
Toward a White Discourse on White Racism

JAMES JOSEPH SCHEURICH

Few would disagree that racism continues to be a serious social problem. More problematic for many White academics is the judgment that the academy itself is racist. In this essay I argue that the judgment that the academy is racist is frequently misunderstood by us White academicians because our socially learned investment in individualism eclipses our awareness of our racial positionality. I conclude with suggestions on how we White academicians could, with less divisiveness, begin to address White racism within the academy.

Educational Researcher, Vol. 22, No. 8, pp. 5-10.

“**W**e are deeply concerned about the increasing incidence of racial and ethnic tensions in our country and the lack of focused attention being paid to this issue” (U.S. Civil Rights Commission, quoted in “Civil Rights,” 1991).

My intention in this essay is to “talk” as a White academic with other White academics about racism. In my opinion, this is an unusual kind of effort. There is a considerable amount of work by people by color¹ that addresses racism and its numerous collateral topics, such as equity, multiculturalism, and affirmative action policies. There is also work by Whites that addresses these same issues. I have read extensively in both of these domains, but what I have not found are efforts by White academics to talk among ourselves about our own racism, even though prominent academics of color, such as hooks (1990) and Spivak (1988), have repeatedly said that one of the most important efforts White people could undertake to address racism would be to self-reflectively examine how White racism works.

Few educators will disagree that racism is one of the major social problems in this country. DuBois, perhaps the most widely and deeply respected African-American intellectual (West, 1989, p. 138), in his seminal work *The Souls of the Black Folks* (1903/1989), concluded that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line” (p. 29) and that “the white man, as well as the Negro, is bound and barred by the color-line” (p. 129). Unfortunately, DuBois’s conclusion continues to be as accurate at the end of the 20th century as it was at the beginning. For example, Pine and Hilliard (1990) recently wrote:

Every time we are almost convinced that the nation is rising above the muck of racism, there are reminders of how little headway we have made—even at eliminating the most vulgar and conspicuous manifestations of the disease. Blatant, crude, egregious, and overt racism has come out of the closet again and into our schools. (Pine & Hilliard, 1990, p. 593).

The recent candidacy of David Duke for governor in Loui-

siana, the Clarence Thomas hearings, the numerous episodes of racism on university campuses and in our neighborhoods and schools are but a few examples of the continuing hold that racism has on our society.

The Issue of Racism in the Academy

In over 20 years of experience with the academy, I have known very few White professors in education who would disagree that racism continues to be a deep and serious social problem. All of those with whom I have become familiar were against racism. Many of them even became visibly saddened when the topic was raised, as if they had just been reminded of an ongoing tragedy they had temporarily forgotten.

This picture of the White professoriate, though, is not meant to dispute contentions by people of color and by some Whites that the academy is racially biased. In fact, I have had African-American friends who provided specifics of racist behavior by the very same White faculty who had expressed anti-racist sentiments to me. Even more importantly, I have had African-American friends point out my own racist thoughts and behaviors. So I do not mean to give the impression that White faculty’s opposition to racism means that they are not racist or that my own opposition to racism means that I am not racist. In fact, it is this contradiction between the conscious anti-racism of White faculty and the judgment of some people of color, and of some Whites, that the academy is racist that is the central issue of this essay.²

This contradiction creates a confusing and difficult dilemma. One side of this dilemma, the conscious anti-racism of White faculty, is founded solely on my own experience and my judgments of that experience. It is not based on a random sample of respondents to a survey, nor is it based on conclusions drawn from an experiment. It is founded only on my interactions with my own colleagues. Yet I feel reasonably confident that a high percentage of White faculty, even under conditions that would erase social desirability response effects, would judge that they themselves do not support racism and are, for the most part, not racist. I would even go so far as to say that White faculty, in education at least, would say that they themselves strongly oppose racism in any form.

