EXPANDINDO A DINÂMICA DO PODER:
FREIRE E A POLÍTICA RACIAL NA EDUCAÇÃO

APPLE, Michael W.[1]

RESUMO

Paulo Freire e eu, em muitos diálogos, passamos horas discutindo a importância não só de intervenções teóricas, mas também da importância crucial da práxis, de intervir nas vidas diárias de realidades culturais e pedagógicas e de deixar essas intervenções responderem ao trabalho político e teórico que se busca desenvolver. Infelizmente, muitos "teóricos críticos" da educação têm esquecido da necessidade de tal ação. A teoria "domina", com pouca correção advinda das realidades de instituições de reais, em comunidades reais, em lutas reais. As lutas de afro-brasileiros contra a subjugação não eram abstrações para Freire. Ele as via como parte das lutas necessárias contra a dominação. Neste artigo, ainda que Freire não esteja mais presente, quero continuar o diálogo com ele sobre a questão racial. Uma vez que ele insistia em que nos concentremos em nossas próprias experiências diárias, vou dirigir a minha atenção para as realidades da questão racial em nações com as quais estou mais familiarizado, embora eu também deva me referir ao Brasil, Portugal e outros lugares. Minha base epistemológica será decididamente freireana. Quero interrogar a "cultura do silêncio" em que vivemos, de modo que ela possa ser transformada. Aqueles de nós que estão comprometidos com políticas e práticas educacionais emancipatórias e anti-racistas, seriam perspicazes ao dirigir sua crítica não só aos efeitos raciais sobre os mercados e padrões culturais, mas também para as formas criativas utilizadas por movimentos neo-liberais e neo-conservadores para convencer muitas pessoas de que essas políticas são meramente tecnologias neutras, que nos ajudarão a tornar a educação mais eficiente e eficaz.

Palavras-chave: Paulo Freire. Raça. Poder. Educação crítica. Currículo emancipatório.

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EXPANDING THE DYNAMICS OF POWER:
FREIRE AND THE POLITICS OF RACE IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Paulo Freire and I, in many dialogues, spent hours discussing the importance not only of theoretical interventions, but also of the crucial importance of praxis, of intervening into the daily lives of cultural and pedagogic realities and of letting these interventions speak back to one's political and theoretic work. Unfortunately, all too many "critical theorists" in education have forgotten about the necessity of such action. Theory "rules", with little correction from the realities of real institutions in real communities in real struggles. The struggles by Afro-Brazilian people against subjugation were not abstractions to Freire. He saw them as part of the necessary struggles against domination. In this paper, even though he is no longer present, I want to continue the dialogue on race that I started with Paulo. Since he insisted that we focus on our own daily experiences, I shall direct my attention to the realities of race in those nations with which I am most familiar, although I shall also touch on Brazil, Portugal, and elsewhere. My epistemological grounding will be decidedly Freirean. I want to interrogate the "culture of silence" in which we live, so that it can be transformed. Those of us who are committed to emancipatory and anti-racist educational policies and practices, would be wise to direct our attention not only to the racial effects of markets and standards, but just as much to the creative ways neo-liberal and neo-conservative movements work to convince so many people that these policies are merely neutral technologies that will help us make education more efficient and effective.

Keywords: *Paulo Freire. Race. Power. Critical education. Emancipatory curriculum.*

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1 FREIRE AND THE POLITICS OF RACE

I am one of the many people who was fortunate enough to spend time with Paulo Freire, both in the United States and in Brazil. Before he became Secretary of Education in Sao Paulo, he and I had a number of public dialogues in the United States in front of large audiences. We spent a good deal of time in those dialogues discussing the ways in which power relations in education, culture, and the economy are hidden. We each agreed on the utter importance of speaking honestly both about the nature of differential power and about the effects of the politics of exclusion and of the oppressive realities that large numbers of people experience every day. One of the things that was always so impressive about Paulo was his constant struggle to expand his understanding of–and action against–the relations of dominance and subordination that are so deeply cemented into all of our societies.

