Multiculturalism and multicultural education are at a paradoxical moment. There is work that continues as if the multicultural hegemony was still intact and on the other hand work articulated as if multiculturalism was decidedly passe. The essays in this collection will be of considerable interest to academics, policy makers and students of both multiculturalism and multicultural education principally because they touch on both perspectives but concentrate for the most part on the thorny problematic of the workings of multicultural education in its present precarious moment. Given the renewed, urgent attacks in various western countries, the cottage industry of “death of multiculturalism” texts and the rise of the interculturalism, transnationalism, diaspora alternatives, is multiculturalism dying? Are the ends of multiculturalism – the management or celebration of diversity; representation and recognition for all in society; creation of just and equitable communities at the global, national and local school classroom levels – better theorized and realized through the ascendant alternatives? Representing the precarious moment in Canada, Ireland, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, the essays in this collection address these questions and both depict and trouble hegemonic multicultural education and contrast it with its supposed successor regimes.
TRANSGRESSIONS: CULTURAL STUDIES AND EDUCATION
Volume 84

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This book series is dedicated to the radical love and actions of Paulo Freire, Jesus “Pato” Gomez, and Joe L. Kincheloe.
Cultural studies provides an analytical toolbox for both making sense of educational practice and extending the insights of educational professionals into their labors. In this context Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education provides a collection of books in the domain that specify this assertion. Crafted for an audience of teachers, teacher educators, scholars and students of cultural studies and others interested in cultural studies and pedagogy, the series documents both the possibilities of and the controversies surrounding the intersection of cultural studies and education. The editors and the authors of this series do not assume that the interaction of cultural studies and education devalues other types of knowledge and analytical forms. Rather the intersection of these knowledge disciplines offers a rejuvenating, optimistic, and positive perspective on education and educational institutions. Some might describe its contribution as democratic, emancipatory, and transformative. The editors and authors maintain that cultural studies helps free educators from sterile, monolithic analyses that have for too long undermined efforts to think of educational practices by providing other words, new languages, and fresh metaphors. Operating in an interdisciplinary cosmos, Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education is dedicated to exploring the ways cultural studies enhances the study and practice of education. With this in mind the series focuses in a non-exclusive way on popular culture as well as other dimensions of cultural studies including social theory, social justice and positionality, cultural dimensions of technological innovation, new media and media literacy, new forms of oppression emerging in an electronic hyperreality, and postcolonial global concerns. With these concerns in mind cultural studies scholars often argue that the realm of popular culture is the most powerful educational force in contemporary culture. Indeed, in the twenty-first century this pedagogical dynamic is sweeping through the entire world. Educators, they believe, must understand these emerging realities in order to gain an important voice in the pedagogical conversation.

Without an understanding of cultural pedagogy's (education that takes place outside of formal schooling) role in the shaping of individual identity--youth identity in particular--the role educators play in the lives of their students will continue to fade. Why do so many of our students feel that life is incomprehensible and devoid of meaning? What does it mean, teachers wonder, when young people are unable to describe their moods, their affective affiliation to the society around them. Meanings provided young people by mainstream institutions often do little to help them deal with their affective complexity, their difficulty negotiating the rift between meaning and affect. School knowledge and educational expectations seem as anachronistic as a ditto machine, not that learning ways of rational thought and making sense of the world are unimportant.

But school knowledge and educational expectations often have little to offer students about making sense of the way they feel, the way their affective lives are shaped. In no way do we argue that analysis of the production of youth in an electronic mediated world demands some "touchy-feely" educational superficiality. What is needed in this context is a rigorous analysis of the interrelationship between pedagogy, popular culture, meaning making, and youth subjectivity. In an era marked by youth depression, violence, and suicide such insights become extremely important, even life saving. Pessimism about the future is the common sense of many contemporary youth with its concomitant feeling that no one can make a difference.

If affective production can be shaped to reflect these perspectives, then it can be reshaped to lay the groundwork for optimism, passionate commitment, and transformative educational and political activity. In these ways cultural studies adds a dimension to the work of education unfilled by any other sub-discipline. This is what Transgressions: Cultural Studies and Education seeks to produce—literature on these issues that makes a difference. It seeks to publish studies that help those who work with young people, those individuals involved in the disciplines that study children and youth, and young people themselves improve their lives in these bizarre times.
Precarious International Multicultural Education

*Hegemony, Dissent and Rising Alternatives*

Edited by

Handel Kashope Wright
Michael Singh
Richard Race
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PART I
PRECARIOUS MULTICULTURALISM
CHAPTER 1

MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION:
PRECARIOUS HEGEMONIC STATUS QUO AND ALTERNATIVES

Handel Kashope Wright, Michael Singh, Richard Race

Multiculturalism as a concept is both topical and relevant (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2011) as well as being perceived positively and negatively (Lott, 2010; May & Sleeter, 2010; Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). The ongoing debates and continuing need to address multicultural education as policy and within classrooms and lecture theatres remains crucial when considering domestic and international practice as well as the changing nature of cultural diversity (Banks, 2009; Modood, 2010; Race, 2011). The essays in this collection address the viability of multicultural education. We are hoping they will challenge the reader through differently focused snapshots of the status quo, the problematizing of aspects of multiculturalism, discussion of the processes and discourses that are contributing to its supposed imminent demise and indication of examples of alternatives to multiculturalism and multicultural education that are emerging. This introduction provides something of a contextualization of multiculturalism and multicultural education today, proceeding through a generalized overview of the context of multiculturalism and multicultural education and the specific examples of conservative European leaders’ contribution to the “death of multiculturalism” trope and cosmopolitan education as a specific example of a discourse in complex coexistence with multicultural education.

This collection of essay appears at what Handel Wright refers to in his chapter as a “moment of danger” for multiculturalism and less immediately apparent, for multicultural education. It is the culmination of a number of efforts at describing and understanding multicultural education at the present moment within and beyond individual national borders. In more specific terms, this collection is the result of several efforts from informal discussions and flurries of emails across continents, through a conference double session on “International Perspectives on the End(s) of Multicultural Education” (at the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies, 2009) to a more expansive follow-up, the Invited International Conference on Multicultural Education (hosted by the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education, University of British Columbia in 2009), as well as exchanges on Australian and Canadian multicultural education generated during Handel Wright’s November and December 2009 Visiting Fellowship at the Centre for Educational Research, University of Western Sydney as part of the Centre’s international research initiatives. The University of British Columbia event was initially conceived as a very small roundtable that would bring together
eight people to discuss the status quo of multicultural education in Canada, the United States, Australia and Britain. However, the event mushroomed into an international conference with some 26 presentations (a selection of which are included in this collection). This set of experts were brought together to address the initial question of the status quo and possible future of multicultural education in terms of constituent aspects such as youth and notions of identity and belonging; anti-racism as an older (but still quite relevant) discourse and policy alternatives to multiculturalism, with interculturalism and cosmopolitanism as newer alternatives; sport, cinema and music as sites of pedagogy that remind us to think of education broadly rather than as synonymous with schooling; the post 9/11, post 7/7 backlash against multiculturalism and multicultural education in both the United States and Britain (Eade et al, 2008); a tradition of “anti-multiculturalists” dissenting progressive voices; Islamophobia in France, and a general rising xenophobia and the politics of difference in today’s classrooms in western societies.

While the majority of the chapters in this collection are updated versions of essays presented at the CCIE conference, others (e.g. Michael Hoechsmann & Lisa Taylor’s essay on multicultural literacy) were invited after the conference. In some cases the conference essays have been radically revised and/or extended, especially in response to recent global events. For example, the anti-multiculturalism comments by conservative European leaders have contributed to the backlash against multiculturalism and the end of multiculturalism discourse and this has led Peter McLaren and Jean Ryoo to add a substantial discussion on what this means for multiculturalism and representation and Handel Wright to replace his original paper (on the problematic of conducting empirical research on comparative Canadian and American multiculturalism in the context of theoretical turn to cosmopolitanism and other alternatives to multiculturalism) with a brief paper that addresses what the global “end of multiculturalism” discourse means for Canadian multiculturalism and multicultural education. Many of the essays are conceptual but others are reports on or discussions of empirical research, especially critical ethnography. Both types of essays come together sometimes to highlight similar issues. For example, Pearl Hunt and Sue Saltmarsh’s ethnographies dovetail with Shirley Steinberg’s conceptual contribution in highlighting the somewhat marginalized issue of social class, with Steinberg stressing the operation of a power bloc of the wealthy and the dwindling of the middle class, Hunt addressing the experiences of working class and middle class New Orleanians experience post-Katrina and the problematic of undertaking research in those circumstances and Saltmarsh indicating how economic discourse is implicated in the sense of self worth of and personal agency of middle class rural Australian women.

Despite the backlash and the sense in some quarters that multiculturalism is passé, there is still multicultural education, not only in the schools but as Sue Saltmarsh’s contribution reminds us, in adult education as well, in the various countries represented in this collection and it is therefore necessary to make meaning of multiculturalism in general and multicultural education in particular in
the present moment. Making meaning of both multiculturality, Wright’s (Wright, in press) preferred term for the juxtaposition of various cultures in community or society) and multiculturalism as policy, pedagogy and everyday practice demands what Lisa Taylor and Michael Hoechsmann (this volume) are calling “multicultural literacy.” Part of that literacy is about making meaning of how multiculturalism is marshaled to understand or foster belonging, including the pedagogy of citizenship education (as discussed in the Canadian and British contexts by Maryam Nabavi and Richard Race respectively in this collection). At a time when the 99% Movement is protesting against Wall Streets’ greed and corporate giants such as Qantas holding stranded air-travellers to ransom, Sue Saltmarsh (in this volume) addresses the question of financial literacy and consumerism amongst mothers and their primary school children in disadvantaged schools in rural and urban communities in Australia. It is also about knowledge about and taking cognizance of the anti-multiculturalist stances of Indigenous Peoples and other “minorities” as articulated by Annette Henry and how the politics of diversity and inclusion are to be engaged pedagogically as discussed by both Dawn Courage and Kal Heer. It is about having an overall sense of the history and status quo of multiculturalism and multicultural education (e.g. as in the accounts with varying accounts of the Canadian case in contributions by Dawn Courage, John Willinsky and Handel Wright).

