relevance of colonialism (or empire—we’ll explore the distinctions between the two shortly) to the teaching of English appears at first glance to be most pressing in postcolonial nations, not so much in the United States. Much of the literature linking the teaching of English to colonialism explores English language teaching in postcolonial contexts or in what Braj Kachru (1990) has termed “expanding circle countries” (p. 3)—that is, in nations in which English has no historical or official role but is nonetheless used widely as a lingua franca. For instance, Angel Lin and Peter Martin’s (2005) important volume *Decolonisation, Globalisation: Language-in-Education Policy in Practice* offers astute analyses of colonial processes in many contexts, including India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania. Hyunjung Shin (2006) has offered ways of rethinking knowledge production through an epistemology of the colonized informed by indigenous knowledge and local practices in the South Korean context. Problems of pedagogical ethics and appropriateness arise when “Western”-trained English teachers import foreign practices to, for instance, Bangladesh, as described by Raqib Chowdhury and Phan Le Ha (2008). This focus on postcolonial and English-as-a-lingua-franca (ELF) contexts can contribute to the impression that it is primarily within postcolonial contexts that processes of colonization and empire are playing themselves out in English-language classrooms. This belief, however, obscures the essential role played by ELT practices within nation-states that are themselves considered “empires” (sometimes called neo-imperial or neocolonial contexts), such as Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret’s context, the United States. Within the interconnectedness of today’s networked world, it is not possible for empire and colonization to evolve in a vacuum in schools within one nation-state. Rather, colonial processes are part of a larger web in which media and events and consumption within one site inevitably shape and are shaped by those in others.

ELT practices within the United States merit further exploration. Alexandra’s Chinese student, described mocking his own language at the beginning of this chapter and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4, is significant not only in his classroom in a middle school in the suburbs of a large city in the United States but also in the historical context of the relationships that different nations (and accents) have with each other globally and of the
dynamics that various groups within the United States have shared historically. The tradition of schooling within the United States has had a complicated history, tangled as it has been with the country's evolving ideas about race, nationhood, gender, cultural identity, foreign policy, religious freedom, and property rights, including ownership of land, material goods, and other human beings. National policies and philosophies, both historically and contemporaneously, play a role in determining the practices and character of today's classrooms, including ESOL classrooms.

For example, assumptions about the racial and cultural superiority of Americans of European descent undergird some of the more disturbing and oftentimes most difficult-to-talk-about chapters of U.S. history—those most deeply anchored by violence or domination, both internally (domestically) and externally (beyond its borders), and by racism in its most brutal and exploitative configurations. It was by conceptualizing Native Americans as culturally inferior that British settlers were able to rationalize the murder of Native Americans, the taking of their lands, their containment on reservations, and the establishment of schools intended to replace First Nations cultural and linguistic resources with the English language and with cultural traditions that were understood to be related to English. Similarly, considering Africans to be inferior made it possible to kidnap, harm, and extract labor from them, to first deny them any education and then to enforce racial segregation of African Americans from Americans of European descent. These processes are part of what Joel Spring (2004) refers to as “decolonization,” which he defines as “the educational process of destroying a people’s culture and replacing it with a new culture” (p. 3), claiming that the new culture is better. The United States does not hold exclusive rights to such phenomena as the genocide of indigenous people, slavery, boarding schools intended to assimilate aboriginal children, racially segregated schools, and other practices related to decolonization such as international invasions and occupations, internment camps for selected ethnic groups, and the denial of citizenship or voting rights on the basis of race. Nonetheless, ideas about racial and cultural superiority are part of the particular combinations of ideas and principles that have given rise to these historical moments in U.S. history and are therefore part of the country’s foundation, its ideological genealogy, the formation of its educational systems, and the ways in which all disciplines, including English, are taught and learned within its school walls. As an example, Jane needed to make decisions about what varieties of English to affirm when her English learners asked her about language associated with African American Vernacular English. More than 70% of students at her school were African American, but her decisions were undergirded by an acknowledgment that ideas about cultural superiority resulted in African American forms of English being accorded a lower level of legitimacy than varieties of English associated with White Americans.
It was within the U.S. historical terrain that the four teachers in this study practiced and were called upon to craft pedagogies that helped their students develop English speaker identities while simultaneously resisting Spring’s (2004) “decolonization.” They were charged with teaching their students English while supporting their critical understandings of the ways in which English acquisition, language hierarchies, and accentedness would position them within their school settings and beyond.

