McGinley, W., & Kamberelis, G. (1996). Maniac Magee and Ragtime Tumpie: Children Negotiating Self and World through Reading and Writing. Research in the Teaching of English, 30, 1-39. Copyright 1996 by the National Council of Teachers of English. This article has been posted online with the permission of the publisher. This work may be downloaded only. It may not be copied or used for any purpose other than scholarship.

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Children Negotiating Self and World Through Reading and Writing

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76

ining and participating in the public sphere. More specifically, she Theoretical Background

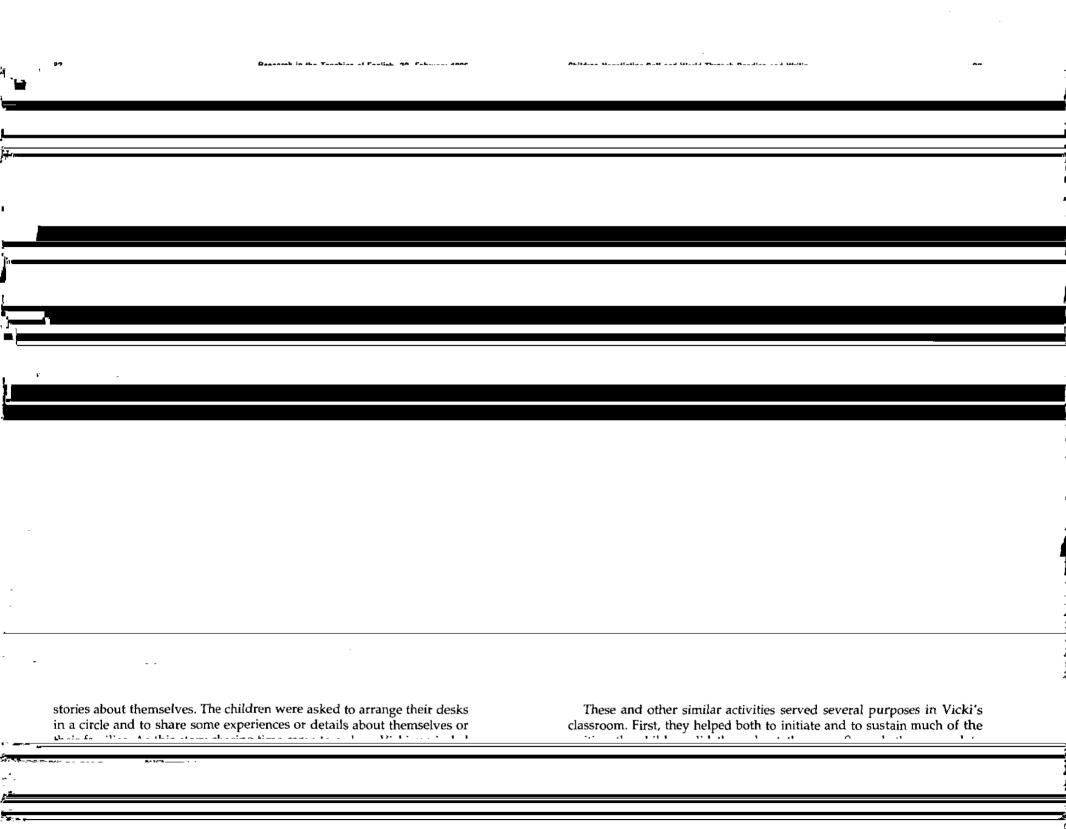
Gundlach, 1981, 1982; Newkirk, 1989). Writing has also been reported to serve certain "mimetic" functions (e.g. Gundlach, 1981; Shuman

In the area of reading, recent interest in the transactional nature of literary understanding (e.g. Rosenblatt 1978) has snawned two kinds of