During these dialogues, it was clear that Paulo was struggling with the realities of gender oppressions. He had been so articulate for so many years about the ways in which class worked, it was fascinating–and compelling–to see him come to grips with the realities of the patriarchal state and the ways in which gender hierarchies worked as forms of exclusion. In response to some of the criticisms that had been made of his work by feminists (see, for example, Luke and Gore (1992)), he set about to incorporate their criticisms. His rethinking of his theoretical, political, and educational positions–without giving up the immense power of his original insights and arguments–provided a model for many of the other critical educators who were struggling to expand the kinds of power relations they dealt with, without forgetting the capitalist materialities that organized and disorganized the societies in which they lived.

During the period of time both when he was Secretary of Education in São Paulo and then later on, Paulo and I had a number of opportunities to continue these dialogues both in public and in private. He and I spent hours discussing the importance not only of theoretical interventions, but also of the crucial importance of praxis, of intervening into the daily lives of cultural and pedagogic realities and of letting these interventions speak back to one's political and theoretic work. Unfortunately, all too many "critical theorists" in education have forgotten about the necessity of such action (APPLE, 1999; APPLE, 2006; APPLE; BEANE; 2007). Theory "rules," with little correction from the realities of real institutions in real communities in real struggles. For all too many of these people, reality had become a "text,"

a subject for deconstruction, but with little concrete action in solidarity with the oppressed. Paulo, rightly, was worried about this, even though he also, again rightly, was very committed to interrupting the epistemological, political, and ethical underpinnings of our accepted forms of knowing.

One of the issues on which we spent time was <u>race</u>. From Paulo's own experiences in northeastern Brazil, he clearly had the sense that in many ways oppression was "color-coded." When he spoke about the murderous histories of the treatment of indigenous people in Brazil and throughout the world, this sense became even stronger. He and I discussed the "myth of racial democracy" in Brazil and the rapidly growing politics of racial identity that had been taking place among Afro-Brazilian people. For him, this was one of the most important movements in Brazil and elsewhere and he reflected on its meaning for his own sense of a pedagogy of the oppressed. I can't remember his exact words, but the points were decidedly similar to what he wrote in <u>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</u> when he stated that "The pedagogy of the oppressed is a pedagogy which must be forged <u>with</u>, not <u>for</u> the oppressed...in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity. This pedagogy makes oppression and its causes objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come liberation" (FREIRE, 1982, p.25). The struggles by Afro-Brazilian people against subjugation were not abstractions to him. He saw them as part of the necessary struggles against domination (See also Apple *et al.* (2003), Apple and Buras (2006) and Apple (2013)). Class, of course, was a crucial reality to him. But just as he understood the importance of the gendered realities that organized his and our societies, he also saw the politics of race as a major arena that needed equally serious transformations. While he did not write a large amount on this in his later work--although it is incipient throughout his writing and can be seen in his concern for "re-Africanization" in <u>Pedagogy in Process: The Letters from Guinea-Bissau</u> (FREIRE, 1978)-- once again his thinking on this issue lent support to others' struggles.

In this paper, even though he is no longer present, I want to continue the dialogue on race that I started with Paulo. Since he insisted that we focus on our own daily experiences, I shall direct my attention to the realities of race in those nations with which I am most familiar, although I shall also touch on Brazil, Portugal, and elsewhere. My epistemological grounding will be decidedly Freirean. I want to interrogate the "culture of silence" in which we live, so that it can be transformed. But here, the silences are of dominant groups, not subordinate ones. As I have claimed elsewhere, dominant groups prefer to live in an "epistemological

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fog," one in which *not* seeing, *not* knowing, is crucial to their dominance. To know is to be called upon to act. Thus, not knowing, creating an epistemological vacuum, has strategic importance in their reality (APPLE, 2013; DAVIS, 2006).