Because the historical processes of colonialism were so dependent on racial divisions, to speak of colonialism is to speak, whether explicitly or not, of race. The spread of the English language across the globe was connected for many centuries to the international political power of people who are constructed as White, so that English and Whiteness are thornily intertwined (Motha, 2006a). Racialization is inevitably salient in language teaching. It is important that the racial roots of English language teaching be clear and visible to teachers if they are to carve out pedagogies that are well informed and conscious of the consequences of their practice. However, throughout the year of this study, the dominant discourses surrounding race in the ESOL teachers’ contexts supported silences about racial identity, which created a challenge for teachers seeking to craft antiracist pedagogy. Through the lens of snippets from the experiences of Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret, this book examines the interconnectedness of race, empire, and language ideologies and engages with the process of becoming an English language teacher with an eye to the inherently racialized and colonial nature of the terrain within which English language teaching is embedded. It engages with the ways in which the racialized and colonial nature of English teaching becomes and remains invisible, drawing from the experiences of four teachers who used an informal space removed from their schools as a site for shaping and crafting their emergent transformative pedagogical practices during their first year of teaching.

This work rests upon the simple assumption that teachers are theorists, transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988), and the most knowledgeable and sensitive analysts of their own classrooms. My aim was not to examine the teachers’ practice and evaluate it from the outside but rather to learn from Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret. The book therefore seeks to privilege teachers’ knowledge and perspectives of their own classrooms, offered in their own voices and within their own communities, above the analysis of other observers, researchers, or administrators. In line with this belief, this book draws on a year of not only classroom observations and interviews but of transcriptions of “afternoon teas” held every 2 or 3 weeks over the course of a school year—unplanned and informal gatherings that began to take place when first Alexandra and then Katie expressed a desire to spend time with their peers, with Margaret and Jane soon echoing the suggestion. When the four teachers graduated from their master’s programs
and embarked upon their first year of teaching English learners in public schools, they did not anticipate the tangled and strangely invisible navigation of connections among empire, race, and linguistic-minority status that they were soon called upon to negotiate. The afternoon teas became a space in which they could seek support from each other, in which they could work together to explore broad questions about how power and privilege circulate in language education, about how inequitable distribution of local and global resources is related to the construction and dissemination of English, and about the ways in which the teaching of English is a racialized practice. (See Appendix for further discussion of the afternoon teas.) As they generated knowledge for themselves and each other, they were also claiming a space within the study, a space in which they had increased agency in the representation of themselves, in the telling of their own stories. In the context of the afternoon teas, the teachers’ theorizing was made explicit, theory and practice had a meeting place, and a window was opened onto the crafting of the teachers’ praxis (Motha, 2009).

In this exploration I do not provide, nor did I set out to develop, facile solutions to any of the challenges the teachers faced, and I did not expect them to resolve the numerous dilemmas they encountered. The stories that follow are therefore neither victim nor victory narratives (Motha, 2006a). This study does not focus on how the four teachers could have or should have addressed the tensions they encountered. Rather, I sought to explore from the inside out how the knowledge they constructed from their experiences could inform current understandings of language teaching. In this vein, I do not presume to suggest alternative pedagogical practice. I simply sought deeper insight into the teachers’ experiences as they struggled with and negotiated the complexities nestled at the nexus of race, language, power, and learning in their teaching lives with the hope that the sense they made of their own experiences might inform other TESOL professionals, including myself.

**"A GENERAL RUPTURE"**

An important argument to be made in this book is that the current period is a moment of great opportunity for English-teaching professionals. Appadurai (1996) describes what he terms “a general rupture in the tenor of intersocietal relations” (p. 2), most likely brought about primarily by faster and more easily achieved connectedness between individuals and communities. Today, many more individuals are communicating with each other over longer distances, and without any time delay between the moment that a message is spoken or sent and the moment it is received or heard, through technologies that were not available previously, such as email and social media, or technologies that were previously too expensive to be used without inhibition, such as telephones. These changes, as well as the concomitant changes in social and economic interactions, have dramatically altered the landscape in which we teach and learn English. The primary medium of communication in the past has been English, and that is no longer the case. Other languages are now being spoken, both within and outside classrooms, and the way we think about language teaching has changed as a result. The ways in which we teach and learn English are now different from what they were a generation ago. A larger number of students now come to our classrooms speaking languages other than English, and the teaching and learning of English in these contexts is different from what it was in the past. This is true not only in the United States but also in other countries where English is taught as a foreign language.

Other theorists have discussed the process of colonization and the ways in which it has affected language teaching. For example, Hill (1991) argues that colonialism has had a profound impact on language education, and that this impact is still felt today. He suggests that the way we teach and learn English is still influenced by the way in which English was taught in colonial settings, and that this influence is still evident in the way we think about language teaching.

Other theorists have discussed the role of technology in language education. For example, Sweet (1999) argues that technology has had a significant impact on language teaching, and that this impact is still felt today. He suggests that the way we teach and learn English is now different from what it was in the past, as a result of the way technology has been used in language education.

In conclusion, this book is about the ways in which language teaching is changing, and the ways in which these changes are influencing the way we think about language teaching. It is about the ways in which language teaching is changing, and the ways in which these changes are influencing the way we think about language teaching. It is about the ways in which language teaching is changing, and the ways in which these changes are influencing the way we think about language teaching. It is about the ways in which language teaching is changing, and the ways in which these changes are influencing the way we think about language teaching. It is about the ways in which language teaching is changing, and the ways in which these changes are influencing the way we think about language teaching.