The other side of the dilemma is the contention by many

JAMES JOSEPH SCHEURICH is assistant professor, *Educational Administration, EDB310, University of Texas-Austin, Austin, TX 78712. He specializes in organizational change, organizational theory, and research methodology.*

people of color and by some Whites that the academy is racist. For example, Frierson (1990) asserts that "the presence of racism in the institution[s of higher education] should be acknowledged as a reality" (p. 16). Reyes and Halcon (1988) claim:

Discriminatory policies and manifestations of racism in educational institutions have changed little over the years. . . . Chicano academics today are generally experiencing many of the same kinds of racial prejudices experienced by those who preceded them into the academy a generation ago. (pp. 310-311).

While I could cite numerous authors with similar viewpoints who are widely respected and write extensively about complexities of racism,³ it would also be possible to find individual people of color who have had prolonged interactions with institutions of higher learning and who think that White faculty as individuals or as a group are not racist. For instance, I am a somewhat more than casual friend with one African-American student who has said to me that he never experienced racism from White faculty. So I do not want to give the impression that people of color monolithically think the academy is racist.

The question embedded, however, in the contradiction between academic Whites who think they are not racist and others who think the White Academy is racist is, how can we determine whether a person or group is racist or not? There is, of course, an extensive body of legislation and case law that confronts this problem from many different angles, most of which are based upon following overt effects, such as the percentage of African-Americans hired in relation to African-American applicants, back to overt and covert causes.⁴ While this approach has been anywhere from fruitful to fruitless, depending on the commentator, I would like to explore a different approach here.

How People of Color and Whites Define Racism

In my estimation, people of color, and those Whites who have concluded that White academics are racially biased, are correct, but this does not primarily mean what White academics may think it means. Highly educated Whites usually think of racism in terms of the overt behaviors of individuals that can be readily be identified and labeled.⁵ A person who does not behave in these identified ways is not considered to be a racist. Within this perspective, racism is a label for individuals but not for social groups. In fact, Kluegel and Smith (1986) found that educated Whites see racism as an individual issue, not a racial group issue.

People of color, on the other hand, usually experience racism differently. DuBois (1989) speaks of the "double consciousness" of African-Americans. Because of this double consciousness, which evolves as a coping response to racism, people of color grow up learning to look at themselves not through their own eyes or through the eyes of their own race but through the eyes of Whites:

The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other [White] world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels

his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (DuBois, 1989, p. 3)

DuBois's self-concept is not rooted in his individual self, nor is it solely rooted in his own race; his self-concept is rooted in a "double," composed of both Black and White. But in this double, the White view is privileged over the Black view: "This American world . . . yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him [the African-American] see himself through the revelation of the other [White] world" (DuBois, 1903/1989, p. 3).⁶

While many things have changed in this country regarding racial issues since DuBois's statement was published nearly 90 years ago, he has captured a feature of the lives of people of color in this society that is still relevant.⁷ Because of racism, because "they are constantly reminded by words, deeds, and unconscious gestures that they are out-group members" (Stanfield, 1985, p. 400), because they experience themselves collectively and historically as being treated differently based on their skin color, people of color learn to see themselves as a racialized people, as a social group defined by skin color.

Because of racism, people of color are not only treated as a social group; they come to see themselves as defined by that group. As Kramer (1970) says, "Members of minority groups have no choice about the status that is imposed upon them" (p. vii). In addition, because racism is imposed by Whites upon people of color, the racialized group sense that people of color have does not originate in their own group. It originates in the actions and attitudes of the White race, that is, "through the revelation of the other [White] world." (DuBois, 1989, p. 3)

We Whites, however, experience ourselves as nonracialized individuals (Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Ogbu, 1978). We do not experience ourselves as defined by our skin color. We especially do not experience ourselves as defined by another race's actions and attitudes toward us because of our skin color. As Stanfield (1985) asserts, Whites do "not even . . . notice they are white" (p. 400).

