

(Winant 1994; Merelman 1986, 1995; Hacker 1992; Fiske 1993, 1994; Giroux 1995; Haymes 1996; DuPlessis 1995; Yudice 1995).

RIGHT-WING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS OF WHITENESS: RECOVERING WHITE SUPREMACY

The right wing has answered questions about whiteness consistently over the last couple of decades. Any pedagogy of whiteness needs to understand the right-wing response to the white identity crisis as basically an insidious effort to reestablish white hegemony. As Aaron Gresson (1995) has pointed out, such recovery efforts have been largely successful and work to dismantle the gains of struggles for social justice. Under the ideological guise of arguments such as America must learn to live with inequality, right-wing proponents rally around cries of reverse racism. In this new discursive universe work against racism can always be represented as a form of neo-racism *against* Whites. Since Blacks and Latinos, the narrative continues, have made so much progress in recent years—at the expense of Whites—racism is not much of a problem any more. Evidence for such non-White progress is found in the positive media images of Blacks, Latinos, and indigenous peoples found scattered throughout the mediascape. Such images have allowed many Whites to disavow the reality of racism at the end of the twentieth century. The white audience of *The Cosby Show*, for example, often interpreted the program as evidence that racism had been cured. Buying into such popular social readings, many white students express great anger when Black, Latino, and indigenous students keep bringing up historical racism. The mere fact that some distant relative was a slave, they maintain, provides individuals with no reason to harbor resentment in the 1990s. In this context white students often express intense anger about having to take classes on race. They have accepted the right-wing answers to questions about race and whiteness: when pushed they may admit that some racism may still exist but only within the Klan and neo-Nazi organizations.

Such answers are plausible only in a society stricken with amnesia, a culture whose dangerous memories have been erased by power. In the U.S. Ronald Reagan and his handlers adeptly rearticulated old ideologies in a way that reinscribed a racism that camouflaged its racist character. The old ideologies of social Darwinism and Manifest Destiny reassured Whites shaken by the identity crisis that they were the inheritors of the moral capital of the Puritans' "city on the hill"—Reagan invoked the reference frequently during his presidential speeches. The amnesia allows right-wing spokespeople the opportunity to answer any challenge to their efforts to reestablish white hegemony with charges of political correctness. We are victims of political correctness, they have maintained, in the process reversing the rhetoric of racial oppression to the point that non-White victims become the new oppressors of white people. Of course, in this rhetorical cosmos, affirmative action becomes the ultimate expression of racism, as undeserving individuals drawing upon a distant past of oppression gain advantages in schools and work-

places at the expense of Whites. Adeptly deploying the strategy of Whites as victims, conservatives painted an appealing vision of life in America before liberal permissivism of the 1960s destroyed the nation's greatness (Gresson 1995; King 1996; Herrnstein and Murray 1994; Kamin 1995; Hacker 1992; Yudice 1995; Gallagher 1994; McMillen 1995; Lind 1995).

The right-wing answers to questions about whiteness and education followed the rhetorical formula. Exploiting public amnesia yet again, right-wing leaders portrayed a pre-1960s, pre-egalitarian educational reform America where educational standards were high, American education was viewed as the best in the world, and because of such educational excellence U.S. economic supremacy was beyond question. Indeed, the *Nation at Risk* report issued in the spring of 1983 can be viewed as a recovery document outlining the impossibility of seeking educational quality and equality simultaneously. Racial difference in this context becomes a destructive force intent on destroying our (white) values and standards—racial difference in education, as manifested in the racial desegregation of schools, destroyed the quality of American education. Declines in test scores and increasing illiteracy, right wing leaders proclaimed, were the direct result of misguided progressives' quixotic quest for equality and democracy. It's high time, they concluded in the spirit of the recovery of white supremacy that we go *back* to the basics, to that *Little House on the Prairie* school with its drill, repetition, and focus on traditional values. In education the recovery of whiteness meant a return to the little red schoolhouse.

A similar theme can be found in popular culture. Aaron Gresson (1995), for example, identifies the recovery theme in the five *Rocky* movies (1976, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1990), as Sylvester Stallone's character (the great white hope) wins the respect of the uppity black champion, Apollo Creed by fighting him to a draw. In *Rocky II* Stallone defeats Creed and wins his support and affection as he fights Mr. T. In later sequels Rocky defeats a threatening Russian and mentors a young white boxer to carry the flag of whiteness after he retires. In *Soul Man* (1986) a white student (C. Thomas Howell) denied entry to Harvard reinvents himself as an African American and gains admission through affirmative action. Tom Berenger stars in *The Substitute* (1996) as a covert operations soldier who comes home to his girlfriend, a high school teacher in inner city (non-white) Miami. After unruly Latino and black students hire a Seminole Indian to "kneecap" her with a baseball bat, Berenger's character poses as a substitute teacher in his girlfriend's classes to find the perpetrators. In the process Berenger and his buddies from the Special Forces not only find the guilty kids but also uncover a Latino/black gang-related drug ring run by the high school principal (an African American) from the basement of the school. Faced with this non-White corruption Berenger and his men exhibit their answer to school reform: they kill them all and heroically *take back* the school. In all of these movies a similar message is conveyed: white privilege is under attack from barbaric non-Whites and we (white males) must recover it by acts of heroism.