Introduction
as telephones. These patterns of communications are changing pretty much everything about modern life: the ways in which we trade stocks, interact socially, buy groceries, run businesses, perform surgery, speak, learn in classes, perform, and fall in love. They are calling into question our definitions of fundamental social concepts, such as war, friend (which has now become a verb), nation, economy, sex, and government. And they are changing the ways in which English is used, taught, and learned. English often becomes the medium of communication when only one person in an exchange uses English as a primary language, and often when neither interlocutor does if two different languages are involved and English is the lingua franca. The position occupied by English in trade, socially, and in the global social imaginary therefore looks quite different from the way it did 1 or 2 or even 3 decades ago. A larger number of people speak English worldwide, posing a challenge to understandings of English ownership as limited to those from what Holiday (2005) has referred to as BANA countries—that is, Britain, Australasia, and North America. English is a compulsory part of public education in numerous non-BANA nations, such as China, Brazil, and Cameroon. Appadurai (1996) draws our attention to recent changes in global arrangements, noting that “the new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive disorder that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models” (p. 32).

Other theorists have advanced parallel arguments. Although some of the substance of their theorizing is controversial, as will be discussed further in Chapter 5, Hardt and Negri’s (2000) description of this moment as an era of rapidly changing political and economic arrangements is valuable in supporting us as we contemplate the ways in which the teaching of English has metamorphosed in recent decades to become quite a different, more complex process. Hardt and Negri, like Appadurai, make a distinction between the circulation of power globally in the past and modern-day configurations. In the past, the international promotion of European culture (and, relatedly, languages) was an intentional effort led by the governments of colonizing nation-states, including Great Britain. For instance, during the 1800s, the British government ensured that English was taught in schools in British colonies around the world and that it was used instead of indigenous languages in government communication. Today, however, Hardt and Negri perceive global power relationships taking on different shapes. The valuing of some cultures, ideologies, economic and social practices, and languages over others emanates not from government coercion but from multiple sources working together—powerful media messages, transnational corporations, the United Nations and its affiliated organizations, religious bodies, nongovernmental organizations, universities—rather than from a single site such as the government of one nation-state. Hardt and Negri perceive domination becoming less of an intentional endeavor and more of simply
an unconscious, unplanned, even incidental reproduction of the status quo, with the boundaries between colonizer and colonized becoming less visible and the range of identities and relationships considered acceptable becoming more dynamic and hybridized. This means that boundaries between nations, cultures, races, and languages have become less defined. According to Mignolo (1995), “Colonization is not behind us but has acquired a new form in a transnational world” (p. 1).

What are some examples of this hybridity and blurring of boundaries? For one, multilingual and multiracial characters appear in mainstream media more frequently today. Of course, multilingual and multiracial individuals are not new to human society, but they have been unrecognized as such within broader social consciousness. They have not figured largely in literature and media, and when they have, their hybridity has been represented as abnormal or Other, has not been represented (for instance, a Black/White biracial character presented simply as Black), or has been their defining characteristic (such as the character Clare Kendry in Nella Larsen’s [1929/1997] Passing). In today’s world, these boundaries are becoming less fixed. In 2000, the U.S. Census acknowledged the possibility of multiracial identity by allowing respondents to select more than one racial identification. The boundaries between many nation-states have become more porous; for instance, most border crossings between countries of the European Union are no longer staffed by immigration officials, and in recognition of the globalized and transnational character of today’s citizens, an increasing number of nation-states grant dual-nationality status. For many years, until a change in Australian citizenship law, I lived in the United States but could not become a U.S. citizen without renouncing my Australian citizenship. Underlying the denial of dual citizenship is the assumption that national identity and allegiance cannot be hybrid. With contemporary changes comes a greater visibility within the social imaginary for possibilities for moving away from black-and-white dichotomies.

Because language is inseparable from racial and national identity, the concept of linguistic hybridity is also gaining favor. Although Hardt and Negri do not specifically discuss the English language, English is deeply implicated in the changes they describe and indeed in any possible transformation of current global relationships, both within ESOL classrooms in the United States and, on a broader level, in English classrooms around the world. In today’s world, multiple varieties and accents of English are acknowledged, and the one variety that was historically considered to be “correct,” the British received pronunciation (RP), is no longer the guiding standard internationally. The possibility of more than one “correct” form of English exists in the modern world, with the BBC now employing anchors with Indian and Jamaican accents, with internationally successful authors (for instance, Junot Díaz and Earl Lovelace) winning high-profile awards for writing in varieties of English. Speaking.

In conclusion, the imprecise term “nonnative,” has professional legitimacy in English assemblies.

This changing range of legitimacy, for greater insight into the ways in which English plays in English plays in ways that reinforce dichotomies, colonial, and so forth. There is a need to represent the English plays in the programs, places, and error-correction practices (lexical choice, discussed through policymakers, and implicated in these changes) be obvious. If we can harness the energy we might find this challenging pattern levels. It seems to underestimate the roles ways in which English in maintaining taken too lightly. Teachers and professionals have underpinnings purposes that account for this.