This difference is how Whites and people of color experience themselves is, I think, crucial to understanding why Whites misunderstand judgments that they are racist. When people of color assert that the academy is racist, individual Whites in the academy, who do not see themselves as racist, are offended or think the judgment does not apply to them. People of color see this unwillingness of Whites to acknowledge their racism as one way that White academics protect their position of privilege. Neither Whites nor people of color seem to understand that there is a clash here between a social group perspective, learned by people of color through the social experience of racism, and an individualized perspective, learned by Whites through their racial socialization.

Individualism and Social Positionality

Among Whites, the idea that each person is largely the source or origin of herself or himself, that is, individualism, is considered a natural facet of life.⁸ Within the frame of this belief, individualism is seen as a naturally occurring, trans-historical, transcultural condition to which all humans naturally aspire. This belief, then, is deeply infused in White

judgments about the way life works. For example, if a person does "well" in life, it is seen as being largely due to her or his own individual choices; if she or he does "badly" in life, it is also largely due to her or his choices. While it is thought that people have different capabilities, what a person does with her or his capabilities is considered to be more important than the capabilities themselves (Schuman, 1971), especially among more educated Whites (Kluegel & Smith, 1986).

The problem with individualism, though, is that it hides the inequities in our social structures, especially racial inequities.⁹ It also hides the fact that "prejudice, discrimination, and racism do not require [individual] intention" (Pine & Hilliard, 1990, p. 595). People of all races are social beings, that is, "human behavior is largely shaped by social/cultural experiences" (Gordon, Miller, & Rollock, 1990, p. 16). Boden, Giddens, and Molotch (1990) make the same point in an article addressing the lack of sociological understanding in the academy: "All too easily . . . academics define human actions as 'psychologically' driven when they are, deeply and significantly, social in origin and orientation" (p. B2).

In different times and different places, people have acted, thought, and believed differently about virtually everything. Even in our own time, middle-class Cuban-Americans, to name just one group, have different codes of conduct than upper-class Whites or lower-class Hispanics. For instance, Stanfield (1985) contends:

It is simply wrong to assume that everyone in the United States has the same cognitive style. . . . The cognitive styles of classes, races, and ethnic groups differ; each of these social categories has different experiences, priorities, and ideas of what is relevant. (pp. 399-400).

In fact, each of us, is socially positioned or located by major sociological categories, such as race, class, and gender. Those in different positional intersections, like White lower-class females or Asian middle-class males, are socialized in different ways.

These positional intersections, however, are not equal in our society. There is a hierarchy of positions, with upper-class White males at the top and lower-class males and females of color at the bottom. Resources and power—economic, intellectual, and emotional—are largely distributed according to this hierarchy (hooks, 1990; Ogbu, 1990; Ransford, 1977; Spivak, 1988; Stanfield, 1985; Weiler, 1988; Yetman & Steele, 1971, pp. 3-15; among many others). Whites as a group get more resources and power than people of color. The upper class as a group gets more resources and power than the middle class as a group, which gets more resources and power than the lower class. Men as a group get more resources and power than women.¹⁰

This inequitable distribution of resources and power by social group, however, is concealed by middle- and upper-income White people's investment in the idea of individualism. In contrast, because of racism's grouping effect and the double consciousness it produces, people of color are not as seduced by the idea of individualism. People of color, through their socially positioned experience, know that they are a racialized group rather than simply separate individuals.

Although we live in a culture that distributes its resources most disproportionately to middle- and upper-class White

males, this does not mean that there are not exceptions to this arrangement or that other groups do not persistently resist the inequitable distribution. Middle- and upper-class White males, nonetheless, consistently reap the most benefits and have done so for a very long time within Western culture. The result of this historical dominance is that the styles of thinking, acting, speaking, and behaving of the dominant group have become the socially correct or privi-

People of color, and those Whites who have concluded that White academics are racially biased, are correct.

leged ways of thinking, acting, speaking, and behaving (Kovel, 1970 [cited in Pettigrew & Martin, 1987]; Kramer, 1970; Stanfield, 1985; Weiler, 1988).

