The Complexity of Our Tears: Dis/enchantment and (In)Difference In the Academy

Conducting scholarship and teaching about socially constructed aspects of identity (e.g., race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and class) often presents challenges to communication scholars. Within this article, we discuss some of those challenges by disclosing aspects of our lived experiences as "outsiders within" the academy. Through analyzing e-mail messages that we exchanged with one another, we explore complexities of our emotions (and ensuing tears) as we experience both enchantment and disenchantment with how members of the academy deal with difference matters. We rely upon feminist standpoint epistemology as our theoretical framework, and we specify dialogic theory and ontology as a promising means by which we can transform the academy.

We were eager to respond to the call for papers for this special issue because we wanted to write about our feelings of disenchantment with the academy. Each of us feels a strong desire for healing apathy, fear, and frustration regarding teaching, studying, and doing "difference" in the academy. Furthermore, we seek to transform how scholars study, teach, and enact difference. Within the context of this article, we refer to "difference" to signify issues that traditionally have been consumed under the umbrella of "diversity." By using this terminology, we specify the primary source of our disenchantment: the ways in which human differences are negotiated in the academy.

Whereas most institutional mission statements centralize diversity within their public identities, "doing difference" in the academy reveals that such ideologies are not necessarily part of the everyday culture of these institutions. Many members of the academy seem to regard difference—based on race or ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual
orientation, and so on—as oppositional and harmful to the existing status of the academy. Just as disturbing, however, are those persons who (for various reasons) display attitudes of indifference, those who perceive attention to cultural differences as insignificant and not worthy of the academy’s attention. The former position views attempts to incorporate difference matters into the core of higher learning as a threat; the latter position deems such changes as unnecessary. In the midst of these dominant ideologies, doing difference in the academy involves the negotiation of a number of complexities. These serve as the foundation for our analysis.

Whereas we recognize sources of disenchantment, we also acknowledge being enchanted by the academy and by the discipline of communication. We were or are enchanted with the promise of the academy as a marketplace for the exchange of diverse ideas, and sometimes we have experienced such exchanges, with exciting and affirming consequences. We appreciate many aspects of a profession that allows us to work toward the betterment of humankind. Our discipline holds the omnipresent potential to have long-term, positive effects on people’s lives regarding matters of difference. Furthermore, the field of communication affords opportunities to address personal issues in our research and teaching.

The source of our dis/enchantment lies within the idealism associated with institutions of “higher learning”: We are attracted to a profession and discipline that inherently promises an openness to studying and teaching difference, yet more often than not falls short of this promise. Therefore, we have experienced disenchantment and enchantment as a “both-and” (not “either-or”) phenomenon. This epiphany was one of the most enlightening outcomes of our collaboration.

We believe that work in our discipline can help members of society understand issues related to difference and to learn how to interact positively and ethically with one another. We feel certain that we can accomplish these goals as educators and learners, as we interact with one another within and across our departments, institutions, and professional associations, as we conduct and publish our research, and as we develop and implement undergraduate and graduate curricula. However, before we can transform the academy along these lines, we believe that we must engage in frank, open discussions about our experiences, as well as how we feel, what we think, what we fear, what we dream. As we conceived and developed this project, the three of us did exactly that, with healing and transformative consequences for ourselves. As you read this article, we hope that “listening to” our experiences provides a discursive space where you can engage in self-reflexivity in terms of your own dis/enchantment within the academy. We hope to demonstrate the role that
self-reflexivity played in setting the stage for dialogue to occur among ourselves. In no uncertain terms, we advocate for dialogue as an impetus for self-discovery, healing, and transformation.

Throughout this article, we share how dialogue emerged as the central means for facilitating an increased understanding of our dis/enchantment in the academy. We believe that such dialogic interactions can promote a collective process of healing attitudes of (in)difference within the academy. We begin by describing our process of discovery. Then, to help you know who we are and what motivates our efforts, we describe ourselves. Next, we provide an overview of the two bodies of work that comprise the theoretical framework of our paper: feminist standpoint epistemology and communication as dialogue. Following that, we share and analyze excerpts of e-mail messages that we exchanged with one another over the course of our project, and we offer conclusions. We hope that by reading our autobiographies and our e-mail messages to one another, you learn “about yourselves by feeling the emotions and contradictions evoked in our accounts and by considering how you might feel in such a place” (Communication Studies 298, 1997, p. 254).

Our Process of Discovery
Clear norms regulate traditional conceptualizations of academic writing, especially that which is published in scholarly journals (Blair, Brown, & Baxter, 1994). These standards include little, if any, attention to history of an article, including how and why the author(s) initiated the project. In this regard, an “expert voice” is created by suppressing how the authors’ convictions and emotions informed their research (Blair et al., 1994). Similar to Marshall (1993), we question these ideological positions that work to restrict the important role that reflexivity plays in the generation of knowledge and theory. Like other scholars (Bochner, Ellis, & Tillmann-Healy 1996; Denzin, 1997; Geist & Gates, 1996; Mumby, 1993), we endorse redefining the traditional responsibilities of researchers and “legitimate” styles of scholarly writing.

Work in autoethnography represents such a reconceptualization, and provides an effective methodological framework for our analysis (Communication Studies 298, 1997; Hayano, 1979; Neumann, 1996; Reed-Danaby, 1997; van Maanen, 1995). Autoethnography involves “turning of the ethnographic gaze inward on the self (auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self experiences occur” (Denzin, 1997, p. 227). Autoethnography encourages passionate, emotional voicing of one’s own lived experiences (van Maanen, 1995). Autoethnography allows us to make ourselves the subject of analysis and to treat our dialogue as primary data (Jackson,
1989). Thus, the process of ethnographic reflexivity necessitates blurring distinctions between subject and object (Geist & Gates, 1996).

This methodological approach appears especially appropriate to articulating how our dis/enchantment is shaped by, as well as shapes, our experiences in the academy. It allows us to acknowledge the multidimensional nature of ourselves (Mumby, 1993) as we write about how we have come to theorize our dis/enchantment within the academy. Specifically, we use this forum to blend “narratives of the self” (Communication Studies 298, 1997) with insights from feminist standpoint and dialogic theories to describe and interpret our lived experiences. We attempt to explore the contradictions of dis/enchantment emotions by focusing on issues of societal power and oppression (see Fine, 1994). Our approach embraces the notion of researcher as a participant-observer while utilizing as data our personal experiences within our respective academic environments.

We began this project to focus on how feminist standpoint theories had helped us to understand our experiences in the academy. Positioning our collaboration in terms of autoethnography and dialogic theory emerged only after we began to reflect on our communications with one another. However, before we tell you more about our “findings,” we need to explain how the project evolved.