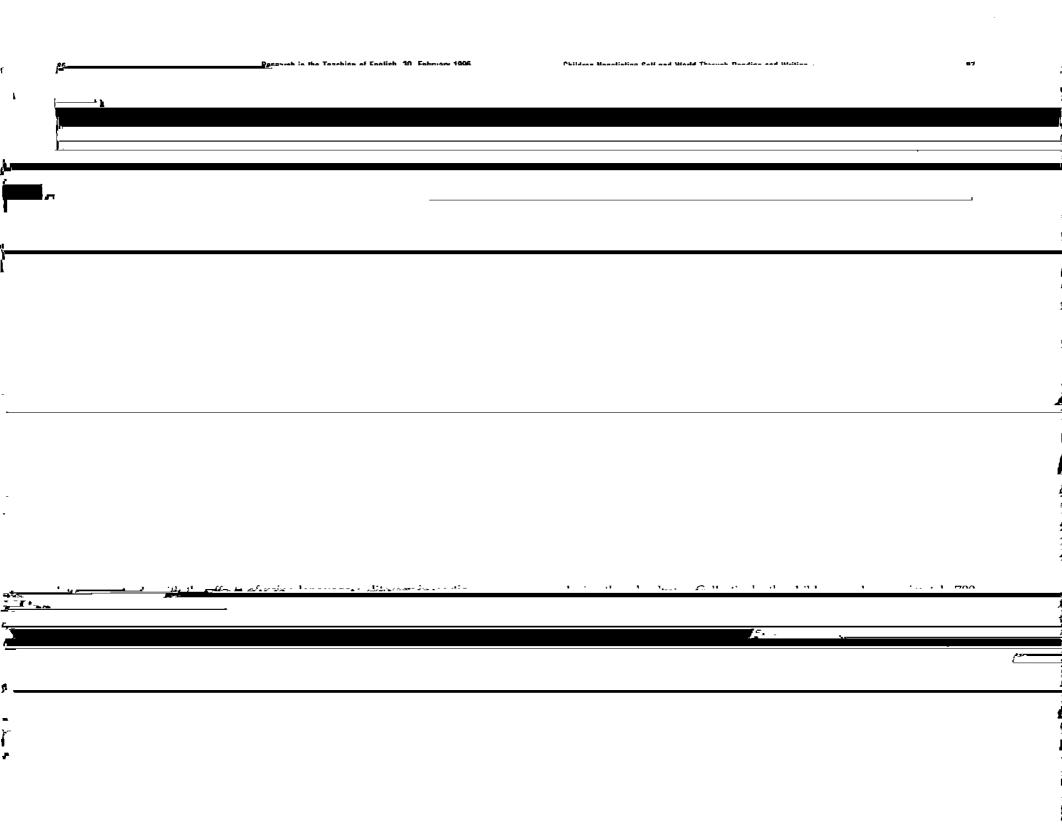
1096 Whale & Dakinson 1079) Mimotics without involved modeling the

and of the board of the similar the intermedation processes that the derivative

Research in the Teaching of English, 30, February 1998 Children Negotiating Self and World Through Reading and Writing 81 research project. These visits eventually led to several research projects, Method



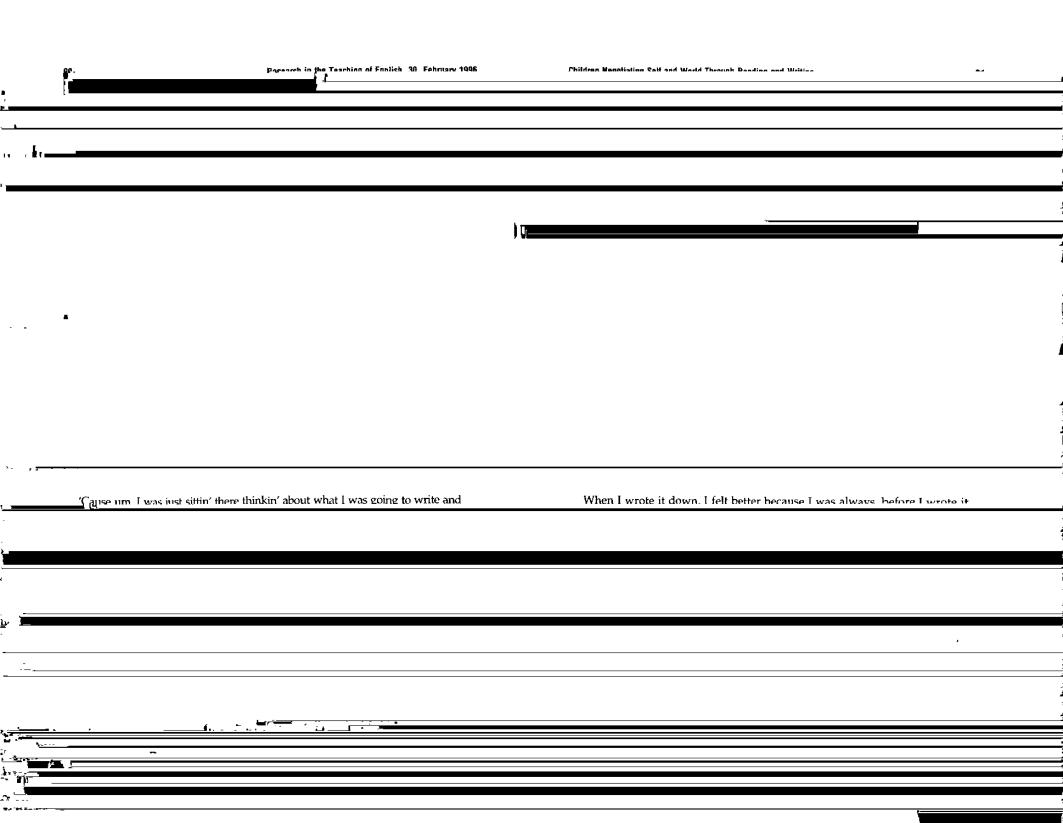
During each interview, children were asked to review the reading and writing they had done since the previous interview and to identify those