One of the main ways this happens is that the ways of the dominant group become universalized as measures of merit, hiring criteria, grading standards, predictors of success, correct grammar, appropriate behavior, and so forth, all of which are said to be distributed as differences in individual effort, ability, or intelligence. Membership in a social group and the group-related, inequitable distribution of resources and power thus disappear under the guise of individualism.

Social Success and Social Awards

The best way, then, to succeed—that is, to receive rewards, recognition, promotions, salary increases, material resources, and so forth—is to learn and reproduce the ways of the dominant group. This learning and reproduction is easiest for those who grow up socialized into these dominant ways. Thus, the children of middle- and upper-class Whites are the ones most likely to succeed because they have been raised (socialized) in the ways of the dominant group. Some children of the dominant group, of course, fail and some children from lower social groups succeed, but on average, the chances of success are substantially better for a person raised within a dominant group family.

Members of nondominant groups and their children have a chance to succeed if they learn the ways of the dominant groups and if they are socially or economically closer to the top of the hierarchy. But, contrary to the popular idea that anyone can succeed, there are limits no matter how well one learns the ways of the dominant group. A person low enough in the social hierarchy of groups—no matter how well she or he learns to internalize the ways of the dominant group—will never attain the level of success that comes much more easily to one who grows up within a dominant group family.¹¹

Although each individual is to some extent different, and thus there is some contribution that is due to an individual's particular constellation of skills and abilities, the rewards each person receives are to a considerable extent an effect of the inequitable distribution of resources and power by race, class, and gender. However, the socially reinforced belief in individualism allows those at the higher reaches

of the social hierarchy (which, in my opinion, includes White academics) to believe that they receive more rewards because they are special individually, because they have more skills, more talents, more intelligence, and so forth. They do not see how these rewards are related to their group position within the social hierarchy.

In a very real sense the cream is skimmed off the social milk and fed to those in the higher groups as if they are individual rather than social rewards, while those at the very bottom of the hierarchy drink a milk so diluted as to be hardly distinguishable from water. Those in the upper levels of the social hierarchy become addicted to the seductive connection of various rewards with the idea that they receive these rewards because of their uniqueness as an individual.

Individualism Is Addictive

This process occurs within the academy as well as virtually everywhere else within our society. I have experienced it myself. While I grew up within a working-class family and have had to train myself to behave like an upper-middle-class person, I did grow up White and male. Although my working-class origins placed some hurdles along the way, I was aided by the fact that I am male and White and that I have been able and willing to learn upper-middle-class ways. Such accommodations (or compromises, if you will) have allowed me to be fairly successful in terms of garnering social rewards, mostly within the academy.

I can personally say that this process is highly addictive, very difficult to resist. All of the rewards are offered in terms of the idea that I am receiving them because of my special, individual talents, abilities, and efforts. It is very easy, then, to convince myself that this individual specialness is true and to become deeply committed to a kind of personal egotism or arrogance. While it is surely true that individual differences play some significant role in the distribution of social rewards, it is very easy to forget, even in the face of the kind of commitment I have tried to express in this essay, that the rewards I receive are deeply connected to my race, class, and gender, that is, to my membership in a highly favored social group.

According to Bledstein (1978), this cult of the individual is an integral part of academic life. There is a special emphasis on the freedom of professors, once they are tenured, to be highly individualistic and thus not defined by any social group categories. Bledstein (1978), in his book on higher education in this country, has said:

The culture of professionalism [Bledstein's referent for the academy] emancipated the active ego of a sovereign person as he performed organized activities within comprehensive spaces. The culture of professionalism incarnated the radical idea of the independent democrat, a liberated person seeking to free the power of nature within every worldly sphere, a self-governing individual exercising his trained judgment in an open society. . . . [This professional person strove to achieve a level of autonomous individualism, a position of unchallenged authority heretofore unknown in American life. (pp. 87-88)]

The culture of the academy not only emphasizes the individual standing of each professor but also inculcates a rationalization of individualism as a positive virtue.