Mark saw the call for papers and invited Brenda J. to collaborate with him and to suggest a third coauthor. Margarita immediately accepted our invitation. After an initial phone conference, we decided to communicate through e-mail. The question we sought to answer was this: How can we move beyond hostility and apathy about difference in the academy? We saved all of our e-mail messages, some of which we excerpt below. In addition to e-mail, we held phone conferences. Early on, we recognized the power of respecting and appreciating collaborative, unified voices and the impact such communication has had on our ongoing healing processes. Our exchanges also allowed us to discover commonalities and differences among ourselves. Maintaining a constant, reflective stance in terms of our interactions facilitated a process of discovery typically unobtainable through traditional scholarship and theory. Although none of us realized it at the time, we were setting the stage for dialogue to emerge.

As we disclosed our experiences of dis/enchantment and (in)difference, emotions often arose. Frequently, we were moved to tears. Through the process of ethnographic reflexivity, we discovered that the complexity of our tears captured the essence of our experiences in the academy. We chose the theme of tears because it mirrors several important issues that emerged as we developed the article. Tears signify the complexity of our lived experiences and our emotional responses. Tears can represent dis-
enchantment (e.g., anger, sadness, guilt, frustration, defeat, blaming, and fear) and enchantment (e.g., excitement, joy, hope, and success). Tears also reflect passion, something that we rarely discuss or disclose in our academic endeavors, yet which permeates everything we do. In essence, we recognized, like Jackson (1989), that our emotions—in the form of tears—serve as an invaluable messenger from the self (see also Gómez-Peña, 1993).

The complexity of tears also reflects the epistemological and ontological positioning of this paper. Consistent with the feminist theoretical frameworks that undergird our attempts to theorize our disenchantment in the academy, we embrace our emotionality as a central component of scholarship. We do not view rational thought as superior to, or exclusive of, emotion. In fact, we believe that sometimes emotion does not cloud reasoning, but reasoning clouds emotions (Martinez, 1996). Emotions help us to attain mutual understanding, gain insight into self and other expectations, build shared interpretations, and understand life histories (Mumby & Putnam, 1992).

Through our passion and soulful work we echo and extend communication scholarship that includes personal, emotional voices to shed insight and to articulate ideas (see, for example, Allen, 1996, 1998; Jones, 1994; Marshall, 1993; Olivas, 1997; Ono, 1997; Orbe, 1998b). Thus, we speak in the first person singular and plural, a rare yet increasingly applied approach to scholarly writing. We also cite more quotations than might seem appropriate in academic writing, as a conscientious effort to honor other writers’ voices.

**Who We Are**

We provide the following autobiographical information to depict the particular standpoints from which we come to understand our disenchantment in the academy. As we have articulated in previous work (e.g., Allen, 1998; Orbe, 1998a), recognizing that a particular standpoint forms perceptions of reality is crucial to contextualizing our scholarship. In this regard, explicitly describing what we consider to be central aspects of our lives is a “standing point” of scholarly inquiry.

We have experienced the academy on the margins. At best we can describe our positions as “outsiders within” (Collins, 1991). Moreover, as “outsiders within” the academy we occupy a place (however tenuous) of privilege as scholars (see Collins, 1991). We have the luxury of being able to spend time reflecting upon and writing about (in)difference. We do not take lightly this place of privilege; rather, we accept it with a strong sense of responsibility and mission. Like bell hooks (1990), we occupy the margins as a “space of radical openness” (p. 145). Situating
ourselves on the margins of the academy is a form of resistance, not solely the result of oppression (hooks, 1990). Clinging to the margins allows us to participate in the central functions of the academy while not abandoning our positions in our “home” cultural communities.

Margarita: I am a Chicana feminist, middle-aged graduate student, and aspiring scholar of organizational communication. The first born of seven children, I was a California migrant field hand until the age of 17. I have had four children and have four grandchildren. As a youth, I attended an integrated elementary school that separated us “dirty Mexicans” from the White population. At the age of 13 I was labeled a gang member by local law enforcement agencies, particularly after my involvement in the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, and, though I performed excellently in school, I was tracked into the clerical pool. In 1970, I dropped out of high school. Nearly 20 years later, I enrolled at a community college and transferred to CSU, Chico. I graduated with a BA in Latin American studies, minoring in public speaking and was accepted into the PhD program at the University of Colorado in 1993. My dissertation topic focuses on the segregated components of the Greek system and the role of networking in the development of ethnic nepotism. My graduate experiences have been instrumental in the development of my Chicana feminist consciousness. In particular, I’ve come to realize that though I have always lived Chicana theory, I did not understand its power until I began teaching Chicana feminism. The most significant outcome of my newfound conscientización (Castillo, 1994; Freire, 1971) has been my emancipation from a counterstance that locked me into a duel of oppressor and oppressed. I can best sum up my current position in life by quoting Anzaldúa (1987) who writes,

At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes. . . . The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react. (p. 79)

Mark: I am a 30-something-year-old man who was raised in a predominately African American and Puerto Rican low-income housing project in the Northeast. My father’s father left the Philippines in 1911 to come to the U.S.; some of my mother’s relatives reportedly came over on the Mayflower. Given this set of lived experiences, people have some difficulty using traditional racial categories (anthropological, institutional, social, cultural) to describe me. In every sense of the word, I am a multicultural being with race/ethnicity and class representing only a few aspects of my identity. In no certain order, I am also a husband, father, Christian, and educator. I am all of these things and more. As the first
member of my extended family to graduate from high school, I identify as a "blue-collar scholar" who studies the inextricable relationship between communication and culture in a variety of contexts. Initially my focus was solely on race and ethnicity. However, more recently I’ve come to understand the power of studying intersections of various components of cultural difference (gender, age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc.).

Brenda J.: I am a Black, heterosexual, middle-aged woman scholar. I was raised in a lower classed community in Ohio. I attended a predominantly Black elementary school (with a majority of White teachers) after which I attended integrated schools where I often was the only Black female in my classes. I earned a BA at a predominantly White university by winning a scholarship and working part-time. Then, I attended a historically Black institution where I earned an MA and a PhD in communication. Since 1989, I have been a faculty member of a department of communication at a predominantly White university. In 1997, I earned tenure. My work focuses primarily on organizational communication and issues of difference. Reading, writing, and teaching feminist standpoint theory elicited consciousness-raising for me. I recognized how I have been oppressed (I was in deep denial), how I have been complicit, and how I have resisted. My reflections and revelations forced me to recognize my own multiple inner voices that stem from various aspects of my identity and their intersections. I’ve grown to understand that I have agency, more than my ancestors, yet not as much as I hope for those who are unborn.

As our autobiographical sketches reveal, we vary in race, age, gender, place of birth, and rank in the academy. However, we are similar in our commitment to studying aspects of identity, culture, and communication scholarship. Moreover, we believe that salient aspects of identity are socially constructed. Our scholarly work usually takes a critical approach (i.e., addresses power and resistance) to examine identity negotiation and communication processes. Critical scholarship hopes to raise consciousness among language users and to encourage them to be self-reflective and cognizant of the reality of their situations—for critical awareness is the first step in the struggle for social change and liberation (Lazar, 1993).