Neither Freire nor I have ever been naive about the effects of critical questioning. The line that divides education as domination from education as an instrument of liberation is not crossed simply through a process of "unmasking." Seeing the world in more political ways, through the eyes of the oppressed, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for social transformation. But it is a beginning. Given the power of race as a constitutive element of oppression–an element that cannot be simply reduced to class dynamics, even though class is absolutely crucial to any complete analysis–let me use this paper to develop what I would have said to Paulo if our conversations had continued. As you will see, I shall argue that it is not possible to fully understand the genesis and effects of neo-liberal and neo-conservative "reforms" in education and society–about which Freire had much to say in his later books (see, for example, Freire (1996))–without placing race at the center of one's critical analysis.

2 KNOWING RACE

In their exceptional analysis of the way the discourses of race have operated in the United States, Omi and Winant argue that race is not an "add-on," but is truly constitutive of many of our most taken for granted daily experiences.

> In the U.S., race is present in every institution, every relationship, every individual. This is the case not only for the way society is organized-- spatially, culturally, in terms of stratification, etc.--but also for our perceptions and understandings of personal experience. Thus as we watch the videotape of Rodney King being beaten, compare real estate prices in different neighborhoods, size up a potential client, neighbor, or teacher, stand in line at the unemployment office, or carry out a thousand other normal tasks, we are compelled to think racially, to use racial categories and meaning systems in which we have been socialized. Despite exhortations both sincere and hypocritical, it is not possible or even desirable to be "color-blind". (OMI; WINANT, 1994, p.158-159).

Not only is it not possible to be color-blind, as they go on to say "opposing race requires that we notice race, not ignore it." Only by noticing race can we challenge it, "with its ever-more-absurd reduction of human experience to an essence attributed to all without regard for historical or social context." By placing race squarely in front of us, "we can

challenge the state, the institutions of civil society, and ourselves as individuals to combat the legacy of inequality and injustice inherited from the past" and continually re-produced in the present (Omi and Winant (1994), p. 159; See also Omi and Winant, (2015)).

While Omi and Winant are analyzing racial dynamics in the United States, I would hope that by now it is equally clear that their claims extend well beyond these geographical borders to include Australia, the UK, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Mozambique, and many other nations. It would not be possible to understand the history, current status, and multiple effects of educational policy without placing race as a core element of one's analysis. Interrupting these dynamics requires that we directly confront the power of race as well (see Mills (1997)).

Placing race at the center is less easy than one might expect, for one must do this with due recognition of its complexity. Race is not a stable category. What it means, how it is used, by whom, how it is mobilized in public discourse, and its role in educational and more general social policy--all of this is contingent and historical. Indeed, it would be misleading to talk of race as an "it." "It" is not a thing, a reified object that can be measured as if it were a simple biological entity. Race is a <u>construction</u>, a set of fully social <u>relationships</u>. This unfortunately does not stop people from talking about race in simplistic ways that ignore the realities of differential power and histories (see, for example, Herrnstein and Murray (1994), Kincheloe, Steinberg and Greeson (1996) and Leonardo (2009)). Yet complexity needs to be recognized here as well. Racial dynamics have their own histories and are relatively autonomous. But they also participate in, form and are formed by, other relatively autonomous dynamics involving, say, class, colonial and post-colonial realities, and so on--all of which are implicated in and related to the social construction of race. Further, racial dynamics can operate in subtle and powerful ways even when they are not overtly on the minds of the actors involved. Thus, a person can be fully committed to an emancipatory pedagogy in terms of class oppression and at the same time participate in the reproduction of racially oppressive categories and relations (LADSON-BILLINGS; TATE, 2015; LYNN; DIXSON, 2013).

We can make a distinction between intentional and functional explanations here. Intentional explanations are those self-conscious aims that guide our policies and practices. Functional explanations on the other hand are concerned with the latent effects of policies and practices (see, for example, Liston (1988)). In my mind, the latter are often more powerful than the former.