Contrary to many white people's perceptions, the recovery of white supremacy has been catalyzed by mass media such as TV and movies. When we speak of these racial dynamics to predominantly white groups we often encounter tremendous resistance and disbelief. "You've got it wrong," they tell us, "Blacks and Latinos are heavily represented in the media." Compared to thirty years ago, there indeed are more non-Whites on TV and in the movies. The question not asked, however, involves the nature of the roles non-Whites can obtain in the entertainment industry. Even when TV and movies dramatize real life events involving African Americans, Latino/as, and other non-Whites, the stars and main characters still tend to be white. For example, the NBC made-for-TV movie about the Howard Beach case where white youths beat three African American men and chased another one to his death focused attention on Charles Hynes, the white special prosecutor portrayed by Daniel Travanti. The promos for the movie give a sense of its perspective: as the camera focused for a close-up on Travanti, the voice-over announced that "only one man can unravel the mystery and bring the guilty to justice." In *Cry Freedom* (1987), the same theme prevails as a movie about the black South African struggle against apartheid focuses its attention on Donald Woods (Kevin Kline) the white journalist who wrote the biography of heroic freedom fighter Steve Biko. One might ask in this context, if Biko was the brave figure who led the resistance, underwent torture, and died for the cause, why was Woods the star/hero of the movie. The same theme dominates *A Dry White Season* (1989), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), and a plethora of other movies too numerous to mention here (McCarthy 1995).

The themes identified in these movies are not simply interesting readings of a trivial entertainment medium; in hyperreality TV and movies are a central location for the production of knowledge and the generation of ideological currents that engage a diverse audience. The racial themes generated in these examples connect with rearticulations of whiteness in a neo-Manifest Destiny and White Man's Burden guise. Such an ideological dynamic reannoints whiteness as it reawakens its messianic racial role around the fears produced by right-wing analysis. In this context right-wing representations of racial contamination via growing numbers of non-white immigrants and high birth rates strike a responsive chord with the white chorus. Using this dysgenesis as an excuse, right-wing leaders shield whiteness from any blame for the socio-economic conditions non-Whites must face. In their response to the white identity crisis many young Whites embrace dysgenesis and its concurrent refusal of white complicity in the degradation of non-Whites. "Leave me alone," they insist, "I've had absolutely nothing to do with racism or racial persecution." Black, Latino, and Native American poverty, unemployment, and disenfranchisement are not white problems, they argue; they're non-white problems. Such pervasive white acceptance of right-wing responses to the racial questions of the late twentieth century has allowed white civic elites to distance themselves from issues of black and Latino poverty. In this context the disparity of wealth between white and non-white continues to grow without any-

one seeming to care (Tanaka 1996; Gresson 1995; Hacker 1992; Gallagher 1994; Giroux 1995; Stafford 1992).

MOMENTS IN THE PEDAGOGY OF WHITENESS

A critical pedagogy of whiteness assumes that over the last two decades many whites have experienced a crisis of identity that must be viewed in the larger context of a growing interracial distrust and an expanding disparity of wealth between white and non-white, rich and poor (Sleeter 1995). Such a pedagogy is grounded on the belief that it is in the best interests of white people as a group to study this situation in a manner that helps them appreciate its moral, ethical, and civic dynamics so they can better formulate progressive ways of responding to them. As white people, working class Whites in particular, explore their socio-economic frustrations and anger in this context, a critical pedagogy of whiteness helps them understand the hollowness of the right-wing argument that preferential policies for Blacks and Latinos have undermined their chances for mobility. White people must understand that the right-wing version of global free market capitalism that has gained ascendancy in the last two decades has undermined both their own and non-white opportunities for good work. Indeed, a key dimension of the pedagogy involves refusing to allow right-wing politicians and social leaders to play Whites against non-Whites, rich versus poor to protect their positions of power.

The pedagogy of whiteness proposed here attempts to connect an understanding of the construction of whiteness to the political and socio-economic issues previously raised. In order to accomplish this difficult task teachers and cultural workers must examine concepts and processes traditionally ignored in academic settings including invisible power relations and the ways such social forces shape human consciousness. They must develop creative and compelling ways of talking about racial identity, racial privilege, and racial discomfort that allow students and other individuals to name their previously unspeakable feelings and intuitions. The reference to feelings and intuitions should not convey the impression that a critical pedagogy is a "feel-good" pedagogy unconcerned with academic rigor. The curriculum envisioned here is very demanding, embracing concepts and analytical methods from history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, literary criticism, psychology, film studies, political science, economics, education, and cultural studies in its efforts to engage students in socio-political and self-examination. For example, students would engage in a variety of case studies in how color lines are drawn, analyzing historical instances such as California's struggle since the mid-nineteenth century to classify its racial groups and the late-nineteenth century Irish struggle for admission to the fraternity of whiteness. Interestingly in the Irish case white status was conferred only when they adopted the old residents' antipathy toward African Americans.

