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# Articles

## For: Anti-Racist Education

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### ABSTRACT

This paper argues that democratic education in a racist society requires anti-racist pedagogy. Because traditional approaches to democratic education conceive racism in terms of personal prejudice, they cannot adequately address the problems that racism actually poses. Racism is structural and institutional as well as embodied and ideational; if education is to do more than refine social expressions of and responses to racism, it must take on racism as a way of framing meaning and value. The paper argues that this cannot be accomplished, however, if anti-racist education is conceived in terms of reactive or corrective argumentation. This is because a reactive or even a corrective response to racist arguments accepts the terms of racism even in arguing against them. To avoid invoking the very assumptions and framework we mean to discredit, we must shift out of the racist framework altogether. What this means for education, the author argues, is that we need to appeal to art and performance as ways to reframe and reconceive race relations. The paper closes with examples of a performative pedagogy addressed to anti-racist goals.

### INTRODUCTION

At a recent dinner party, my brother tells me, Mom mentioned to friends that I was working on a paper. Naturally, her companions asked her what the topic was, and, not wanting to load them down with detail, she replied simply, "Prejudice." As a conversational move, it was kind of thin, and for a moment there was dead silence, broken only when Dad asked helpfully, "For or against?" The paper was in fact this one and it is, as most academic papers are, "against." As my father's ironic question suggests, very few people declare themselves "for prejudice." Even statements as boldly racist as *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* and *Race, Evolution and Behavior* declare themselves against prejudice, appealing to some variant of "science" as a supposedly objective bulwark against "reverse prejudice." On the other hand, even determinedly anti-racist educators hesitate to call themselves "anti-racist." In the ears of many, the term

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sounds too narrow, self-righteous, extremist, or provocative. It sounds negative, aggressive, ugly. It sounds politically correct. At the risk of sounding narrow, self-righteous, extremist, provocative, negative, aggressive, ugly, and politically correct, I propose to argue for a specifically anti-racist pedagogy that understands racism as something more than prejudice. Such a pedagogy must avoid propaganda, but cannot avoid politics.

If racism were strictly a matter of prejudice, the philosophical argument on behalf of anti-racist education might not look any different from an argument for a traditional liberal education. For example, it might take the form: a) Education in a democracy must work against all forms of prejudice; b) racial prejudice is one of the problems facing American democracy; therefore c) education in the United States needs to take a stand against racism (i.e., racial prejudice). Such an argument assumes the centrality of fairness to democratic relations.<sup>1</sup> It assumes that, in a democracy, individuals are to have either equal or fair access to social goods and thus are to be treated in terms of merit and not with reference to racial identity or other irrelevant considerations of difference. From this perspective, democracy is upheld when citizens can count on the absence of obstacles to freedom and equality such as racial preference, intolerance, or ignorance. Addressing racism as a form of prejudice, the argument takes the problem to be a matter of mistaken beliefs, lies, ignorance, and/or undemocratic sentiments such as hatred or intolerance for members of particular social groups. Because racism, in this framework, is considered a deviation or aberration based on error, fixing it requires targeting individuals at the point when they are most susceptible to corrective or preparatory democratic training. Typically, the task of providing such training, whether in the form of alternate socialization or rational clarification, is regarded as the province of public schooling.

In contrast to the position sketched above, this paper takes as its starting point a conception of racism as structural and embodied inequities that are rendered “legitimate” and appropriate by particular conventions of policy, law, common sense, and even science. Accordingly, addressing race problems through education will require something different from helping each individual flourish as a free, well-rounded, and rational human being. Indeed, it may mean calling into question what traditionally has *counted* as free, rational, or well-rounded—for if our very frameworks of understanding are geared to the maintenance of racist relations, it may be that values such as “rationality” need to be reframed so that they no longer help explain and legitimize racial oppression. If racism is not a problem attributable simply to ignorance, mistaken beliefs, or individual character flaws, but instead is an organizing principle of our society and culture, education intended to challenge racism needs to adopt a different framework from that offered by liberal education. Liberal education helps us flourish within a society committed to individual freedom. If the society in question is actually organized to prevent or suppress the flourishing of some groups so that others may flourish, liberal education lacks the framework it requires to support its mission.