**Feminist Standpoint Theory**

One way to understand how ideologies impact interaction and identity formation is by observing interaction through the lens of feminist standpoint theory (Hartsock, 1983, Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1991; Smith, 1987). Aligning with general goals of feminism, feminist standpoint theory seeks
to emancipate traditionally oppressed persons. Derived in part from Marxist principles on the standpoint of the proletariat, where hidden privileges were awarded to some and denied others (Calhoun, 1996), feminist standpoint theory seeks to expose both acts of oppression and acts of resistance by asking disenfranchised persons to describe and discuss their experiences. Based upon a belief that knowledge is socially constructed, feminist standpoint theory privileges the knowledge and experiences of disenfranchised persons, with hopes that their knowledge will reveal otherwise unexposed aspects of the social order (Allen, 1998). Feminist standpoint theory enjoins us to look at everyday experiences, while acknowledging the role of sociohistorical contexts in knowledge development.

Chicana feminism (e.g., Anzaldúa, 1987; Castillo, 1994; Garcia, 1989; Moraga, 1983) and Black feminism (e.g., Allen, 1998; Collins, 1991) strive to construct a social system where traditionally disenfranchised women and men can raise their voices and, at the same time, work toward consciousness raising for both the oppressor and the oppressed. Consciousness raising, however, cannot occur without critical reflection and the desire and willingness to learn and grow. As our experiences have revealed, feminist consciousness can evoke a joyous consciousness of one's own power, of the possibility of unprecedented personal growth and the release of energy long suppressed. These theories also allow for healing. They place value on "personal history and experience, self-expression, relationships, and yes, love" (Martinez, 1996, p. 117). Furthermore, as Anzaldúa (1987) observes, mestiza consciousness can be a source of intense pain that breaks down the subject-object duality that keeps us prisoners of oppression. Thus, the feminist epistemologies on which we rely portray complicated ramifications of consciousness raising that parallel the complexity of our tears as we find ourselves both disenchanted and enchanted by our lived experiences within the academy.

Within these pages, we reproduce excerpts from our conversations and our introspections as we reflected critically on our dis/enchantment within the academy. We analyze these conversations to provide insights to help us understand a particular person or situation AND to allow us to discover insight and direction for changing (in)difference in the academy. Moreover, we incorporate our stories and narratives to help us conceptualize and communicate about theory (Martinez, 1996).

Like hooks (1991), we see these theories as a productive location for healing. Specifically, we used the above-described tenets of feminist standpoint theories to analyze our conversations with one another as well as our autoethnographic musings. These theories facilitated a process of discovery in terms of specific ways to heal self and others. Finally, as we
explain next, these theorizing tools enabled us to identify from within our discipline a starting point for healing and renewal.

**Dialogue**

Although several conceptions of dialogue exist within the discipline of communication (see Anderson, Cisna, & Arnett, 1994), we focus upon the pioneering work of German existentialist philosopher Martin Buber (1958, 1965) for several reasons. First, communication scholarship on dialogue frequently relies upon Buber's philosophy (Anderson et al., 1994; Anderson & Ross, 1998; Cisna & Anderson, 1994). Moreover, Buber's ideas provide compelling insight and direction for healing and transforming (in)difference in the academy because his perspective emphasizes relationships, with a central concern for collaboration and co-construction (Stewart, 1994). Buber's ideas are rooted in everyday existence, and they are "increasingly practical . . . in a world of cultural conflict" (Anderson & Ross, 1998, p. 170). Thus, this perspective aligns nicely with standpoint theory because it centers on our everyday lives rather than abstractions. Also relevant to standpoint theory are Buber's distinction between communicators as subjects and objects and his emphasis on manipulation, power, control, and domination.

Buber's (1958, 1965) conception of dialogue rests on his notion of "the between"—a region of existence that links one individual with another. This region of a relationship requires both the self and the other, and it represents more than the sum of self and other (Cisna & Anderson, 1994, p. 23). According to Buber, humans can live life authentically only through meeting others (Anderson & Ross, 1998). Genuine dialogue occurs "where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular beings and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them" (Buber, 1965, p. 19). Buber refers to this state as "being" rather than "seeming," which distinguishes between allowing oneself to be spontaneous as opposed to providing a calculated self-image. Anderson et al. (1994) elaborate: "Dialogue is a dimension of communication quality that keeps communicators more focused on mutuality and relationship than on self-interest, more concerned with discovering than with disclosing, more interested in access than in domination" (p. 2). This relational philosophy advocates "narrow ridge" communication, a common ground where "participants are open to and can see the other's viewpoint, it is not a place where participants meet and compromise their beliefs to suit each other" (Scholz, 1998, p. 1). In this place, "I do not know beforehand who I will be, because I am open to you just as you are open to me" (Kaplan, 1994, p. 40).
Buber's most famous insight on dialogue exists in his distinction between two potential modalities of human relationship: "I-Thou" and "I-It" (Anderson & Ross, 1998). In the I-Thou modality, communicators fully accept each other as dynamic human beings, whereas in the I-It modality, we dehumanize and depersonalize ourselves and the other as static, predictable, measurable objects (Kaplan, 1994). The I-Thou attitude invites and allows dialogue because an individual "sees and responds to the other as a unique person that he or she is, not as a representative figure, a stereotype, or an extension of one’s own personality" (Anderson & Ross, 1998, p. 170). In contrast, the I-It attitude treats the other person as an object, as something that can be concisely described, measured, manipulated, and accounted for (Anderson & Ross). From this stance, a person generalizes another person into a stereotypical category or assumes that the other instantiates a predictable representative of a category. In addition, a person may treat another as a means to an end (Kaplan, 1994). Consequently, an I-It modality can preclude genuine dialogue. This aspect of Buber's perspective appeals to us because it captures our senses of how members of the dominant culture frequently seem to interact with "minority" persons or anyone else who seems "different" (e.g., homosexuals, disabled persons), as well as vice versa (i.e., "minority" persons may view majority individuals as objects, as stereotypical).

According to Johannesen (1971), six specific characteristics appear central to cultivating dialogue: genuineness, empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and a supportive climate. Because it is difficult to maintain a situational context where all of these dialogic elements exist, dialogue may not occur without much preparation, thought, and commitment. In fact, "pure dialogue," according to Buber (1965), seldom occurs in spite of such groundwork. Part of the difficulty of dialogue is that it is too idealistic, too elusive, too enchanting an idea to be precisely outlined and subsequently achieved (Grudin, 1996). These concerns notwithstanding, embracing the spirit of dialogue appears as a viable means to begin (continue?) the process by which healing and transformation can occur within the academy.