It is clear that multiculturalism these days is not what it once was. We have come a long way from only a decade and half ago or so when Nathan Glazer (1997, 2002) declared, perhaps both wearily and warily, “we are all multiculturalists now.” His acknowledgement of the hegemony, indeed ubiquity of multiculturalism has been replaced with a sense that multiculturalism is dead, dying or simply embarrassingly passé. Indeed there is much talk these days of “the death of multiculturalism,” so perhaps we ought to join John Willinsky in speaking of it in the past tense, in asking as he does in the title of his keynote address at Conference and his contribution to this volume, “What Was Multiculturalism?” Even if we are not yet ready to concede the demise of multiculturalism we have to face the factors which have placed it on its deathbed, are supplanting it or at the very least are contributing to rendering it distinctly passé. These include its awkward subjects and their stances that Hesse (2000) would describe as “transruptive,” such as Indigenous Peoples and their rejection of multiculturalism and ambivalence about inclusion of indigenous students and communities in multicultural education in the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand contexts. It also includes the tension between multicultural practice and policy and its alternatives, an example of which Paul Carr discusses in his essay on the co-existence of Quebecois interculturalism and multiculturalism and multicultural education in the rest of Canada (this volume). A third example is the set of cutting-edge theoretical successor regimes – cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and globalization/glocalization. Indeed at least one of these discourses, namely cosmopolitanism, is now being discussed in more concrete praxis terms as an
approach to education in Australia as illustrated in Michael Singh’s and Bobby Harreveld’s contributions to this volume.

Since the early 2000s across Europe, the condemnation by high profile conservative politicians of multiculturalism as a concept has increased. German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s comments in November 2010, underline what has been termed the backlash against multiculturalism in Europe (Vertovec & Wesserndorf, 2010). Merkel was politically reversing her previous support for multiculturalism within Germany, a country which had experienced increased immigration, especially but not exclusively from Turkey. Various studies have tracked a similar retreat from multiculturalism in Australia (Luchtenberg & McLelland, 1998; Schwarz, 2004). Even acknowledging Merkel’s desire to appeal to elements of the German electorate with her change in policy, what needs to be highlighted is this notion of the multicultural backlash. As Vertovec and Wessendorf (2010) argue: “The backlash discourse has been strong in its own right; it’s fair to say that some political reactions have ensued – but these seem to have mainly taken the form of rhetorical adjustment rather than a significant alteration of course” (p. 27).

In England, Prime Minister David Cameron provided more evidence of this backlash, at a security conference speech in Munich (February 2011), when he suggested that the state must confront, and not consort with, the non-violent Muslim groups that are ambiguous about British values such as equality between sexes, democracy and integration. Claiming the previous Labour government had been the victim of fear and muddled thinking by backing a state-sponsored form of multiculturalism; Cameron talked about the need for less passive tolerance and the need for more active, muscular liberalism. Despite Cameron’s criticisms, the previous Labour government in England were not strong supporters of multiculturalism as an idea, indication of which includes their strong support of “integration and accountability” in the Early Child Matters education policy (Race, 2011).

Interestingly, Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Cameron’s colleague within the Coalition Government in the United Kingdom, gave a speech in Luton (England) in March 2011 in which he opposed the notion of a backlash by supporting and praising the notion of multiculturalism. Clegg has indicated that multiculturalism should be seen as a process by which people not only respect but communicate with each other. Clegg supports a multiculturalism which welcomes diversity but resists division. Furthermore for Clegg, respect and diversity are important conditions of an open, confident society. France provides another European example of the perceived multicultural backlash. The banning of the hijab in public places was introduced in April 2011. As Amiraux (in Silj, 2010) highlights within education: “Schools have been … designated as the main place for illustrating the so-called ‘failure of integration’ in France. As in the headscarf controversies, public schools are considered to be in danger of overexposure to ethnic cleavages and their related effects” (pp. 74–75). Germany, England and
France – along with Australia (Ang & Stratton, 2006; Jakubowiz, 2002; Singh, 2000) – all highlight the recent complexity involved within the politics of difference. However, the banning of the hijab in public spaces in France needs to be placed in a context of recognizing French secularism as well as modern and current politics. Opposition to the banning of the veil is present nationally but vocally stronger internationally and is perceived universally as a potential political vote winner for the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy (BBC, 2011).

The European multiculturalism backlash has seen political reactions to the current educational, economic, social and cultural changes taking place all over the world. Change and the alternatives that are raised by all authors in this book have multicultural implications. Multiculturalism poses the fundamental question, who are we? Multicultural education in response focuses on struggles over students’ identity – often more than one. Nilofar Shidmehr’s contribution is in part concerned with knowing who you are, and reminds us of the heterogeneity of students’ identities, and challenges stereotypical reductionism. The multicultural preoccupation with different identities spotlights students’ particularities; it either tends towards withdrawal and self-absorption with regard to ethnicity, or produces ethno-cultural displays for the gaze of tourists, spectators or voyeurs (Buras, 2008). Students are motivated to center their concerns on their particular ethnic qualities, encouraging a desire to privilege this identity as self-enclosed. The assertion of a constrained or bounded ethno-cultural identity as one’s most important attachment represents a protectionist, atomizing sense of identity. What counts for multiculturalism is the problem of identity and the accommodation of diversity – who am I and how do we live together? The identification and ambivalent defense of the integrity or authenticity of ethno-religious identities in the national context has become its particular focus.

There is a need to consider alternatives to this version or perception of multiculturalism because of several key problems it poses (Kymlicka, 2007). Is it necessary that respect for certain “ethnic” customs and practices requires the defensive insulation of ethno-cultural particularities? Given multicultural education’s preoccupation with the excess of identities what alternative is there to appreciative celebrations of ethno-religious differences? While Charles Taylor’s (1994) discussion of a politics of recognition is often lauded as an excellent response to addressing how we are to live together, Nilofar Shidmehr’s chapter’s sustained critique of Taylor’s politics of recognition joins that of other visible minority scholars like Himani Bannerji (2000) and reflect progressive minorities figures’ ambivalence about multiculturalism as a whole, e.g. Sylvia Wynter (1990) and Annette Henry (this volume) and Taylor’s notion of a politics of recognition in particular (Bannerji, 2000).

In her chapter, Bobby Harreveld offers a view on cosmopolitan education that identifies reasoned, informed perceptions of threats to civil society, its political and economic processes, and developed the concept of cosmopolitan capabilities the strength of which is its explicit foregrounding fair dealing in the world’s knowledge.
Jennifer Chan, in her contribution, explores the prospects for an alternative to multicultural education that foregrounds pedagogy of acknowledgement and knowledge. Such egalitarian cosmopolitan pedagogies are being promoting as alternatives for cultivating the ability to detach one’s self from restricted ethno-cultural perspectives and circumscribed forms of ethno-religious interests, and to self-consciously engage global perspectives, communication and methods (Pinar, 2009). This requires the development of cosmopolitan capabilities for intercultural imagination and knowledge exchange. Given the suppleness of the idea of cosmopolitanism it is being reconstituted in the post-9/11 debates, because it encourages reflecting on one’s ethno-cultural connections, developing an appreciation of many different cultures, and supports an interest in the well-being of people worldwide. Cosmopolitan pedagogy is being encouraged in opposition to the restrictions and constraints of the excesses of acute national, racial and ethnic parochialism. In this volume Sean Brayton analyses ethno-nationalist representations of immigrant labor, their cinematic depictions as ghostly zombies and monsters. With the rise of mass international communication, perspective-growing travel, and transnational movements of workers and students the prospects for broad-based rather than elite cosmopolitanism learning are increasing. Pearl Hunt explores the uses of music and sound as ethnographic data as a mean of making both theoretical and emotional connections to potential audiences and to analyse issues of social and environmental justice.

The problem is that it is not clear that the optimism associated with cosmopolitanism pedagogy is an intellectual enterprise for students (see Peter McLaren & Jean Ryoo, and Maryam Nabavi this volume). It is by no means clear that cosmopolitanism pedagogy is encouraging intercultural contacts and exchanges that focus on knowledge, especially theoretical rather than evidentiary knowledge (van Hooff & Vandekerckhove, 2010). Moreover, it is not apparent that cosmopolitanism pedagogy is directed at the fusion of intellectual resources from different cultures, let alone encouraging self-interrogation about Western intellectual hegemony. Alternatives to multicultural education are directed at fostering reciprocity in theorizing as the basis for transformative knowledge exchange. Kal Heers’ chapter explores the pedagogically possibilities for building alliances between non-Western peoples of differing backgrounds within a Western nation-centered educational project. A worldly educational alternative embraces an expansion in the intellectual matter engaged through Western education, and thus, a shameless recognition that Western, Anglophone educators have to make productive use of their inability to transcend knowledge boundaries born of differences in linguistic and educational cultures. Richard Race in his chapter indicates the possibilities for engaging the concepts that lie behind both children’s intellectual traditions and education policy-making, and foreshadows the need for educators to find pedagogies and to make policies for engaging with their lack of knowledge of these.
This does not mean that students or educators have to disconnect themselves from vital attachments, especially the nation-state given its continuing importance in local/global geopolitics. Nation-states have a key role in securing the well-being and protecting the rights of their citizens – and non-citizens. However, these chapters draw a distinction between ethno-nationalism, and civic nationalism associated with democratic will formation through public debate (Hollinger, 1995; Sen, 2006; Yang, 2009). Alternative pedagogies are directed towards promoting an overlapping civic national and egalitarian cosmopolitan identity through detached self-reflections oriented to building democratic communities, nationally and internationally, by seeking local/global intellectual connections, and in particular justifications for democratic institutions using the different theoretical resources available through culturally diverse knowledge communities (Keane, 2009).