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In essence, this point rightly turns what is called the genetic fallacy in logic on its head, so to speak. Let me be specific here. We are apt to think of the genetic fallacy in particular ways. We rightly tend to criticize authors who assume that the import and meaning of any position is totally determined by its original grounding. Thus, for example, it is clear that E. L. Thorndike--one of the founders of educational psychology--was a confirmed eugenicist and was deeply committed to the project of "race betterment" and had a vision of education that was inherently undemocratic (APPLE, 2004). Yet, one is on shaky ground if one concluded that every aspect of his work is totally "polluted" by his (repugnant) social beliefs. Thorndike's research program may have been epistemologically and empirically problematic, but a different kind of evidence and a more complex analysis is required to debunk all of it than to simply claim (correctly) that he was often racist, sexist, and elitist (see Gould (1981) and Harraway, (1989) for how this more complex program might be done). Indeed, it is not difficult to find progressive educators drawing on Thorndike's work for support of what were then seen to be radical positions.

When we are talking about racism and reform in current policies, we need to turn the genetic fallacy around. The overt motivations of the sponsors of the current educational policies in the UK, of former President George W. Bush's policies in No Child Left Behind for education such as the establishment of national testing in the US, of President Barack Obama's sponsorship of performance testing for teachers so that they are basically paid based on their students' test scores, or of the continuing plans for a national curriculum in Brazil may not have been about race or may have assumed that such proposals would "level the playing field" for everyone. Their intentions may have been self-consciously "meritorious". (I very much mean this play on words.) Yet, conscious originating motives do not guarantee at all how arguments and policies will be employed, what their multiple and determinate functions and effects will be, whose interests they will ultimately serve, and what identifiable patterns of differential benefits will emerge, given existing and unequal relations of economic, cultural, and social capital and given unequal strategies of converting one form of capital to another in our societies (BOURDIEU, 1984; APPLE *et al.*, 2003; APPLE, 2006; APPLE; BURAS, 2006, VALENZUELA, 2005; KATZ; ROSE, 2013).

Such differential functions and outcomes are clear in some powerful analyses of race and education in England. For example, in Gillborn and Youdell's report of the results of their investigation of the effects of national "benchmarks" (performance standards) and

similar "reforms" in schools with significant populations of children of color, they state that the available data suggest that "beneath the superficial gains indicated by a year-on-year improvement against the benchmark criterion...in some areas there has been a widening of inequality; between students, schools and in some cases, ethnic groups" and that this is especially the case for White and Afro-Caribbean students (GILLBORN; YOUDELL, 1998, p. 7; GILLBORN; YOUDELL, 2000; GILLBORN, 2008).

It should not be surprising at all that Gillborn and Youdell find what they call an "educational triage" system at work in the school. Indeed, it would be surprising if they didn't, given what we know about the effects in other institutions of specific racialized patterns of income inequality, of employment and unemployment, of health care and housing, of nutrition, of incarceration, and of school achievement in nations like the United States, England, and Brazil, to name just a few (see, e.g., Apple (1996, p. 68-90), Apple (2006) and Alexander, (2012)). These patterns and effects make a mockery of any claim to a level playing field and one should not be surprised that in times of fiscal and ideological crises multiple forms of triage will be found in multiple institutions.

Yet, Gillborn and Youdell's cautionary tale should make us extremely skeptical that the constant search for "higher standards" and for ever-increasing achievement scores can do much more than put in place seemingly neutral devices for restratification. As they demonstrate (though considerably more empirical research would be required to fully substantiate the more general claim), in situations such as these, there is a narrowing of the curriculum. Increasing a school's test scores means focusing both on those subjects and those students who can contribute to higher school performance. As they go on to show, class, race, and gender interact in complex ways here. White boys' achievement, especially for those on the D/C (pass/fail) borderline of the national test, is all too often seen as mutable. For Black male students, their supposedly "lesser ability" is tacitly assumed. "Valuable" students, then, are not usually Black, seemingly by a set of natural accidents (GILLBORN; YOUDELL, 1998; GILLBORN; YOUDELL, 2000; VALENZUELA, 2005). All of this is not necessarily intended. It is due to a set of over-determined historical relations and to the complex micro-politics over resources and power within the school and between the school and the local and national state, and due as well, of course, to the dynamics of power in the larger society. Paulo Freire would have understood these dynamics in education, since it was clear to him that without substantive political struggles, formal education served to perpetuate dominance.