**Dialogic Moments Within Our Discussions**

Although our e-mail and phone interactions generated a great deal of insight, we cannot report that all of our exchanges represent dialogic moments. However, retrospectively, we realized that early sequences of exchanges set the stage for dialogue. Below we reproduce a series of e-mail messages that we wrote during the summer of 1998 because they
represent the most vivid "dialogic moment" of our e-mail and phone exchanges. This dialogue sheds light—a spotlight, that is!—on our experiences of dis/enchantment in the academy. It also increased our consciousness in terms of the complexity of our tears.

Brenda J.: I hope you both have had blessed days since our last posting. I've been working on a book chapter on Black feminist standpoint for an org[anizational] comm[unication] feminist reader, and the process has been quite a challenge. Lots of thoughts and revelations emerged that we might explore in our piece. I struggle with knowing where to begin, but I'll just jump in.

The idea of healing suggests the existence of pain or injury or suffering, doesn't it? Given that, I shall reflect a bit on painful or injurious aspects of being an "outsider within" the academy. A primary source of distress for me stems from my sense that I often am the only person (with the exception of one of my colleagues) who really is concerned about diversity issues. . . . I do not always speak up when I should, partially because I do not want them [my colleagues] to view me as hypersensitive or paranoid. Consequently, I'm frustrated with myself as much as I am with them. However, as I come to understand Gramsci's [1971] notion of hegemony [as cited in Mumby, 1987], I also understand better my own behaviors. This knowledge does not exonerate me, but it does help me to be mindful. Lately I feel resolute in my quest to resist, resist, resist. This resolve arose as a result of the consciousness-raising that occurred as I read and wrote about Black feminist standpoint epistemology, and as I continue to script my own intellectual autobiography. I look forward to being more forthcoming about my concerns and my ideas for how my department can seriously address diversity issues. I can no longer stand the silence.

I surprised myself today after I mailed my chapter to the editor. As I drove home, I began to cry. Usually I feel quite buoyant when I finish a major writing project. Not this time. Tears are welling even as I type these words, I cannot quite explain how I feel. However, I accept the tears as healing waters, and I trust that I will process my feelings as I continue to write and think about oppression and emancipation.

I'm excited about the graduate course that I will be teaching: Difference Matters in Organizational Communication. I wholeheartedly am following Patricia Hill Collins's (1991) advice regarding being creative in my marginality. Within the course, I will consciously and conscientiously enact socially constructed aspects of being a Black woman as I facilitate students' learning and growing. For instance, I will encourage students to discuss their emotional-subjective as well as rational-objective responses to readings. This will help me to promote healing for myself as well as the students. I believe that we never really will value
difference until we openly and honestly explore and voice our fear, shame, guilt, anger, and despair. Of course, we also will delve into positive feelings, such as joy, hope, and fearlessness. What feelings and thoughts do you have regarding the healing metaphor?

Mark: Although I wanted to respond to B.J.'s comments immediately, I found that it was important to reflect on them some first. I had an emotional reaction to your latest entry, QueenB. This was not unlike my responses to reading your recent research on Black feminist standpoint theory. Upon reflection—and rereading our collective dialogue thus far—I now can identify the source of my reaction. It was in response to the complicated, intense ways in which I saw BOTH pain/injury AND excitement/hope/healing in your comments. It reminded me of the sense of perplexity that I often feel when I find myself on the verge of tears. Because I was directly taught that one should “never let them see your pain,” I always fight back public tears while privately questioning the source of such an emotional outburst.

This past spring I organized a panel on diversity for NCA's National Ethics Conference. For the panel, I authored an autoethnographical paper on the catch-22 that many faculty of color must negotiate in terms of service in the academy. Following the panel, I found myself sitting around my kitchen table with two other panelists discussing our experiences (mostly painful) in academia. At one point in the wee hours of the morning, a woman asked me several poignantly questions: "Whom do you admire?" "What motivates your work?" "Where do you get your passion?" As I began to articulate my responses, I was overwhelmed by emotion—to the point where I couldn’t hold back the tears that literally took away my breath. What I couldn’t give voice to then was the complexity of those tears. It was one of the first times that I had publicly (probably because I was within the context of "home" with friends) been confronted with acknowledging the problematic positioning that I attempt to negotiate in/outside the academy. I was crying because my heroes are my close friends and family members—some living, but most dead—who have inspired my commitment to making a difference. They are the ones that I admire most; their abilities to maintain dignity in the midst of the daily oppressive insults poured on them by a society that renders them less valuable due to their race, sex, and socioeconomic standing are the source of my motivation.

Ironically, my "success" in the academy is the very thing that oftentimes isolates me from my friends and family members. So, my tears reflected a sense of pain, frustration, guilt, and sadness in realizing that in the process of making a difference in my chosen profession, I have inadvertently separated myself from my past—something that I had vowed never to do. With my success in the academy came relative privilege.
For the past 15 minutes, I have typed and retyped a couple of paragraphs in attempting to give voice to the sources of pain and frustration in the academy. I am having great difficulty in articulating my feelings... but one thing that I got from B.J.'s post was that IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE HEALING OF OTHERS, WE MUST ENGAGE FIRST IN THE PROCESS OF SELF-HEALING. This includes "naming" those things that cause us pain, suffering, and frustration as well as acknowledging that we do, in fact, experience such emotions. I still am hesitant to reveal this stuff, probably because I have worked so hard to construct a public image of independence, strength, and control. Opening yourself up in this regard makes you more vulnerable—or does it make you less vulnerable?? Hmm.

One last thing... a couple weeks back I read an article by Kent Ono that is something that I think we all should read. It is called "A Letter/ Essay I've Been Longing to Write in My Personal/Academic Voice" (Western Journal of Communication, 61(1), 114–125). It's a letter that he writes to his mother about his experiences in the academy... it's pretty powerful stuff. Be blessed, Mark.

Brenda J.: Mark, thank you. You captured so much of what I was trying to convey, and you took it further. Your comments moved me and inspired me. As I continue to think and feel about the notion of healing, I wonder if it's necessary to acknowledge and realize that you need to heal before you can heal. Something like 12-step programs that (I think) begin with acknowledging that, for instance, you are an alcoholic. Can healing occur if you're oblivious to your pain, wounds, or chronic illness? I think not. Consequently, it seems imperative that those persons who are in denial snap out of it. One of my missions is to illuminate "isms" for those who do not seem to think that they exist, or who think that they occur only through blatant behaviors, who seem to believe that they are never guilty of them. I also have had to awaken myself. My work on Black feminist standpoint has truly helped me to raise my consciousness. It also helped me to see a need for many marginalized persons to recognize that they are indeed marginalized and oppressed. I believe it is easy for some of us [in the academy] to be lulled into a sense of complacency, to buy the lie that we are unique, "special" versions of whatever group we embody. As I think about my earlier comments regarding why I have only recently become aware and radical, I believe that I was guilty of a type of blindness and separation that allowed me to be insulated. Thank goodness I've lifted the veils and allowed myself to be drawn back to reality! Mark, you're absolutely right about what you read in my comments. I feel a sense of "both pain/injury and excitement/hope/healing." I also agree a thousand percent that in order to facilitate the healing of others we must engage first in the process of self-healing.
Margarita: Buenos días to you both. I've been thinking about the healing metaphor and realized that I've been engaging in the process of healing since I started exploring Chicana feminist theory. The core of being a Chicana feminist is learning to be self-reflective, which also entails a willingness to "openly and honestly explore and voice our fear, shame, guilt, anger, and despair," as well as delving into our positive feelings (Allen, 1998).

