The Great White North?

Exploring Whiteness, Privilege and Identity in Education

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Darren E. Lund (Eds.)

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GEORGE J. SEFA DEI

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to write the foreword for this book—which addresses in a direct and explicit way particular topics in anti-racism that have been hidden from view or seen to be secondary by most people—for a number of reasons. I have known Paul Carr since the beginning of his doctoral studies at OISE in the early 1990s, and am pleased that he has continued to interrogate "race" from a problematized vantage point, and also to bring forward a critical analysis of policymaking based on his own experience. I first came to know Darren Lund as an anti-racism scholar in the mid-1990s, when we engaged in a robust scholarly debate on African-centred schooling in the pages of a national academic journal, and have long been aware of his outstanding social justice work in schools and communities.

Over the course of the last two decades I have been involved in a number of projects dealing with anti-racism education, a concept that has consistently evolved over time. There are many scholars, including my colleagues and students and researchers that I have worked with, who recognize the intersectionality of race, class, gender, sexuality and other forms of difference. Many other scholars and colleagues across the country, some of whom are represented in this book, have continued to work toward inculcating a more critical, meaningful, and relevant formulation of anti-racism. I believe that race is a fundamental marker of lived experience in Canada, as well as internationally and, at the same time, like the others in this book, I feel that so many other factors contribute to how race manifests itself.

My own work in Canadian schools and the academy, in general, has pointed to the politics and denial of race and difference even as race and racism stare us in the face. As racialized/minoritized students articulate their concerns about racism I have also encountered the denial and silencing that many others have often embarked upon, not simply to protect their privileges, but to mask any sense of complicity and responsibility for social oppression. What I have found over time, and one reason this book is such a timely and necessary addition to the literature on racism and racialization, is that many of the people most imbued with its orchestration and manifestation, namely White people, maintain the power and privilege to ignore and dissociate themselves from the experiences of others who are more directly affected or marginalized by racism. It is destabilizing, troublesome, and problematic to hear White people vigorously refute the notion that there is racism in society. We see this in Canada in many ways, and in education we have long heard of the *de facto* policy of "colour-blindness." Many people of good will, however, have become engaged in trying to make for a better

society, but many others challenge the foundation and legacy of racism. The fact that most of the decision-makers are White, and that it is these people who control the funding, laws, programs, and policies, means that it is often an uphill battle just to get racism formally identified as a concern. Thus, a book on Whiteness, led by two academics who are White, is an important contribution to the discussion about how power works in society.

This book includes contributions from some well-known and critical theorists in the area of racism in this country—as well as some new voices in the field. The impressive range of approaches, methodologies, theoretical perspectives, and experiential vantage-points provides for a comprehensive and engaging text for students, researchers, and others interested in exploring how Whites are intensely implicated in perpetuating the racial project. I think the question of whether Whites should talk about race is "no brainer." As this book suggests, racism can best be addressed when everyone addresses their role in maintaining the *status quo*, even if difference is still considered to be a strategic consideration in how race manifests itself and is experienced. There is place at the anti-racism table for White scholars. For the dominant, the entry-point is the investigation of Whiteness and White identity.

There are many excellent chapters in this book addressing the specific concerns of those most marginalized by racism (i.e., Aboriginal peoples, Black/African Canadians, and other people from minoritized racial groups), and these works explore the myriad contradictions racialized peoples face in their quest for human dignity and rights. Until now, we have not seen a book within the Canadian context with such obvious relevance at the international level—one that effectively brings to light the curiously implausible contradictions of Whiteness. Paul and Darren's undertaking to gather such eloquent and thoughtful voices to fill this void provides an important catalyst for all people to reaffirm our engagement in living out equity and social justice, and toward an authentic and critical pluralism that surpasses the trivialized and romanticized versions of diversity and multiculturalism that seem limited to spicy food and coloured clothing on the dance floor. Racism is about maintaining White dominance and supremacy. It is about the power to produce and validate knowledge about particular experiences while subjugating other concerns. In this regard, I would like to engage the dialogue with additional readings on Whiteness and White identity. I remember not long ago teaching a graduate class on the "Principles of Anti-racism" when a student asked why there was a focus on Whiteness and White identity in the course. It was not the usual concern about re-centring the dominant group's issues in anti-racist practice. In fact, what the student was alluding to was whether an anti-racist practice should today not be preoccupied foremost with the ways to empower racialized and minoritized bodies (spiritually, politically, and intellectually) to come to terms with our social oppression and, ultimately, to suggest ways to resist dominance.

Race is a powerful divide in contemporary society. Whiteness as a form of racialized identity helps frame much of the discourse and social practice. The universalism of Eurocentric experience points to the bankrupt ways White racialized identities are held up as the norm to which everything else is measured

and accounted for. The authority of Whiteness rests upon how, in everyday practice, the tropes of White supremacy scripts the lives of the oppressed and minoritized. In a racialized society to be White does not simply mean to be privileged. It also implies owning up to complicities and responsibilities for the maintenance of oppression. Consequently, it can be argued that there are limits to how we can deconstruct White identity without falling into the easy slippage of acknowledging responsibility and complicity.

White racial identity is about White privilege. Learning about Whiteness, and teaching about White identity and Whiteness are some of the many challenges facing anti-racist and dominant educators today. Discourses on race and anti-racism cannot avoid a discussion of White identities and white privilege. When we fail to do so we are merely reproducing the dominance of Whiteness. When certain bodies enter into our institutions they carry the institutional weight of Whiteness. These bodies can easily reproduce their dominance freely if they choose to use their positions to work for change. It is a choice that is often not afforded to all groups. Dyer (1997, p. 10) long ago observed that, in looking at Whiteness, the goal is to "dislodge it [Whiteness] from its centrality and authority, not to reinstate it." In order to dislodge Whiteness we must first understand the insidious ways it maintains dominance through the ideology of White supremacy. A supremacist ideology ensures that Whiteness guarantees racial privilege irrespective of gender, sexuality, and class. Consequently, Whiteness has become a system of dominance. In fact, Howard (2004) is correct in arguing that Whites cannot escape their implication and complicity in Whiteness in a White supremacist society. To claim otherwise negates or compromises the ability of Whites to do serious anti-racist work as "it espouses a gross misunderstanding of the structural and embedded nature of racism" (p. 8). Anti-racist Whites must clearly acknowledge and demonstrate the tensions and difficulties of their grappling with racism in order to gain credibility, and to solidify the ground for anti-racist coalition politics.

