This narrative assignment asks you to interrogate your own positionality as you tell stories about your experiences and beliefs. **Your writing must be at least 4 pages long or 16 frames (ppt, I-movie, etc).** Be prepared to read/show a 2-minute excerpt of your narrative to the class.

Please choose 1 of the 5 themes listed here for your narrative. Remember that this is a narrative which means that you are trying, as much as possible, to SHOW your stories (without too much of those Hallmark-commercial-unreal-happy-endings). As you will see below, you are only receiving a one-paragraph overview of each of these 5 topics in order to leave as much space and creative flexibility as possible. If some of these topics sound similar, that is okay. It simply means that you have overlapping experiences.

The 5 choices that you have for your narrative come from the ideas about “cultural capital” that Yosso outlined. For many years, majority scholars have written about the kinds of “social” and “cultural” “capital” that white, wealthy, suburban, Christian, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon, English monolingual students have and argue that these forms of “capital” should be taught to groups who fall outside of the aforementioned categories in order for them to succeed. As you can see now, CRT scholars have come back by saying, nope, it ain’t so: “non-dominant groups” have their own “capital” and THAT should be the basis of how children are also taught, understood, and heard. We will take on that idea with this project.

**Your 5 Choices**

A Narrative about “Aspirational Capital”: This kind of “capital” is about your ability to maintain a hope and vision for a brighter future despite what may have been impossible odds in your life. In African American Language, we call this “makin a way outta no way.” If you choose this kind of narrative, show us how and why you have overcome an adversity in your life (remember to locate this adversity in terms of your own positionality). How did you make a way outta no way? What did you do to get here today and why? Remember, you are not constructing another western hero epic. You are going against that in order to show that the very cultural system or group to which you see yourself as belonging gave you the tools to move forward, despite the fact that the dominant culture denigrates that very group or system.

A Narrative about “Linguistic Capital”: This kind of “capital” is about the intellectual and social skills that you have if you can maneuver in more than one language, in more than one style, in more than one culture’s/community’s language codes. If you choose this kind of narrative, re-visit and creatively explore your own language autobiography (remember to locate this language autobiography in terms of your own positionality.) Really take us back to the time when you realized differences regarding language (positive or negative) and how that affected you. What did you do and why? What do you think of this today? How do you think that impacted you? Or, what do you do, linguistically, in different situations and why? Describe some of these situations—actually
language them out on the page—do not just use English or standardized English, for that matter. Use all the languages and Englishes that you know and live in.

A Narrative about “Familial Capital”: This kind of “capital” is about the systems of knowledge that your family and extended family have provided in your life by instilling their memories and cultural values. Langston Hughes captured this in his very popular poem where a mother repeatedly tells her son: “Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair.” The idea is that the stories, (repeated) warnings, expectations, or legacies handed down through your family members shape who you are and how you respond to situations outside of home. If you choose this kind of narrative, tell us about a story, tradition, saying, belief system, etc. of your own family (remember to locate yourself and your family in terms of your own positionality) that falls outside of what the dominant or mainstream culture values. How has this influenced you? Did this ever cause conflict with peers, teachers, administrators, institutions, etc.? If so, what did you do about it? What do you think of this today? How do you think that has impacted you?

A Narrative about “Social Capital”: This kind of “capital” is about the community resources (church, after-school program, project, cultural organization, peer group, etc.) that have helped you to become who you are. If you choose this kind of a narrative, tell us about a community, civic, religious, peer, etc. affiliation that has played an important role in your own life (remember to locate this affiliation in terms of your own positionality) that falls outside of what the dominant or mainstream culture values. Take us inside of this resource so that we can see, feel, and hear who you are there. How do you think these connections in your life have impacted you?

A Narrative about “Navigational Capital” and “Resistant Capital”: These kinds of “capital” are about those things that you believe have helped you and others to confront oppression and provide unique social skills, psychological resilience, and cultural values. Think about people like Bob Marley who famously stressed: “Rastaman, live up!” even when it was not accepted. If you chose this kind of narrative, tell us about 1 or 2 texts and/or events (book, song, artist, artpiece, style, experiences, etc.) that you feel has taught you how one expresses (cultural) resistance to oppression and/or the status quo. How does this impact you? Why are you connected to this? Why are you drawn to this? How do you think these connections in your life have impacted you?

You could do this as one story. Or, you could have a series of connected, mini-stories (like mini-chapters).

In terms of grading, you will need to make sure that you include all of the following:
1. Use a creative title and create an edited and well-crafted narrative
2. Write an engaging text that illustrates who you are with detailed personal stories
3. Construct an implicit argument about your “cultural capital” / community cultural wealth throughout your writing…..remember you are counter-storytelling, not storytelling
4. Construct an explicit argument about the ways that your community cultural wealth challenges dominant culture

In-Class Writing to Get the Pen, Film, Images, and/or Keyboard Flowin’

Choose one for now….

“Aspirational Capital”: Think back on a time when you didn’t know your own strength, didn’t think you would make it through, but did (obviously, since you are here)? What happened? What did you learn? How did this make you the person you are today? What is your advice to others who have been through what you have endured AND those not like you?
“Linguistic Capital”: Tell about a time when you were: 1) confronted with learning a new language; 2) felt that you were an outsider because of language; 3) formed unique, close bonds (with family or peers) because of language; OR 4) could not form bonds with family because of language. What happened? What did you learn? How did this make you the person you are today? What is your advice to others like you AND those not like you? [Try to capture the different language and sounds in your actual writing too]

“Familial Capital”: Think back on a story, a wise saying, or a piece of advice that someone in your family told you. What is your relationship with this person? How did these words impact you? When and where did these words ever help you? What happened? What did you learn? How did this make you the person you are today? What would you tell this person today about this wisdom they gave to you? What is your advice to others like you AND those not like you?

“Social Capital”: Is there a community resource, church, after-school program, cultural organization, peer group, team, etc. that has helped you to become who you are. How did you become a part of this and why? What happened? Who are the people there and what are they like (let us see, her, feel them)? What have you learned? How has this resource made you the person that you are today? What is your advice to others like you AND those not like you?

“Navigational Capital” and “Resistant Capital”: Is there a text and/or event (music, artist, style of expression, etc.) that you feel has taught you how to express yourself? How to resist oppression and/or the status quo? How to be unique? How does this impact you? Why are you connected to this? How did you become a part of this and why? What happened? Are there others who you bond with because of this and what are they like (let us see, her, feel them)? What have you learned? How has this resource made you the person that you are today? What is your advice to others like you AND those not like you?

Now go back and look at what you wrote...
How does this story typify what CRTists have called community cultural wealth? Why might this community cultural wealth be important?

The images and symbols at the left represent Sankofa.

Sankofa is the mythic bird that flies forward but is constantly looking backward with an egg in her mouth, where the egg symbolizes the future. In the Akan language, the concept is expressed as: “s wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki,” which translates to "it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot."

Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone or have been stripped of, we can reclaim, revive, preserve, and represent.

Source: ADINKRA TATTOO GALLERY
http://www.adinkra.org/htmls/tattoos.htm