As it contextualizes whiteness, the critical pedagogy of whiteness is characterized by particular moments, including the exposé of the invisibility of its social power and privilege, awareness of the way whiteness as an ideological

construction cannot be conflated with white people, recognition of the power of whiteness to help produce both white and non-white subjectivity/consciousness, cognizance of whiteness's power to dominate through its ability to normalize itself, knowledge of tacit forms of white supremacy and their complicity with mutating, end-of-century crypto-racism, and the appreciation of the necessity of the reconstruction of whiteness and white identity around a stance of progressive anti-racism. The moments do not present themselves in some convenient linear unfolding but are *enfolded* into the opacity of whiteness itself, expressing themselves here and there like photons in a linear accelerator. Extending the quantum metaphor, the moments are observable only if we ask the "appropriate" questions. Such questions might involve: inquiries into how whiteness functions in the lives of white people—a prerequisite to any attempt to rearticulate white identity; investigations of how whiteness as a signifier will be received very differently by individuals standing at different intersections of various race, class, gender, religious, and geographical axes of identity; or inquests into the ways whiteness as a norm shapes the lives of both those who are included and excluded by the categorization (Yudice 1995; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Stowe 1996).

One of the most dramatic moments in teaching whiteness involves the effort to identify and make sense of white power. Such an identification process involves encouraging students to understand the white power bloc—the loose alignment of various social, political, educational, and economic agents and agencies who work in concert around particular issues to maintain white power. Without trying to elicit guilt and place blame, the attempt to teach students about white power involves the difficult task of tracing oppressive historical frameworks that continue in an ever-evolving form to structure everyday life of all peoples at the end of the twentieth century. Such a process will always be difficult simply because stifling information by which everyday people gain insight into the workings of power is central to the maintenance of power. Those who are privileged struggle to control representations of themselves; the white power bloc, thus, is not comfortable with the study of whiteness. In this context white students from middle/upper-middle class backgrounds will frequently resist a pedagogy of whiteness as a threat to their privilege. When such a pedagogy views the white power bloc from the perspective of the marginalized, palms sweat and blood pressures rise as connections and continuities between agents such as the governing board of Texaco, the publishers of many high school history textbooks, agribusiness leaders in southern California, the administrators of VMI, and Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray and the editors of *The Bell Curve* are highlighted. No secret Oliver Stone-like conspiracy exists between these agents—but they do work in concert at some tacit level for the protection of white and often male privilege.

The highlighting of the white power bloc enables individuals to see the previously invisible role of whiteness as the norm, the standard by which everyone is measured. Thus, another important moment in this pedagogy involves denormalizing whiteness. White ways of being can no longer be uni-

versalized, white communication practices can no longer be viewed unproblematically as the standard, and issues of race can no longer be relegated to the domain of those who are not white. The analysis of whiteness called for in this critical pedagogy involves a cultural reassessment, a cultural commitment to rethinking the basis of multicultural society. In this context Whites rethink racial imprints that have traditionally been tacitly relegated to a transcultural domain. Operating on the foundation of such a commitment, white people get over their discomfort discussing how they appear to non-Whites, they learn to listen to African American, Latino/a, and indigenous people's perception of them as people not to be trusted, and they begin to rethink their lives and world views accordingly. Thus, Whites begin to take seriously the poststructuralist imperative to analyze their social and political positions *vis-à-vis* their whiteness. In this process white people start to understand that what they "objectively" see may not be as neutral as they originally thought. Their white assumptions have shaped interpretation of perceptions that differ significantly from the perceptions of non-Whites (Keating 1995; Fiske 1993; Tatum 1994; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Haymes 1996).

LISTENING, LEARNING, CHANGING

Simply put, a key feature of a pedagogy of whiteness involves inducing white people as a key aspect of their analysis of their subjectivity to listen to non-Whites. Such a process will be difficult in Western societies where the dominant culture has encouraged speaking over listening and has rewarded domination over sensitivity to the position of others, especially subordinated others. Such listening will involve both taking seriously those who have been silenced out of fear and developing an empathetic imagination that sees from the perspective of the other. It is not very difficult to understand that if Whites don't develop these abilities, the possibility for intensifying racial violence will grow—individuals become more combative the more they are ignored. Thus, it is no exaggeration to maintain that racial peace in the twenty-first century will depend on Whites' developing the willingness to listen and make meaning from what they hear. The meaning-making process in which Whites must engage will require that for the first time they will accept the presence of non-White culture. Having no tradition of adapting to what they have historically deemed inferior cultures, Whites will find this process difficult. Given the right-wing redefinition of whiteness and the recovery process it supports, the white effort to assimilate becomes even more formidable.