To my reading and experience, Whiteness is never invisible to those who daily live the effects of White dominance. Many Whites may see their Whiteness, and yet they are able to deny the dominance associated with it. This denial is not unconscious, nor is it accidental; I believe it is deliberate. Critical anti-racism maintains that we will only do away with racism when Whiteness no longer infers dominance and Whites acknowledge and work towards this end. In noting this I also agree that there are contradictory (and sometimes competing) meanings of Whiteness, as in the way Whites and subordinate groups understand contemporary Whiteness (e.g., the perception of Whiteness as anything but positive). As I have argued elsewhere (Dei, forthcoming), a critical study of Whiteness and White identity means bringing certain considerations to the fore of our anti-racist practice. For example, how individuals choose to inhabit their bodies (claiming a racial identity) ought to be distinguished from the concept of Whiteness as a system of domination conferring privilege upon White bodies at the expense of racial minorities. We must also look for what is being gained when distinctions between White identity and Whiteness is vigorously maintained. And, at whose expense and to what intents and purposes do we uphold such distinctions? At times we make

distinctions to absolve us on individual and collective responsibilities, and not simply for the sake of intellectual scholarship. Personal accountability, and collective responsibilities and complicities, cannot be avoided or skirted around by focussing on how White bodies are trapped by the system. Consequently, while we may be seduced into separating "White identity" and "Whiteness," there is a link that must not be denied. In fact, White identity and Whiteness work together allowing dominant groups to become immune to the system. We know that certain bodies have the privilege to opt out by default through inaction.

The idea of practice of "disembodied identity" (which, for the purpose of this essay, I would interpret as "Whiteness without bodies") can be problematic as it fails to uncover how race is embodied and how race, gender, class, and sexual politics intersect to create and maintain social differences. As alluded to, Whiteness cannot itself be essentialized, especially when embodied Whiteness intersects along gender, class, and sexual lines. As Deliovsky (2005) notes in articulating an "embodied femininity," White women do not have the same relationship, access, or subjective experience to Whiteness as their male counterparts. Notwithstanding these complications, however, it is also equally important to reiterate that there is a systemization and structuralization of dominance within social institutions that perpetuate White privilege and other forms of oppressions "inter-generationally" and/or through time and space, irrespective of class, gender, religious, language, and sexual differences, particularly among dominant groups. The structural dynamics of Whiteness work with broader socio-economic forces as well as within the institutional aspects of structure/society as evidenced in everyday discursive practices and social scripts/texts to place Whites in a "positional superiority" (Said, 1979) at the expense of "Others." Such "positional superiority" of Whites is also fed constantly by the ideological system based on White supremacy (see Deliovsky, 2005, p. 12).

This collection has come at an opportune time. It fills a gap in the Canadian literature on the ways Whiteness masquerades in our institutions and within Canadian mythologies. Naming Whiteness and White identity is a political project as much as an intellectual engagement, and the co-editors of this collection must be commended for creating the space for such naming to take place in public and academic discourses. To some, while Whiteness can be said to be an "unnamed," "unmarked," and yet "marked racial practice" (e.g., Frankenberg, 1993; Mercer, 1991, pp. 205-206), its material and symbolic consequences are all too real irrespective of the intersections of class, gender, and sexual differences. We know that throughout history the power and ideological privilege of Whiteness has allowed working-class Whites to associate themselves more with their oppressive middle-class counterparts than the working-class of colour (see the pioneering works of duBois, 1975; Cox, 1958). The reason is not far fetched to the critical scholar interested in the political economy of race. Dyer (1997, p. 19), among many others, has also observed that Whiteness has proved more successful than class in bringing White people together across ethno/cultural boundaries, often against the best interest of working-class peoples. There is no contradiction here. In

fact, Harris (1993) got it right in her careful, astute, and eye-opening analysis of "Whiteness as property."

In effect, what I am leading to is the fact that the anti-racist discursive framework articulates a link between race, identity, and representation in educational and political practice. In the context of an anti-racism discursive practice, "bodies matter." White identity has powerful currency in social settings. In fact, in anti-racist work, "bodies matter" when we come to think of the ways knowledges are read and encoded on different bodies and how learners engage in/with processes of schooling and education. But as noted by others, bodies matter in anti-racist work also because of the "rootedness [or, I would say "embeddedness"] of racist ideologies in bodies" (Howard, 2006). I cannot agree more when Howard (2006) contends that the White body is potentially prone to racism, and this profoundly complicates any engagement in critical anti-racist work. The White body itself gives rise to certain liabilities in any work that would be deemed "anti-racist." Yes, this liability is attached to the body. However, this does not mean White bodies cannot do anti-racist work. In fact, as I have repeatedly noted, the critical question today is not "Who can do anti-racist work?" but whether we are all prepared to face the risk and consequences of doing this work! And the risk and consequences are different for who the bodies are. Engaging self in anti-racist schooling and education work, and what it means to bring an embodied experience, as well as the consequences for this, are all crucial components to such work. Because White bodies are invested in systems of privilege, the importance of dominant groups questioning their self-appointed and racialized neutrality is always critical and transformative. For far too long we have witnessed how White society has conscripted and choreographed the idea of a fractured Black community that avoids taking responsibility.

In the context of bodies, and the politics of educational transformation, Doyle-Wood (2006) reiterates that "it is not a question of the color of the person but the color of the person's politics" is on the mark. This is precisely because of the kinds of damage that minoritized bodies can engender when their politics are socially conservative. At the same time, if we are speaking about bodies whose politics must be libratory and transformative in anti-racist ways to begin with, then we must acknowledge that it is crucial that such bodies must substantially (but not exclusively) be bodies of color. There is a psychologically liberating aspect for students when, in this context, a Black or racial minority teacher is present and experienced in positions of knowledge production and learning. At the same time, location is a critical factor when we are speaking about issues of race and power. A minoritized gaze, and the knowledge produced from that gaze and experience, is a different gaze than that of the dominant White, supposedly normative view. It provides an alternative paradigmatic way of seeing and knowing. To give a concrete example, it should matter greatly who teaches what (e.g., race, anti-racism, Black Canadian Literature history, or Aboriginal knowledge). There is a powerful and symbolic reading of anti-racist work evoking Whiteness and different bodies.