Alternatives to multicultural education are part of complex intercultural exchanges that are driven by rich intellectual engagements that contribute to educational developments within, and beyond the nation-state. This alternative, refreshing intellectual outlook is a dynamic educational product of the transformative, transnational exchange of knowledge across ethnicity, languages, and religions. Maryam Nabavi’s chapter points to important questions to be addressed about the relationship between imparting substantive knowledge and equality (also see Richard Race’s chapter). If the idea of cosmopolitanism pedagogy is to be part of this alternative agenda then extending it beyond the usual associations with the Western metropolitan intellectual heritage would seem advisable, as it is no longer a Western privilege.

One of the important philosophical and policy exports from Canada in the late 1970s was multiculturalism. Through strategic contextualization in different times and spaces throughout the world it has been reconstituted through official policies, pedagogies, critiques and changes in everyday lived experiences. In his contribution to this volume Wright argues that multiculturalism is a floating signifier. This designation indicates that multiculturalism was always already multiple and shifting in terms of what it referred to (intellectual outlook, day to day informal guide for living with difference, official policy) and varying in its politics along the political continuum (from conservative through liberal to critical versions). Multiculturalism he argues has no pre-given destiny nationally or globally, but is continually being renewed and re-contested by policy actors and their varying forms of actions, ever-open to fresh possibilities which include the emergence of new ways of being, doing and seeing multiculturalism otherwise. Such a re-conceptualisation of multiculturalism ought to give pause to the basis for both the backlash against and arguments for alternatives to multiculturalism, namely that it is a fixed policy which promotes silos of group identity politics at the expense of social cohesion.

What alternative educational agenda might emerge from Western intellectual engagement with the diversity of non-Western theories? Among those non-Western theories that presently do not count in the West are Indigenous (Denzin,
Lincoln & Smith, 2008), Arab (Freely, 2011), Indian (Sen, 2006), Chinese (Yang, 2009) theories. Peter McLaren and Jean Ryoo (this volume) argue for pedagogies that challenge the imperialistic imposition of Western knowledge which is typically assigned a normative position within education, and instead to pursue a reciprocal intellectual relationship with marginalized or excluded non-Western theories. Likewise, in making problematic what counts as knowledge Lisa Taylor and Michael Hoechsmann (this volume) argue for a de-hierarchization of knowledge that engages the theoretical contributions of racialized minorities in contemporary processes of knowledge production. An alternative educational agenda is interested in rich and long-term intellectual engagement with non-Western theories, including, as Harreveld (this volume) argues those concerning cosmopolitanism and its pedagogies.

Multiculturalism as the defense of a particular ethno-cultural identity against others undermines the cross-sectional support needed for a range of struggles based on equality. It is with respect to these issues that Dawn Courage explores the metaphor of “harmony jazz” in her chapter. The struggles by those who do not count in any given society and throughout the world take intellectual equality as their presupposition and set out to verify these (see Michael Singh, this volume). Their claims on the equality, assert a stake in something we all share, establishing grounds for drawing peoples of diverse backgrounds together. Ethno-cultural identities do fracture and splinter. However, given the centrality of ethnicity in people’s lives, either as a matter of ascribed and/or self-identification, what might this mean for an alternative educational agenda?

An alternative is to focus on being equal to others. Equality asks the question, what are we arguing for? “Pedagogies of intellectual equality” lives (Singh, in press) declassify students according to any and every particular characteristic so as to gather more and more under banners that claims all people are equal, that all people are capable of creating meaningful. Cooperative struggles for equality, for projects to create meaningful lives, cut against the grain of particular identities to encompass workers, environmentalists, Indigenous peoples, feminists, union organizers and sometimes even elected representatives. What counts, and provides the basis for arguing the grounds of commonality is the presupposition of equality. As Peter McLaren and Jean Ryoo argue (in this volume) under asymmetrical systems of power which exploit or promote the self-exploitation of labor power and deny participatory democracy, the presupposition of equality and the drive to verify it can disrupt these socio-economic inequalities. Sue Saltmarsh provides a sustained discussion of how economic discourse is implicated in the social worth, personal agency and imagined futures of rural and suburban women. Shirley Steinberg (in this volume) develops the idea of critical multiculturism as a vehicle for studying privilege in terms of interacting ‘power blocs’ constituted by class elites, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

The challenge for educators operating on the basis of alternatives grounded in this presupposition about intellectual equality is to verify it. This takes the romance
out of issues of educational equality by bringing the difficulties of its corroboration
to the fore. Nilofar Shidmehr (this volume) argues against the reductionist
treatment of identity as coherent, continuous, and homogenous, in favor of seeing
identities as having cross-cultural and transnational layers. Students’ multiple
identities – which are shifting, multilayered and not necessarily opposed, rather
than unchanging or motionless – are not rejected but incorporated into the
alternative educational agenda for intellectual equality.

This alternative educational agenda begins with the presupposition, and seeks to
verify the presumption of equal intelligence among non-Westerners and
Westerners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, Southern and Northern students, male
and female alike (Singh & Meng, in press). It is this presupposition of equal
intelligence that drives Indigenous struggles to have their knowledge counted
wherever it presently does not count. The presupposition of equal intelligence
entails seeing non-Western, Indigenous and Southern theoretical tools – metaphors,
concepts and images – as being connected to struggles by those whose knowledge
does not count around the world (see Michael Singh, this volume). Nilofar Shidmehr
(this volume) takes a Foucauldian perspective engaging such “subjugated
knowledge.” In the work of Rancière (1991), non-Indigenous Westerners and
Northerners may find grounds for committing themselves to the presupposition and
the verification of the presumption of equal intelligence, and work to see what can
be achieved on this basis.

The essays in this collection are firmly based in four specific national contexts –
Australia, England, Canada and the United States of America. In that sense the
book is an international collection of essays on the status quo of multicultural
education. However, the sections employed, Precarious Multiculturalism; Difference
and Representation in Multicultural Education; Stretching Multiculturalism:
Including Alternatives, are not nation-state based but rather highlight themes and
developments across the countries. Indeed the same is true of the way we have
chosen to discuss the essays in this introduction. Thus, the focus of this collection
is on examining the status quo of multicultural education as an international
phenomenon generally and more specifically on the idea that caught between
historical and contemporary dissent from the political left and right; continuing
post 9/11, post 7/7 bombings backlash on the one hand and the related rise
of alternatives like cosmopolitanism and interculturalism on the other,
multiculturalism and multicultural education are in a precarious position at the
present historical moment.

We thank Meng Hui, a doctoral candidate in the Centre for Educational
Research, University of Western Sydney, for her valuable assistance she provided
in proof reading, editing, formatting and styling the manuscript for this book.

Handel Kashope Wright
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Richard Race
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 2

WHAT WAS MULTICULTURALISM?

John Willinsky

Early into his United States presidency in 2009, Barack Obama gently chided Eric H. Holder, the first African-American to hold the position of attorney general, for suggesting that America was a “nation of cowards” when it comes to discussing race. Holder was surely right, if not politic, in naming what is, among other things, a fitting commentary on multiculturalism and education in general. In support of Holder’s stance, Obama had to allow that “we could probably be more constructive in facing up to sort of the painful legacy of slavery and Jim Crow and discrimination” (Cooper, 2009, p. Y22). However, the sometime post-racial president also went on to say that he did not believe that “talking about race somehow solves racial tensions”, but that “fixing the economy”, as well as improving health care and the schools, would lead to more “fruitful conversations” (Cooper, 2009, p. Y22).

William Julius Wilson also speaks of the need to talk about race, and all the more so at this point: “These problems [of high crime rates among black males] will not be addressed, however, if we are not willing to have an honest and open discussion of race in America, including a discussion of why poverty and unequal opportunity so stubbornly persist in the lives of so many African Americans” (2009, p. 3). Richard Thompson Ford sees this talk now moving into an era of post-racism, growing out of a “weariness with contemporary racial politics” and calling for, in his eyes, addressing “residential segregation,” which so magnifies social problems and which now needs to be addressed through a “language for discussing the persistent and destructive legacy of overt racism of the past that doesn’t lay underserved blame on the present” (2008, pp. 341–342).

There’s just enough presidential ambiguity in Obama’s statement to allow that constructively facing up to the painful legacies can be tied to fixing the economy, health care, and education. That Obama is the president of the United States establishes that this era is already about more than just talking about race, even as his historic election stands as its own a declarative statement, pointing to the value of just such talk and introspection.

Following on from this divide, and necessary connection, between talking and fixing, I revisit in this paper a number of turns in the course of multiculturalism. There’s much I missed the first time around, and in that there is much to talk about, as part of an effort to fix the economy, by which I mean, in this case, the economy of meaning in the construction of difference. What multiculturalism was, you might say, was at once largely inadequate and reasonably effective. For earlier critiques of multiculturalism, see McLaren (1994). More recently, McLaren has

H. K. Wright et al (eds), Precarious International Multicultural Education: Hegemony, Dissent and Rising Alternatives, 15–39.
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noted how “capitalism has, after all, been multiculturalized” (2007, p. 294). He regrets how multiculturalism now finds its hope in changing “cultural practices at the level of the individual at the expense of challenging the structural determinations and productive forces of capital” (p. 292). It arose out of a truncated sense of culture, and still it gave people a way of changing their attitudes toward culture. But then culture, in this limited sense, had been an effective device, promoted by W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Boas and his students, for reducing some of the sting that had been invested by the end of the nineteenth century in a venomous notion of race, as a means of creating a greater divide among people. And race, in turn, has been used, all too well, to naturalize a history of economic and sexual exploitation, in what seems at bottom to be matters of property. Or so it seems to be now, looking back on the chain of oddly distorted signifiers – culture, race, history, economics, sexuality, property – that multiculturalism has left, too rarely spoken of, in its wake.