A pedagogy of whiteness encourages a form of listening that intensely attends to different ways of knowing and their implications for the restructuring of identity. Here white individuals study the insights of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and indigenous peoples not only into racism and forms of oppression but into others' ways of being, experiencing, and living in the world. A pedagogy of whiteness asks, for example, what are the alternatives to Western modernist rationalism with its emphasis on scientific procedure, the regulation of consciousness, and the division of the world into smaller and smaller

categories. Progressive Whites value these alternatives and use them to help extend their imagination beyond a confining monoculturalism. For example, right-wing constructions of whiteness have persuasively represented African Americans as dependent on the government for welfare and social services. In this representation of black dependency Whites are portrayed as independent and self-sufficient. Such a popular construction does not hold up to examination, as even affluent Whites also depend on government to patrol and contain poor black neighborhoods, to construct highways and subways that steer clear of such neighborhoods, and to process home owners' mortgage deduction refunds. Understanding the inaccuracy and poisonous effects of this skewed way of seeing, Whites learn to empathize with Blacks deemed unworthy of opportunity. Such Whites learn ways of acting that interrupt the vicious cycle such racist representations set into motion (Fiske 1993, 1994; Tatum 1994; Merelman 1995).

The implementation of a pedagogy of whiteness that induces Whites to listen, learn, and change is a delicate operation. In an era where young Whites face an identity crisis that has elicited angry responses to efforts to pursue social justice, a critical pedagogy of whiteness must balance a serious critique of whiteness and white power with a narrative that refuses to demonize white people. Teachers and cultural workers must not only negotiate this task but also induce students to form multicultural/racial coalitions that work for structural change. As Whites begin to take seriously the ways non-Whites see them, they concurrently learn to address social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate the cycle of racism. In this process they find that the structures in question are the province of whiteness, emphasizing once again the importance of studying the social center as well as multiculturalism's traditional concern with the margins. In this context the work of the coalitions for social transformation does not simply go to black and Latino/a neighborhoods and Indian reservations to do their work; in addition they work with Whites and white institutions to develop anti-racist policies and progressive ways of being white.

REINVENTING WHITENESS

As white students gain an understanding of the power of whiteness, white supremacy, the mutating nature of contemporary racism, and the other moments in a pedagogy of whiteness, they begin to perceive problems with their traditional civics lessons. The asymmetries of racial power do not fit with the American faith in meritocracy and the rewards of hard work. Individuals react differently to such a contradiction: despair, anger at the situation, anger at the messenger, a sense of mission, the development of a moral compass, the list goes on. . . . Central to a critical pedagogy of whiteness is the development of a healthy, hopeful, justice-oriented response to this paradox coupled with a rethinking of both white identity and the very nature of whiteness itself. Traditional forms of multiculturalism have not offered a space for Whites to rethink their identity around a new, progressive, assertive, counter-hegemon-

ic, anti-racist notion of whiteness. Various multicultural social theorists have addressed the issue of the new white identity with little agreement emerging in the process. Though difficult, it is possible to rethink white identity and reinvent whiteness in light of progressive democratic social goals and a critical understanding of social justice.

In this context teachers of whiteness refuse to allow individuals to assume new identities without extensive analysis. Whites have traditionally devoted little attention to their racial identity, attending to it only after decades of heightened racial and ethnic awareness. A pedagogy of whiteness must understand these historical dynamics and appreciate the ways the white identity crisis has been colonized by conservative Eurocentric monoculturalists. When white students find themselves outside of any ethnic community and opt to build a new one around a mythologized white supremacist tradition, critical educators must be ready to show them they understand the context in which such students are operating and to offer them a progressive alternative. In this context a pedagogy of whiteness becomes a contemporary adaptation of the goal of a Deweyan notion of a progressive education: to gain command of oneself so as to make positive social use of one's powers and abilities. Thus, the pedagogy promoted here is simply a sub-theme of a philosophy of education that concerns itself with cultural identity and the social production of self. In its analysis of white identity, a critical pedagogy of whiteness seeks a new socio-psychological imaginary that offers a new vision for a twenty-first century whiteness (Yudice 1995; Gresson 1997; di Leonardo 1994; Grossberg 1995; Tatum 1994; Dewey 1994).

The redefinition of whiteness begins with the simple question: what does it mean to be white? How can we answer this question in a way that allows for a critique and rejection of the oppression inflicted in the name of whiteness but concurrently creates a space for a progressive white identity that transcends some narrow notion of a politically correct orthodoxy? I am not comfortable with the concept of a new oppositional white identity as a "race traitor" who renounces whiteness. It is unlikely that a mass movement will grow around the race traitor concept, as oppositional Whites would still have little to rally *around* or to affirm. Anti-racist Whites in search of a new identity in the late 1990s are still walking into a racial netherland with few guides or guiding principles. The netherland can undoubtedly be exciting and affirmational, but it can also be ambiguous and lonesome. One's time in the netherland can nurture creativity while at the same time undermining traditional support systems and emotional stability. A key feature of a whiteness pedagogy, therefore, involves developing both theoretical and emotional support systems to help courageous white people through this complex transition. Such theoretical and emotional support systems must not be ascetic and punitive but appealing, affirmative, humorous, sensitive, and aesthetically dynamic. They must draw upon the emancipatory productions of many cultures while making use of the most progressive aspects of white culture itself.