The argument of this paper is that democratic education must take an active stance against racism, and that, to do so, it cannot merely correct for racism but must help reorient us in ways that enable us to rework and rethink race relations. Because this paper starts from a conception of racism as a system of stigma and privilege manifested in both embodied and structural relations, it offers a different structure of argument from that which one might expect if starting from the liberal education framework. The first question it must address is, *What is racism*, such that we cannot count on a traditional liberal education to lay the groundwork for a non-racist social order? To make the argument that the educational response to racism must go beyond either corrective socialization or (re)training in reason and empathy, the paper begins with a discussion of racism itself. It next moves to the question of why, in a racist society, a non-racist approach to education must be considered inadequate. The remaining sections take up anti-racist education as a distinctive educational response to racism, addressing concerns regarding the threat of bias and political correctness in anti-racist education and closing with a discussion of how such education can avoid engaging in propaganda.

## RACISM AND ANTI-RACISM

### Racism

Analyses of race and racism abound. This paper works within an existing framework of analysis to offer an argument for anti-racist pedagogy as a necessary focus of education in a democracy. The framework I will assume regards racism as institutional and structural as well as embodied and cultural.<sup>2</sup> According to this framework of analysis, racism is a *system* of privilege and oppression, a network of traditions, legitimating standards, material and institutional arrangements, and ideological apparatuses that, together, serve to perpetuate hierarchical social relations based on race.

Because this paper is concerned with both structural and embodied dimensions of racism, it does not claim to address all forms of racism. Since the mechanisms and ideological functions of racism differ importantly from one set of race relations to another, talking about anti-racism (whether in the form of oppositional stances, political activism, deconstructive strategies, or visionary reconstructions) means talking about approaches that address the specific forms racism takes in particular sets of relations.<sup>3</sup> While we would expect to see parallels in anti-racist education as practiced in Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and the United States, for example, or in anti-racist education addressed to Anglo/Native American and white/African American relations, we would also look for important differences.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, race issues cannot be treated as strictly local, for they are also caught up with national and international power relations. The mechanics of racism may vary importantly from one group to another and from one

country to another, but the organization of race relations is likely to owe something to broad economic and political relations as well as to local history.

Insofar as parallels can be drawn demonstrating racism's structural character, the paper will call upon examples of racism concerning a variety of groups, but it is concerned primarily with *an* anti-racism rather than with anti-racism *tout court*. For the most part, the terms "race" and "racism" will refer to the relations between whites and blacks in the United States; specifically, racism will refer to the way that relations between European Americans and African Americans are organized such that whiteness is perceived as normal and neutral while blackness stigmatizes groups and individuals as exceptional, problematic, exotic, or threatening. Although racism often incorporates ethnocentrism (that is, cultural bias), and both operate on the basis of deficit theories, the terms refer to kinds of inequality grounded in distinctive assumptions about the nature of difference.

**Ethnocentrism and Racism.** Ethnocentrism refers to the assumption of a particular culture as the norm, other cultures being viewed through its lens and in relation to the taken-for-granted culture. Accordingly, outside cultures may be sentimentalized, marginalized, condescended to, demonized, exoticized, diminished, or ignored. Textbooks that take the colonial period of North American history as "the beginning of the story," for example, or world maps that adopt graphic conventions allowing the United States and Europe to appear disproportionately large, demonstrate ethnocentrism. Great Books programs, too, work within an ethnocentric framework when they celebrate an unbroken line of white, Western, male authors. Because the problem in ethnocentrism is a refusal of pluralism—of multiple points of view—the solution to ethnocentrism is multiculturalism, or the inclusion of a variety of cultural perspectives on their own terms.

By contrast, racism is not merely a matter of failing to recognize other standpoints, "centers," or perspectives, but refers to the stigmatizing of outsider groups as inherently inferior, whether such groups are seen as threatening, unworthy, or unreliable, on the one hand, or as benevolent and "childlike," on the other. Among the most overt forms that racism takes are exclusionary hiring practices, district redlining, stereotyping, "scientific" explanations of sexual prowess or I.Q. along "race" lines (although "race" itself, of course, is not a scientific category), police abuse and false arrest patterns, hate crimes, and, most obviously of all, eugenics and genocide. Yet racism also may take a seemingly benign form. Sentimentalizing Native Americans as "noble savages" or glorifying the purity and "primitivism" of African art, for example, are ways of insisting on a different kind of human status for the groups in question. The problem is not simply that Native Americans or African art forms are viewed from outside the framework of their own cultures, but that "noble savagery" and "primitivism" are implicitly Social Darwinist metaphors. Although African Americans or Native Americans or other groups may be characterized as more "pure" than whites, the upshot is still that whites are more civilized than others and that they bear a paternalistic relation to the "childlike" races. The paternalistic

stance of whites may be more easily recognizable in forms of racism shaped by fear and hatred, but even sentimental versions appeal to racial difference as a way to organize relations between whites and other groups in hierarchical terms. Both forms serve the interests of whites at the expense of oppressed minorities.