Together, Darren and Paul have brought together a project that seeks to frame and foster debate, analysis and, most importantly, social change in relation to race, difference, and identity in society. Is it noteworthy to acknowledge that both Paul and Darren are White, and that they are overseeing this work on Whiteness? I believe that it is, not because others cannot write about the subject with clarity and insight, as is clearly evident in the diverse range of contributors to this book. Rather, naming their positions as White allies embracing a rigorous conceptual and analytical discourse in the social justice field is an important signal that White society must also become intertwined in the entrenched racism that infuses every aspect of our society. As Paul and Darren correctly point out, race is still a pivotal concern for everything that happens in society, and especially in schools. The beauty of this collection under the leadership of these two editors is that the engagement allows readers to bring healthy interpretations and contestations to critical anti-racist work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PAUL R. CARR AND DARREN E. LUND

INTRODUCTION

SCANNING WHITENESS

As *white as snow*, *pure white,* like *Snow White*— we could start off this book with dozens of metaphors, analogies, images, and cultural landmarks that all speak to the sanctity, beauty, and the hypnotic predominance of the colour white in the Western world. Not merely the opposite of black, white has been a signifier for global racial supremacy—good against evil, lightness versus darkness, and benevolence over malevolence—and symbolizes cleanliness, kindness, serenity, and youth. White is associated with Europe the conqueror, while Black is inexorably fused to colonial notions of the "dark continent" of Africa.

White supremacist groups have coalesced in North America around virulent hatred based on the premise of biological superiority. Canada has long been a welcome home to the KKK and numerous other hate groups (Baergen, 2000; Kinsella, 2005). White supremacist propaganda has been used historically in a sophisticated manner to soften the message of xenophobia to reinforce White hegemony (Daniels, 1997). Slavery, colonialism of First Nations and other peoples, neo-colonialism, imperialism, and a host of other political, economic, and cultural strategic maneuvers and mindsets have all been buttressed by the grandiose conceptualization of the White man as morally enlightened (Dei & Kempf, 2006). Supported for centuries by the Christian religion and the drive to expand the Empire, White people have colonized and ravaged much of the planet. Willinsky (1998) reminds us that the racialized divisions of the past still shape our educational institutions, and that exposing privileges and inequities is part of what we owe our students. Further, he explains that students

> need to see that such divisions have long been part of the fabric and structure of the state, including the schools, and they need to appreciate that challenging the structuring of those differences requires equally public acts of refusing their original and intended meanings. (p. 5)

Rather than regarding this as a sensationalistic depiction of the legacy of a diverse group of people, one need only look at the history of indigenous peoples in North America (Churchill, 1998) to understand the present day privilege and power held by White people (Dei, Karumanchery, & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004; Fine, Weis, Powell Pruitt, & Burns, 2004; Lund, 2006a).

The collection of writings assembled within *The Great White North?* speaks to the idea that Canada is an expansive country, richly diverse in its geography, shaped by the mesmerizing landscapes crafted by the Group of Seven artists in the early 1900s, with an undercurrent of the pioneer spirit defined in the literature of

generations of great Canadian writers in the latter part of the twentieth century. One feature that defines the Canadian experience is the complex, and often antagonistic, relationship it has had with the United States since before Confederation. A common sentiment that binds Canadians together is the self-assured notion that Canada does not suffer from the same racial problems as in the US. We are less segregated, less discriminatory, less racist, and less divided, as we often remind ourselves. The Americans, on the other hand, have endless visible warts, including a long history of racial tensions and civil rights struggles, and we strive to convince ourselves that we Canadians have not followed their destiny (Lund, 2006c).

As educational researchers interested in the sociology of "race" and identity in education, the editors of this book have become aware of the intricate, systemic, and pervasive nature of racism in Canada. Many strong antiracism scholars have begun the work of acknowledging and documenting this racist past and present (e.g., Dei, Karumanchery, & Karumanchery-Luik, 2004; Fleras & Elliot, 2003; Henry & Tator, 2005; James, 2003; Trifonas, 2003). Starting with the first European contact with the Aboriginal peoples, through the existence of slavery in Canada—about which many Canadians have no information—to the undulating waves of immigration, through the razing of Africville in Halifax, to the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, through the experience of Jamaican-Canadians in Toronto and Haitian-Canadians in Montreal, the history of racism in Canada is as rich as it is shrouded with resistance and denial (Lund, 2006b). While there have been hundreds of studies on race relations and racism in Canada, there have been few, if any, scholarly works exclusively dedicated to exploring Whiteness in Canada.

We decided to compile such a book examining the multiple perspectives and vantage points on Whiteness in order to challenge the current complacency in the Canadian state and nation, and particularly among educators, to address deep-seated inequities and injustices. This volume builds on a growing desire to examine Whiteness without reifying its centrality in the antiracism and other social justice movements. We have been, simultaneously, inspired by critical White scholars in the US who have undertaken critical self-examination of their own privileges as they take up the work of unlearning racism in their schools, communities, and faculties of education (e.g., Bush, 2005; Howard, 1999; Jensen, 2005; McIntosh, 1988; McIntyre, 1997; Rodriquez & Villaverde, 2000; Sleeter, 2005; Sullivan, 2006). Questions emerge that seem self-evident and yet confound our work: Do most White people even know that they are White? Do they use their privilege to deny or ignore their racial identity and, simultaneously, infer inherent racial attributes to the "Other"? If White people do not know that they are White, how can those who are in positions of power, many of whom are White, effectively understand and challenge racism and unearned privilege?