The reinvention of whiteness operates outside any notion of racial superiority or inferiority, as it seeks to transverse the terrain of the netherland of transitional identity. While it confronts white tyranny directly, it avoids the projection of guilt on to white students. In the process it generates a sense of pride in the possibility that white people can help transform the reality of social inequality and reinvent themselves around notions of justice, community, social creativity, and economic/political democracy. These concerns become extremely important in light of the reactions of white students to the curriculum of recent efforts to teach a critical multiculturalism. When confronted with the despotism of the white norm and the brutality of white racism, many white students have encountered great difficulty dealing with such revelations. Many white students have reacted negatively to such teaching not as much out of disbelief or rejection but out of frustration as to what to do with their new knowledge. Without a vision of racial reinvention and support for the difficulties it entails, such students had nowhere to go. Their frustration in this context often turned to cynicism and a descent into nihilism. The importance of an anti-racist, positive, creative, and affirmational white identity in this pedagogical context cannot be overstated.

One white response to white tyranny has involved the attempt to opt out of whiteness, to escape the responsibility that comes with being white. Becky Thompson (1996) describes her personal effort to opt out of whiteness as a "I don't want to be white stage"—a period where she did not want to associate with white people. In this mind-set white liberal guilt often leads to an essentialist romanticization of non-Whites that grants them a morally superior status. At the same time Whites may be essentialized as racist, bland, and undeserving of respect—given such characterizations what person would want to call herself white? In this context white people may attempt to appropriate the "oppression status" of non-whiteness, misreading the oppression of others for their own. This, of course, is the space where race traitors enter the whiteness studies cosmos—some describe the race traitor impulse as the political wing of the academic analysis of whiteness. I certainly reject such a label and argue that while this is one activist response to white tyranny and the crisis of white identity, it is merely one of many—indeed, one that may be of little value in the larger effort to solve the material and spiritual consequences of racism and the inequality it generates (Tatum 1994; Jordan 1995; Yudice 1995).

George Yudice (1995) feels uncomfortable with what he considers the easy renunciation of whiteness and the privilege that accompanies it. Whites alone have the privilege of opting out of their racial identity, of proclaiming themselves as non-raced. But no matter how vociferously they may renunciate their whiteness, white people do not lose the power associated with being white. Such a reality renders many white renunciations disingenuous to some extent. It's as if some race traitors want to disconnect with all liabilities of whiteness (its association with racism and blandness) while maintaining all its assets (the privilege of not being black, Latino/a, or Native American). Such cold, self-interested realities will always be an impediment to widescale efforts to forge new

white identities. And this is not the only obstacle, as teachers and cultural workers must deal with a variety of social forces that undermine the effort to reinvent whiteness. As teachers teach a pedagogy of whiteness, they are reminded of how new and unusual such a concept must seem to students and how few models for transcending mainstream embodiments of whiteness exist.

FASHIONING PROGRESSIVE WHITE IDENTITIES: IMPROVISATIONS WITHIN A LITERACY OF POWER

As progressive anti-racist Whites learn to listen and empathize with non-Whites, they work to overcome these obstacles to reshaping their identity and developing collective solidarity with other non-racist white people. Such a step is central to the struggle for successful multicultural living and the political movement that by necessity must accompany it. None of this focus on whiteness and white identity should be taken to suggest that efforts to empower oppressed groups should be deemphasized. Instead, the goal of a critical pedagogy of whiteness involves the construction of a white identity that is emancipated from the cultural baggage that has often accompanied whiteness and the norm it insidiously establishes. This norm has traditionally involved a rejection of those who did not meet whiteness's notion of reason emerging from the European Enlightenment. Whiteness deployed reason—narrowly defined Eurocentric reason—as a form of disciplinary power that excludes those who do not meet its criteria for inclusion into the community of the socio-politically enfranchised. Understanding such dynamics, those interested in the reconstruction of white identity can engage in the post-formal (a theoretical effort to redefine the Eurocentric notions of intelligence and reason by examining such concepts in light of socio-psychological insights from a variety of non-Western cultures (see Kincheloe and Steinberg 1993; Kincheloe 1995) search for diverse expressions of reason. Such a project empowers white students seeking progressive identities to produce knowledge about the process of White identity reconstruction, the redefinition of reason, the expansion of what is counted as a manifestation of intelligence, and the phenomenological experience of challenging the boundaries of whiteness.