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However, even as I say this, I do not want to suggest that this makes race less powerful. Indeed, my claim is exactly the opposite. It gets a good deal of its power through its very hiddenness. Nowhere is this more true than in the discourse of markets and standards that now permeates discussions of educational policy throughout the world.

3 EDUCATION, MARKET FORCES, AND THE INVISIBILITY OF WHITENESS

The invisibility of Whiteness, and its effects in education and on market forces, allows race to function as an absent (at least for some people) presence in our societies. While some commentators contend that "the competitive schools market...as envisioned by neo-liberals was created without reference to implications for ethnic minorities" (TOMLINSON, 1998), this may be true only at the level of conscious intentions. While race talk may be overtly absent (or may be used a part of a strategy of legitimation) in the discourse of markets, it remains an absent presence that I believe is fully implicated in the goals and concerns surrounding support for the marketization of education. For dominant groups, the sense of economic and educational decline, the belief that private is good and public is bad, and so on, is coupled with an often unarticulated sense of loss, a feeling that things are out of control, an anomic feeling that is connected to a sense of loss of one's "rightful place" in the world (an "empire" now in decline), and a fear of the culture and body of the Other—and indeed a challenge to the very basic understanding of what counts as "rationality and who does and does not have it (MILLS, 1997). The "private" is the sphere of smooth running and efficient organizations, of autonomy and individual choice. The "public" is out of control, messy, heterogenous. "We" must protect "our" individual choice from those who are the controllers or the "polluters" (whose cultures and very bodies are either exoticized or dangerous). Thus, I believe that there are very close connections between support for neo-liberal visions of markets and free individuals and the concerns of neo-conservatives with their clear worries about standards, "excellence", and decline (BURAS, 2014; APPLE, 2006; 2010). I believe that this is true not only in places such as the United States and Britain, but in Brazil and other nations that have instituted similar policies. And Paulo was very clear that neo-liberal policies were exceptionally dangerous to the lives and hopes of identifiable people.

In this regard, I believe that it is the case that, under current conditions, national curricula all too often actually represent a step backwards in critical and anti-racist education

(although we should never romanticize the situation before; not all that much anti-racist education was actually going on, I fear). Isn't it odd that just as gains were being made in decentering dominant narratives, dominance returns in the form of national curricula (and national testing) which specify--often in distressing detail--what "we" are all like? Thus, just when Afro-Brazilian voices of protest with their long history are being heard in increasingly powerful ways Brazil, and just when Afro-Brazilian cultural forms of protest music and rap are a real public presence, a national narrative is formed that has little place for the voice of the racially oppressed. Of course, in many nations the attempts at building national curricula and/or national standards were and are forced to compromise, to go beyond the mere mentioning of the culture and histories of the Other. (Certainly, this was and is the case in the United States.) And it is in such compromises that we see hegemonic discourse at its most creative best (APPLE, 2014; APPLE, 2006; APPLE, 1996; APPLE; BURAS, 2006).