We realize the oversimplification entailed in placing into one White category such heterogeneous ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious, and other groups. Certainly, there are myriad international examples of nuanced experiences of oppression and struggle within and across nations of White people. For example,

Francophones have historical differences with Anglophones in Canada, the Catholics and the Protestants have been at loggerheads for years in Northern Ireland, the Hungarian minority has not had a favourable experience with the majority Romanian population, and the Basque population has been involved in a separatist movement in Spain for generations, with all of these conflicts, struggles, and complexities involving White people. It would seem extremely unusual, and perhaps even unacceptable to most people, to hear news anchors speak of "the White community" during a daily newscast in North America, yet we commonly refer to the "Black community," the "Asian community," the "West Indian community" and so on, as if these racialized groups can so easily be confined within a tightly defined and coded category of identity and social experience.

This volume asks the question: What does Whiteness look like, in general, and in Canada, in particular? The Canadian context is highly complex with the number and variety of exogamous relations and blending of peoples with complex and shifting ethnic, cultural, and racial identities. Almost infinite individual experiences make for a confusing notion of "race" in Canada; for example, the last two Governors General are women from racialized minority groups, coincidentally with each being a former journalist married to a White husband. Is it a coincidence that there has never been a non-White Supreme Court judge or a Prime Minister of colour? Who maintains the predominance of power in Cabinet, at the CBC/Radio-Canada, in boardrooms of the large corporations, the Senates of Canadian universities, and so on? Power does have a colour in Canada, despite official multiculturalism, making our nation appear superficially to be a harmonious society in which anyone can be successful with the right attitude and effort. The meritocratic myth has worked against people of colour in Canada for hundreds of years. It is problematic that White people so effortlessly invoke deficits in individual efforts as an explanation of underachievement by some racial minorities.

Despite recent significant gains for (mainly White) women in the workforce and political life, there still remains an important and visible privilege gap between Whites and non-Whites in Canada. Clearly, women as a group still face numerous barriers and challenges in society, and for women of colour the inequities are multiplied. The tumultuous rift and near dismantling of the *National Organization of Women* (NOW) in the 1980s is illustrative of the tension between White women and women of colour. The latter did not see their needs being addressed, nor their voices being heard, through an organization dominated by middle-class White women, which eventually led to non-White women assuming leadership positions in the movement.

Are people generally overtly racist in Canada? While it is unlikely that blatant racist behaviour is currently condoned or tolerated by most Canadians, there is ample evidence that widespread systemic racism is a reality. Part of the problem in documenting trends is the absence of useful data collection (see Carr, in press). Many people resist indicating their racial origin on census forms, for a variety of reasons. People from racialized minority groups know that a chance at employment may later be tainted with the accusation that the employer simply wanted to "fill a quota." Playing the proverbial "race card" is perhaps most insidious when

considering the trivialization and malignment of employment equity in Canada (Klassen & Cosgrove, 2002) and affirmative action in the US (Feagin & O'Brien, 2003). At some level, racial identity is obvious to everyone and, at the same time, is obscured by the false notion that human rights legislation, common decency, and religion all negate its existence. Where people live, the positions they ultimately attain, who they may befriend, employ, and marry, the types of associations, clubs, and organizations they belong to, and other markers of social integration all may have a racialized component. Who most often attends private schools, private golf clubs, and private business circles, has traditionally depended on, among other things, unspoken racial categories. How people choose to understand their own implication in racism relates to privilege and power, and ultimately, Whiteness is shrouded with justifications and denials that allow people to avoid discussion of how oppression continues to benefit White people in Canada.

Therefore, we begin with the premise that "race" and racial identities are highly contested and problematic ideas for our consideration. Just as with politics and religion, these topics are not usually addressed openly in polite company. For this volume, we insist that Canadian society cannot be understood without stripping away the layers of the "race" onion. Clearly, social relations are infinitely more complex than race relations. The social construction and intersectionality of identity provide a medium in which Whiteness can be deconstructed and problematized. Whether we are speaking about sexual orientation, ability, religion, gender identity, cultural group membership, or some other aspect of our identities, the racial template always affects the power relations inherent between groups and individuals (McLaren, 2007). For instance, when a marginalized person is also a person of colour, that individual's lived experience can become more complex.

The birth of this Whiteness project stems from a chance encounter of the co-editors at the *National Association for Multicultural Education* (NAME) conference in Atlanta in November of 2005. Sharing a table at lunch, we were both surprised to learn how much we have in common: We are two White males from Canada of about the same age who have been involved in antiracism education for a number of years. One is from Calgary (Darren), one from Toronto (Paul), and both have had a rich experience outside of the academic world—as a high school teacher (Darren) and as a government policy advisor (Paul). We enjoyed the talks, workshops, and especially the Freedom Ride, which traced the roots of the civil rights movement through Spellman and Morehouse Colleges, the Ebenezer Church, and the Martin Luther King Memorial Center. Against this poignant and moving backdrop we discussed the state of racism in Canada, and agreed that being White and not saying so, or failing to strive to understand the ways in which it works to subjugate others, serves to undermine the antiracism movement.

We wished to produce a book with people from a range of cultural and racialized identities, and with a variety of perspectives on Whiteness, with the stated desire that each author problematize Whiteness through inquiry that was both personal and critical. We are aware of the highly contentious and discriminatory history facing a number of White immigrants over the years in Canada (e.g., those of Jewish, Italian, and Ukrainian origin) but we wanted to focus

on the power and privilege of Whiteness in this volume. This requires changing the paradigm, forcing the issue of who really holds the power, and interrogating the Canadian identity.

The book is unique in that each one of the writers addresses his or her personal implication in Whiteness. We strongly believe this does not diminish the scholarship, but enhances these accounts of rich, subjective, and politicized experiences of Whiteness. All of the authors of chapters making up the core of this collection are Canadians, with the exception of Brad Porfilio, who taught Canadian students across the border at a university in Buffalo, New York. One of the editors (Paul) is a Canadian living in the US. We are pleased that we have representation from almost all of the provinces, contributing a range of pieces—theoretical, conceptual, and applied—that collectively represent a range of interdisciplinary perspectives.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

There are five sections in the book, each containing three or four chapters. All of the chapters approach Whiteness and race from a critical vantage point, problematizing identity within the Canadian context, and also providing linkages to the international arena. Education is a central focus to this volume, and is approached from a broad perspective. The range of authors, in terms of racial identity, ethnic origin, gender, region, discipline, and experience builds on our belief that Whiteness is multi-faceted, complex, and permeates human experience in this society.