Such pedagogical work is anything but easy and requires sophisticated help and support to pull progressive Whites through the social, political, and psychological dilemmas they all face. In such a context a pedagogy of whiteness always needs strong support groups for those attempting to rethink their identity and to address the cultural and institutional racism they encounter. Progressive Whites, unfortunately, will frequently find themselves at odds with white colleagues over racial issues that are deemed by their colleagues to have nothing to do with race. In these situations they will face accusations of being unreasonable and truculent subversives who don't understand the hallowed traditions of the schools and institutions in which they operate. Individuals in these situations need support groups if for nothing else to help them survive emotionally. They need examples of white anti-racists historically and contemporaneously who have engaged in these struggles and who have faced

these personal attacks. Concurrently they need black, Latino, Asian, and Native American supporters as well, who can provide them other types of insight and support. In this context alliances can be formed between non-Whites and the white support groups that can address a range of problems in unique and creative ways (Fiske 1994; Thompson 1996; Sleeter 1995; Alcoff 1995; Tatum 1994; Macedo 1994; Brosio 1994; Swartz 1993; Shor and Freire 1987; Steinberg and Kincheloe 1997; Rodriguez and Villaverde 1999).

In a pedagogy of whiteness the notion of identity itself is reconceptualized, as teachers refuse to view identity as an absolute, fixed essence. Since in a critical constructivist conceptual frame identities are ever-changing in relation to power-driven ideologies and discourses, references to *true* identities are rendered oxymoronic. Understanding that identities are always in the process of negotiation, a critical pedagogy of whiteness does not seek to produce closure on the new white identities it engages. While critical teachers listen with interest to Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1986) notion of a post-modern nomadic identity that breaks up racial and cultural hierarchies, they are uncomfortable with its emphasis on the negation of categories of identity. A pedagogy of whiteness is more interested in identity structures that are informed by a variety of engaged identities, focus on community building, and find grounding in critical notions of justice and democracy. While certain aspects of a nomadic identity can inform the reconceptualization of white identity, its lack of an ethical and a political referent is troubling.

From a critical pedagogical perspective the refashioning of white identity involves not simply acquiring a new theoretical appreciation or new way of seeing the world. Such an effort involves new modes of living one's life, new methods of relating to the various individuals with which one comes in contact. This reconceptualization of identity is first and foremost focused on the critical theoretical notion of emancipatory transformation—not in a modernist sense where the new identity becomes final and authentic, but more in a post-structuralist articulation that understands the new identity as a transitional phase of an ever evolving notion of self. A pedagogy of whiteness, therefore, seeks to engage students, teachers, and other individuals in an ever-unfolding emancipatory identity that pushes the boundaries of whiteness but always understands its inescapable connection to the white locale in the web of reality. Such a social location demands forms of political analysis and introspection that move Whites to examine, for instance, the privilege of white identity even after an unexamined whiteness has been abandoned.

An emancipatory white identity seen as a process of becoming is catalyzed by explorations of new cognitive possibilities and forms of consciousness that are historically shaped but knowingly adopted. In this context transformation is fueled by familiarity with non-White aesthetics, culturally diverse manifestations of intelligence, and subjugated and indigenous knowledges. Many who have written about identity and the transformation of identity have used the metaphor of border crossing to characterize this multicultural dynamic. While there is much to recommend the use of such a term in a ped-

agogy of whiteness, care must be taken to connect the act of border crossing with a fidelity to critical notions of social justice, democracy, and egalitarian community building. Without such moral and political grounding the border crosser like the nomad can become an agent of the dominant culture who uses his or her knowledge of non-Whites to facilitate their regulation. A pedagogy of whiteness encourages white students to explore and cross the borders, to take advantage of the benefits of cultural bricolage, to interrogate the new perspectives emerging from the ways traditions are reworked on the cultural borders, to study the manner in which common ground is negotiated in a context where differences are accepted and affirmed, and to analyze the effects of all these border dynamics on identity formation.

It is high time that progressives respond to the white identity crisis—hopefully the reinvention of whiteness and the construction of transformational white identities are steps in the right direction. The reconstruction of white identity is important because it affects everyone; dominant white culture imposes cultural meanings on Blacks, Latino/as, Asians, and Native Americans in the process helping to shape self-images and consciousness. As a pedagogy of whiteness moves individuals past a quixotic quest for racial authenticity and purity, the analysis of the meaning and pitfalls of hybridity ensues. The term, cultural *mestizaje*, often used as a concept challenging existing racial categories and representations, can be employed as a heuristic device in a pedagogy of whiteness that induces teachers, students, and cultural workers to study the ways cultural interaction and exchange take place. In a critical context *mestizaje* becomes not an educational goal as much as a category for careful scrutiny into the forces that reshape culture and influence identity (McLaren 1993; Alcoff 1995; Wellman 1996; Haymes 1996; Keating 1995).