Over the past 2 years, I've been engaging in this healing process in my personal life, but more so in the classroom. At times I've questioned the value of doing this, as it has left me vulnerable to cruel comments of students on my FCQs [faculty course questionnaires—students' evaluations of a course]. Most negative comments and, interesting enough, most of the positive ones focus on my passion for teaching about difference. For some students this passion is a blessing that motivates them into the realm of empathy and understanding. However, one student had a different perspective: "This course didn't concretely focus on communication, although Margarita clearly is knowledgeable about the subject. However, many times she borders upon being too self-righteous—it's difficult to get over that."

When I first read the comment about my being self-righteous, I was offended. Then I remembered what I usually tell my students over and over again. "If you are offended by something I say, or by something someone else says in this class, work at exploring why? Ask yourself, why do I feel angry, insulted, or pained?" I've always viewed myself as an open-minded individual who has the ability to be intersubjective. However, from this accusation and self-reflection, I learned that I was indeed being self-righteous through my talk.

Though not my intent, I was communicating in ways that led some students to view me as all knowing and unwilling to listen to their perspectives of reality. Since these FCQs, I have been working on learning new ways of communicating with students, as well as with the people I love. I do not want to appear as all knowing, because I know that I am not. As the old saying goes, the more I learn, the more I realize how little I really know.

For me, healing comes from understanding the world around me. In particular from embracing and deconstructing the words that people use to describe me. . . . Growth can come only when we factor in all the elements that influence who we are. Personal growth can not occur without interaction; put me in a cave, close it up, and isolate me from the world, and I will die, if not physically, mentally. Healing is painful. Over the past 2 years I have been slowly healing from the pain that comes from hating. I hated the privilege that came to White people born into this White world I am now immersed in. I hated the pain that came
when I thought of the invisibility of my people and the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. I hated that I had had my identity stripped from me as a child, and more than anything, I hated being Brown.

However, I did not know I hated these things until I started the process of healing. This path opened up to me when I began teaching Chicana feminist theory courses. My throat tightens and tears stream down my face no matter how many times I show the video in class of the 1970 L.A. Vietnam moratorium, particularly during the shooting, beating, and killing of our people who had just minutes before been singing and dancing while they held onto children, wives, husbands, lovers, and mothers. The tears well up now as I write about the pain that comes from remembering the smells, the voices, the music, and the laughter that was squelched by brutality.

Such classroom experiences have helped me to heal by openly sharing the pain, suffering, and exploitation people of color have endured and continue to endure. Over the past 2 years I’ve learned to love myself and replace the hate I once held with compassion and understanding. I teach my [Anglo] students to understand White privilege, and they have taught me that they are willing to learn and change. Some express much anger, guilt, and self-hatred during the course of the semester. At first I worried that my work was doing more harm than good. However, I came to see that [many of] my students also needed to “openly and honestly explore and voice [their own fears,] shame, guilt, anger, and despair” before they could heal. Thus, I built into my course curriculum self-reflection papers that helped students through this process. My students of color also go through a similar process. The self-reflection papers tend to work for them as well, but they need more. Thus, I befriend them and work with them outside of class. I invite them to my home, and we talk about the importance of voicing their anger, hatred, and discomfort to each other, as well as to the Anglo people in the class. I have been blessed with watching some of my students of color, as well as some of my Anglo students, begin the healing process by the end of the semester. I have watched them allow themselves to be vulnerable and open about what they feel and who they are. Yes, by becoming vulnerable we open ourselves up to potential criticism and pain, but without taking such risks nothing changes. Healing and personal growth are stimulated when we are honest and open with ourselves, as well as with those we wish to influence. Like both of you, I too believe that “in order to facilitate the healing of others, we must engage in the process of self-healing first.”

May the spirits guide your life paths, Margarita.

Sharing these feelings and thoughts helped us to open up to one another. As we reflected on these messages, we discerned several issues
that help us to feel hopeful for healing. First, we recognize the importance of telling and analyzing everyday experiences. In particular, our discussion helped us to understand how we experience dis/enantchantment in similar and different ways within particular contexts. Second, this "dialogic moment" captures the intricate ways in which our tears symbolize articulated and muted expressions of dis/enantchantment. Our exchanges reflect the complexity of thoughts and emotions that trigger tears—both expected and unexpected. In addition, the multidimensional nature of tears (tears that reflect joy, pain, fear, and so on) reveals the intricate, inextricable ties between rational thought and emotion. Third, this excerpt demonstrates the value of frank exchanges on "personal" topics that are typically taboo.

We did not label this exchange as dialogic until after it had occurred, and once Mark recommended that we consider the applicability of dialogue to our project. After we explored related literature, we were pleased to see its potential. Moreover, when we analyzed the preceding series of messages and related contextual issues, we realized that we unknowingly had established a climate conducive to dialogue.

We identified in these interactions the characteristics of dialogue (genuineness, empathic understanding, unconditional positive regard, presentness, spirit of mutual equality, and a supportive climate) that Johannesen (1971) cites. We were open to one another's experiences and viewpoints, despite the potential to yield to mores associated with conventional roles (e.g., Brenda J. serves as dissertation advisor for Margarita). We also offered empathic understanding with one another as we sought to clarify one another's feelings. We displayed unconditional positive regard for another, even when we disagreed. Although each of us was deeply involved in numerous other professional and personal commitments, we fully engaged with one another whenever we interacted. Finally, we treated each other with mutual respect and equality, and we established and maintained a climate of psychological support. Following this pivotal set of messages, we decided to explore the complexity of our experiences in the academy that resulted in tears of dis/enantchantment.