In being brought back to multiculturalism, rightly and smartly by Handel Wright’s invitation to participate in this event, I feel compelled, if not gently pushed, to confront my own drift within this curricular and political movement. Multiculturalism’s moment has spanned the better part of my teaching career over the last four decades. I would say that I am still trying to make something of multiculturalism, having moved from work on postcolonialism to my current absorption in the geopolitical economy of scholarly publishing, as I try to alter the political economy by which we, as university faculty, produce meaning. I want to retrace the unspoken parts of the multicultural journey – through tolerance and diversity, anti-racism, postcolonialism (and now anti-colonialism), Critical Race Theory (and now Critical Race Realism) – as a way of demonstrating how, as our ideas about multiculturalism have changed, our respective projects need to find new forms. I am also and undoubtedly indulging in self-justification here as well. How many remonstrances have I faced over the years, from those I greatly respect, for having seemed to have abandoned earlier work on postcolonial analysis of curriculum? I have, then, selfishly taken hold of this opportunity to suggest the ways in which, well, all is not lost. But then, I hope, as well, that this paper does more than that, as it has done more than that for me to return to what multiculturalism was and may yet be.

THE CANADIAN ORIGINS OF MULTICULTURALISM

By way of a brief refresher of what multiculturalism was in Canada, we need to turn the clock back to October 8th, 1971. On that day, a few weeks after I had begun a teacher education program in North Bay, Ontario, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau stood before Parliament and rolled out what was to become this country’s official policy of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism was the country’s belated civil rights effort, following the failed Quiet Revolution in Quebec intended to establish French language rights (which had repeatedly been punctuated by exploding
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mailboxes and other disturbances over the course of the previous decade, culminating in the 1970 October Crisis initiated by the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) with political kidnappings, murder, which was met by the War Measures Act’s suspension of civil liberties in Canada.

As part of the restoration that followed, Trudeau was careful that October morning in 1971 to frame “a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework”, as he put it before parliament exactly a year after the October Crisis. “For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other” (Trudeau, 1971). At the same time, we all knew, in our hearts, that this was not true nor even possible. There was most certainly an ethnic group that did take precedence – and thus was not even ethnic but just English – even as the designation of French as an official language went some way in establishing a second official culture. Trudeau was promulgating, after all, an extremely truncated sense of culture. It was culture independent of language. Citizens’ rights to their own culture were to be supported, if they acquired, as Trudeau put it in that speech, “at least one of Canada’s official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society.” To live within one’s culture on Canadian soil – at least to do so in a language other than English or French – was to exist outside of Canadian society. In 1985, Canada passed the Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada, the place of other languages was expanded to read that “the policy of the Government of Canada… to preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada” (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985).

Trudeau may have posed multiculturalism as eliminating this country’s “barriers” and lack of “fair play”. Multiculturalism was, he said, “a policy [that] should help to break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies.” Yet looking back, it seems to astoundingly understate the mistreatment and injustices, the property rights violated and abuses suffered by First Nation people, as well as citizens of Asian and African origins.

What also needs to be appreciated in understanding multiculturalism is that Trudeau’s cultural theme – with its line of “other ethnic groups” contributing “to the cultural enrichment of Canada” (1971) – was already a dated and somewhat tired response in 1971. At the turn of the century, W. E. B. Du Bois had drawn on the cultural contributions of African Americans in his search for a way of turning the “Negro problem” into the “problem of the color-line”, a line which had been drawn in the sand by white society to keep African Americans separate and not the least equal (1903/2007). Du Bois set out to weaken that line by shifting attention from racial difference to cultural contribution, as part of a long march through the bandstands, sports fields, voting booths, courts, and schools of the United States to this day and still, necessarily, beyond. In 1897, Du Bois (1897/2007) gave a speech at the founding of the African Negro Academy entitled “The Conservation of Races”, in which he spoke directly of the “wonderful possibilities of culture” that
African Americans brought to America: “Whose subtle sense of song has given America its only music, its only American fairy tales, its only touch of pathos and humor amid its made money-getting plutocracy” (p. 185). He spoke of the two races and “the peculiar contribution which each has to make to the culture of their common country” (p. 187). It was a deliberately anti-racist strategy, then, that Du Bois judged necessary not in the struggle, at the beginning of the century, for a multicultural nation, but for another sort of politics of recognition that would take on the social injustice and racist violence that continued to mark his already conglomerate country. This was the approach of Franz Boas and his students, as well, in seeking to undermine the racist play on racial differences in anthropology by emphasizing the value and plurality of cultures (Stocking, 1982).

Which is only to say that the famous politics of recognition within the Canadian mosaic, was still in Trudeau’s hands a form of political diversion, directing our attention away from the historical patterns of discrimination, even as it proved capable of loosening the Eurocentric hold on what was otherwise the country’s official cultural apparatuses (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, educational institutions, etc.). In just this way, Handel Wright has pointed out, as Canada did not afford him some sort of cultural recognition as black, in light of this new policy, rather it simply misrecognized the ways in which the dominant or official culture within Canada had made him black – “When I arrived in Canada I became Black” – within “the racist history of western conceptions of blackness” (Wright, 2007, pp. 316, 319). Which is only to say that multiculturalism was not really about culture. Multiculturalism was a way for the state to distance itself from a history of discrimination. As a policy, it reinforced the degree to which it takes extraordinary and belated measures to assert this inclusiveness, or as Rinaldo Walcott, author of Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada (1997), sharply observes about his own place in this country – “to imagine me as a Canadian, legislation is needed” (Walcott, 2007, p. 243).

Certainly, Aboriginal peoples understood that all of this talk of culture was a way of not talking about what mattered. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood rejected the federal government’s proposed assimilation of First Nations peoples into multicultural Canada, issuing its own pointed position paper, Indian Control of Indian Education, which placed sovereignty at the forefront, with culture, in the form of education, following (NIB, 1972). As another contributor to this collection Jan Hare points out, what mattered was “the development of self-determination” and “the restoration of self-governance among Aboriginal people” and from that, then concerns for the recognition of culture diversity could follow (Hare, 2007, p. 66). Otherwise, multiculturalism made a mockery of what had been taken and what was allowed, and to the government’s credit, I agree to adhere to the paper’s recommendations, at least in principle.

It should be clear that the use of multiculturalism follows George Orwell’s famous dictum on politics and language, as it represents “a kind of euphemism” that falls about our ears “like soft snow, blurring the outline and covering up all the
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details” (1946/1984). Here, then, was the perfect teachable moment, the very substance of a cutting edge curriculum, that would focus on how a policy concept of the significance of multiculturalism is constructed in ways that will divert, subvert and convert discontent into something more positive and promising – peaceful co-existence – but surely less educational as it blurs the outline and covers up the historical details, the root causes, the continuing inequities that define this country.

Legal scholar Richard Ford argues that that emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism is also “an essentially conservative project of cultural preservation and a fetishism of pedigree and tradition” which fails to pay its due to racial identity and the “potential eruption of new cultural forms… the creativity of the avant garde” (2005, p. 56). Yet the promotion of diversity in workplaces and schools is still a matter of tolerating differences, of turning them into a value-add for all parties, rather than recognizing that reinforcing differences based on group identification may not only exaggerate the concept of difference, does not begin to deal with the root of the issue, namely that these differences originally took on significance and meaning within the assertion of privilege and power.

This is not to say that a dose of even the most innocuous multiculturalism was not needed in the schools. When I started my teaching career, a year after Trudeau’s speech, I had to lead that public school class in reciting the Lord’s Prayer each morning, followed by the reading of a provincially prescribed passage from the Bible. And five years later, in 1977, when Ontario instituted a “heritage language” after-school program across the province, it was only after much controversy, even as it continued to be illegal in the province to use any language but English or French as a medium of instruction, except where it was held that the use of other languages might ease the transition to one of the official languages (Cummins, 1983). And today, Canada’s Immigration and Multiculturalism minister Jason Kenney has recently taken a stand in favor of strengthening the language proficiency requirements for immigrants to Canada: “I think it’s really neat that a fifth-generation Ukrainian Canadian can speak Ukrainian – but pay for it yourself” (Libin, 2009).

“We want to avoid the kind of ethnic enclaves or parallel communities that exist in some European countries. So far, we’ve been pretty successful at that, but I think it’s going to require greater effort in the future to make sure that we have an approach to pluralism and immigration that leads to social cohesion rather than fracturing” (Libin, 2009).

MULTICULTURAL TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY

If multiculturalism in Canada was a celebration of non-linguistic culture, in the first instance, then it was also to be, as I was soon to learn, a matter of tolerating some but not all differences. In 1984, when I began working at the University of
Calgary, James Keegstra, a school teacher, former mayor, and auto mechanic in Eckville, Alberta, was stripped of his teaching license for having taught students for decades to question the Holocaust and the designs of the Jewish people on world domination. The province responded to the national outcry over this embarrassing “discovery” by establishing the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding: “Tolerance, understanding and respect for others occurs when people learn to cherish, comprehend and enjoy each others’ similarities and differences” (Ghitter et al., 1984, p. 2). To be fair, in 1971 Alberta was the first province to legalize languages other than English or French for instruction, resulting in bilingual Ukrainian, German, and Hebrew schools in Edmonton (Cummins, 1983, p. 5). As well, Lauri Johnson has noted that in 1938, New York City instituted “tolerance” assemblies in the schools as a way of addressing local anti-Semitic incidents, with the policy stating that such “assemblies be devoted to the promulgation of American ideals of democracy, tolerance and freedom for all men” (2007, pp. 29–30). The long-term tolerance of anti-Semitism in an Alberta school had triggered a renewed interest in multicultural education. And tolerance could well be said to be at the root of multiculturalism, even if it seems, to us now, living outside the province of Alberta, to be a regressive, parsimonious approach to multiculturalism and diversity.