This book aims to make English language learning a mission to transmit
in varieties of English considered nonstandard. The NNEST (nonnative English-speaking teachers) movement, an organized effort to critique the imprecise term nonnative and to end discrimination against teachers labeled "nonnative," has provided awareness and political action and increased the professional legitimacy of individuals with a wide range of accents and varieties of English around the world (Braine, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

This changing linguistic landscape opens up possibilities for a broader range of legitimate racial and linguistic identities and related language varieties, for greater attention to be paid to ownership of English and control of the ways in which it is commodified and distributed, and for critical attention to representations of the language's various speakers within the broader social imaginary. Although it is indisputable that linguistic and racial identities are becoming conceptualized as less stable, these changes are far from uncontested. Complex practices alter the degrees and forms of hybridity permissible. Blatant impediments to linguistic hybridity are evident—movements toward English-only, monolingual education, and the delegitimization of particular forms of English (especially those associated with racial groups coded as non-White). These are related to a form of globalization that reinforces differences in wealth and power in relation to individual racial, colonial, and linguistic histories. But less obvious practices, too, can shape the ways in which English and the profession change and the role English plays in the world. Some examples are the configurations of ESOL programs, placement policies, ESOL policies surrounding English varieties, error-correction practices, ideologies of teacher education, and the language used (lexical choices) to describe individuals in schools, and these will be discussed throughout the pages of this book. The teachers, administrators, policymakers, and teacher educators who make up the ELT industry are implicated in these practices, although the significance of our role may not be obvious. If we are able to be open-eyed, intentional, and conscious and can harness the exciting possibilities offered by this moment of transition, we might find this to be a moment of magnificent transformation, a time for challenging patterns of racial and linguistic inequity on global and national levels. It seems to me that English-teaching professionals play a vital, deeply underestimated role in this process and have the potential to influence the ways in which relations of global power change. The responsibility of English in maintaining the current inequitable global economic order has been taken too lightly. The first step toward that change is to ensure that all ELT professionals have a conscious awareness of the political, racial, and colonial underpinnings of the project of teaching English and of the desires and purposes that accompany the acquisition of English.

This book aims to interrupt and enter into conversations that represent English language learning in primarily linguistically mechanistic terms, as a mission to transmit words and information about syntax and word order
and master pronunciation. Such a focus on accuracy and form has contributed to the invisibility of the ways in which English functions within a larger communications-and-knowledge-production industry with a variety of political and social effects. This book offers examples drawn from the first year of teaching of four K–12 ESOL teachers, Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret, highlighting associations between English on one hand and Whiteness, prestige, and privilege on the other and interpolating explicit analysis of the ways in which constructions of race and language work together to exclude racial minorities and ex-colonial subjects from ownership of and even access to the English language. This book is not the story of a study in the traditional sense. It is instead an argument for a reframing of the historical foundation of English language teaching to acknowledge its rootedness in racialization, globalization, and empire. It offers a retheorizing of the project of English teaching and consequently an attendant re-envisioning of its goals and intentions. To do so, it draws on fragments of everyday life—mundane, unremarkable occurrences drawn from the everyday experiences of first-year teachers.

Although attention has been paid to the effects of ideologies of race and empire in postcolonial contexts (Lin & Martin, 2005; Ramanathan, 2006; Shin, 2006), these effects have been less visible within the teaching of English in schools in the United States. Race and empire are, however, unquestionably present in U.S. K–12 public schools, although perhaps not so easily visible. They become apparent when we examine the disproportionate number of children of color in ESOL classrooms in the United States, patterns of differences in the quality of education between students who have received ESOL services and those have not, the differential ways in which postcolonial varieties of English are legitimated within U.S. schools, and the social status of ESOL students and ESOL departments within school hierarchies. Suárez-Orozco and Sattin (2007) note the necessity for educational systems to be responsive to a changing contemporary context, remarking that “these new global realities are challenging schools everywhere and in multiple ways” (p. 7). This book is intended to illustrate, through clear examples from actual classroom practice, the imprudence of attempting to conceptually comprehend the English language as racially neutral, the inextricability of the teaching of English from the postcolonial terrain in which it is embedded, and the complicated nature of the politics of Global Englishes. I offer numerous examples to demonstrate how invisibly the political nature of English teaching functions. The reader will notice that these are not stories of extraordinary schools nor of exceptional classrooms. They are, in fact, notable for their ordinariness. The events described in the vignettes in this book could have taken place anywhere in the country; these are scenes that play themselves out every day in classrooms around the United States and other neo-imperial contexts. Throughout the study we see teachers going to astonishing lengths in schools and communities to understand the effects of the empire and race on students, not only in the United States but also in the countries whose first language is English. This ability to see English as raced and raced by race is often easy to overlook. One of the functions of English is to make visible what was not visible before I myself perceived it. In this book, I seek to make visible through consciousness to consciousness the empire in the classroom.
...astonishing lengths to reorganize inequitable relations of power within their schools and communities. Although their efforts usually yield some results, the effects of their work are almost always limited by the unseen effects of empire and race, which I argue form the basis of our profession. For instance, you will read shortly about Jane’s attempts to legitimize to her class the variety of English spoken by her Ghanaian student, Terrell, whose first language was listed by the school district to be “World English.” Her ability to argue that Terrell’s language variety does actually constitute English is limited by assessment policies that have placed Terrell in her ESOL class to, in fact, learn English. The logics that determine which varieties of English count as English are rooted in racial and colonial ideologies, with varieties associated with postcolonial contexts and higher non-White populations often being considered less valid. However, these patterns are easy to overlook and remain outside consciousness unless TESOL professionals are actively engaged in noticing them. In fact, it was several months before I myself noticed the contradiction of Terrell’s placement in ESOL. In this book, I seek to demonstrate the importance of moving from unconscious to conscious planes (Motha & Lin, 2013) the role played by race and empire in the teaching of English.