In many cases, racism and ethnocentrism will overlap. For example, whites who blame black unemployment on laziness or unwed motherhood may speak as if they were blaming “the culture of poverty,” but they tend to link the “culture” they denigrate to “blackness” as something not only inherent, but inherently inferior, implicitly invoking the slaveholder stereotype of blacks as lazy and immoral. White unemployment, by contrast, might be blamed on the culture of “the underclass,” but it will not be blamed on *white* culture. Only in the case of non-whites is a problem culture identified with racial or ethnic identity. Ethnocentrism also converges with racism insofar as it lends itself to the treatment of “others” as a contrasting category by means of which the superiority of the dominant culture can be asserted. Insofar as analyses or reports of the American Civil War cast northern whites as the saviors of southern slaves, for example, they are ethnocentric, for they operate within a framework that ignores blacks’ own telling of the story. Yet such histories are also racist insofar as African Americans provide a dramatic foil by means of which the agency and heroism of whites are heightened: whites figure as disinterested moral agents, blacks as passive victims or interested parties. Not only is the experience of African Americans thereby eclipsed, but it is specifically subordinated to the purpose of casting whites as central, heroic, and interesting.

My point in distinguishing between racism and ethnocentrism is that we need to recognize whether group marginalization is in some sense *necessary* to a given social order before we can know how to address the “problem” of difference.<sup>5</sup> Ethnocentrism, which involves ignorance, cultural parochialism, or a lack of respect for difference, typically attempts to assimilate minority groups to the beliefs and habits characteristic of the dominant social group. Democratically speaking, it amounts to a form of negligence. If the problems concerning racial difference in the United States were strictly a matter of ethnocentrism, addressing these problems educationally might mean fostering recognition and appreciation of other cultures. Racism, far from trying to assimilate oppressed groups, insists on the otherness of outsider groups. Indeed, it specifically *generates* the category of race as an organizing principle of social meaning and then works to naturalize hierarchical relations so that oppressed minorities appear inherently inferior, suspect, or undeserving. Given the *necessarily* hierarchical terms in which difference is understood and acted upon within a racist framework, neither pluralism nor multiculturalism can offer an adequate response to racism. Because I see our society as racist, I argue that education must be specifically anti-racist and not merely anti-bias. Multicultural education may well have an important role to play in democratic schooling, but it is at best a partial, at worst a misleading response to the problem, unless coupled with anti-racist education.



**Racism as a Framework for Meaning.** Whereas ethnocentrism assumes a particular cultural perspective as neutral, universal, or superior, and may take the form of simply disregarding others, racism requires “others” but also requires that they *be* other. In racist relations, not only are white perspectives and interests assumed to the exclusion of others’, but they are predicated on others’ subordination to whites. Obviously, white interests are served by denying minority groups access to the careers, public positions, housing, and other goods seen as most desirable. What is perhaps less obvious is that, insofar as racial minorities are stereotyped and demonized, whites are made to appear deserving of the privileges they enjoy. Structurally, racism operates to ensure an unequal distribution of social goods according to race; ideologically, racism works to legitimate such inequalities by establishing the superiority of one group as a product of contrasts with other groups. By blaming the victims of exploitative economic and social relations, those in the dominant social group foster a climate in which attention is deflected away from the workings of power and instead is concentrated on the supposed inadequacies of particular minority groups.

Racism thus affords a framework of meaning that forces the burden of proof regarding legitimacy, adequacy, and worthiness on blacks.<sup>6</sup> For example, since the high degree of poverty among blacks in the United States commonly is considered a fact about blackness and not a fact about economic or other power structures, an African American woman who becomes a lawyer or professor may find herself continually having to persuade whites that she has “earned” her place; any perceived shortcomings are likely to undercut not only her reputation but her very claim to legitimacy. By contrast, a white man can be simply a lousy lawyer. Whether as lawyer, professor, company executive, or even president or vice-president of the United States, if he is discovered to be ignorant, incompetent, or unscrupulous, he may be held accountable as an individual but never as a representative of maleness or whiteness: one incompetent white, male president does not endanger future white, male claimants to the title. A black man or woman deemed a failure in such a position, however, would be considered to reflect upon the race and/or gender as a whole. Despite the insistence of the dominant group that there is no such thing as systemic racism—that each instance of black poverty, for example, is the result of individual failure, having nothing to do with the overall status of blacks in the society—any personal shortcomings on the part of a visible African American are likely to be attributed to the group in its entirety.