Tolerance is at the very heart, then, of the liberal stance on multiculturalism, and in understanding this stance, there is no better guide than John Locke. I latch onto Locke only partially because Handel’s invitation interrupted my work on how Locke’s theory of property, so critical to capitalism and modern state formations, carries within it, as I will argue, the seeds of an unrealized economy for what I am terming the intellectual properties of learning, the case for which I will be working out, I hope, in some detail (Willinsky, 2006a). Liberalism’s seventeenth-century founding figure wrote four tracts on this theme, beginning with A Letter Concerning Tolerance, which he published anonymously in 1689, while living in political exile in Holland. Religious freedom was very much in question at the time, and Locke (2002) held “tolerance to be the Chief Characteristic mark of the True Church” (p. 155, capitalization in the original). Note how clear Locke is about not mistaking tolerance for any sort of recognition that other religions might possibly be, say, true or worthy of worship. “I readily grant that these opinions are
false and absurd” (Locke, 2002, p. 140), Locke adds, after characterizing the beliefs of Catholics, Jews, and heathens.

But still, Locke holds, such false and absurd beliefs are to be tolerated because “the power of the magistrate and estates of the people may be equally secure whether any man believe these things or no” (Locke, 2002, p. 140). The Toleration Act of 1689 allowed freedom of worship to Protestants who dissented from the Church of England, such as Baptists and Congregationalists, but certainly not Catholics or Quakers who were excluded from many aspects of public life. That is to say, we can afford to put up with this effrontery because it poses no economic threat to the property rights the government is committed to upholding. Locke was busy at the time establishing that such matters as beliefs were not “the business of civil government”, which was to be restricted to such matters as “life, liberty”, and “the just possession of these things belonging to this life” (Locke, 2002, p. 118). Still, articulating a concept of tolerance represented an important step in the development of civil rights, given that intolerance in his day took a violent turn, on occasion, that included “fire and faggot”, as he melodiously put it (Locke, 2002, p. 160). It was also a political tolerance of dissent, in Locke’s sense, as other protestant religious forms represented dissension from the established Church of England, just as those who were not part of the Church were known as Dissenters and were excluded, for example, from attending Oxbridge until the nineteenth century. The relation of tolerance and dissent was taken up by Herbert Marcuse in the 1960s in terms of how tolerance was practiced in ways that were kept distinct from economic and political matters:

“The tolerance which was the great achievement of the liberal era is still professed and (with strong qualifications) practiced, while the economic and political process is subjected to an ubiquitous and effective administration in accordance with the predominant interests. The result is an objective contradiction between the economic and political structure on the one side and the theory and practice of toleration on the other” (1969, p. 115).

Locke provides the case, then, for the separation of church and state, and thus the grounds of a seemingly tolerant multicultural state. It was also tolerance as much of dissent as difference (as those who were not part of the Church of England were known as Dissenters), a point that Herbert Marcuse made in the 1960s in terms of how this tolerance is made to operate at the level distinct from economic and political forces:

“The tolerance which was the great achievement of the liberal era is still professed and (with strong qualifications) practiced, while the economic and political process is subjected to a ubiquitous and effective administration in accordance with the predominant interests. The result is
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an objective contradiction between the economic and political structure on the one side and the theory and practice of toleration on the other” (1969, p. 115).

I will return to Locke below, as his work bears on other aspects of this history, but let me first note that the carefully constructed limits of tolerance, much like Trudeau’s no less limited multicultural vision, speaks to two important ideas. The first is that while the differences among us are many if not countless, what is at issue with multiculturalism is how differences are designated, and thus constituted, officially and informally – thus the educational imperative to constantly track and debate the implications and consequences of such language. Multicultural education did recognize, in effect, that some people were being treated unjustly, it just could not talk about the recriminating reasons of why that was so, except as an educational failure in appreciating cultural differences. The second and related idea is that, on top of everything else we hope to achieve in school, or perhaps because it, one must aspire to be a student of one’s own education.

At the same time that tolerance was playing out across the 1980s in Canada, diversity was taking hold in the United States as a parallel concept. It had formally begun with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in Regents of the University of California v. Bakke (1978), in which Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. identified “the goal of achieving a diverse student body is sufficiently compelling to justify consideration of race in admissions” (although he alone among the nine justices referred to diversity). Twenty-five years later, when Grutter v. Bollinger (2003) reached the Supreme Court, a majority of the Court was willing to uphold “an official admissions policy that seeks to achieve student body diversity”. This concept of diversity, in which race becomes a plus in admission decisions, has supplanted multiculturalism in much the spirit of tolerance. Both diversity and tolerance are principally about properties of the dominant group. That is, a ruling class that points proudly to its tolerance of otherwise inconsequential historical differences, as one its distinguishing properties, is also able to see that the diversity tolerated actually “has the potential to enrich everyone’s education and thus make a law school class stronger than the sum of its parts,” as Justice Sandra Day O’Connor put it in her opinion on the case. Richard Ford has been one to rightly question what sort of responsibility that places on minority students to be, in some essentialist fashion, diverse and to be diverse in ways that add to everyone’s education, while still having to pick up on “many of the benefits of elite education flow from what it’s fair to call cultural assimilation” (Ford, 2008, p. 255).

It might sound harshly cynical, on my part, to suggest that the diversity argument is yet another way of not talking about the history, race, and economics of continuing discrimination. I do appreciate how the University of Michigan’s reliance, before the Supreme Court, on diversity, in making its case for recognizing race in admissions, had everything to do with taking advantage of the one opening
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provided by the courts (which in this case was Justice Powell’s singular argument about the value of diversity in the Bakke case).

Historical arguments directed at compensating for past discrimination had already been ruled in Bakke beyond the scope of the courts to reasonably address and manage, much to the dismay of Justice Thurgood Marshall, who in his dissenting opinion on Bakke stated: “I do not believe that anyone can truly look into America’s past and still find that a remedy for that past is impermissible” (Regents, 1978, p. 402). The Marshall cite is drawn from Prendergast’s analysis of literacy as a white property as reflected through the Supreme Court decisions on the Brown, Washington, and Bakke cases (2002): “Once remedy is granted in one literacy environment, that literacy environment is denigrated to devalue its worth.” (2002).

Michigan found a concept that proved capable of standing up to the conservative backlash, that was prepared to claim racial discrimination against white students and the need, suddenly, for colorblind policies.

So, as teacher educators, as curriculum scholars, as students of education, we need to both recognize the realpolitik of what will fly with the courts, school boards, teachers and the public, while also being prepared to name what has not been talked about. We should not simply treat the latest iteration of multiculturalism – whether it be tolerance or diversity – as if it were the whole of what is needed.

This becomes clear, for example, when Karen Lowenstein, in her recent review of multiculturalism in teacher education, holds that “it is necessary to reframe the structure of debate about preservice teachers learning about diversity” (Lowenstein, 2009, p. 187). Lowenstein wants to based that reframing on treating white prospective teachers “as competent learners who bring rich resources to their learning” about diversity, rather than as deficient learners who just don’t get diversity. I would have to agree with her, for if only teachers learned about diversity; and not simply as “a term used more and more frequently to detail all types of difference (racial, gender, socioeconomic, linguistic ability, sexual orientation, etc.)” (Lowenstein, 2009, p. 173), as she puts it. Lowenstein’s review also reveals the general inability of teacher education programs to do little more than further existing prejudices and stereotyping among teacher education students, who appear to have little enough understanding of racism and other forms of discrimination (2009, p. 177, citing Sleeter, 2000-2001 and McDiarmid & Price, 1990). Rather, what teachers need to learn about diversity has as much, if not more, to do with how such political concepts play out not just in legislatures and the Supreme Court, but in their own work within the school, in advancing the promise of equality. They need to see how such arguments are limited, as they preserve economic advantages that continue to be produced by an ongoing legacy of prejudice and discrimination. They need to be prepared to take on more direct means, such as anti-racist education.
During the 1990s, more than a few who had originally been drawn to the spirit of multiculturalism, as a way of creating more inclusive forms of schooling, realized that multicultural education contained within it a denial of racism as a Canadian problem, and precluded opportunities of dealing with or even talking about such a seemingly un-Canadian issue. (The mockingbird of racism, it was assumed, had not landed in this country, although its death in the southern United States was still worth studying in Canadian high schools year after year, perhaps, in part, to make that point.) For those teaching in this country who rightly saw racism, our racism, as the problem, anti-racist education was clearly what was needed. Here Enid Lee did much in this country to push multiculturalism into a form of explicit anti-racist education: “In anti-racist education, we attempt to look at – and change – those things in school and society that prevent some differences from being valued” (Lee, 2009/1994, p. 10).

There was something bold and refreshing in Lee calling multiculturalism on its own project: “A lot of times people say, ‘I just need to learn more about these other groups.’ And I say, ‘No, you need to look at how the dominant culture and biases affect your view of nondominant groups in society’” (Lee, 2009/1994, p. 13). What we teachers were failing to recognize in our schools and communities was the extent to which our everyday practices in school and out reflected forms of discrimination and exclusion: “Anti-racist education helps us move that European perspective over to the side”, Lee goes on to explain, “to make room for other cultural perspectives that must be included” (Lee, 2009/1994, p. 11). She recommended simple and straightforward ways of changing the curriculum so that the missing aspects of this history could become part of the students’ education: “Columbus is a good example. It turns the whole story on its head when you have the children try to find out what the people who were on this continent might have been thinking and doing when they were being ‘discovered,’ tricked, robbed and murdered” (Lee, 2009/1994, p. 12). She was not afraid of how children might respond in learning about the role racism has played in this country: “We don’t need to be caught up in the guilt of our benefit [from racism], but should use our privilege to help change things” (Lee, 2009/1994, p. 14).