ACCIDENTS AND INTENTIONALITY

One issue that arises frequently when I speak about how race functions within school walls is the issue of intentionality. The ways in which racial inequality is sustained through English teaching are largely unwitting or accidental and exist only because of patterns established before any of the current-day actors in U.S. schools were even born. It is a rare adult in the school system who is actively in pursuit of racial or colonial inequality. However, we nonetheless end up with inequality, what Bonilla-Silva (2013) calls “racism without racists.” How does this happen?

I once heard a wise fellow-playgroup parent explaining to her son that there are two types of accident: the accidents that are part of life and are largely unavoidable and the accidents that happen because we’re not paying attention and are careless. These latter accidents can be prevented, and she impressed upon her son that watching for and preventing them is actually part of his responsibility when he plays with other children. Her son was the oldest, biggest child in the playgroup, and he was therefore the one who was least likely to be hurt in a mishap. Because of his size, he was also most likely to cause damage if, say, he collided with a much smaller child. This meant that he had less of an investment in preventing mishaps but, his parent argued, more of a responsibility in preventing them. She taught him that if being careful not to harm other children is a low priority for him and an
accident occurs because of his carelessness, he is culpable regardless of intentionality. Her words raise a question for me. If patterns of racial and colonial inequality are unwitting and accidental, what responsibility do we have for noticing and preventing them? Is it enough for us to say that because racial, colonial, or linguistic inequality is not our intention we are therefore not implicated? How is the responsibility different for those of us (individuals, teachers, institutions, nation-states) who are bigger—or who have more economic power or more unearned privilege because of our colonial or racial identities or who have less to lose or perhaps even something to gain in the short term from inequality (such as greater employment potential because of a prestige accent)? Some accidents are not truly accidents but reflect (sometimes unconscious) individual and social priorities. If we believe on some level that we profit from inequality, we might be less inclined to move social justice to the top of our list of priorities. At a minimum, if we are not the direct recipients of discrimination, we may have less of a motivation to spend our time fighting against it rather than on another task. To what degree are we called upon to be conscious and mindful of the potential for mishaps, such as the widening of the gap between rich and poor, the extinction of indigenous languages, the perpetuation of racism, or linguistic and racial minority students’ lower achievement and lack of access to college? To what degree are we culpable if we do not act?

Watching Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret and listening to them make sense of their teaching lives helped me think through many of these questions. In this book I share with you what I learned from them.

ALEXANDRA, JANE, KATIE, AND MARGARET SIPPING TEA

I see Margaret, a willowy flash of lavender, moving up the driveway, and I open the front door. She smiles her characteristically serene smile, hair the color of clover honey and dark-lashed, bottomless eyes the same shade. I feel the urge, as I always do when I see her, to put my arms around her protectively. Margaret has an unflagging belief in the inherent goodness of all humans, and as long as I have known her, I have felt a guarded but persistent certainty that humans are about to let her down. We’ve been friends for many years now and it hasn’t happened yet, but my impulse to shield remains. Margaret embraces me, then proffers a delicately painted Japanese bowl filled with her lentil salad. The kettle whistles, beckoning us back into the kitchen, and she settles onto the carpet in the adjacent living room, leaning against the sofa and tucking her toes under her, while I slosh water over the dark, heady tea leaves, scalding deep flavor out of them.

The next to arrive is the other elementary-level teacher in the study, perpetually smiling Katie, swirling warmth into the front foyer, an eddy of
animated energy. She carries handouts in her hands, resources to share with the rest of us, and spills over with animated stories of the first days of school. “Tea, yes, please!” she sighs with a “hit-the-spot” exhalation. She sinks to the floor, flipping her long, straight black hair behind her. Her vitality is infectious, and we sit up straighter and listen to her tale. She begins to tell us about a conversation that has just taken place between her sister, who like Katie was adopted from Korea in infancy, and her parents, Americans of German-Irish descent, humorously describing her own intervention into the family conversation. Katie is the only teacher in the study who does not identify as White.