The treatment of *mestizaje* speaks to a central feature of the pedagogy of whiteness described here: no fixed educational outcome, specific definition of whiteness, or particular formation of white identity is sought. While all pedagogical activity is carefully framed by a commitment to anti-racism, social justice, political and economic democracy, and heterogeneous and egalitarian community building, there is great room for divergence within these categories. The idea of a pedagogy of whiteness is one of the most compelling notions concerning the struggle for racial justice to emerge in decades. In order to take advantage of the possibility it offers we must be vigilant in our efforts to discern potential problems within it. Understanding that when multicultural education addresses only the other and the other's cultural difference, Whites do not have to examine their own ethnicity and the ways it shapes their social outlook and identity. Once this fundamental concept is appreciated the most difficult pedagogical work begins with the examination of white privilege, the complex nature of whiteness, the dynamics surrounding the white identity crisis, the redefinition of whiteness, and the formulation of an emancipatory white identity.

In this context the social forces that have rocked the racial relations of the last couple of decades will be confronted. Understanding the history and

nature of racism in relation to the socio-psychological impact of the last thirty years on the white psyche, teachers of a critical pedagogy of whiteness develop a "power literacy" that helps them simultaneously negotiate and explain the quagmire of racial interaction in the late twentieth century. Such power literacy helps white people in the process of reconceptualizing their identity appreciate the fact that a new white identity does not erase the power differences between white and non-white. No matter how loudly Whites proclaim their border identities, their racial hybridity, their commitment to a common humanity, or their fidelity to *mestizaje*, they can still "pass" as white people when they seek employment, job promotions, or even when they stroll through all-white neighborhoods. The conversation about whiteness and a pedagogy of whiteness is just beginning, and judging from the intense interest it generates it doesn't look as if it will quickly fade away. A study of whiteness that refuses to make the mistakes of forgetting its anti-racist and democratic roots, lapsing into bourgeois self-indulgence, becoming a psychologized attempt to "feel good" about the angst of privilege, or losing sight of the power dynamics that shape racial relations has a chance to make a valuable contribution to the cause of racial justice and egalitarian democracy.

WORKS CITED

- Alcoff, L. 1995. "Mestizo Identity." In *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, ed. N. Zack. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Appiah, K. 1995. "Straightening out *The Bell Curve*." In *The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, and Opinion*, ed. R. Jacoby and N. Glauber. New York: Random House.
- Banfield, B. 1991. "Honoring Cultural Diversity and Building on Its Strengths: A Case for National Action." In *Women, Work, and School: Occupational Segregation and the Role of Education*, ed. L. Wolfe. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Brosio, R. 1994. *The Radical Democratic Critique of Capitalist Education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Clover, C. 1993. "Falling Down and the Rise of the Average White Male." In *Women and Film: A Sight and Sound Reader*, ed. P. Cook and P. Dodd. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. 1986. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Trans. D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dewey, J. 1994. "My Pedagogic Creed." In *Exploring Education: An Introduction to the Foundations of Education*, ed. A. Sadovnick, P. Cookson, and S. Semel. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- di Leonardo, M. 1994. "White Ethnicities, Identity Politics, and Baby Bear's Chair." *Social Text* 41: 5-33.
- Du Plessis, R. 1995. "HOO, HOO, HOO: Some Episodes in the Construction of Modern Whiteness." *American Literature* 67.4: 667-700.
- Eisenman, R. 1995. "Take Pride in Being White. Letter to Editor." *Chronicle of Higher Education* (October): 134.
- Fiske, J. 1993. *Power Plays, Power Works*. New York: Verso.
- _____. 1994. *Media Matters: Everyday Culture and Political Change*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Frankenberg, R. 1993. *The Social Construction of Whiteness: White Women, Race Matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gallagher, C. 1994. "White Reconstruction in the University." *Socialist Review* 24.1-2: 165-87.
- Giroux, H. 1992. *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1995. "White Panic." In *Eyes Right: Challenging the Right-Wing Backlash*, ed. C. Berlet. Boston: South End Press.
- Gresson, A. 1995. *The Recovery of Race in America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- _____. 1997. "Professional Wrestling and Youth Culture: Teasing, Taunting, and the Containment of Civility." In *Kinderculture: Corporate Constructions of Childhood*, ed. S. Steinberg and J. Kincheloe. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Grossberg, L. 1995. "What's in a Name (One More Time)? *Taboo: The Journal of Culture and Education* 1.1:37.
- Hacker, A. 1992. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Haymes, S. 1996. "Race, Repression, and the Politics of Crime and Punishment in *The Bell Curve*." In *Measured Lies: The Bell Curve Examined*, ed. J. Kincheloe, S. Steinberg, and A. Gresson. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Herrnstein, R., and Murray, C. 1994. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. New York: The Free Press.
- hooks, b. 1992. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Jordan, J. 1995. "In the Land of White Supremacy." In *Eyes Right: Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*, ed. C. Berlet. Boston: South End Press.
- Kamin, L. 1995. "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics." In *The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, and Opinion*, ed. R. Jacoby and N. Glauber. New York: Random House.
- Keating, A. 1995. "Interrogating 'Whiteness,' (De) Constructing Race." *College English* 57.8: 901-18.
- Kincheloe, J. 1995. *Toll and Trouble: Good Work, Smart Workers, and the Integration of Academic and Vocational Education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Kincheloe, J., and S. Steinberg. 1997. *Changing Multiculturalism*. London: Open University Press.
- _____. 1993. "A Tentative Description of Post-Formal Thinking: The Critical Confrontation with Cognitive Theory." *Harvard Educational Review* 63.3: 296-320.
- Kincheloe, J., S. Steinberg, and P. Henchey, eds. 1999. *The Post-Formal Reader: Cognition and Education*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Kincheloe, J., S. Steinberg, N. Rodriguez, and R. Chennault, eds. 1998. *White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- King, J. 1996. "Bad Luck, Bad Blood, Bad Faith: Ideological Hegemony and the Oppressive Language of Hoodoo Social Science." In *Measured Lies: The Bell Curve Examined*, ed. J. Kincheloe, S. Steinberg, and A. Gresson. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Lind, M. 1995. "Brave New Right." In *The Bell Curve Wars: Race, Intelligence, and the Future of America*, ed. S. Fraser. New York: Basic Books.
- Luke, C. 1994. "White Women in Interracial Families: Reflections on Hybridization, Feminine Identities, and Racialized Othering." *Feminist Issues* 14.2: 49-72.
- MacCannell, D. 1992. *Empty Meeting Grounds*. New York: Routledge.