The price we White academics pay for this orientation is that we lose sight of the multiple effects of our member-

ship in a favored social group. We lose sight of how much we and, more importantly, our intellectual productions (books, articles, presentations, symposia) are, at least to a significant extent, enacted by our race, gender, and class. Our intellectual products, which play an important part in how our society knows and reproduces itself, are marketed as if they are individual products, unrelated to or reproductive of social group membership. Our social positionality simply disappears from the conscious surface of our products. For example, a book I might write would be seen solely as the work of my individual self; it would not be seen as a White upper-middle-class male production.

This perspective returns us to the earlier point that White academics tend to misunderstand judgments that White professors are racist. As I said before, we White academics tend to see this as a judgment of our individual behaviors rather than as a judgment of our membership in a social group. People of color, on the other hand, because of the

We need to make White racism a central, self-reflective topic of inquiry within the academy.

“double consciousness” forced upon them by racism, see both themselves and Whites as enacted by their racial categories. When people of color contend that we White academics are racist, they are not primarily judging our individual behavior (though certainly they sometimes are); they are, most importantly, judging our membership in a racial group that has produced and maintained skin color as a socially enforced category of difference within a hierarchy of social groups.

In addition, people of color are saying, correctly I think, that we Whites operate as if we are oblivious of our racial positionality and its effects in terms of the inequitable distribution of resources and power within our society. Because of this lack of awareness, we White academics learn to act as if our social rewards—salary, position, recognitions, and so on—are solely the product of our special, idiosyncratic individuality. We thus ignore the inequitable distribution of such awards by social group and the impact of this inequitable distribution on ourselves and our intellectual products. More critically, we ignore the fact that the inequitable distribution of resources and power is, in a very important sense, constitutive of who we are as upper-middle-class academic Whites.

We Whites Are in This Problem Together

Recognizing our social group position raises another important point for us Whites. Virtually all academic Whites occupy, as Whites, the same general social position no matter what each individual's opinions about racism may be. Even if a White academic strongly opposes racism in her or his intellectual work, she or he still benefits as a White from the inequitable social distribution of power and resources. There is no individual escape from one's racial

group. We Whites, because of our social group membership, are socially bound together, just as people of color are, in terms of addressing racism. This social group membership orientation is particularly relevant to efforts by Whites to confront White racism. Unfortunately, many Whites who have made a commitment to addressing racism also consider themselves superior to those Whites who have not made the same commitment. This division into "good" Whites who address racism and "bad" Whites who do not is implicit in the writings of many antiracist Whites. It is also implicit, albeit in a much more complex fashion, in such philosophical orientations as those versions of Marxism that locate racism as a phenomenon secondary to the class hierarchy (McCarthy, 1988; Young, 1990).

A full recognition of the advantages we gain as a result of our racial positionality means that all Whites are in the struggle against White racism together. None of us gets an individual dispensation that releases us from our racial position, from its inequitably derived rewards, or from White racism. Our positionality requires that we Whites must work together to address this situation; otherwise, we are assuming we can escape our social group membership and its effects through claims for special status for individual antiracist whites.

I do not make this last point lightly. I know from my own personal experience that it is very easy to divide those who are "politically correct" from those who are not. I often fall into this myself. The indirect claim of superiority, because I am focusing on White racism when others are not, is highly seductive. It is very easy for me to think that I have done my part because I am on the "politically correct" side.