The doorbell interrupts the unfolding story. Alexandra arrives, her hands full of entertainment for her solemn 4-year-old, Daniel, who wanders in beside her. Alexandra remains, to this day, the most unflappable person I know. She juggles numerous duties simultaneously, multitasking with aplomb, maintaining a quietly self-assured manner in her middle school classroom and the appearance of composure under the most chaotic of circumstances. She comes from a family of educators and has deep and time-consuming commitments to political action within schools while navigating a long-distance marriage to a pilot. I wonder whether I’m imagining that her bright blue eyes look tired as she slips off her shoes and lowers herself to the carpet. Although none of us knew it that bright autumn day, not even Alexandra, she was pregnant with her first biological child at that moment.

The last to arrive was cheerful, commonsensical Jane, who worked in a neighboring, poorly resourced district, James District, where salaries were quite a bit lower than in Bennett District, where the other three teachers worked. Jane’s salary was therefore the lowest of the four teachers, and during her busy first year of teaching high school, she moonlighted at night as a waitress in a movie house. She was skilled at steering herself through what would otherwise have been a frenzied and muddled year. Long and slender, hair the color of glossy dark chocolate, faint freckles across her nose, she telegraphed liveliness as she reached for her cup of steaming tea and joined the huddle around my oversized coffee table.

The afternoon teas formed the basis of a study that drew from the traditions of critical feminist ethnography (Behar, 1996; Carspecken, 1996; Fine, 1992; Madison, 2012) to explore the pedagogy and perspectives of four women who were K–12 public school ESOL teachers during their first year of teaching. They were recent graduates of an MEd in TESOL program at the institution at which I was a PhD student, a large publicly funded land-grant institution in the suburbs of an ethnically diverse metropolis in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. East Coast. I had known Alexandra, Jane, Katie, and Margaret for 2 or 3 years before the study began, having served as the graduate-student advisor for incoming MEd students, a teaching assistant in their classes, the supervisor of their student teaching, and
the supervisor of Alexandra’s, Katie’s, and Margaret’s master’s theses. Each teacher had been in at least one class that I co-taught. They were similarly closely connected to each other; each teacher had taken at least two classes with each of the others. I was familiar with their pedagogical practice, conducting observations on their teaching and providing them with feedback, meeting with cooperating teachers, and gathering with the teachers in a seminar context every 2 weeks during their student-teaching semesters. Margaret and Jane were first-semester teachers when we began the study, while Katie and Alexandra had graduated a semester earlier and were beginning their second semester of teaching. We had developed friendships before the study began, socialized out of school, and faced professional doubts together. We had met each other’s families and attended each other’s weddings.

The nature of this history together created a power imbalance in our relationship. I took all steps I could think of to diminish the effects of the hierarchy—reiterating that they should not feel obligated to have me in their classrooms or to come to the afternoon teas, repeating in every email and phone call that they should not feel compelled to respond, discussing openly and repeatedly with them my concerns about exploiting them. I tried to make the afternoon teas a place of support and camaraderie for the teachers, rather than a site of data collection. However, none of these steps could have erased the hierarchy among us, and this story should be read as such.

**FOUR DIFFERENT SCHOOL CONTEXTS**

The study was carried out in four separate schools, which represented a range of demographics. Katie, Margaret, and Alexandra taught in Bennett District, whose majority population was White. Jane taught in neighboring James District, in which 86% of K–12 public school students were racial minorities.

I use the district’s terminology to describe student categories, including racial categories. (Percentages do not always add up to exactly 100% because they have been rounded up or down.) Katie’s elementary school, which served children in grades K–6, was located in one of the highest-income regions of the district. Of the student population of 317 students, 28% were classified by the district as Limited English Proficient and receiving ESOL services, the highest percentage of the four schools, and most of these students were Asian/Pacific Islanders. The school population receiving free or reduced-price meals was 13.9%. The racial composition of the population was predominantly White (not of Hispanic origin) at 66%, followed by 15% Asian/Pacific Islanders, 13% Hispanic, and 7% African American. Margaret’s school, also a K–6 institution, was larger, with 489 students, although only 9.1% of the school population was defined as Limited...
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English Proficient. It was also a poorer school, with almost a third (30.9%) of children receiving free or reduced-price meals. Margaret’s school’s African American population was much larger, at 35%; the Hispanic population at 13.1% was essentially the same, and the White (not of Hispanic origin) and Asian/Pacific Islander populations were smaller, at 46.8% and 5.9%, respectively. Margaret’s school also had a 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native population. Alexandra taught in a large and diverse 6th- through 8th-grade middle school. Of the 903 students, 37% received free or reduced-price meals, and 6.3% were considered to be Limited English Proficient. The student population was predominantly African American (41.5%), 25% White (not of Hispanic origin), 17.4% Hispanic, 15.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native. Jane’s dauntingly big high school, the only study school in James District, was by far the largest school in the study, at 2,100. It had a large African American population (70.5%) and also the largest Hispanic population of the study schools (21%). It had relatively small numbers of White (6.6%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (3%) students and no American Indian/Alaskan Native students. At this school, 6.5% of students were defined as Limited English Proficient.