Bob Peterson provides a commendable instance of spontaneous anti-racist education with his fifth-grade project, inspired by a student question, to establish which U.S. Presidents owned slaves, which led to the discovery that the answer was not to be found in the “traditional history textbooks and the student-friendly websites from the White House and the Smithsonian Institution” (2009, p. 299). Peterson says that gathering the information on who owned slaves “was not an in-depth analysis” but the way that it raises the fundamental questions around what can be so readily taken for granted and what can now seem so unquestionably wrong, seems to go as deep as the fifth grade can go and then some (p. 302). The students went on to write to the textbook publishers, and Peterson adds a note
about a website that Wesleyan University put up that brought the number of presidents who own slaves up to 13 (p. 306).

My own approach during the 1990s was to take a leaf from the postcolonial work of Edward Said and others to look at how the schools were implicated in this imperial legacy, how the lesson taught science, geography, history, language and literature carried these ways of dividing the world from the European perspective (Willinsky, 1998). I attempted to catch sight of the weight of this imperial history, as an intellectual adventure in learning how to divide the world, all of which was being carried forward by the lessons that we continued to teach, and all of which seemed worthy of including in an education that sought to understand how cultures worked, and the work that cultures did to produce such division as race. David Theo Goldberg has recently addressed this very question of the work that goes into producing race, although we may want to add teachers and judges to his lineup:

“Thus the labor of race is the work for which the category and its assumptions are employed to effect and rationalize social arrangements of power and exploitation, violence and expropriation … Those seeking to advance racial representation—scientists and philosophers, writers and literary critics, public intellectuals and artists, journalist and clergy, politicians and bureaucrats—for all intents and purposes became the day-laborers, the brick-layers, of racial foundations” (2009, p. 4).

It wasn’t so much about Columbus’ misguided voyage as what followed, not just in the abject violence against Aboriginal peoples of the Americas, but in the educational and intellectual sense made of exploration and conquest. The educational danger, then, is that multiculturalism obscures this labor and history, deflects racism onto the views of misguided individuals, while preventing students from learning needed prophylactic lessons about how such massive wrongs can be perpetuated at so many levels and to the point where history becomes nature.

My hope was that an understanding of such history would, in Lee’s sense, help change things, much as educators have to believe that knowing matters. Larry Wolfson, whose doctorate I had supervised, responded to Learning to Divide the World by suggesting I come into his high school English class and do something about it, using a scheduled unit on poetry. I have described my experience teaching the unit elsewhere, but what I did, in short, was have the students consider the poetry anthology that they were currently using from the 1960s when Canadian literature was beginning to make its mark in the two official languages. We then set out to construct a new anthology of poetry that drew on many other languages for which we would do or find translations, creating a multilingual anthology for which we created a class set for other teachers to use. While I did find it difficult to sustain with the students the themes of imperialism and postcolonialism, which underwrote those lessons, I later came to realize that a few of the students were
actively challenging my sense of “cultural difference” by bringing in the hip-hop and spoken word poetry of African Americans (Willinsky 2006b). Yet I also came, after more than a few years of working on this project, to feel ensnared in all of that mired history, seeing no end to the colonial traces that could all too easily be discovered by visiting any school bookroom or turning over any textbook. What was missing was a sense of how to step beyond responding to the historical imprint of colonialism, to somehow take hold of the means of production, that were given to producing meaning, and in particular meaningful differences. One critical way forward is found in the work of George J. Sefa Dei, who has encouraged a moving beyond postcolonialism’s close association with literary theory in favor of anti-colonialism: “Contemporary anti-colonial thought argues that colonial constructions affect knowledge production with profound material consequences” (Dei, 2007, p. 13; see also Kempf, 2009). These material consequences also arose out of the legal construction of race, and it was the very role of the law in this production of meaning and consequence which I had failed to pick up on. How race was learned and produced among the learned, was complemented by the legal and economic apparatus of the state, and I would briefly consider this missing but critical piece, even as it brings me back to Locke.

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

If Locke’s early work on tolerance places him as a key thinker in considering this multicultural moment, it turns out that his highly influential work on property rights is no less important. Multiculturalism, Locke, property? Yes, I may seem to be adrift. But bear with me. Locke’s positioning of property rights, as fundamental to the democratic state, played a critical role (although disputed by some) in the formation of the United States, through the thinking of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and others (Dworetz, 1998). Private property, for Locke, was the earned political right of bourgeois individualism (against monarchial claims to land and loyalty), and the protection of property rights was the defining instance of what law and state were about. The role that property plays in the political and legal production of differences known as race has received considerable and enlightening attention from the legal scholars working on what is known as Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Kendall, 1995). In the field of education, Gloria Ladson-Billings who has done as much as anyone in, as she puts it, “deploying race and racism as a challenge to traditional notions of diversity and social hierarchy” (2004, p. 57). Thus, Ladson-Billings argues (with William F. Tate IV in this case) that the “savage inequalities,” which Jonathan Kozol identified as separating the education of poor African-American and Latino students from their white counterparts, is nothing less than “a logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized” (1995, p. 47).

Critical Race Theory is multiculturalism’s nemesis. It roundly condemns multiculturalism’s milquetoasts efforts to dress up racial oppression as a failure of
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cultural appreciation. Critical Race Theory gets down to hard cases, in the form of court decisions and legal measures. It finds within these cases ongoing efforts to protect what amounts to white property rights, or as Cheryl I. Harris (1994) puts it starkly, in her key contribution to critical race theory: “Even though the law is neither uniform nor explicit in all instances, in protecting settled expectations based on white privilege, American law has recognized a property interest in whiteness” (Harris, p. 1713).

Although Harris does not make the connection in this article, Locke’s theory of property can be said to have underwritten two of the United States’ most egregious property “crimes,” namely slavery and the seizure of Aboriginal peoples’ traditional territories, or in Harris’ terms, the assertion of “white supremacy and economic hegemony over Black and Native American peoples” (1994, p. 1707). The problem Locke exemplifies, no less than Thomas Jefferson who drew on Locke’s work, is what appears to be a terrible lack of reconciliation between word and deed. Locke wrote boldly, if anonymously, in the Two Treatises about the natural state of human equality in which “God has given the World to Men in common” (1690/1988, p. 306). Locke holds, as well, that “every Man has a Property in his own Person. This no Body has any Right to but himself” (p. 305). Yet from that promising start, Locke goes on to provide what became pervasive arguments for taking colonized lands due to the resulting increases in productivity, through intense farming and enclosure. Prior to this chapter “Of Property” in the Second Treatise is “Of Slavery” in which Locke insists on the “this Freedom from Absolute, Arbitrary Power, is so necessary to, and closely joined with, a Man’s Preservation, that he cannot part with it” meaning that he “cannot, by Compact, or his own Consent, enslave himself to any one” (p. 302). Slavery is, then, only justified as “the State of War continued between a lawful Conqueror, and a Captive” (ibid.). How, then, could Locke hold investments in the East Africa Company, profiting by slavery so clearly removed from anything approaching lawful conquest? How then does he risk his life by challenging in print the arbitrary exercise power by the Crown in favor of the consent of the people, and still stand so short-sighted to the consequences of his stance for the lives of Blacks and Aboriginal Peoples? One answer lies in the power of language, in which this use of equality and justice to sanction what are so clearly travesties of both. And yet this early formulation of a natural rights argument takes on its own force, provides a means for others to channel an Abolitionist argument, just as treaty negotiations going on today in British Columbia are entrenched in conceptions of property rights. This process of exaggerated differences and false distinctions is not only a matter of exploitation by those that seem without a conscience when it comes to what is fair and just, but by those who do seem well-intentioned, insofar, like Locke and Jefferson, who seem to have had the rights words in the right order, but take W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King to bring home the meanings that make those words all the more real and true.
Harris sets out how race took on increasing significance with the expansion of slavery across eighteenth-century America. The key here is a reversal in our thinking about what we take for granted about the order of things. Slavery came first, with Europeans trafficking in Africans as part of an imperial economic system, and race, as we know it, followed as a way making it seem part of a natural order. All that the West was to make of race had a way of naturalizing property claims that had otherwise gone far beyond anything Locke’s theory of property warranted.

Harris finds the courts repeatedly protecting white property interests originally through slavery and then through segregation laws, housing policies, job discrimination, and educational disadvantage. If African-American efforts succeeded in convincing the courts and legislature that segregation and other forms of discrimination were unconstitutional and not in the best interests of America, they have not yet been permitted to go any further in disrupting property relations or taken steps “to eradicate inequalities in resource allocation either in public education or other public service” which then continue to reflect this legacy of whiteness as a property right (Harris, 1994, p. 1757). And yet the remedies permitted – the striking down of laws that had already enshrined white advantages and privileges for generations to come, the endorsement of multicultural education policies, the recognition of diversity on campuses and workforces as a general advantage – have repeatedly left white property rights intact.

At best, following the Brown decision and subsequent court cases, such as Bakke and Grutter, more minority students are allowed to acquire educational properties of value, but only as they are seem to contribute to diversity, as a value to all students, rather than as any sort of redress for the historical violation of minority property rights. Cheryl L. Harris comments thus:

"In failing to clearly expose the real inequities produced by segregation, the status quo of substantive disadvantage was ratified as an accepted and acceptable baseline—a neutral state operating to the disadvantage of Blacks long after de jure segregation has ceased to do so. In accepting substantial inequality as a neutral baseline, a new form of whiteness as property was condoned" (1994, p. 1753).