Take as one example the new national history standards in the United States and the attempt in textbooks to respond to the standards' creation of a multi-cultural narrative that binds "us" all together, to create that elusive "we." Such a discourse, while having a number of progressive sounding elements, demonstrates how hegemonic narratives creatively erase historic memory and the specificities of difference and oppression. All too many textbooks in our schools construct the history of the United States as the story of "immigrants" (CORNBLETH; WAUGH, 1995). "We" are a nation of immigrants. We are all immigrants, from the original Native American people who supposedly trekked across the Bering Strait to more recent people from Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Well, sure we are. But such a story totally misconstrues the different conditions that existed. Some "immigrants" came in chains, were enslaved, and faced centuries of repression and state-mandated apartheid. Others were subjected to death and forced enclosure as official policies. And there is a world of difference here between the creation of (an artificial) "we" and the destruction of historical experience and memory (APPLE, 1996). (Here I would ask you to critically reflect on how this works in your own nation. What "national narratives" are currently being created? Whose past is valorized? Through whose eyes are you being asked to see the past, present, and future? What role does race play in this?)

This destruction and how it is accomplished is again related to how race functions as an absent (at least for some people) presence in our societies. (Indeed, I want to suggest that those who are deeply committed to anti-racist curricula and emancipatory and dialogic

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pedagogy need to place much more of their focus on white identity.)

It may be unfortunate, but it is still true that many Whites in a considerable number of countries believe that there is a social cost not to being a person of color but to being <u>White</u>. Whites are the "new losers" in a playing field that they believe has been leveled now that the United States and other nations are supposedly basically egalitarian, color-blind societies. Since "times are tough for everybody," policies to assist "under-represented groups"--such as affirmative action--are unfairly supporting "non-Whites." Thus, Whites can now claim the status of victims (GALLAGHER, 1995, p. 194; APPLE, 2006). These feelings are of considerable importance in the politics of education in the United States, but also in many other nations. The growing anti-immigrant movements in United States, Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal, or the continuing scandalous treatment of "Gypsies" (Roma) throughout Europe, for example, are cases in point. As it is being shaped by the conservative restoration, Whiteness as an explicit cultural product is taking on a life of its own. In the arguments of the conservative discourses now so powerfully circulating, the barriers to social equality and equal opportunity have been removed. Whites, hence, have no privilege. Much of this is untrue, of course. Although undercut by other dynamics of power, there are still considerable advantages to "being White" in society (LIPSITZ, 1998). However, it is not the truth or falsity of these claims that are at issue here. Rather it is that the production of identities are historically conferred. We need to recognize that "subjects are produced through multiple identifications." We should see our project as not reifying identity, but both understanding its production as an ongoing process of differentiation, <u>and,</u> most importantly, as subject to redefinition, resistance, and change (SCOTT, 1995, p.11). This is an extension of Freire's project onto a terrain that he too understood.

The implications of all this are profound, politically and culturally. For, given the Right's rather cynical use of racial anxieties in so many nations, given the economic fears and realities many citizens experience, and given the historic power of race on the US psyche and on the formation of identities in so many other nations, many members of these societies may develop forms of solidarity based on their "Whiteness." To say the least, this is not inconsequential in terms of struggles over meaning, identity, and the characteristics and control of our major institutions.

How do we interrupt these ideological formations? How do we develop emancipatory and anti-racist pedagogic practices that recognize White identities and yet do not lead to

retrogressive formations? These are complex ideological and pedagogical questions. Yet, as Freire so clearly recognized, issues such as these cannot be dealt with unless we focus directly on the differential power relations that have created and been created by the educational terrain on which we operate. And this requires an insistent focus on the role of the state, on state policies, on the shift to the right even by some supposedly "leftist" governments, and on the reconstruction of common-sense in which the right has successfully engaged.

If we were to be true to the historical record, Whiteness is certainly not something we have just discovered. The politics of Whiteness has been enormously, and often terrifyingly, effective in the formation of coalitions that unite people across cultural differences, across class and gender relations, and against their best interests (DYER, 1997, p. 19). It would not be possible to write the history of "our" economic, political, legal, health, educational, indeed all of our institutions, without centering the politics of Whiteness either consciously or unconsciously as a core dynamic. How can the history of the Brazil that Paulo Freire loved so much be understood without placing slavery and the continuing exploitation of Afro-Brazilians at the center of the formation of the nation and its economy? How could one understand the realities of Portugal without placing its history of domination in Latin America and Africa at the center of its formation as an economic and cultural power? And how could one understand the development of my own nation, the United States, without also stressing the fact that the current economy was built off of the exploitation of millions of Africans who were enslaved for hundreds of years. Speaking relationally, all of our current lives rest on the unpaid labor and exploitation of those millions of people now and in the past who were seen as "less valuable" and "less human" than "ourselves."