The first section sees authors conceptualizing Whiteness. The three chapters presented therein provide an array of examples and insights as to how White identity is constructed and reinforced in Canada from the moment of birth. Kathleen Berry employs an auto-ethnography to explore how numerous factors, events, and phenomena in her youth served to buttress a White hegemony in education and society, as she reveals how the intersectionality of race and (dis)ability effectively marginalizes people at different levels. Berry writes that, "the spaces and times of the auto-ethnographic text show where Whiteness hides in ancestral and inherited grand narratives, such as Euro-centric history and rationality, Christianity, and Colonization, that have constituted modern, Western education." She describes the books studied in school in Maritime Canada that served to diminish the non-White "other," the highly informal encounters with "ethnic food," the adept manoeuvres to avoid contact with non-Whites, even at Church, the endless jokes, and the evident marginalization of people of colour without interrogation, all of which infused privilege and power in the White child and White race. A central theme elucidated by Berry speaks to the "individual interpretations and political implications for the institution (that) varied in their degrees of inclusion based on a difference from the 'norm'al."

Tim McCaskell provides a critical look at his personal evolution in a chapter entitled "Before I was White I was Presbyterian," highlighting how being raised in Ontario in the 1950s involved myriad forces that encouraged alienation of the

"other," whether these were Catholic, Italian, or French. In this case, the first "other" was White, which made for an intensely aggravated relation with the non-white "other," including Aboriginal peoples, Blacks, and other immigrants. Again, the dichotomy between the goodness of the Church and the evil of segregation and hatred of others is brought to the fore. The notion that Whites do not have a colour but "others" most assuredly do is juxtaposed with a class analysis. McCaskell documents his travels in Latin America, Africa, and India, illustrating how his own racial origin became clearer with the contact he established with people of colour who better understood the international dynamic of racism. Documenting the difficulty in doing antiracism work within the Toronto Board of Education, and then as a man living with HIV, he underscores that, for White people to become allies in anti-racist struggle, it is crucial that we understand not just the racialization of others, but our own Whiteness, both as a marker, and a constituent element of our own privileged cultural, national and class location. We need to understand how our own biographies and experiences shape and limit our identities and consciousness, and the path we must take to transform them.

James Frideres rounds out this section with a chapter entitled "Being White and being right: Critiquing individual and collective privilege." He documents his experience in teaching Aboriginal students, highlighting how the normative values of education and society serve to malign and marginalize Aboriginal peoples. He writes that White privilege is an institutional set of benefits granted to those who, by colour, resemble the people who dominate the powerful positions in our institutions and organizations. In turn, these become individual benefits. The system is not based on each individual White person's intention to harm but on a racial groups' determination to preserve what they believe is rightly theirs. For Frideres, White is invisible, and all "others" have to substantiate their claim to citizenship. The barriers to teaching and learning are documented in this chapter, and the concept of power is underscored as being key to understanding how to achieve equity as well as, importantly, breaking the silence of Whiteness.

The second section is entitled "The Whiteness of Second Peoples," borrowed from Tracey Lindberg's analysis of the European-Aboriginal relationship. As a society, we are so confident of the validity in the normative actions of White Christians that it will surely come as a jolt to some to hear of the colonizers of the First Nations as "Second Peoples." As an Aboriginal woman, Lindberg frames the terminology through thoughtful reflection about how power is constructed. In her chapter, she presents eleven theorems "related to Indigenous peoples' survival in non-Indigenous institutions," highlighting the ingrained, systemic and taken-for-granted morality of attitudes, behaviours, traditions and systems that serve to freeze out First Nations people in the academy. She addresses how Aboriginal persons need to be able to survive within Western academic institutions, and how there may be an exotic, folkloric view of First Nations that trivializes their identity while simultaneously contributing to some form of a perceived cultural enrichment program. She describes the institutional challenges, enforced through a philosophy that sustains Whiteness, which can marginalize work necessary for recognition and

growth within First Nations. Lindberg also critiques the way Aboriginal persons are regarded when they do undertake work that is beneficial to the First Nations.

Herb Northcott's chapter is entitled "Going native: A White guy's experience teaching in an Aboriginal context," in which he discusses how attempts to teach to Aboriginal persons using the same references, frames, approaches, and attitudes employed for the general population were highly ineffective, and ultimately, further served to alienate the former. However, by elucidating Whiteness, Northcott was able to discover constructive learning, demonstrating the need to understand identity when dealing with others, and, ultimately concluding that avoiding it or assuming its neutrality will only aggravate the situation:

> Despite my attempts to remove Whiteness from this course, Whiteness remained. I, the "White guy," was clearly responsible for the course, was the person who graded each essay, and assigned the students' final grade…. The success of a course like this depends on disclosure by individual participants, and a willingness to examine issues publicly from a variety of perspectives. However, public discussion is constrained by political correctness, that is, by an awareness of the perspectives that are more or less acceptable in the local community…. Distance, in the form of Whiteness, is then both problematic and functional.

Northcott presents the important concept of how we should deal with Whiteness once we have unearthed it, examining the place of White people in the struggle for social justice.

The last chapter in this section is by two researchers from Quebec, Julie Caouette and Donald Taylor, who examine the impact of collective White guilt from a social-psychological perspective. This chapter openly discusses the problematic of White people doing research on Whiteness and others, a common concern among antiracism workers: Who should be researching whom, and how? Recounting some of the intricate and complex work undertaken with First Nations during times of conflict, Caouette and Taylor surmise that it can be painful to face our White privilege and our White guilt; and it can be frustrating to deal with issues related to our Whiteness and our White identity in a diverse nation such as Canada. Nevertheless, the quality of our relationship with disadvantaged groups depends on our being vigilant about the implications of our position of privilege.

Their research on collective White sentiment toward racism concludes with a plea to "shift our focus from attributing blame and towards taking responsibility." This chapter sheds new light on the necessary affirmation that Whites are also a racial group.