- McCarthy, S. 1995. *Why Are the Heroes Always White?* Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel.
- McIntosh, P. 1995. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies." In *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, ed. M. Anderson and P. Collins. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- McLaren, P. 1993. "Border Disputes: Multicultural Narrative, Identity Formation, and Critical Pedagogy in Postmodern America." In *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and the Process of Educational Change*, ed. D. McLaughlin and W. Tierney. New York: Routledge.
- McMillen, L. 1995. "Lifting the Veil from Whiteness: Growing Body of Scholarship Challenges a Racial Norm." *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (September): A23.
- Macedo, D. 1994. *Literacies of Power: What Americans Are Not Allowed to Know*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Merelman, R. 1986. "Domination, Self-Justification, and Self-Doubt: Some Social Psychological Considerations." *Journal of Politics* 48: 276-99.
- _____. 1995. *Representing Black Culture: Racial Conflict and Cultural Politics in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Morrison, T. 1993. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York: Vintage.
- Nakayama, T., and Krizek, R. 1995. "Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81: 291-309.
- Rodriguez, N., and L. Villaverde, eds. 1999. *Dismantling White Privilege*. New York: Peter Lang Press.
- Rubin, L. 1994. *Families on the Faultline: America's Working Class Speaks About the Family, the Economy, Race, and Ethnicity*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Semali, L., and J. Kincheloe, eds. 1999. *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Shor, I, and Freire, P. 1987. *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.
- Sleeter, C. 1993. "How White Teachers Construct Race." In *Race, Identity, and Reproduction in Education*, ed. C. McCarthy and W. Crichlow. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1995. "Reflections on My Use of Multicultural and Critical Pedagogy When Students are White." In *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*, ed. C. Sleeter and P. McLaren. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Stafford, W. 1992. "Whither the Great Neo-Conservative Experiment in New York City." In *Race, Politics, and Economic Development: Community Perspectives*, ed. J. Jennings. New York: Verso.
- Steinberg, S., and Kincheloe, J. 1997. *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Stowe, D. 1996. "Uncolored People: The Rise of Whiteness Studies." *Lingua Franca* 6.6: 68-77.
- Swartz, E. 1993. "Multicultural Education: Disrupting Patterns of Supremacy in School Curricula, Practices, and Pedagogy." *Journal of Negro Education* 62.4: 493-506.
- Tanaka, G. 1996. "Dysgenesis and White Culture." In *Measured Lies: The Bell Curve Examined*, ed. J. Kincheloe, S. Steinberg, and A. Gresson. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Tatum, B. 1994. "Teaching White Students About Racism: The Search for White Allies and the Restoration of Hope." *Teachers College Record* 95.4: 462-75.

- Thompson, B. 1996. "Time Traveling and Border Crossing: Reflections on White Identity." In *Names We Call Home: Autobiography on Racial Identity*, ed. B. Thompson and S. Tyagi. New York: Routledge.
- Vattimo, G. 1992. *The End of Modernity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Wellman, D. 1996. "Red and Black in White America: Discovering Cross-Border Identities and Other Subversive Activities." In *Names We Call Home: Autobiography on Racial Identity*, ed. B. Thompson and S. Tyagi. New York: Routledge.
- Willis, E. 1995. "The Median is the Message." In *The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, and Opinion*, ed. R. Jacoby and N. Glauber. New York: Random House.
- Winant, H. 1994. "Racial Formation and Hegemony: Global and Local Developments." In *Racism, Modernity, and Identity on the Western Front*, ed. A. Rattansi and S. Westwood. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Yudice, G. 1995. "Neither Impugning Nor Disavowing Whiteness Does a Viable Politics Make: The Limits of Identity Politics." In *After Political Correctness*, ed. C. Newfield and R. Strickland. Boulder, CO: Westview.