Again, it takes the carefully calculated strategies of advocacy groups, such as the NAACP, to provide the courts with a means of moving forward on the original promise of equality to be realized, resulting at best in rough corrections – separate is not equal with Brown – in what otherwise would make an outright lie of that promise. And still such legal advances, as Derrick Bell (2004) and others argue within critical race theory, take place only insofar as they do not (a) disturb the well-entrenched property rights and interests associated with whiteness, and (b) offer benefits to the white community, such as gains in the cold-war public relation
campaign (to win third-world support against communism) and white school-district financing (with the addition of bussed-in student fees).

In looking back on the contribution of Critical Race Theory to education, Adrienne Dixson and Celia Rousseau (2005) conclude that “the call to action [in Critical Race Theory] must move beyond mere recommendations” and that in the field of education we need to explore “the material effects of whiteness and the manner in which it is deployed and maintained materially, hence as an aspect of property” (pp. 23–24). In that regard, it is worth noting that Critical Race Theory has been more recently supplemented, if not supplanted, by something called Critical Race Realism judging by a new collection that seeks to represent “a synthesis of Critical Race Theory, empirical social science, and public policy” (Parks, 2008, p. xv). The social science side of this ongoing analysis is determining how, decades after the Brown rulings, too many African-Americans continue to live in largely segregated and impoverished American inner cities bereft of adequate schooling or reasonable economic opportunities.

Derrick Bell states: “The statistics on resegregation … painfully underscore the fact that many black and Hispanic children are enrolled in schools as separate and probably more unequal than those their parents and grandparents attended under the era of ‘separate but equal’” (2004, p. 114). Linda Darling Hammond makes the point: “The key question for students, especially those of color, is whether investments in better teaching, curriculum, and schooling will follow the press for new standards, or whether standards built upon a foundation of continued inequality in education will simply certify student failure with greater certainty and reduce access to future education and employment” (2007, p. 327).

William Julius Wilson (2009), whose research on inner cities has done much to document the “racial isolation and chronic economic subordination” of ghetto life, points to how even seeming “nonracial” policies and structures – such as federal highway policies shifting jobs from cities to suburbs, and mortgage-interest tax exemptions enabling further class migrations from cities – end up contributing to the racial inequality and cycle of poverty that affect African American communities. Wilson states: “The relative importance of cultural or structural explanations in accounting for behaviors and social outcomes is often debatable—though I will argue that, in terms of major effects on immediate group social outcomes and racial stratification, structure trumps culture” (2009, p. 21). The structural implications of these cumulative patterns give rise to, in his analysis, “cultural forces within the inner city that have reinforced poverty and racial inequality” (Wilson, 2009, p. 148).

This new sense of realism is directed at the world beyond the academy, while holding all the more closely to the contribution that research and scholarship can make to affecting that world, particularly around a “systematic, race-based evaluation and critique of the law and legal institutions” (Parks, 2008, p. 1). How this realism might be worked – from research to policy – poses its own risk to democracy. For it is not the place of research, within a democracy, to dictate
policy, in a tyranny of expertise. And yet such work should certainly be part of the public record where it can inform public deliberations, even when this work delves into what is otherwise repressed, among traditional notions of property rights and public institutions.

RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

Another set of property issues that Critical Race Theory does not address, at least not directly, in its analysis of race (but then neither have I in previous work) is possession in a gendered and sexual sense. Property, in this sense is no less about the relations of production and economies of meaning, just as such relations go unspoken in the talk around multiculturalism. Here, let me first introduce the work of Kara Walker, as an artist whose large-scale cut-paper silhouettes present arresting depictions of sexual improprieties and racial violence in a melding of slave narratives and Southern antebellum folklore. Walker’s engagement with this legacy is troubling and complex, in ways hinted at by the title of her recent collection of her work: *My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love* (2007).

In an earlier interview, Walker talks of moving to Georgia from the “multicultural acceptance that I grew up with in California”: “Blackness became a very loaded subject, a very loaded thing to be – all about forbidden passions and desires, and all about a history that’s still living, very present ... the shame of the South and the shame of the South’s past; its legacy and its contemporary troubles” (Walker, 1999). The silhouettes cast their own shadows on multiculturalism, calling for talk on what is forbidden and still living in this way. Seeing Walker’s work could yet become a starting point among teachers for thinking about how we teach to avoid facing what will eventually be learned, as Walker has learned, of this history.

So, too, with William Pinar, who brings the gendered nature of racial politics into the “complicated conversation”, which he makes of curriculum, and it is again no easy ride, this time through a fearless history of lynching and prison rape in the United States (2001). At every turn, it seems that multiculturalism comes up short in facing the weight of what it imagines it could address. Pinar (2002a) is lead to conclude that “White racism is, in part, a mangled but very much still circulating homoerotic desire, a ‘return of the repressed’” (p. 128). Against the “(bureaucratic) procedures and rationales for curriculum development”, Pinar alone would speak of education in terms of “the myriad of ways that men ‘shatter’ and then pull themselves together to carry on the racialized patriarchy” (Pinar, 2002b, pp. 114, 118). How can it not then seem that multiculturalism was always part of the small talk, an inconsequential aspect, in what was otherwise institutionalized in repressed and mangled forms of desire within racism?

It is as if the cultural has always been used to contain and isolate what would otherwise be linked to the harsh workings of the material world. Judith Butler (1998), as well, insists that what matters in race, gender and sexuality is always
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more than cultural, however diverse: “Whereas class and race struggles are understood as pervasively economic, and feminist struggles to be sometimes economic and sometimes cultural, queer struggles are understood not only to be cultural struggles, but to typify the ‘merely cultural’ form that contemporary social movements have assumed” (p. 38). Against this sense of merely cultural, as limiting the consequence Butler holds that “the regulation of sexuality was systematically tied to the mode of production proper to the functioning of political economy” (Butler, 1998, p. 40). And if that seems too abstractly drawn on Butler’s part, she follows with striking instances of how this seeming cultural question, within the expanded sense of diversity, again comes down to property matters, when lesbians and gays are “deauthorized by law to make emergency medical decisions about one’s dying lover, to receive the property of one’s dead lover, to receive from the hospital the body of one’s dead lover – do not these examples mark the ‘holy family’ once again constraining the routes by which property interests are regulated and distributed?” (Butler, 1998, p. 41).

The lessons here are about how much more is always at stake in the very areas that multiculturalism and diversity would presume to address, about how deeply this political economy runs through these matters, and how often this aspect is passed over in silence. At issue is the degree of mis-education through multiculturalism. It is not that we need to (or possibly could) teach everything, or even what is most difficult to learn. It is about remaining vigilant, ready to listen to such discomforting voices, in trying to comprehend what we are unprepared to teach, as our own learning must always exceed what we dare to teach.

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN A POST-NATIONAL WORLD

If multiculturalism is superseded by more direct and comprehensive ways of taking issue with what has been made of race, gender, sexuality in a historical, economic and legal sense, it has also to join the rest of the world in thinking and acting globally. Looking back, policies and programs of multiculturalism affirmed the cultural/racial/heterosexual sovereignty of the nation-state (in which the formula of nation = culture = race = gender was to be expanded through an act of legislated exception and recognition). This very sense of the bound nation had led to the need for multiculturalism as a social policy and educational program. Certainly, even in this global era, the nation state remains an effective and necessary political arena for addressing the legal, economic, and cultural issues arising out of this checkered history of discrimination and tolerance. Frederic Jameson provides a further sense of globalization as economically driven and culturally effective:

“In fact, what we confront today is an immense international division of labor, which has certainly been anticipated at certain moments of the past, but has now become both universal and irreversible, with consequences
for culture fully as much as for economics… Indeed, on the level of culture, globalization mostly has been greeted positively, as when we point to its immense new communicational and informational possibilities, and rejoice in the democratization of public opinion in a kind of utopia of blogging” (2008, pp. 375–76).

Yet what is needed now, for those originally drawn to multiculturalism, is a recognition of the increasingly reduced cultural force of those national borders (if met by legal efforts to wall up the nation against illegal aliens and nation-hating terrorists). We are already living within far wider jurisdictions than the nation-state in both a cultural, as well as economic and legal sense. And what inspired advocates of multiculturalism to envision a more inclusive state, as a democratic right of participation, has now to be envisioned as a political culture operating on global as well as national terms. What then of multiculturalism’s relevance when the political issues that mobilize people, from human rights to global warming, are globally situated?

This latest transformation of multiculturalism has taken hold in the schools through global citizenship or international education initiatives. In Ontario, this global sensibility has added such admirable topics to the curriculum as “the rights and responsibilities of citizenship within the global context” based on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention on the Rights of the Child (cited by Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 43). Michele Schweisfurth discovered that in actual practice, there are inspired teachers who were able to take their high school civics class into areas of community activism, around fair-trade coffee campaigns and benefit concerts, as well as acts of critical media literacy in the anti-racist spirit of Shirley Steinberg’s (2007) work. James A. Banks takes a refreshingly activist stance towards what he frames the possibilities of moving students from the basic legal sense of citizenship (which I feel is worth considering in contrast to cultural and racial notions) to a “transformative citizenship”. He uses among his transformative examples the African American college students who on February 1, 1960 staged a sit-in at the segregated Woolworth’s lunch counter “that ended segregation in lunch counters throughout the South” (Banks, 2008, p. 137).