The third section examines developing and de-constructing White identity, beginning with Christine Wihak, from Alberta, who uses a psychological lens to examine the development of anti-racist White identity in Canadian education counselors. Building on her experience living in Nunavut with the Inuit, her analysis of the phases of understanding and affirming White identity includes the pitfalls associated with doing social justice work. She stresses that "White adolescents, however, may never consider this facet [racial] of identity because

Whiteness is not something that distinguishes them as individuals," which will ultimately influence how counselors approach problems and issues related to race. In describing White racial identity development, Wihak emphasizes that, initially, a White person raised in a liberal, White country such as Canada cannot see the differences in life experiences and opportunities that come from race. As a White person actually gets to know members of oppressed minorities, she also starts to see her own Whiteness and the privilege that accompanies it. As she accepts responsibility as a White person to work for social justice, she once again can express her sense of shared humanity with minorities, a sense essential for making the end of oppression their common cause…. This ability to be colour-blind and not colour-blind simultaneously is the hallmark of the achievement of a mature, anti-racist, White identity.

Wihak ends her chapter by emphasizing that there is never an end-point to White racial identity development, that the work continues as it transforms itself but, significantly, this work must be rendered visible.

Susan Tilley and Kelly Powick from Ontario continue the inquiry into racial identity and White privilege in their chapter, exposing how a group of graduate students in a Master's of Education program interrogated Whiteness. They found that White students had difficulty understanding and grappling with the notion that they were White, whereas racial minority students demonstrated an in-depth and textured understanding of Whiteness:

> For racial minority students, concepts and ideas were taken up in more personal ways. Throughout the interviews, these students introduced stories of their parents growing up in a racialized society, retold personal encounters with racism, and even related course content to the schooling experiences of their own children…. A racial minority participant talked about the idea of White privilege as "not really [new] because I've been confronted with it throughout my whole life that they [White people] are the dominant race," while White students often struggled with the idea that their group membership grants unearned privileges not available to "others."

Focusing on the problematic of how Whites and non-Whites—both teachers and students—acquire knowledge is central to their analysis. Attempting to achieve a more critical consciousness of lived and societal experiences through structured programs is one way of laying the groundwork for difficult, but necessary, conversations about race.

Carl James concludes this section with his chapter entitled "Who can/should do this work? The colour of critique." In his exploration of how race issues are broached by his students, he focuses his analysis by acknowledging that Whiteness as an identity/identification that, like with other identities, is not fixed, but is always in transition, which involves "conscious reflective struggle" and an active process of construction and reconstruction—the meanings and understandings of which continuously shift in relation to structural and cultural contexts.

James highlights how racism is the responsibility of all people, not just those who are disadvantaged by it and, moreover, requires that "antiracism proponents

must work to disrupt the normativity and centrality of Whiteness as well as expose and challenge 'White talk,' all of which function to maintain White hegemony." Emphasizing that individuals and groups experience racism differently, James warns against avoiding tackling race issues because of the illusion of colour-blindness, which deflects the lived experiences of racial minorities.

The fourth section deals specifically with teaching, learning, and Whiteness. Cynthia Levine-Rasky begins by discussing the complexity of the intersectionality between Whiteness and Jewish identity, delving into the problematic issues surrounding social class and race. By analyzing the underpinning rationale for choosing schools and, in effect, moving children from a particular school, she exposes the nuanced sentiments pervading Jewish identity. In highlighting the neo-liberal commodification of the school as an integral part of the market place, Levine-Rasky dissects the motivations for school choice as well as the linkage between Jewish identity and social class. Ultimately, this analysis of Whiteness unearths and confirms the problem of over-generalizing about identity:

> Jewish identity is ambiguous. Ambiguity is manifest in appeals for Jewish authenticity *and* for membership within the White, Christian majority. Jews want to sustain *dos pintele yid* (the Jewish essence) but within the framework of dominant Christian society. Jews may feel the risk of their difference or they can forget it, but they want to evoke Jewishness too by choosing schools and neighbourhoods that feel Jewish. Jewish narratives of immigration, struggle, and subsequent mobility influence these parents' regard of the "other" embodied by the Kerrydale parents since Jewish assimilation is accomplished through their ongoing project of differentiation from others. That is 'we' are integrated only relative to others who are not. The problem of ambiguity in being both privileged and at the periphery indicates Jews' contradiction with their liberal humanistic principles.

Protecting and nourishing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity, as is the case for Francophones in Canada, is a complex enterprise, and the connection to Whiteness may, therefore, take on different shapes and forms.

Lisa Comeau, from Saskatchewan, provides the next chapter, entitled "Re-inscribing Whiteness through progressive constructions of 'the problem' in anti-racist education." Her research employs a discourse-analytic perspective, exploring "variable and often contradictory ways these highly educated, experienced, and well-intentioned research participants discursively construct and account for the problem of social inequality." She argues that "the discursive production of cultural difference through racializing and racist discourse is complicit in re-inscribing both Whiteness and Otherness, thereby reproducing the social inequality that is claimed to be the object of transformative, anti-oppressive education." Comeau exposes how Whiteness is delineated as goodness in educational discourse, and argues that White privilege and power need to be named in order for there to be *bone fide* progress in education. In highlighting the uneasy contradictions about how one should engage in Whiteness, referring to the notion of the "double blinds of Whiteness" (Ellsworth, 1997), she postulates that "this

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double blind position is unavoidable for White people who want to disrupt racial inequalities."

Patrick Solomon and Beverly-Jean Daniel provide the next chapter, entitled, "Discourses on race and 'White privilege' in the next generation of teachers." As teacher-educators examining pre-service teachers' experiences, they provide a summary examination of the literature of how this latter group has approached Whiteness. Stressing how racialization has traditionally been avoided in teacher-education programs, their qualitative research uncovered two predominant themes, one dealing with "Not here in Canada," revealing "the extent to which the candidates remain unaware of the history of racism in the Canadian context," and another related to "discourses of competing oppressions, which centres gender and class, and decentres race." They expose the deeply entrenched beliefs of the largely White, female, middle-class teacher candidates: namely, that many White Europeans from an under-class were able to integrate into Canada, and that Canadian society is a meritocracy:

> The part of the story that seldom gets told is the fact that their ancestors were given land (often stolen from First Nations peoples), or allowed to purchase land for nominal sums of money. The fact that their ancestors Anglicized their names in an attempt to better fit in with the existing Canadian populace, or that within one generation, their White skin and the disappearance of their accent gave them access as the dominant group at the time, is another part of the story that remains untold.