Of course, I am saying little that is new here. As critical race theorists and post-colonial writers have documented, racial forms and identities have been and are constitutive building blocks of the structures of our daily lives, imagined and real communities, and cultural processes and products (See for example, Omi and Winant (1994), Omi and Winant (2015), Tate (1997), McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis and Dolby (2005); Fine, Weis, Pruitt and Burns (2004), Lynn and Dixson (2013)). Thus, much of the problem in education is not only about educating the oppressed, but re-educating those who were and are in dominance (see Swalwell (2013)). Is there a Freirean pedagogy for them? I do not mean this question to be simply rhetorical.

Let us look at this situation a bit more closely. Race as a category is usually applied to

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"non-white" peoples. White people are usually not seen and named. They are centered as the human norm. "Others" are raced; "we" are just people (DYER, 1997, p. 1). Richard Dyer speaks to this in his insightful book, White.

> There is no more powerful position than that of being "just" human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can't do that--they can only speak for their race. But, non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of a race. The point of seeing the racing of Whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power, with all of the inequities, oppression, privileges, and sufferings in its train, dislodging them/us by undercutting the authority with which they/we speak and act in and on the world. (Ibid., p. 2).

"Our" very language speaks to the invisibility of power relations in our ordinary talk about whiteness. "We" speak of a sheet of white paper as "blank." A room painted all white is seen as perhaps "needing a bit of color". Other examples could be multiplied. But the idea of whiteness as neutrality, as a there that is not there, is ideally suited for designating that social group that is to be taken as the "human ordinary" (Ibid, p. 47). In this sense, for example, the whiteness of "us" enables the White majority to represent "immigrants," or indigenous people, or racially oppressed minorities either as sinister or as having "exotic" cultural values and experience. It is a small step then to represent their claims for justice as indicative of "special treatment" for "those people" that is not available to "ordinary" people. Living in an ahistorical epistemological fog allows this happen.

4 CHALLENGING THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOG OF WHITENESS

In the face of this, in the face of something that might best be called an absent presence, a crucial political, cultural, and, ultimately, pedagogic project then is making whiteness strange (DYER, 1997, p.4). Thus, part of our task in terms of pedagogy and political awareness and mobilization is to tell ourselves and teach our students that identities are historically conferred, that, as I said, subjects are produced through multiple identifications.

There are dangers in doing this, of course. As I argue in both Cultural Politics and Education (APPLE, 1996) and Educating the "Right" Way (APPLE, 2006), having whites focus on whiteness can have contradictory effects, ones we need to be well aware of. It can enable one to acknowledge differential power and the raced nature of everyone--and this is all

to the good. Yet, it can also serve other purposes than challenging the authority of, say, the White West. It can just as easily run the risk of lapsing into the possessive individualism that is so powerful in this society. That is, such a process can serve the chilling function of simply saying "But enough about you, let me tell you about me." Unless we are very careful and reflexive, it can still wind up privileging the White, middle class woman's or man's need for self-display. This is a seemingly endless need among many middle class people. Scholars within the critical educational community will not always be immune to these tensions. Thus, we must be on our guard to ensure that a focus on Whiteness doesn't become one more excuse to recenter dominant voices and to ignore the voices and testimony of those groups of people whose dreams, hopes, lives, and their very bodies are shattered by current relations of exploitation and domination. It becomes a monologue masquerading as a dialogue. This is something Freire was deeply concerned about and we need to remember his insistent warnings about "fake" dialogues.