What arises out of this is a way of talking or writing (through tone or word choice, for instance) that implicitly communicates my ideological or political superiority. Not only does this approach alienate those I need to communicate with, but it falsely represents me as being less affected by my racial group membership than those Whites who do not address White racism. In my opinion, no matter how much I individually confront the issue of White racism, I cannot escape being White. I cannot escape the inequitable distribution by race and its effects on me. As West (1990) says of those in my position, I am both "progressive and coopted" (p. 94). Since I cannot individually escape my racial group and its position within the inequitable social hierarchy, no matter how much I individually detest racism, I am compelled to work inclusively with other members of my racial group to address White racism.

Two Suggestions

I would thus make two suggestions to facilitate a White discourse on White racism within the academy. We White academics need, first, to begin to understand and make conscious, especially within our intellectual work, the fact that in our society all people are racialized persons, that is, all people are socially influenced in significant ways by their membership in a racial group. We Whites need to study and report how being White affects our thinking, our behaviors, our attitudes, and our decisions from the micro, personal level to the macro, social level. We need to make White racism a central, self-reflective topic of inquiry within the academy. We need to become aware of our racial positionality as it affects our intellectual products and then infuse this reflexivity into those products.

Second, we need to undertake this effort in a way that does not attempt to separate "good" Whites, willing to confront White racism, from "bad" Whites, unwilling to confront White racism. While this nondivisive approach makes good, practical, political sense, it is even more important to understand that as long as the discourse on White racism divides "good" Whites from "bad" Whites, it misses the central argument advanced in this essay. That is, in our society everyone is racially located and experiences the inequitable distribution of resources and power by racial group, even though a belief individualism conceals this inequitable distribution. It does not matter whether we are a "good" or a "bad" White; all Whites are socially positioned as Whites and receive social advantages because of this positionality. No individual White gets to be an exception because of his or her antiracism.

Virtually no one would dispute that racism is one of the chief social problems in this society and in many other societies. It is certainly not surprising that no consensus exists on how to solve the problem. In this essay, following the advice of the victims of racism, I have tried to start from where I am. Since I am a White male academic, I have tried to start from there. I have attempted to consider how we White academics participate in the reproduction of racial inequity. I have attempted, at least to some extent, to be candid about my own participation in that reproductive process, to talk, for instance, about my own experience of the seductions of individualism. I have made suggestions about what we White academics need to do and how we need to do it. It is not my intention, however, that this essay be a definitive consideration of White racism in the academy. It is neither the first word nor the last. It is only an attempt to discuss my thoughts about White racism in the academy and to provoke additional conversation, in agreement or disagreement (both are helpful, useful, and important). While none of us can escape the innumerable, intricate, large and small ways that our society daily advantages or disadvantages each of us racially, I do not believe we are fatally condemned to continue the present inequities. The key question is, how do we end this tragedy? I suggest that we White academics begin with a White discourse on White racism. I hope this essay facilitates that conversation.

Notes

A somewhat different version of this article was presented at the annual conference of the University Council on Education Administration (UCEA) in Baltimore, Maryland, 1991.

¹I will use the phrase "people of color" to denote the collective of all non-White races in the United States. I do not wish, though, to imply, in some totalized fashion, that the different non-White races are all somehow the same either in general or in regard to racism. Each race has had a different historical experience in this country that is constitutive of its racial culture. Ogbu (1978, 1990) for instance, has written that because of the historical effects of slavery, the contemporary position of African-Americans is different from that of other races, such as those that freely immigrated to this country. In addition, throughout this article, I do not mean to imply that each race is monolithic in its viewpoint about anything, especially racism; there are, as West (1990) says, "differences (class, gender, region, sexual orientation)" among all peoples of color (p. 103). In addition, McCarthy (1988) asserts that "the characterization of minority groups in monolithic terms leads to unwarranted generalizations about the social, political, and cultural behavior of racially oppressed groups" (p. 272). (See also Ransford, 1977, on this issue.) Nonetheless, since the focus of this article is on Whites and White racism, and not primarily on