The Complexity of Our Tears

Through a deeper probing, we discovered the powerfully productive role that tears play/have played for us. In addition to serving as a healthy means of cleansing, tears also facilitated clarity in terms of the crucial mission that we feel called to fulfill in higher education. Consider the following excerpt from a book chapter that Bj (Allen, in press) wrote, and which she shared with us in an e-mail message:
Brenda J.: While writing a draft of this chapter, I felt frustrated because I could not figure out how to express a thought. Unexpectedly, a picture flashed in my mind of my mother, Thelma L. Allen, leaving home on cold, icy nights to work the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift at the post office (in a windowless building under the watchful eye of a ruthless supervisor). I recalled also several times when she resisted authority, often in defense of her children, whom she raised by herself. I thought also of Ella Josephine Baker, a Black woman whose autobiography I recently read (Grant, 1998). Miss Baker was a quiet, dignified, yet determined activist who played a crucial but unheralded role in the civil rights movement. Her story fascinated, moved, and inspired me. I paused a few moments to reflect upon these two Black women’s lives. Although tears blurred my sight, in my mind I saw clearly what to write. I wiped my eyes and picked up my pen. From my renewed angle of vision, I continued to record my ideas.

Brenda J.’s reflections vividly illustrate how inextricably linked several emotions are within one set of tears. The complexity of tears is symbolized through the ways in which they simultaneously reflect pain and joy, pride and shame, as well as inspiration and despair. Interestingly, the more we critically analyzed times when we found ourselves on the verge of tears, the more we recognized that multiple emotions and thoughts informed our experiences, as the following message illustrates:

Mark: There is one particular circumstance within the academy that consistently moves me to tears: Commencement activities. Ironically, my own graduation ceremony (undergraduate, that is . . . I skipped the other two because they seemed—at the time—like an anticlimactic ritual of sorts) was relatively emotionless. I mean I experienced the “natural” excitement, but little else. Beginning with my very first graduation on the other side (as a faculty member), it has been drastically different. As soon as I put on my regalia, emotions began to build. I look in the mirror and see my parents and grandparents’ dream (and subsequently my own) fulfilled. This is something that I’ve come to recognize fairly recently. It has been facilitated by a family ritual that includes all of my children (ages 3, 4 1/2, and 6) trying on my hood/gown . . . as I “announce” their names and anticipated educational accomplishments. Between the laughter fueled by their attempts to walk around the living room in these oversized garments and tears reflecting how these children represent a legacy of ancestors who were denied opportunities for quality education because of race, I am overwhelmed with emotion. Once at graduation, the tears well up in my eyes as soon as I hear “Pomp and Circumstance.” It’s like clockwork. Brenda J., you were right on target
recently when you insightfully surmised that these tears represent my enchantment with the academy and the "magic" that the ivory tower holds for people. It represents a source of empowerment, a means to improve your life condition, and—for some—the essence of an extended multigenerational family's dream. It also represents a place of privilege, one that was or is denied to many people. This hit me hard at my most recent commencement (the first time I've seen the hooding ceremony for new PhDs). In this particular ceremony, a good number of people of color were hooded. As is often the case, their family and friends in the audience celebrated more passionately than their European American counterparts. Each time I saw their emotional outburst—shouting, chanting, waving, jumping up and down—I began to understand what this accomplishment symbolizes for so many of us. It is a testimony of our ancestors. A case where we beat the odds. It's not another "raisin in the sun," but a dream fulfilled. A promise for the future. Clearly, the source of these tears is connected to the enchanting nature of the academy and what it represents in our society (success, intellect, free market of ideas, etc.). However, my tears are also reflective of all of the mistreatment, dehumanization, and lost opportunities of past ancestors. It reminds me of Wiley's (1991) response to "why Black people tend to shout." He wrote that "Black people are too smart not to shout, especially when happiness comes in for a short visit before it has to go on down the road" (Wiley, 1991, p. 2).

Margarita (replying to Mark's message further reveals the complexity of emotions): Mark, your comments brought more tears than anything else has in a very long time. I was thinking about the two graduations I've had over the last 11 years. Each time I've had two family members, other than my children, present and several friends. In thinking about graduating with a PhD in a year or so, I'm saddened to think that only one of my brothers will probably be able to attend. He, one of his daughters, and I are the only three, out of more than 300 grown descendants of my grandparents, to graduate from college. I am the first to attend college and will be the first to receive a PhD.

When I go home for visits, I can't talk to family about my work or research, because they don't understand. To them, I am wasting my time in school when I should be working and living close to my family. I remember going home 3 years ago and having my little brother teasingly call me a coconut, White on the inside, Brown on the outside. Though he was teasing, his words indicated how different I had become. Indeed, I'm in a privileged space. At times; I'm saddened by the disparity that exists between and betwixt the two worlds I live in. I see my young cousins, nephews, and nieces struggling as they resist the encroachment
of affluent retirees and developers who strive for the expansion and colonization of yet another rural community. I often wonder what good my work does people like these back home? How is what I study and write about going to help them to stay out of a legal system that is constantly creating new and harsher laws that are, intentionally or not, putting more and more of our young men and women in prison, with little hope of rehabilitation?

I'm indeed living a double life. When I go home, I'm a *veterana*, a elder to the peewee locos who look up to me with respect when my little brother introduces me in this manner. When I'm here, in this academic environment, I'm a graduate student, researcher, and, at times, a professor, as many of my students call me . . . I struggle with the notion of teaching students how to acquire cultural competence. In other words, I help provide students, the majority being Anglo, the tools to work with and among difference. Meanwhile, my *raza* suffer under an oppressive system that relegates them to the status of crop pickers, housekeepers, factory workers, packing shed workers, and motel maids. I'm conflicted on the one hand, because I know I can't directly help those I've left behind, yet elated at the notion that my students may develop a deeper understanding of the plight of people of color in this country, and maybe even reach out to our communities. The tears stream down my face as I think about how torn I feel having one foot in the barrio and the other in academia. I continually ask myself, can I, such an insignificant creature in this vast universe, really make a difference? How long must we wait before we have significant numbers of Chicanos and Chicanas shouting with excitement and pride as they knowingly watch the hooding of their peers?

Once again, we recognized and felt the complexity of our experiences and emotions. Mark and Margarita's messages reveal the complexities of identity and the conflicts that arise between privilege and penalty, insider-outsider social positioning, and the similarities and differences between and among racial-ethnic group members. For instance, similar to many Chicanas in U.S. society who break from traditional roles, Margarita faces the complexities of her identities: She is sister, mother, grandmother, researcher, Chicana, American, graduate student, Brown woman, "professor," and even a "coconut." These social constructions relegate her to the status of outsider-within each of the realms that lead to her dis/enchantment with the academy. She is both enchanted with the privileged position that comes with being able to influence the Anglo students whom she teaches, while disenchanted by the societal barriers that hinder the participation of more Chicanos and Chicanas in higher education. Moreover, Margarita's discussion of her struggles in teaching
implies her disenchanted role within the system that
oppresses her people. On the other hand, she feels enchantment with the
hopeful possibilities of influencing those whom she might teach, espe-
ially members of the dominant race.