Although children's individual reading interests varied, many of the most popular books embodied the following more specific themes: friends and friendships, families and family relationships, sports and sports heroes, heroic experiences of child or adolescent characters, animal stories, the lives of important African Americans, and social and cultural histories. Some of the texts that were read by many or most children included: Harriet Tubman: The Road to Freedom (Bains, 1982), I Have a Dream: The Story of Martin (Davidson, 1991), Honey I Love and Other

their lives. Finally, children engaged in reading and writing to "experience" or participate in the storied lives and worlds of imaginary characters.

Reading (and to a lesser extent writing) provided children with opportunities to adopt and imaginatively explore a variety of new roles, responsibilities, and identities derived from both real and fictional story characters. For example, after reading several books about well-known African American women, Mary wrote the following in her reading-re-



Americans such as Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglas, Harriett Tubman, Some children also went beyond increasing their own awareness of 96 97 Jamar also used writing as a means to objectify emotions in relation abiding concern with understanding inter-racial conflict. Indeed, he revisited this topic in much of his reading and writing, in conversations to social problems that affected him only indirectly. One text that was To summarize, reading and writing functioned for Jamar in ways that allowed him to address a host of complex personal and social issues. He

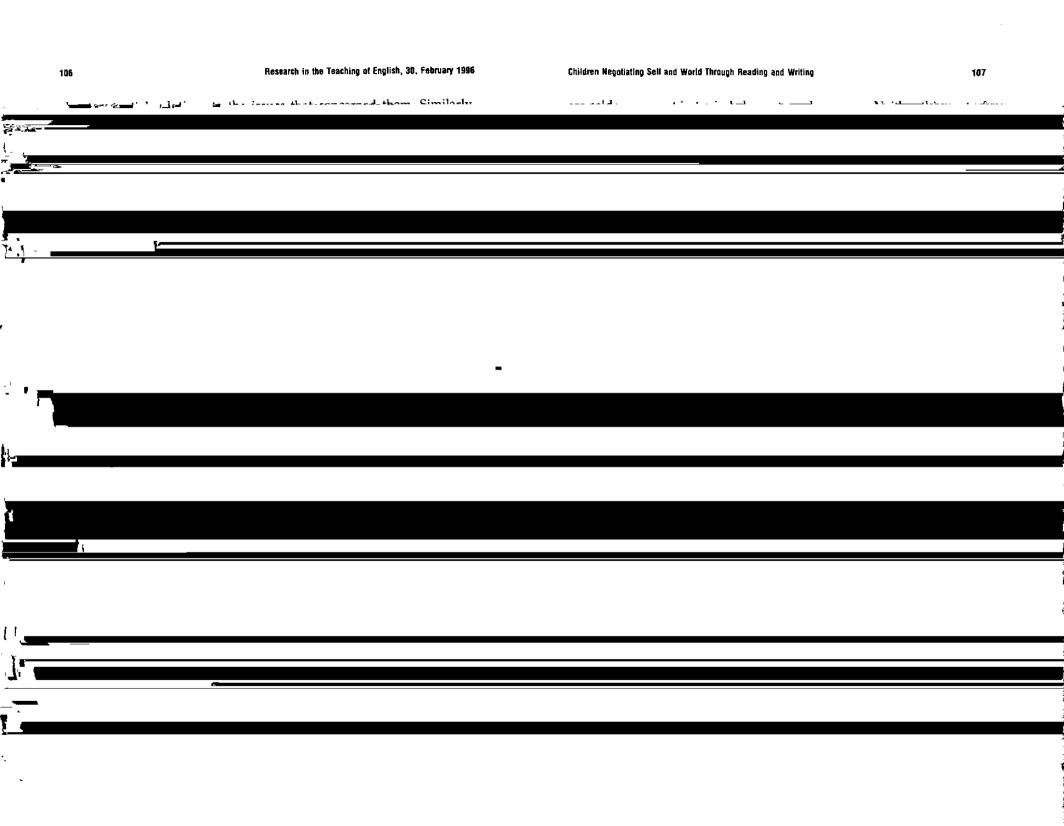
Tanya's class) came to school, and I started, started thinking on her [Mary]. And then it went on and on, and started, then we started being friends.