James A. Banks: “Transformative citizenship involves civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions. Transformative citizens take action to promote social justice even when their actions violate, challenge, or dismantle existing laws, conventions, or structures” (2008, p. 136). On the other hand, Christopher J. Frey and Dawn Michele Whitehead found that global citizenship (or international education) interests in the United States “has been driven less by global concerns than by state economic development priorities, national security, and domestic diversity” (Frey & Whitehead, 2009, p. 285). These global citizenship initiatives demonstrate little recognition of, let alone engagement with, the cultural forces that have been coming together, largely among youth, to work directly on
planetary issues on a global political stage. And this, for me, is worth considering as a follow through on an education meant to, in Enid Lee’s sense, use “our privilege to help change things” as well as Bank’s notion of transformative citizenship (Lee, 2009, p. 14).

What is potentially altered here is how multiple cultures come together around a common purpose, making the traditional focus on the culture (as in cultivation) of differences beside the point. Now when multiculturalism spoke to students and teachers about greater rights of cultural recognition within the nation-state, there was, within that idea, a sense of greater cultural participation. But recall how the National Indian Brotherhood responded by saying, in effect, that the cultural participation that they were interested in, that so clearly mattered, was Indian control of Indian education. The cultural participation at issue was direct political participation, as a legal and economic force that gives meaning to difference.

So, we might speculate that students today need to consider new sorts of lessons on cultural participation that do not begin with their ascribed apolitical heritage, but with, for example, the nature of the global networks and social movements that seek to establish rights of dissent and social justice, as effective democratic forms of introducing diversity into a dominant global culture of capital and corporatism. We need to join them in gaining an appreciation of new forms of cultural participation in the ongoing formation and constitution of the world.

Here Nancy Fraser’s case for expanding the democratic scope of the public sphere is critical, as it introduces conceptions of “transnational public sphere” (as well as the “disasporic public spheres”, and “the global public sphere”). Following Fraser, we have then to learn with our students how to increase both the legitimacy and efficacy of these greater networked spaces so that this multicultural participation increases its contribution to workings of the world. Fraser asks, in the spirit of Habermas’ rational communication writ large, “could public spheres today conceivably generate legitimate public opinion, in the strong sense of considered understanding of the general interest, filtered through fair and inclusive argumentation, open to everyone potentially affected?” (Fraser, 2009, p. 92). This is very much an educational vision, in the sense of an open forms of cultural participation aimed not at self-preservation, as a cultural heritage, but as the formation of that democratic force of public opinion, in its informed and deliberative sense, even as we are still uncertain about this mechanism that operates in fits and starts on a transnational basis.

One dramatic example of the political direction being taken within these new public spaces, which has also been termed “transnational counterpublics”, comes with the loosely organized movement against what corporate globalization is making of the world, in both a cultural and economic sense, through privatization of public goods and other neoliberal economic policies. In Jeffrey Juris’ recent analysis of this phenomenon (made famous through the Battle in Seattle at the WTO Ministerial Conference of 1999), groups such as People’s Global Action are coming together to promote “the diffusion of alternative information” and use “the
networking tools and logics of contemporary global capitalism to challenge global capitalism itself” (Juris, 2008, pp. 2, 3). In such movements, we can see the original multicultural impetus – of creating a means to recognize and celebrate difference as a form of dissent and diversity, in order to reverse a threatened loss of identity – taking on a new form in naming the dominant cultural force (global capitalism) and dealing with its unbridled prevalence and presumption directly and head on, as an economic and ethical issue.

And yet, Fraser may be selling the academy short, limiting its own culture of participation in this transnational public sphere. She holds that only by *rethinking* the public-sphere’s “core premises concerning the legitimacy and efficacy of public opinion”, will “public-sphere theory keep faith with its original promise to contribute to struggles for emancipation” (Fraser, 2009, p. 99). This is to participate behind (or is it above?) the sphere. It reflects little sense of taking any responsibility for how such work could serve that sphere and its struggles for emancipation, for how that thinking will find its way into that sphere, as another part of its multicultural constitution.

This is only to say that we now have the technologies to readily contribute our work to the transnational public sphere. Fraser’s ideas can now be made far more publicly available than in the past, when it took a trip to a university library or an academic bookstore. And with the new public standing available to the scholar – as many scholarly publishers now permit authors to make a copy of their published work freely available online (Willinsky, 2009) – it may be part of a “considered understanding of the general interest, filtered through fair and inclusive argumentation, open to everyone potentially affected” (Fraser, 2009, p. 94), as Fraser puts it. And this idea that scholarly work might not just comment on but instead, be fully and freely part of the public spheres, and can do so in ways that adds to their transnational and multicultural standing is what underwrites an experiment that a number of us – faculty, librarians, graduate students, rogue programmers – have underway in the form of the Public Knowledge Project, which represents an effort to step out, to take our work into these newly realized public spheres as a political act.

This experiment forms its own coda to what was, and has become of, multiculturalism in my own career as an educator and researcher. It is what I have ended up doing at this point to try to fix in some small way the economy of meanings rooted in the properties by which I live. Where we have been is one thing, and what we are now trying to fix as a result is a fair enough question to ask of ourselves close to four decades down this multicultural road.

**CODA: AFTER MULTICULTURALISM**

I do not imagine that the Public Knowledge Project forms a proper extension of Critical Race Theory and Realism, or a brave new movement within the transnational public sphere. Still, it falls to you to judge how the connections have
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been made, knowing that I have set up this review of multiculturalism to emphasize how my current work does represent what we are doing in light of our own efforts to move beyond multiculturalism, if without breaking faith with the original impulse. It represents a major shift in audience, from those who would teach and cite work related to the postcolonial analysis of curriculum to those who need resources that will help them run journals and conferences.

Over the course of ten years, we have developed a series of tools designed to help faculty members manage, publish and index peer-reviewed journals, conferences, and books. These tools, in the form of open source (free) software systems, help editors and small publishers move scholarly publishing online, structure peer-review, reduce costs, support both online and print editions, as well as open access and subscription models, facilitate indexing, and can be installed on servers anywhere, while allowing for international collaborations among editors, reviewers and authors.

As organizations and informal groups of scholars have taken up this software to run journals, conferences, and soon book series, it is fair to ask whether we are contributing to an expansion of the western university’s neo-imperial project, through the spread of western so-called “international” standards for academic publishing. Is this really, as we sometimes imagine, about providing faculty members with a viable alternative to the increasing corporatization of scholarly publishing? Can software tools, locally installed and used to publish online, possibly redress, if only to a limited extent, the European university’s colonial legacy, in which knowledge centers poorly serve the always aspiring peripheries?

Jerome McGann is among those who challenge this use of the center/periphery geo-metaphor as self-serving, at least in the context of literature and literary history, and a similar concern has to be noted about supporting the universality of scholarly production: “What if we decide that the center/periphery map has been drawn Under Western Eyes only and that it gives poor service in a truly globalized world? What if – going further still – we were to propose, to theorize, that in such a world, that myth resembles less a map than a kind of equilibrium device, a cultural gyroscope for maintaining cultural status quo?” (2008, p. 651). With universities already forming part of a global system, it is fair to say that the free distribution of scholarly publishing tools reinforces the hold of the center even as it draws the periphery onto the only slightly leveled playing field. This globalized perspective must also be tempered by the contribution of publishing at a local level.

In that sense, at least, we might say that the Public Knowledge Project is narrowly experimenting with the material relations of production within academic work. It is working, in this way, on the production of difference, as it involves the very participation and constitution of the global knowledge exchange which marks the university as a world system. Prevailing property relations in scholarly communication isolates this knowledge, otherwise known as a public good, from the world in both an academic and public sense. If structures shape culture, to what degree can the current structures shaping academic culture be altered by efforts to extend the range of (multi)cultural engagement in scholarly publishing? Will
greater access to this work also open this particular culture of knowledge to others, from outside the academy pursuing similar questions while representing different cultures of engagement with knowledge as professionals, amateurs, policymakers, activists, or simply interested readers? The Public Knowledge Project has a research program which includes studies on access to knowledge with a focus on teachers, students, government policymakers, Registered Massage Therapists, Wikipedia, editors in Africa and Latin America, scholarly societies, the origins of the journal, and Jacques Derrida, all of which are available on the project website (http://pkp.sfu.ca/biblio). As the academic community finds new ways of going public with its work, new ways of moving it out of that particular (very monocultural) commercialization of tenure-and-promotion journal system, it may well open such work to different sorts of cultural voices and textual genres, different qualities of knowledge and information. This is not about the article going the way of the tweet, or even the blog. But it is about testing whether the specialized forms of knowledge that we can contribute to the public sphere can be enjoyed and utilized by a larger audience without suffering irreparable damage.

Shifting the intellectual properties of this work from being highly proprietary to widely public is not without risks. This potent mix of open access to research and scholarship supported by open source software tools lowers the barrier to participation. As this concept of opening access to knowledge attracts increasing support, associations of scholarly publishers have been quick to warn that it threatens the future of scholarship by destabilizing the publishing economy (Mabe, 2008). To encourage open access to knowledge, as we are doing, can only undermine shareholder value among the major corporate publishers, who have worked hard to acquire a large proportion of the journals in science, technology and medicine, as well as threaten the incomes of large scholarly societies. To provide alternative tools that enable small groups of scholars anywhere to start up a peer-reviewed journal may also dilute standards of scholarly work and add to the information glut, however much it provides new opportunities for a broader range of faculty members to learn about research review and publication processes, or for publishing in areas not otherwise covered by the current literature.

Still, you may want to ask, do we really need to disturb the current publishing system? It has taken long enough for each of us to figure it out, and it does seem to work well enough for each of us. So, yes, you might as well ask what could come of opening up the (academic) community in this way to the rest of the world of potential researchers and scholars, and what could it possibly teach us about what was multiculturalism? And besides, once you make it that easy to take up a place in this community, well, you might say, there goes the neighborhood.

REFERENCES

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