Margarita also despairs because her community cannot easily be freed
from a history of oppression that continues to manifest itself. A particu-
lar source of pain is the notion of indifference her family seems to ex-
hbit to the “magic” of the ivory tower. Her turmoil arises not only
because of these indifferences, but also from realizing that she is an out-
sider within her family, her community, and the academy. We discerned
a similar epiphany within Mark’s comments about the irony of gaining
some level of success by writing from his cultural perspective, only to
have his success in the academy ultimately cause some perceptual dis-
tance from others in that very group.

Additional probes into the complexity of our tears allowed us to dis-
cover a lesson we learned as children and have relied upon as we maneu-
ver through institutions of higher learning: Never let “them” see you
cry. We were surprised at the times we could recall not allowing our-
selves to express the complexity of our emotions and thoughts through
our tears. Most often we refused to cry in front of others because we
were afraid that they would interpret our tears as a sign of weakness or
embarrassment. We feared that our tears might let others know that we
were hurting, or that others might view us in condescending ways, as
Brenda J. recalled:

When I was viewing a film about “Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes” [Jane Elliott’s well-known
experiment dealing with prejudice] with my colleagues during a faculty retreat, I tried
initially to block my tears. I asked myself why I was holding back, and I realized that at
some level I didn’t want them to feel badly for ME. That felt weird, because it seemed
that I was somehow trying to protect them. I decided that it might be healthier for them
to see that I do feel passionately about these issues.

Brenda J.’s experience reveals another important point about dis/en-
chanting tears. Our tears serve as informational cues to others. Tearful
expressions can communicate to our colleagues and students how we
think and feel about certain issues. However, holding back our tears
may block authentic communication. It also can deprive communica-
tors of insight on just how dis/enchanting the academy can be for mem-
ers of marginalized groups.

Not-Even-Close-to-Being-Final Conclusions
Each of us began this project with one thing in common: We had found
hope, respite, understanding, direction, and healing in feminist stand-
point theories, and we wanted to explore these theories for insight about how to deal with difference matters in the academy. We find it interesting that attempting to engage in dialogue in the colloquial sense served as the impetus for the project, and it resurfaced as central to self- and collective healing. We feel gratified to have discovered within our own discipline a theoretical framework that provides (a) guidance for how to more fully articulate and understand our dis/enchantments within the academy, and (b) a strategy for how to address them.

Through our collaborative effort, we came to recognize the important role that dialogue can play in healing and transforming, for both individuals and the collective, (in)difference in institutions of higher learning. One specific benefit of our attempts to engage in dialogue was utilizing one another to maximize our use of the margins as a "space of radical openness" (hooks, 1990, p. 145). In this regard, we have discovered the utility of choosing to remain on the margins even though we may be able to negotiate a status that renders us more insiders than outsiders. Our positioning as outsiders-within allowed us to question the appropriateness of what is normalized at the center of the academy with no threat of jeopardizing our positioning (such would not be the case if we were striving for "insider" status). Although undeniably ideal, this strategic form of resistance facilitates the possibility—however remote—that boundaries between insiders, outsiders-within, and outsiders will become increasingly blurred. We believe that such a change will promote an increased level of consciousness for every member of the academy, especially in terms of her or his own dis/enchantment.

For any number of reasons, using the margins as a site of resistance can be quite difficult. Operating within a space of radical openness makes us both more and less vulnerable. Giving voice to what and how we feel presents others with information that may be used to legitimate efforts to problematize difference in the academy. Simultaneously, however, our radical openness frees us of experiencing the margins in isolation and empowers us to confront our dis/enchantment. By doing so, we also set the stage for dialogue to emerge across experiences. However, as the following e-mail from Mark reveals, attempting to engage in dialogue prematurely may simply reinforce existing dominant ideologies of (in)difference.

Mark: I'm anxious to get this piece published, but in a very real sense, I'm sort of hesitant and anxious. Unlike you, QueenB, I've never put myself "out there" in my scholarship before. Yeah, sure, I've invested in my research in very real ways, but this investment hasn't involved personal disclosures about things that generate dis/enchantment. I wonder how people will respond—both those who know me (and my work) as well as those who do not. My worst fear is that one of two things will
happen. First, individuals will see the articulation of our lived experiences as “crying over spilled milk”—bringing attention to relatively insignificant things that others deal with on a daily basis. Second, and even more disturbing, is the potential for some readers to feel sympathy for us having read our autoethnographical reflections. And while this second response may provoke some increased understanding for the lived experiences of those traditionally marginalized in the academy, it also works to reinforce the existing power dynamics. So, instead of minimizing our experiences as insubstantial or taking a sympathetic stance to our plight, I'm hoping that each reader will see her or his own disenchantment with the academy. As we have found, such self-reflexivity can be intense but a crucial step toward self- and other-healing.

These comments reflect a central concern: “We fear those who speak about us, [but] who do not speak to us and with us” (hooks, 1990, p. 152). The comments also communicate a basic truth that emerged within our dialogue: Self-awareness (healing) must preclude collective-awareness (healing). As we strive for collective dialogue, we must not expect the process to be easy or automatic. The three of us had the advantage of having similar concerns and experiences, and we relied on these as a core force for appreciating and understanding our differences. In other situations, setting the stage of dialogue may require significantly larger investments in time, energy, and commitment. Yet, we must persist, and we must remain hopeful because dialogue cannot exist without hope (Freire, 1971).

When we began our summer conversation, we did not anticipate the outcomes that emerged. We discovered the importance of beginning with ourselves, and we urge you to do the same. As we engage in self-healing, we must be honest with ourselves. We must reflect upon our lives. We must consider, as feminist standpoint cautions us, the impact of sociohistorical as well as local contexts. We need to read and to develop scholarship that helps us to understand relevant issues. We need to recognize our own complicity in perpetuating indifference. Furthermore, as dialogic ontology allows, we must be willing to be changed.

As Buber's (1958, 1965) conception promises, we could not have imagined the benefits of our dialogue, in both tangible and intangible ways. In addition to engaging our disenchantment in the academy at overwhelmingly productive levels, we have also developed a greater awareness and appreciation of the role that theory can serve in self- and collective healing. Specifically, the theoretical framework associated with "dialogic complexity" appears to centralize much of what we have learned. Dialogic complexity describes a relational system of understanding that is characterized by a "both-and" (as compared to an either-or) orientation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Reflectively, we can see this frame-
work within many of the epiphanies that emerged out of our interactions. Due to space limitations, we will highlight two major areas.