They conclude that if teacher education students can acknowledge that, "Whites continue to experience multiple economic, political, social and ideological benefits, which have been accrued through centuries of colonial ventures," they will then start to question the myth of meritocracy, thus placing them in a moral and ethical quagmire. The issue of complicity must then be addressed, and pointing to the American example as being the "evil antithesis" does not help re-align the Canadian education equation.

The concluding chapter in this section, from Brad Porfilio, outlines the re-production of social relations constructed from his research on White, Canadian, female students in a technology in education class in a Bachelor of Education program. He draws on the literature related to neo-liberalism and the employment focus of education programs and students. Porfilio finds that White privilege framed how teacher-education candidates perceived the normative world, revealing that they enter schools of education with a pedestrian view of how power, privilege and domination gird their own as well as other citizen's relationships. The data indicate that teacher-educators did little, in twelve graduate courses, to broaden their perspectives, so as to help them recognize White privilege.

Further, he finds that there is a fundamental lack of critical conversation, on the part of the participants in the study, on the social nature of technology, [providing] critical research that 'queers' computing technology for the purpose of how women and minoritized people, across the globe, are affected by its use in an economic

system bent on maximizing profit, or (spelling) out how technology can promote social justice in K-12 classrooms.

His analysis underscores the prevailing normative view that technology is neutral, although it is adapted primarily to the needs of middle-class White people. This chapter reminds us that only a small percentage of people around the world have computers, or have unhindered access to the Internet, yet technology is often presented as a remedy for under-development.

The last section of the book deals with the institutional merit of Whiteness, building on the previous sections with chapters dealing specifically with contentious educational issues related to identity and race. Laura Mae Lindo begins by interrogating non-White philosophy in schools, based on her study of the place of philosophy in the Ontario secondary curriculum. Recounting her own story of how she, as a Black woman, was dissuaded from pursing graduate studies in philosophy, Lindo critically questions the normative positioning of philosophy in education, and how White people and their concepts, ideas, and lives seem to take precedence over all other groups. She highlights how "philosophy has often been presumed a 'disembodied' practice," disconnected from "racialized bodies" engaged in philosophy. Raising issues related to epistemology and "philosophic insiders," Lindo argues that race and gender are removed from the philosophy canon with a paradoxical acceptance that philosophy is both White and male:

> Often it seems philosophers are unable to see beyond differences of race, gender and/sexuality when deciding who is allowed to play within the boundaries of philosophical discourses. The clash between a philosopher's naturalized sensibility of who does and does not belong within the boundaries of academic philosophy, and the "other" that stands before them requesting to share in their philosophical epistemological discourses is often considered an irrelevant concern. Yet, it is not irrelevant but an important aspect of philosophical epistemology, for it is these presumed ideas of who belongs and does not belong in the discipline that form the backdrop upon which new epistemologies are created, proliferated and, consequently, more deeply entrenched.

Lindo concludes by analyzing the saliency of the philosophy curriculum in Ontario, which can offer opportunities for constructive engagement but is also shrouded with systemic barriers potentially ensuring its isolation and limitations.

Debbie Donsky and Matt Champion, two White school administrators in the Toronto region, focus their chapter on working in a school where the majority of students are from racial minority groups. They pose the question of how to negotiate Whiteness in such a diverse community, and reflect on the problems of inclusion, equity, and leadership. Through a dialogue, they decipher how they each acted in relation to various events involving race, and question how difficult it is to interpose oneself into situations about which one may not understand the lived experiences of those involved. They question normative values in structuring public education, and also illustrate how difficult it is to critique the institution in which one is employed as an administrator. They focus on parental involvement as

well as ongoing struggles with the power and privilege of Whiteness as an explanation for the actions of others. Questioning their own predispositions and identities is a necessary component to understanding the educational experience of the students in their school. Their openness about how they structure their thinking provides for critical reflection on issues related to race:

> I [Champion] have always worked hard to hire teachers who reflect the broad range of cultures we have in Canada. I am embarrassed to say that in all of these cases I have only hired teachers who received their training in Canada, and have been reluctant to hire teachers whose training was in a country where I was uncertain about the instructional values and methods.

Donsky and Champion offer important insights into how educational leaders actually live issues related to diversity and privilege, an area of concern for many school-based antiracism activists.

The next chapter, by Gulzar Charania, explores the intricacies of how race plays itself out within a school context in relation to racial violence. She presents and analyzes facts critically with a view to understanding the institutional functioning of the people involved. By examining the "dominant story," from the point of view of school officials, she lays the groundwork for understanding how normative values and judgments are made and reinforced in a systemic way. The school in question is portrayed as harmonious until the arrival of Black students from a feeder school. Charania examines the meaning of insisting on bringing together the two groups involved in the violence, White and Black girls, as the only logical response to the problem, rather than understanding if, and how, the Black girls were facing discrimination She explains:

> The multicultural school requires the appearance of difference but only on conditions and terms defined by the students and community that are rightly entitled to the space. Racialized students are not excluded from the school officially or denied access all together. However, their success or failure is thought to be about qualities intrinsic to who they are, qualities worn on their bodies as explanation, rather than in the systemic processes of marginalization they experience and the racially ordered opportunities offered to them. Curiously, the inclusion of these less desirable students also has the effect of representing the White students and community as gracious, tolerant hosts, making space in their school community at considerable inconvenience and disruption.

She concludes by focusing on accountability in how these situations are handled, emphasizing the inequitable power relations framing school codes and policies used to assert Whiteness.

In the last chapter by Paul Carr, the author writes of the Whiteness of educational policymaking based on his experience as a government policy advisor working on equity policies in the Ontario Ministry of Education. Carr presents a critical look at how policies are conceived, developed, implemented, and monitored with a particular focus on Ontario's antiracism education policies in the

early- to mid-1990s. The author looks at how Whiteness plays a role in virtually every step of the policy process, and how the willful omission or exclusion of groups, concepts, and approaches is built into that process. An example is the complete lack of response from the Ontario government to the desire of some Black parents to have Black-focused schools in Toronto because of the less than acceptable conditions and outcomes produced by the public (White) system. He provides a number of examples of how Whiteness is rife in the system, and how it remains problematic to raise social justice concerns from the inside, thus making the discussion and realization of antiracism gains extremely difficult on the outside:

> A critical realization from this review of how government functions in support of Whiteness resides in the infinite number of subtleties and nuances framing the discourse. Despite the numerous efforts, resources, and pronouncements in support of social justice at the formal, institutional level, the results appear to be extremely mitigated and the impact rarely sustained…. The power to manipulate and omit language has been used to convince broad sectors of society of the high level of "democracy" and "accountability" in education.