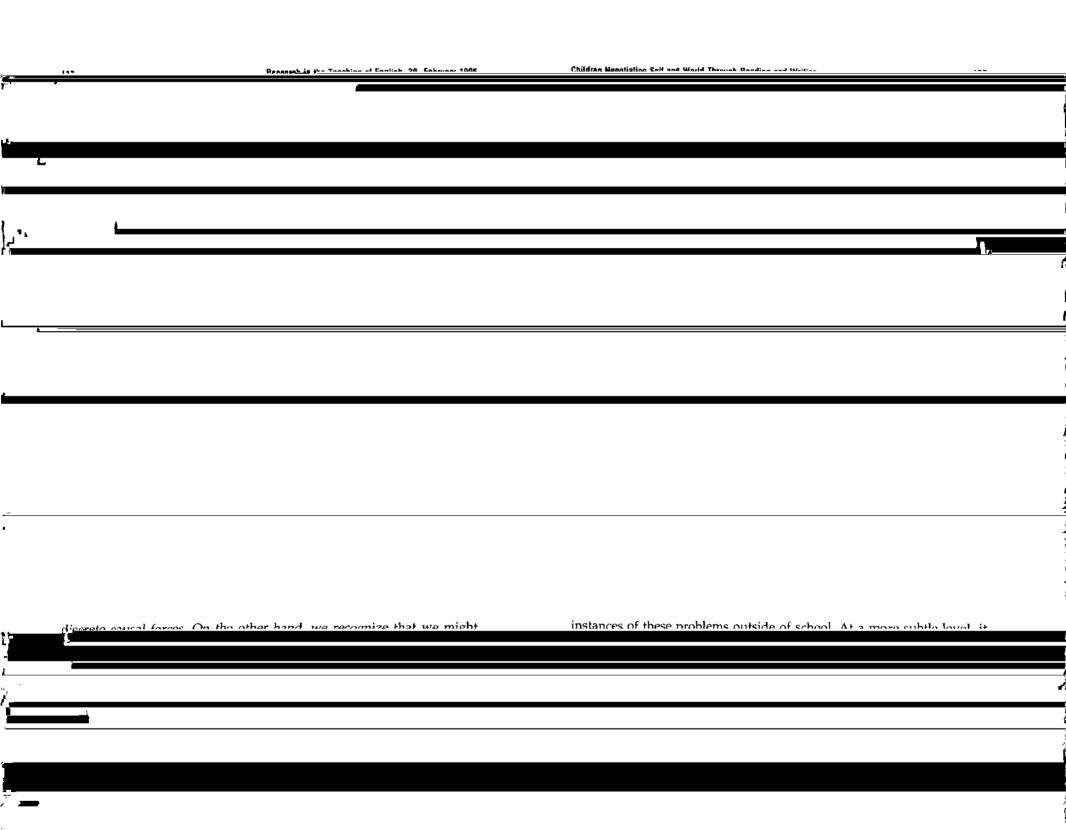
probably be a singer or a preacher or somebody like Dr. Martin Luther

First, in response to our questions about how she came to write the

tion and respect of peers within her own classroom. This sense of power became manifest in children's responses to her essay, "Non-Violence"

fashion social and moral codes, and to consider possibilities for social change.





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Note

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