Ideologically and structurally, racism helps supply the framework whereby we come to understand what counts as appropriate, intelligible, attractive, legitimate, moral, or intelligent. Within that framework, racial difference is a key organizing principle, implicitly or explicitly preparing understanding for perceptions predicated on racial contrasts.<sup>7</sup> In the explicit form, blackness offers a signal to the (implicitly white) observer that what is being framed for perception is to be read as, say, comical or primitive. Minstrel shows, for instance, used blackface as an explicitly racist convention to

frame perception and understanding, preparing the audience to “read” the performance in terms of buffoonery. In its subtler forms, racism shapes meaning through an implicit set of contrasts of which we may be unaware—and which, if pointed out to us, we might resist as irrelevant to our own sense of meaning. The point is, however, that meanings framed by racism are not simply personal interpretations. They are preframed for perception by a complex system of social relations. For example, conventional femininity is a conspicuously white, middle-class ideal, signifying gentleness, delicacy, benevolence, innocence, and refinement, among other attributes. The performance of that style of femininity often depends on women of other classes and colors doing the indelicate labor of domesticity; in addition, it depends on these women being *seen* as “other,” for it relies on contrasts such as that between some women’s charitable activities and other women’s poverty, or that between the supposedly untamed sexuality of black women and the romanticized innocence of white women.

Racism thus *produces* contrasts that function, in effect, as dramatic devices. Racism means that whiteness is predicated on blackness as a foil, so that blackness is necessarily treated as other, as secondary, or as supporting, much in the way that literary foils serve to define a hero or heroine by allowing them to demonstrate their virtues as *comparative* values.<sup>8</sup> We then are able to turn to such comparisons as “proof” of superiority or inferiority. The higher standard of living in the United States, for instance, is often cited as proof of the superiority of American capitalism over traditional African economies, although the desperate straits in which many developing nation economies find themselves are in part the result of exploitative U.S. economic practices.

Racism also provides a means of legitimating those social inequities deemed problematic but unavoidable. Not only can racist assumptions and arguments supply handy explanations for poverty or for school failure, but they can be used to explain away such phenomena as misogyny and urban violence. In a powerful analysis of the charges leveled against gangsta rap by the mainstream media, bell hooks points out that treatments of misogyny, violence, and rampant consumerism as somehow peculiar to young black men perform a sleight of hand, by framing these problems as characteristic of young black men rather than of society at large.<sup>9</sup> Misogyny and violence thus are reframed as aberrations, so that young white men (the majority audience for gangsta rap) can enjoy the spectacle of violence against women without realizing their own complicity in the act. By locating blame for the unsavory aspects of a culture *away* from its dominant members, racism undercuts any need to change those aspects of the culture.

In summary, racism is not an aberration or tragic flaw but a systematic way of organizing social relations that privileges whites and then naturalizes that privilege. It encompasses such varied issues as job ceilings; low self-esteem among African American school children; the use of black stereotypes in advertising to signal exoticism; the popular and political equation of gangs, welfare, and poverty with blackness (and blackness, in turn, with an absence of “family values”); white resistance to having black



neighbors or to having black classmates for their children; and the virtual invisibility of African Americans in the school curriculum. Racism means that a white businessman's actions will be attributed to him as an individual, whereas those of a black businessman are likely to be attributed to his race. Racism means that "Black History Month" will offer exceptional attention to African American achievements but ignore the centrality of the African American experience to "regular" American history.<sup>10</sup> Racism is not a matter, then, of errors accidentally regularized as ideology, nor of sheer absence of knowledge on the part of whites, nor even of malicious lies. It is a question of how the privileges of whiteness come to be identified as "natural," while African Americans are put on the defensive and required to establish their belongingness to the satisfaction of those in power.