Further, focusing on Whiteness can simply generate White guilt, hostility, or feelings of powerlessness. It can actually prevent the creation of what I have called "decentered unities" that speak across differences and that can lead to broad coalitions that challenge dominant cultural, political, and economic relations, something I have stressed even more in Can Education Change Society? (APPLE, 2013). Thus, doing this requires an immense sensitivity, a clear sense of multiple power dynamics in any situation, and a nuanced and (at times risky) pedagogy.

Issues of Whiteness may seem overly theoretical to some of us or one more "trendy" topic that has found its way to the surface of the critical educational agenda. This would be a grave mistake. (Remember, when Freire first articulated his vision of a transformative pedagogy, he was seen as utopian and not taken seriously by those in power.) What counts as "official knowledge" consistently bears the imprint of tensions, struggles, and compromises in which race plays a substantial role (APPLE, 1999; APPLE *et al*., 2003; APPLE, 2006; APPLE, 2014). Further, as Steven Selden has so clearly shown in his history of the close connections between eugenics and educational policy and practice, almost every current dominant practice in education--standards, testing, systematized models of curriculum planning, gifted education, and so much more--has its roots in such concerns as "race betterment," fear of the Other, and so on (SELDEN, 1999). And these concerns were themselves grounded in the gaze of Whiteness as the unacknowledged norm. Thus, issues of

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Whiteness lie at the very core of educational policy and practice. We ignore them at our risk.

Of course, this is partly an issue of the politics of "identity" and there has been increasing attention paid over the past decade to questions of identity in education and cultural studies. However, one of the major failures of research on identity is its failure to adequately address the hegemonic politics of the Right. As I have been at pains to show elsewhere, the conservative restoration has been more than a little successful in creating active subject positions that incorporate varied groups under the umbrella of a new hegemonic alliance. It has been able to engage in a politics inside and outside of education in which a fear of the racialized other is connected to fears of nation, culture, control, and decline--and to intensely personal fears about the future of one's children in an economy in crisis. All of these are sutured together in tense but creative and complex ways (APPLE, 2014; CARLSON; APPLE, 1998; APPLE, 2006). In this way, considerably more democratic and critical trajectories of reform are in essence closed off (see, for example, Apple and Beane (2007)) and groups of people are pulled into what are implicitly racialising rightist projects by the very success of the Right in institutionalizing its logics and assumptions.

Presented with such questions, those of us who are committed to the project that Paulo Freire spent his life building–putting into practice a transformative education in real institutions and real communities, defending it against the predictable rightist and neo-liberal attacks that he faced for years–need to pay close attention to these movements. Those of us who are committed to emancipatory and anti-racist educational policies and practices, and who are engaged in bearing witness to the actual functioning of existing and newly proposed educational neo-liberal "reforms," then, would be wise to direct our attention not only to the racial effects of markets and standards, but just as much to the creative ways neo-liberal and neo-conservative (and in the US, authoritarian populist religious evangelical and fundamentalist) movements work to convince so many people (including many of the leaders of the Labour and Conservative parties in the UK, the Democratic Party in the US, and even some members of the Workers Party in Brazil) that these policies are merely neutral technologies that will help us make education more efficient and effective. They're not.

For this very reason, the way to honor Paulo Freire is to extend his struggles into this terrain as well. We owe it not only to Paulo, but to oppressed people throughout the world and to ourselves. In this way, we can do what Paulo Freire urged us to do. "We can take the role of agents, makers and remakers of our world [in] a permanent critical approach to reality

in order to discover the myths that deceive us and help us maintain the oppressing , dehumanizing structures" (quoted in Taylor (1993, p. 53)). He constantly demanded that we educate not for "domestication", but for liberation. From my intense discussions with him, I am certain that he would have become an even stronger participant in the struggles over racial subjugation had he but lived longer. This is one more reason why so many of us miss him.

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