First, we came to understand that the essence of dialogue is consistent with the both-and orientation of feminist standpoint theories in terms of simultaneously giving attention to the similarities and differences inherent in different marginalized groups (i.e., Orbe, 1998a). According to Bakhtin (1984), engaging in dialogue involves unifying clearly differentiated voices with one another within a process that simultaneously recognizes similarities and differences (see also Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). Second, the process of creating this paper revealed the centrality of dialogic complexity to various elements of our dialogue or analysis. This awareness emerged only through the constant process of ethnographic reflexivity. We clearly discerned a both-and orientation in our descriptions of autoethnography. By utilizing this methodological framework, we abandoned traditional scholarship that attempts to dichotomize the researcher and the researched. Interestingly, this decision invoked a process that facilitated an increased awareness of how dialogic complexity captures the essence of our lived experiences in the academy.

For example, we recognized how futile it was to attempt to articulate how we experience enchantment or disenchantment, healing or pain, and privilege or penalty. Through our dialogue, we came to understand the complexities of how our lives in the academy simultaneously involve experiences, emotions, or positions that cannot be understood in traditional either-or dichotomies. Upon greater reflection, we now can identify existing literature that addresses the ideas, if not the specific language, of dialogic complexity (see, for example, Collins, 1991, and Martin & Nakayama, 1999, for their treatment of privilege–penalty and privilege–disadvantage, respectively). However, the initial process of self- and collective discovery, in terms of theorizing our dis/enchantment within in the academy, was facilitated through our commitment to openly discuss our experiences with one another.

We also recognized that we had experienced powerful events in the academy that we might reasonably designate as dialogic moments. For instance, we saw traces in Margarita’s message about how she processed her students’ feedback about being self-righteous and accordingly changed her attitude and her communication style. Upon recalling other such moments, we found that most of them related to our roles as teachers, specifically to times when we made conscientious efforts to “meet” students (especially Caucasians) as we dealt with difference matters. Our experiences were fraught with negative and positive emotions. For instance, in a reflection about being frustrated with a group of students in an intercultural communication course, Mark described feelings of relief and joy after a spontaneous moment when students finally opened
up. Similarly, Margarita shared a highly emotional classroom confrontation and ensuing private conversation with a White student that ended in increased understanding between her and the student. These stories and others further reinforce the potential of dialogue, and they provide exemplars for how to engage in dialogue.

Recalling these types of experiences contributed to our sense of enchantment as well as renewal. They also encouraged us to enact dialogic attitudes in academic situations outside our roles as teachers. For instance, the review process for this article included a series of exchanges that illustrate to us both the needs and possibilities for self-healing in our professional relationships. One of our anonymous reviewers sent lengthy comments, to which our initial response was defensive. We characterized the reviewer among ourselves as a stereotypical member of the dominant culture (Brenda J. even found herself using masculine pronouns to refer to this person). Upon reflection, Brenda J. realized that we had adopted an I–It stance and attributed that stance to the reviewer as well. She struggled against the temptation to objectify the reviewer and instead chose to accept the comments as if the person had offered them in alliance, from an I–Thou stance. We recounted this experience in a subsequent draft of this article, to which the reviewer responded:

I can appreciate the satisfaction of turning a situation around so that you feel you have overcome defensiveness and acted in a humane manner. But you are right to think that I tried to make your revision process more difficult or that I failed to respond to the passion and risks of your work. I’m glad you were able to recast my comments and sorry that the length and tone of them caused you such defensiveness. Perhaps you realize this—otherwise, how could you recast my comments “as if” they were offered from an “I–Thou” stance without making a sham of that relationship? I ask you to reflect on your example of the reviewer—is it offered from an “I–Thou” stance or does it perpetuate the “I–It” stance that may well be a dimension of our disciplinary disenchantment? Doesn’t your example engage in the very practices you seek to transform?

The reviewer’s response seemed defensive, and we found ourselves at an emotional stalemate—our characterizations countered by the reviewer’s characterizations, with the possibility of genuine interaction thwarted by the professional distance of the anonymous review process. We might have remained strangers locked into stereotypical caricatures, even of ourselves, except for the efforts of Patricia Geist, the special issue editor, who encouraged us to contact each other. The reviewer’s reaction spoke for us all: “I hesitate because our experience of each other has been hurtful. But I am willing to do so with all authors, if we can undertake such a meeting in the spirit of dialogue to promote mutual empathy and healing.” Consequently, Brenda J. talked by phone with
Patty Sotirin, the reviewer, and the outcome was transformative, as she notes in an e-mail to Margarita and Mark:

Brenda J.: Our conversation, no our dialogue, about this experience helped us to generate ideas for how we can transform the academy that align wonderfully with our paper. I'm even more excited now about the possibilities and pleased that, thanks to Patricia (Geist), we [Patty and I] were able to enact the very type of dialogue that we [Brenda J., Mark, and Margarita] advocate.

During their conversation, Brenda J. and Patty recast the review process as a collaboration and an opportunity for mutual engagement, not only with each other's work but, more importantly, with each other. They cowrote the previous two paragraphs about the review process, but more importantly, both felt a momentary intimacy and mutual supportiveness against the common deprecations and institutionalized isolations of life in the academy.

Based upon this experience, we recommend transforming the review process so that reviewers and authors talk openly with one another. The current anonymous, rationalistic review process seems to lend itself to an I-It orientation, despite the intentions of the reviewers and authors. Although Blair et al. (1994) confront the oppressive nature of the review process, we believe that we can go further than their counterpower approach by encouraging a model of the review process inspired by dialogue. Through mutual engagement and collaborative interactions, we can strengthen our connections with one another as scholars, and also become more human in the process. If we transform the review process into an opportunity to experience the enchantment of shared passions, we can reconstitute one another, as Buber (1958, 1965) contended, both personally and professionally. We acknowledge that this radical suggestion has complex implications, and we will not even try to offer suggestions for how to implement it. Rather, we hope that our experience offers inspiration.

In closing, we hope that we have provided insights for engaging dis/enchantment and (in)difference in the academy. Certainly we feel a sense of renewal and hope because our tears have washed away some of our pain, even as they have illuminated some of our joys. The process of collaboration was especially meaningful for us. The insights generated in this article would not have occurred if any one of us had attempted to write about this topic individually. Writing this article has helped us recognize our potential to be transformed as well as our potential to transform the academy. We do not feel quite as disenchanted as we did when we began to write this paper, partly because we sense how inseparable enchantment is from disenchanted, healing from pain, and privi-
lege from penalty. We expect that our quests to make a difference in the academy and in our society will be brought about only through a constant negotiation of these realities. Our attempts to legitimize difference within the academy are inextricably tied to your desire to engage in dialogue with us and with one another. As we attempt to explore difference matters, we surely will experience a variety of feelings. Sometimes we may need to shed tears. We pray that those times will be transformative, and we hope to see you at the narrow ridge.

Some journals offer the option for reviewers to disclose their identity. For instance, as a member of the Howard Journal of Communications editorial board, Brenda J. agreed to be identified to an author whose paper she thought the editor should reject. The author contacted Brenda to thank her for her comments and ask for her assistance in reworking the manuscript.

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