### Anti-racism

If racism is understood as referring to the ways in which inequities, marginalization, and oppression become naturalized in a society, anti-racism cannot be collapsed into non-racism (or the absence of discriminatory intentions). Non-racism assumes the possibility of racial innocence, whereas the arguments on which this paper draws hold that in the United States all relations are racialized. This is not to say that all white-black relations are characterized by prejudice. Rather, it is to say that being white or black cannot be assumed to be irrelevant to a situation, despite our hopeful belief that, in our capacity as private individuals, we can and should be colorblind.<sup>11</sup>

Paradoxically, colorblindness—that is, attempted non-racism—becomes itself a form of racism, in a racist society. Colorblindness assumes that acknowledging racial differences amounts to stereotyping, and, like such other forms of voluntary ignorance as gender neutrality, it attempts to correct for social and structural bias with an appeal to the metaphorical blindness of justice.<sup>12</sup> Colorblindness treats race as if it did not matter, invoking an ideal according to which color *ought* not to matter, a world in which color is not a difference that makes a difference. In a society in which degrading assumptions are routinely attached to "racial" (meaning "non-white") identifications and in which designations such as "greatest black artist of the twentieth century" or "foremost African American novelist" mean something necessarily *less* than "greatest artist of the twentieth century" or "foremost American novelist," it is an understandably attractive ideal. But while the refusal to stereotype is surely desirable, colorblindness also involves a refusal to see racism as anything more than prejudice. Because race does matter in American society—although race, even more than class, is something we resist seeing as an organizing principle of social relations<sup>13</sup>—the effort at colorblindness actually serves to *deny* the effects of racism, rather than to eradicate racism.

Anti-racism differs importantly from non-racism in referring to an active resistance to the ways in which knowledge, status, value, and competence have been framed to give preference to white interests. Anti-racism also

differs from non-racism in its perceived racial applications. A non-racist orientation is likely to be understood as applying only to white-on-black relations, for it assumes that the ideal is for whites to treat blacks as if they were white—that is, as if they did not carry the stigma of blackness (or rather, as if one had not noticed). By contrast, anti-racism refers to any relation in which assumptions about whiteness as well as blackness play a part. It refers as much to white-on-white relations or black-on-black relations, therefore, as to black/white relations. Because the point of anti-racism is to challenge naturalized presumptions of white privilege so that race relations can be problematized and reconstructed, anti-racist considerations apply wherever whiteness has been assumed as a standard or blackness treated as a foil—whether in moral relations, democratic relations, or standards of educational and intellectual achievement.

### Anti-racist Education

Since my focus in this paper is not on all forms of anti-racist activity, but on anti-racist education, particularly anti-racist pedagogy, part of my concern is to demonstrate that anti-racist pedagogy is profoundly educative and not simply politics by other means. In a democracy, the role of education is political at least to the extent that education is expected to prepare students to become active citizens, citizens to whom democracy is a vital engagement. While education is therefore a political undertaking, it is not a mere subset of political activism.<sup>14</sup> For education to *count* as education, it must provide for an enlargement and deepening of experience—for enhanced understanding of relations or implications not readily available to uninformed perception. By contrast, non-educative schooling may allow students to pile up facts and skills, yet fail to speak to their experience or understanding. And miseducation actually confounds understanding and experience, preparing students for a world that does not exist—a world, for example, from which social obstacles and economic barriers have magically been erased.<sup>15</sup>

**Miseducation.** Miseducation is as much a political as an educational description, referring to curricular falsification or distortion of what is appropriate, natural, valid, or useful.<sup>16</sup> It refers to “education” that misprepares students for the actual social conditions that they are likely to encounter; that misrepresents knowledge; that narrows or cuts off opportunities and growth; that lies to students about who they are or what their society is like. Because miseducation actively shapes students’ perceptions, habits, and skills in ways that prevent them from flourishing as fully as they might, it is worse than no education at all. (Invoking “miseducation” as a description of non-racist education does not of itself answer the question of what democratic education *would* look like, of course.<sup>17</sup> I will turn to this question later.) Non-racist education is miseducative insofar as it ignores the social fact of racism in a society. In so doing, it teaches students not to think about race, promoting ignorance as if it were innocence. Indeed, it is not

merely that such education prepares students to misunderstand the conditions of their society, but that, as Woodson argues, it does so in collusion with prevailing power relations, thereby reinforcing racist social structures.