He concludes that identity needs to be a greater area of focus in the policy process, as does the effect of such policies, which should over-shadow the supposed notion of individual effort, merit and colour-blindness. Undoubtedly, the formal policy process will have an impact on what actually happens in schools, and government needs to consider more close what accountability should look like for social justice, in addition to the other traditional areas which are prominently mentioned as being of great importance.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We feel honoured to have George Dei, involved in the book for the intensely critical pedagogical perspectives he brings to his work, and to attend to some of the pitfalls encountered when researching and writing about Whiteness. In reading this volume, it is inevitable that some will contest specific aspects of these analyses of how Whites are fully immersed in the swamp of inequitable power relations. As a living and vibrant field, the community of researchers need not speak with a single, consensual voice. We hope that the plurality of views put forward here will open an important conversation and stimulate further activism in eradicating racism and other forms of oppression and inequity. The authors of each of these chapters critically examine diverse perspectives and contexts as well as the construction and application of societal and institutional practices that underpin inequitable power relations and disenfranchisement based on racial identity. Each chapter concludes with a series of questions to foster further reflection in readers as they continue to interrogate Whiteness. The relevance and salience of this text, we believe, extends far beyond the Canadian context, and we hope those in other global settings will

find abundant and poignant lessons for their own transformative work in education with a particular focus on promoting social justice.

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SECTION 1

CONCEPTUALIZING WHITENESS

KATHLEEN S. BERRY

EXPLORING THE AUTHORITY OF WHITENESS IN EDUCATION

AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC JOURNEY

INTRODUCTION

Using certain archeological premises of Foucault, the task in this chapter is to examine, track, deconstruct, excavate, and critique the existence of Whiteness in informal and formalized educational locations. The purpose is to reveal how the power and privilege of Whiteness has been created, circulated, and sustained through a socio-historical process of hegemony that questions, if indeed, Canada is a location for racial diversity and pluralism at the individual, societal, institutional and national levels. To examine and expose hegemonic practices of systemic and epistemic racism in Canada, I author an auto-ethnographic text as a White, Canadian woman privileged mainly by my immersion in the invisible constructs of Whiteness. Through my auto-biography as an ethnographic, historical process (not linear or chronological) that constructs and locates me in several discourses and practices, I am able to disclose not only the authority of Whiteness in Canadian society but discuss how the very invisibility of Whiteness works to generate, circulate and maintain racism in Canadian society and its institutions. The spaces and times of the auto-ethnographic text show where Whiteness hides in ancestral and inherited grand narratives, such as Euro-centric history and rationality, Christianity, and Colonization, that have constituted modern, Western education.

METHODOLOGY

In a manner similar to *bricolage* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004), I employ a mixture of analytical tools to dig and connect the personal to the political authority of Whiteness in Canada. The methodological *bricolage* includes elements of Foucault's archeological analysis (Frankenberg, 1993), auto-ethnography and axiology. In addition, the theoretical *bricolage*, taken mainly from the field of Critical Studies, is threaded throughout my auto-biography as interpretive discourses to further move the personal into the political. A criss-cross of these discourses attempts to prevent a simple chronological unraveling of a personal history. Instead, an archeological analysis of an auto-ethnographic text (Jones, 2005) surrounds the personal in the political, social, and economic powers

of the time and space in which the story takes place. I borrow from Carolyn Ellis' *The Ethnographic I* (2004) as a way to present and write autobiographical research.

I purposely selected certain excerpts from my autobiography that best expose the invisibility of Whiteness. Although not a disclosure of all the invisible locations of Whiteness in Canadian life, I use the selected excerpts to move the personal in and out of the individual level to indicate where Whiteness exists at its most seductive levels of concealment—the societal, institutional and Western civilizational levels.

Another researcher, Frankenberg (1993), to whose work on Whiteness I often turn for theoretical and pedagogical assistance, has generated a useful research process that helps me focus my thinking yet avoid a totalizing "grand narrative" that seeks unity, coherence, and closure. Frankenberg guides the researcher through: (a) an *examination* of products of Whiteness; (b) a *tracking* of whiteness as it moves into formal and institutional, political processes; (c) a *deconstruction* of ways whiteness marks literary, cinematic, and scholarly practices; (d) an *excavation* of the limit points of whiteness, enabling reflection on the disciplinary practices that reinforce race as a historically constructed system of differentiation, exclusion, and belonging; (e) a *critique* of white complicity with reproduction of racial domination along a continuum from conscious to unselfish conscious enlistment; and finally (f) an *articulation* of strategies/action for development of antiracist, activist, and [transformative] practices (p. 70). In the limited space of this chapter, I have only scratched the surface of these different areas.

Another area of the *bricolage* known as axiology (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) is also threaded throughout my autobiographical texts. In education, for example, the cloak of Whiteness generated by Western rationality and European Imperialism are handmaidens to capitalistic driven economies that need individualism and competition for material goods as human capital and subject formation. In turn, these organizing "grand narratives" are intersected by other discourses such as Christianity, patriarchy, and heterosexuality that serve to privilege Whiteness. This criss-crossing of grand narratives and shifting contexts is known as axiology. I include axiology as an attempt to avoid essentializing, normalizing, generalizing, and abstracting locations of Whiteness from the lived world. In other words, the power and privilege of Whiteness does not apply in all contexts or to all people at all times; neither is power and privilege stable, constant, or unified. In the modern world, however, Whiteness acts as a dominant construct for assigning power and privilege in Canadian society and institutions.

EXPOSING WHITENESS

Patterson (in Frankenberg, 1997) defines Whiteness as:

> the culture that the dominant peoples of the world possess; it was created socially and structurally by a society. Whiteness can be defined by several strong features including, capitalistic market society structure; belief in progress and science, possession of modern concepts of family and societal