the experiences of people of color, I need a single, collective term for the other-than-White races. Other possible terms that have frequently been used are more problematic for various reasons. The term "non-White" is deficient because it derives its meaning from Whites rather than from people of color themselves, thus reinscribing a hegemonic relationship of Whites over people of color. Sometimes, though, it is the only term that works grammatically; the term "people of color" cannot be used as an adjective. The term "minorities" is also inadequate because people of color are minorities only at the national level and within some other specific contexts: In the world as a whole and in many contexts, people of color are the majority. For example, "California is already a 'majority' of 'minorities' insofar as its schools are concerned" (Gutherie & Reed, 1991, p. 7). Finally, although the term "people of color" is also deficient because everyone is, strictly speaking, a person of (skin) color, this term is the one that is currently most frequently used by people of color that I read.

²That a person of color in an institutional setting with Whites is the only one to recognize that there is racism in the setting is a common point made in the literature on racism. For example, Feagin (1991) says that it is typical for "a black employee to perceive the subtle undercurrent of prejudice not perceived by white employees" (p. 86). Pettigrew and Martin (1987) contend that "often the black is the only person in a position to draw the conclusion that prejudice is operating in the work situations" (p. 50).

³See, for example, Baratz & Baratz, 1970; Feagin, 1991; Higham, 1971; Pine & Hilliard, 1990; and Reyes & Halcon, 1988. For more philosophical treatments of the racism of the Western knowledge project, see Gordon, Miller, & Rollock, 1990; hooks, 1990; Minh-ha, 1989; Said, 1979; Spivak, 1988; Stanfield, 1985; and Young, 1990.

⁴See, for example, Pettigrew and Martin (1987) in the *Journal of Social Issues*, which devoted one complete issue to the topic of racism and employment (43:1, 1987).

⁵I would suggest that what many academic and other middle-class Whites see as racism is the style of racism historically common to working-class Whites. Indeed, in much of the public, popular discourse on racism in the media (newspapers, television, radio, movies), racism is characterized almost solely in terms of White working-class racism. Pettigrew and Martin (1987) call this style of racism "raw, overt bigotry" (p. 46) while Kovel (1970) calls it "dominative racism" (quoted in Pettigrew & Martin, 1987, p. 46). While many middle-class Whites find "raw, overt bigotry" or "dominative" examples of racism to be repugnant, they tend not to be aware of their own, more subtle styles of middle-class racism.

⁶Pine and Hilliard (1990, p. 596) make the same point about students of color: "Students of color . . . experience conceptual separation from their roots: they are compelled to examine their own experiences and history through the assumptions, paradigms, constructs, and language of other people."

⁷The determination of which racial groups in the United States experience Dubois's "double consciousness" would initiate a lively debate. I do not think, however, that the central purpose of this essay requires that I take some stand on this issue. My unwillingness to engage this here does not mean that I think this debate is unimportant; it is very important. Neither does my unwillingness mean that I do not have a sense of where I would stand in such a debate; I simply think that to attempt to discuss this issue here would not only take too much additional space but, more importantly, would detract from the central point I am trying to make.

⁸I do not mean to imply that people of color do not also value individualism. What I am saying is that people of color are much more aware of their racialized group status than Whites are of their racial group status and that thus the influence of the idea of individualism on people of color is significantly less than on Whites.

⁹The idea of individualism as hindering White attention to racism does not originate with me. For example, Ogbu made this same point in his influential *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1978). I do, however, think that raising this issue within the context of White academics talking to other White Academics is an important addition to the work of Ogbu and others.

¹⁰Although I appear here to treat the social categories of race, class, and gender as if they operate independently from each other, I do this only to simplify the larger argument that I am trying to develop. Actually each category intersects with the other categories in very complicated ways.

¹¹DuBois (1903/1989) expressed awareness of this difference in life chances in 1903 when in speaking of a young African-American man, he said, "I had feared for Jim. With a cultured parentage and a social

caste to uphold him, he might have made a venturesome merchant or a West Point cadet" (p. 49).