**Non-education.** Some versions of non-racist education, on the other hand, are non-educative. Non-education refers to school activities or programs with no educational value: school activities that may *look* intellectual or skillful but that cannot be justified in terms of any coherent philosophy of education. Coursework that merely keeps students busy, that parrots sophisticated intellectual skills without promoting intellectual understanding, or that fragments or mystifies knowledge, represents one by now familiar form of non-education.<sup>18</sup> Insofar as non-racist education provides students with irrelevant skills tied to reified conceptions of knowledge (say, “generic” science skills, mystified and fragmented in ways that discourage inquiry into such current controversies as research concerning race and I.Q.), it is non-educative.<sup>19</sup>

There is a further sense, too, in which non-racist education may be non-educative. Schooling that “drifts,” that serves first one set of presumed social needs and then another, without appealing to any overarching conception of students’ educational flourishing, stands a good chance of being non-educative.<sup>20</sup> (At best, it may be accidentally or haphazardly educational.) Insofar as such programs lack any independent standard of pedagogical value and simply appeal to the latest notion of what schools ought to be doing, they cede responsibility for education to whichever popular or politically expedient demands happen to carry the day. Obediently adopting the catchphrases of the moment (whether technology, multiculturalism, literacy, national productivity, or “at risk” students), they fail to examine the *relation* between those concerns and the larger goals of education in a democratic society.<sup>21</sup> Education thus becomes whatever emergency measures seem to meet the demands of the moment. Non-racist education risks being non-educative when it grasps at colorblindness or multicultural inclusiveness as a panacea, without asking what such education means in a racist society.

**Democratic Education.** In a racialized and racist society, if education is to be democratic it must be specifically anti-racist: we cannot rely on generic programs of education either to undercut the impact of racism on students’ learning or to absolve education of any specific responsibility for addressing racism. Attempting to rid our actions of racial bias—attempting to be non-racist—risks exacerbating racist relations, for it means focusing on individual freedom from prejudicial intentions instead of addressing the racial dynamics already present in a situation. By ignoring rather than challenging racism, it may effectively play into racist structures that exist independent of private intentions. In schools, trying to fix on a non-racist curriculum or pedagogy is a way of teacher-proofing the classroom, taking reflective responsiveness out of the work that teachers do by providing them with an approach that supposedly avoids any possible racism. Admi-

rable though the intentions are behind such approaches—for they are meant to ensure pedagogical justice—they risk offering students and teachers a choice between miseducation or non-education. Both help perpetuate existing power relations. Both fail as education.

The difficulty, of course, is to know what education does call for in a democratic but racist society. As Dewey points out, what is called for can never be taken as given: the meaning of education in a democracy is something that each society and each generation must work out for itself.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, rather than offer a blueprint for democratic education, this paper provides a framework for the kinds of education needed in today's racialized societies. I say "kinds" because I believe that no single approach can serve to address the varied forms that racism takes.<sup>23</sup> Thus, although the term "anti-racist education" has been used in connection with a variety of competing approaches,<sup>24</sup> my concern in this paper is with the concept of anti-racist education more generally, as a framework that addresses the problems racism presents to education in a democratic society.

A meaningful education speaks to actual experience while also teaching students to examine their experience in terms that press against the boundaries of convention and of immediate perception. Often, we assume that the education afforded to the privileged represents an ideal to be extended to all students. An anti-racist framework, however, suggests that the education enjoyed by members of privileged groups may fall far short of any educative ideal, insofar as it fails to provide perspective—that is, insofar as it fails to teach privileged students how their own experience is related to the experience of others very different from themselves. Since in racist societies common sense and immediate perception are racialized, education in such contexts must include learning to question and challenge that which seems obvious. While education must help students appreciate and make sense of their experience, then, it must also equip them for uncommon sense. That is, it must equip them with tools and symbols for pursuing understanding beyond what appears necessary or relevant from the perspective of their own immediate relations and observations.<sup>25</sup>

In the remainder of the paper, I want to consider how pedagogy can be anti-racist without being reactive. The danger in undertaking an anti-racist pedagogy is that we fail to imagine it more broadly than its "anti" term suggests—concentrating on fending off racism, without ever developing an alternative vision of a democratic society. This image of anti-racist (and anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, etc.) pedagogies as essentially reactive is what leads even their most sympathetic critics to shun them as overly negative and alarmist. Intellectually, too, the term seems to suggest a rather thin conceptualization—a kind of *au contraire* instruction, in which the point is simply to refute all misconceptions. Actually, if anti-racist pedagogy were merely a way of correcting errors, it might be difficult to think of it as education at all, since education as most of us conceive it is a way of enhancing growth and constructing further possibilities. It is hard to know how one would begin to characterize a form of education that took its entire impetus from the principle of keeping error and corruption at bay.