ABOUT THE STUDY OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHING

My ideas about school-based research were shaped by my early readings of educational researchers I admire—for instance, Deborah Britzman (1991), Annette Lareau (2000), and Signithia Fordham (1996)—passing in and out of the school communities they were learning about, observing, and interviewing along the way. I carried these images with me as I embarked upon the first days of this study. As I designed the study, I imagined that I would rely heavily, as did the researchers I sought to emulate, on observational and interview data, which have always seemed to me to be mainstays of work informed by ethnographic methods. However, over the year of the study I found myself on a complicated journey, one that called into question my ideas about the relationships among representation and voice, objectivity and objectification, power, humanity and the nature of being human, praxis, community, validity, agency, and the politics of telling other people’s stories.

Spradley (1980) has suggested that ethnography should rely primarily on observations, and as I set out to learn from these four women, I concurred. I was attracted to ethnographic methods for their richness, their ability to talk to the situatedness of language learning and language teaching. Observations appeared to me as somehow organic; they seemed to offer a chance to see the teachers living their lives in natural, authentic contexts. I initially imagined myself quietly observing classrooms with a video recorder, tape recorder, pen and notebook, and that is indeed how I started out my
study year, surreptitiously tucking myself into a quiet corner at the back of each teacher's classroom, silently scribbling and diligently avoiding eye contact with curious students in order to minimize my influence on classroom events. However, two things happened along the way: one relating to participant voice and the other to community, both of which troubled my wholehearted commitment to an observational study. First, as I began my ongoing data analysis during the first few weeks of the study, I started to sense that my fieldnotes and consequently my representation of my participants were suffering from a gaping absence of the teachers' voices. Instead, I had the impression that as I was telling the teachers' stories, I was interpreting their actions, cloaking their practices with my perspective, and in the process appropriating their lives. My first effort to counteract this effect was to extend the length of my interviews, asking the teachers for detailed elucidations of classroom incidents that I'd observed, as if by gathering enough of their words to serve as a proxy for my own, I could somehow neutralize my own presence and diminish the volume of my voice. The second important happening, also during the first few weeks of the school year, was that Alexandra and then Katie expressed a desire to meet regularly with their former classmates as they had while they were student teaching. Imagining something reminiscent of the kitchen table conversations of the early feminist movement, I offered my home, which was a geographical midpoint among the four schools.

And so began the afternoon teas. The five of us would sit on my family room floor, clustered around the coffee table, drinking strong tea and munching cucumber sandwiches, scones, and Sri Lankan mas-pan (meat-bread). We gathered together in the afternoon after the last school bell rang, sometimes rushing off to prepare lessons or put children to bed, more often talking late into the night. By the second semester of the study, the afternoon teas had grown into dinners, although we always drank tea as we chatted. Alexandra, Katie, Jane, and Margaret were seeking support from each other out of personal need, but in doing so they claimed a space within the study. The afternoon teas transformed the study, which I had initially designed as a collection of four cases. I had intended to explore the experiences of four individual beginning ESOL teachers during their first year of teaching, following the portraits with cross-case analysis (Yin, 1994). However, with the afternoon teas an unanticipated element surfaced: the element of community. I was no longer exploring four cases of individual teachers but rather was now studying one group of four teachers, a community of practice (Lave & Wegner, 1991) of teachers who came together and developed their meanings of teaching in a socially and culturally fertile context. As I became increasingly appreciative of the constructs supported by the afternoon teas, such as connection, legitimation of participant voice, community, and the sociocultural nature of identity construction, I simultaneously began to see...
some of the shortcomings of an exclusive focus on observations and interviews, both of which had initially formed the methodological backbone of the study. Observations and fieldnotes did not adequately capture the participants' voices, and one-on-one interviews lacked the richness of community. Mindful of Harding's call to rectify the androcentrism of research (1987) and Reinhartz's (1992) suggestion that a feminist perspective on data analysis includes flexibility and creativity in format, I made the decision to modify commonly used qualitative research methods in order to foreground the afternoon tea transcriptions over all other data sources, including observations and fieldnotes. Further information about the methodological orientation of the study is included in the appendix.

Just as English represents a contradiction, so too, for me, does tea. Over the years, tea has come to take on complex meanings in my day-to-day life. I have been offered tea or have brewed tea for those I cherish in response to heartache or illness or tears, as an expression of caring and welcome, and as a commemoration of friendship. I serve it during my practicum classes, my office hours, upon returning home with my young daughters after picking them up from school, and in gatherings of my writing collective. Tea has come to represent for me comfort, community, contemplation, consolation, camaraderie, and creativity. But I add other troubling Cs to my associations with tea—for instance, in the context of Sri Lanka: colonization. Another C is ceremony, evoking the ways in which obfuscated social knowledge surrounding formal teas has served to reinscribe social hierarchies. In her wonderful book, Interrogating Privilege, my friend and mentor Stephanie Vandrick (2009) similarly connects tea with various notions, including, she tells us, "my childhood in barely post-colonial India, my Anglophilia, my beloved English novels, women's groups" (p. 18), and expresses misgivings that resonate with my own: "It is also a source of ambivalence because of its postcolonial and social class associations" (p. 18).