References

- Baratz, S. S., & Baratz, J. C. (1970). Early childhood intervention: The social science base of institutional racism. *Harvard Educational Review, 40*, 29-50.
- Bledstein, B. J. (1978). *The culture of professionalism: The middle class and the development of higher education in America*. New York: Norton.
- Boden, D., Giddens, A., & Molotch, H. L. (1990). Sociology's role in addressing society's problems is undervalued and misunderstood in academe. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 36*(23), B1, B3.
- Civil Rights panel to study issue of racism in schools. *Education Week, 11*(14), 22.
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1989). *The souls of Black folks*. New York: Bantam. (Original work published 1903)
- Feagin, J. R. (1991) Blacks still face the malevolent reality of White racism. *The Chronicle of Higher Education, 38*(14), A44.
- Frierson, H. T., Jr. (1990). The situation of Black educational researchers: Continuation of a crisis. *Educational Researcher, 19*(2), 12-17.
- Gordon, E. W., Miller, F., & Rollock, D. (1990). Coping with communcentric bias in knowledge production in the social sciences. *Educational Researcher, 19*(3), 14-19.
- Gutherie, J. W., & Reed, R. J. (1991). *Educational administration and policy: Effective leadership for American education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Higham, J. (1971). Toward racism: The history of an idea. In N. R. Yetman & C. H. Steele (Eds.), *Majority and minority: The dynamics of racial and ethnic relations* (pp. 230-252). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- hooks, b. (1990). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston: South End.
- Kluegel, J. R., & Smith, E. R. (1986). *Beliefs about inequality: Americans' views of what is and what ought to be*. New York: de Gruyter.
- Kovel, J. (1970). *White racism: A psychological history*. New York: Pantheon.
- Kramer, J. R. (1970). *The American minority community*. New York: Crowell.
- McCarthy, C. (1988). Rethinking liberal and radical perspectives on racial inequality in schooling: Making the case of nonsynchrony. *Harvard Educational Review, 58* 265-279.
- Minh-ha, T. T. (1989). *Woman Native Other*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1978). *Minority education and caste: The American system in cross-cultural perspective*. New York: Academic Press.
- Ogbu, J. U. (1990). Racial stratification and education. In G. E. Thomas (Ed.), *U. S. race relations in the 1980s and 1990s: Challenges and alternatives* (pp. 3-34). New York: Hemisphere.
- Pettigrew, T. F., & Martin, J. (1987). Shaping the organizational context for Black American inclusion. *Journal of Social Issues, 43*(1), 41-78.
- Pine, G. J., & Hilliard, A. G., III. (1990). Rx for racism: Imperatives for America's schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 71*, 593-600.
- Ransford, H. E. (1977). *Race and class in American society: Black, Chicano, Anglo*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.
- Reyes, M. L., & Halcon, J. J. (1988). Racism in academia: The old wolf revisited. *Harvard Educational Review, 58*, 299-314.
- Said, E. W. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.
- Schuman, H. (1971). Free will and determinism in public beliefs about race. In N. R. Yetman & C. H. Steele (Eds.), *Majority and minority: The dynamics of racial and ethnic relations* (pp. 382-390). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Stanfield, J. H. (1985). The ethnocentric basis of social science knowledge production. *Review of Research in Education, 12*, 387-415.
- Waller, K. (1988). *Women teaching for change: Gender, class & power*. New York: Bergen & Garvey.
- West, C. (1989). *The American evasion of philosophy: A genealogy of pragmatism*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- West, C. (1990). The new cultural politics of difference. *October, 53*, 93-109.
- Yetman, N. R., & Steele, C. H. (Eds.). (1971). *Majority and minority: The dynamics of racial and ethnic relations*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Young, R. (1990). *White mythologies: Writing history and the West*. London: Routledge.