The shortcomings of reactive or compensatory approaches to anti-racist education were set forth almost seventy years ago by African American philosopher Alain Locke, who observed that the fundamental question for any anti-racist social agenda was “Art or Propaganda. Which?”<sup>26</sup> The next section addresses the concern that anti-racist education might be inherently propagandist and argues that it is not, but that, to avoid a propagandist framework, such education must be approached in emergent rather than corrective terms.

## AVOIDING PROPAGANDA IN ANTI-RACIST EDUCATION

### Art as Experience

For Locke, part of the solution to the problem of racism lay in the Harlem Renaissance. Indeed, when he said “art,” he meant the art of the Harlem Renaissance, art that was concerned with expressing truths about black experience rather than with promoting images of black respectability. Whereas older generations of black artists and intellectuals (including W. E. B. Du Bois) had assumed that art ought to serve the function of race propaganda, few of the luminaries of the Harlem Renaissance saw their work in that light. Some Harlemites, such as James Van Der Zee, Jessie Fauset, and Countee Cullen, did concentrate on “positive” depictions of black Americans, but most of the generation that came of age in the 1920s saw art as the setting forth of a kind of “truth” that would encompass the pimps, prostitutes, and crap shooters of Claude McKay’s *Home to Harlem*, as well as the genteel members of the Talented Tenth acclaimed by Du Bois.

Far from using their art as a way to conceal propagandist tonic under aesthetic sugarcoating, then, most of the leading figures of the Harlem Renaissance saw art as offering a way to explore the full range of black experience. No more interested in “good” stereotypes than in the undesirable variety, artists and writers such as Aaron Douglas, Augusta Savage, Langston Hughes, William H. Johnson, Zora Neale Hurston, and the young Jacob Lawrence sought to avoid racial clichés or other shortcuts to understanding the diversity of black experience.<sup>27</sup> As Locke was to comment many years later, African American art could not proceed on the assumption “that there is a type Negro who, either qualitatively or quantitatively, is the type symbol of the entire group.”<sup>28</sup> The point was not to persuade whites of the worth of black lives but to provide both blacks and whites with new ways of seeing and appreciating blackness.

For the most part, therefore, the art and literature of the Harlem Renaissance were expressive rather than reactive, creative rather than argumentative. And it was specifically because they avoided propaganda, avoided engaging racist ideology directly, that Locke believed that art and literature could teach the truth about blackness in a white world. For Locke, the educational value of the movement consisted above all in its capacity to represent blackness without reference to the terms set by a racist society.

Disregarding conventional perceptions and assumptions, art could offer an objective look at black experience, physiognomy, and heritage.<sup>29</sup> Rather than offering piecemeal correctives to error, it would set forth a wholly fresh vision of the race.<sup>30</sup>

Key to Locke's notion of art as education is its avoidance of argumentation. For him, the problem posed by propaganda is not that it serves a particular agenda—obviously, he meant for art to serve a distinct social, political, and intellectual agenda. The problem with propaganda, as he saw it, is that it is reactive, and thus reliant on the very assumptions it is intended to displace. Unlike the more familiar opposition between propaganda and common sense or between propaganda and open inquiry, Locke's art/propaganda dichotomy suggests that the most important obstacle to social understanding may be a form of literal-mindedness: accepting our starting points as a given and seeking change through incremental adjustments. In effect, then, Locke rejects the kind of approach to promoting interracial understanding taken by liberal education. In the traditional liberal arts model, the path to a freer understanding is through careful analysis, reasoned argumentation, and dialogue. But from Locke's perspective, that approach reintroduces at every turn the very assumptions that preclude a transformed understanding. Particularly in the case of black/white relations, what is called for is not the correction of each and every error in existing understandings, but a reorientation in our thinking. As a pragmatist, Locke saw change not in terms of incremental improvement but in terms of shifts: adopting new positions and entering into new relations.<sup>31</sup>