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2, "Operating in Concert: Empire, Race, and Language Ideologies," explores the interconnectedness of ideologies of race, empire, and language ideologies and situates the ideas contained within this book in relation to other significant conversations, drawing from a range of disciplinary traditions. In Chapter 3, "Teaching Empire or Teaching English?" I take up themes of imperialism, and decolonization in relation to English, engaging specifically with the construction of the category ESOL as a school and institutional construct within the broader context of globalization. Chapter 4, "English, Antiracist Pedagogies, and Multiculturalism," focuses on the racialization of the
English language in general and English language teaching specifically, exploring the ways in which school and classroom practices provide terrain for the dynamic and continuous construction and renegotiation of racialized identities. Chapter 5, “Producing Race and Place: Language Varieties and Nativeness,” engages with the concept of English, exploring the range of ways in which English was defined in the various study contexts, the tension between heterogeneity and homogeneity of language varieties, and the language hierarchies teachers found themselves subscribing to or questioning. In Chapter 6, “Toward a Provincialized English,” all of the preceding discussion is brought together in an exploration of the central notion of how language, race, and empire meet. Here are posed perhaps the most profound and complex questions in the book, all of which center around one fundamental issue: How might teachers’ practice be shaped by their deep understanding of the complex racialized and postcolonial terrain of English language teaching? This chapter considers the implications of this analysis for classroom teaching, for educational policy, for the administration of schools and programs, for the practice of teacher education, and for research on second language education. It further explicates and elaborates upon the theoretical implications of the book.

When my graduate student teacher candidates at the University of Washington (and previously at the University of Maryland) walk into my classes, they are sometimes confused to see mention of race or colonialism on my syllabi. “What’s teaching English got to do with race?” “How is it related to colonialism?” they ask. This book is for them; my primary audience is preservice teachers at the graduate and undergraduate levels who will be using English in any form as they teach, including those preparing to become ESOL teachers. This is the book I wish we had to read together as they begin their teacher education journeys. This work assumes teaching to be intellectual practice and views teachers as transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). As such, it approaches its topic not as a how-to manual seeking to offer simple solutions to everyday teaching challenges nor as an easy guide to “teacher-proof” and “scripted” curricula—indeed, it offers no solutions at all. Rather, its point of departure is that it is only through the intellectual engagement of teachers that these changes can take place. This work is intended to bring together everyday challenges of teaching with what we understand of the theoretical terrain of empire, race, and linguistic ideologies so that teachers might find support in analyzing their own local circumstances and developing individual context- and moment-specific responses accordingly.

The book’s audience is not limited to teacher candidates. It is also for scholars of English linguistics, English language pedagogy, and TESOL; for teacher educators reflecting on their practice; for inservice teachers trying to make sense of their practice in messy and inequitable linguistic terrain; and
for critical race scholars whose focus is not necessarily on English language
teaching but who are interested in how the teaching of English is shaped by
race. I further intend this work to also be of interest to scholars of multi-
cultural education, critical race theory, postcolonial studies, globalization
studies, second language acquisition and applied linguistics, educational cri-
tiques of neoliberalism, and social scientific critiques of colorblind racism.

Throughout this work I seek to begin and end each idea with the class-
room, while never shying away from intellectually engaging process. Teach-
ing requires knowledge, analytical skills, a talent for deep reflection, and
an ability to connect the events within classroom walls to the larger socio-
historical context of our world. No one—not teachers, not students, not
communities—is served by a positioning that assumes teachers to be in need
of nothing more than quick and easy instructions on how to teach without
regard for teachers’ own understandings of the peculiarities of their own
local classrooms. For this reason, I close each section with a set of concrete
pedagogical Reflection Questions. The Reflection Questions are designed
to support the reader in thinking about how the concept being described is
relevant within familiar classroom contexts. For faculty members using the
Reflection Questions in teacher education classrooms, I offer a caution. The
questions might require students to reveal uncomfortable thoughts, opin-
ions, or information. I therefore suggest that students decide whether to
participate and then choose the question on a list they would like to discuss,
rather than being asked to discuss a specific question.

My writing buddy and departmental colleague, Anu Taranath, a scholar of
postcolonial literature, shared with me a quote by Toni Morrison, who
wrote, “If there’s a book you really want to read, but it hasn’t been written
yet, then you must write it.” This book is my response to her charge. I hope
that it will be picked up by practicing and future teachers in all disciplines
who have contact with linguistic-minority students in public schools, in uni-
versity intensive English programs, and at universities around the world.