In Locke's view, the anti-racist mission of the Harlem Renaissance could succeed only insofar as it specifically avoided propaganda, for propaganda would exacerbate the polarization of black and white positions, whereas art could supply a new social vision, addressing the African American experience with a fresh eye and ear. The problem with propaganda, he argued, is that it cannot reframe the terms of the debate. However vehemently one repudiates racism, taking up the issue in pro/con terms affords a presumptive legitimacy to racism, allowing racism to set the terms for what will count against it. Thus, the major objection to propaganda, "apart from its besetting sin of monotony and disproportion, is that it perpetuates the position of group inferiority even in crying out against it. For it . . . speaks under the shadow of a dominant majority whom it harangues, cajoles, threatens, or supplicates. It is too extroverted for balance or poise or inner dignity and self-respect."<sup>32</sup> Propaganda, in short, is inevitably either defensive or strident, if not both. Art, in Locke's view, would create its own terms for understanding and appreciation, allowing us to sidestep the received, conventional terms of meaning, and to take up new possibilities presented to us in the work of art. Although art could not by itself transform race relations, Locke believed that it could "lead the way."<sup>33</sup>

The art/propaganda categories are not unproblematic, of course. As I shall discuss in the final section, positing a dichotomous relation between art and propaganda assumes too neat a distinction between truth and



ideology. Moreover, Locke's notion of how art would serve the cause of anti-racist education suggests that reframing social perceptions of blackness would set new terms for white-black race relations, as if racism were a matter of ideological baggage that, once discovered to be non-serviceable, would be set aside.<sup>34</sup> Despite its limitations, however, the art/propaganda framework performs a useful function in demonstrating the limitations of reactive or corrective argumentation as a framework for anti-racist education.

From the point of view of anti-racist education, the problems with corrective or reactive argumentation are twofold. One problem is specifically educative. Conceiving of anti-racist education as correction assumes that the teacher's role is that of expert authority while students are sites of contaminated or otherwise misguided knowledge. Racism thus is assumed to reside in the students but not in the teacher, so that education consists in the teacher's efficacy in getting students to recognize and accept racial truths. Such a conception of education is problematic on several grounds, including its assumptions about authority, motivation, students' deficit status, and content knowledge as final, definite, and complete before the education process begins. Even if it did not assume a deficit model of education, it would be enormously labor intensive and would require a considerable supply of right-thinking teachers.

The other problem is that such a model assumes racism to be a function of error. The impulse to *correct* racism is problematic in that it assumes that the framework underlying racist assumptions or beliefs is egalitarian, and that the presence of racism is due to errors or falsehoods—so that once the corrections are made, the underlying truth is all that will remain. But if the underlying framework is *itself* the problem, no amount of correction will produce non-racist understanding.<sup>35</sup> Racist errors do not so much produce racism as they are themselves produced by it. Certainly falsehoods, omissions, and misrepresentations help hold racism in place—but they are just a few of the many mechanisms for doing so. The central question to be asked with regard to such falsehoods is, *What made the errors or lies appear plausible in the first place?* Which interests, exclusions, and blaming apparatuses are fueled by those mistaken beliefs?—for if the errors and lies serve a purpose, they can always be replaced by other “mistakes.” Whether the purpose is the maintenance of privilege, the demonization of a particular group as the source of all of society's ills, or simply a desire to “make sense” of institutionalized inequality, errors will continue to find a home in societies organized by racism. Indeed, it may be a stretch to call them errors at all, if we view them from within the discourse in which they originate: for here they work, they make sense, they fit.

The most recent crop of racist errors is impossible to understand except in terms of a racial backlash: an attempt to reinstate a racist discourse. Arguments that African Americans are less intelligent than whites were discredited decades ago; the desire to believe such claims requires an enormous commitment to ignorance. Nor can the willingness to believe that the Holocaust never happened be understood as gullibility or as a mistaken openness to conspiracy theories. What could render such implau-

sibilities plausible in the first place, especially given that those persuaded by them are not typically of the *National Enquirer* mind-set? What makes the preposterous plausible is not an arithmetic of errors but an investment in producing racist narratives and outcomes. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has pointed out, the ignorance that accompanies privilege is neither a form of innocence nor a simple absence of knowledge but a specific refusal to know that which would threaten one's own interests.<sup>36</sup> Education intended to address such ignorance, then, cannot afford to proceed in terms of propaganda, for reasons both pedagogical and political. Some of the challenges to anti-racist education, however, suggest that anti-racist education is inherently propagandist. The remainder of this section examines such arguments and concludes that they are flawed.

### Education and Propaganda

If we accept Locke's definition of propaganda as partisan, as "one-sided and often pre-judging,"<sup>37</sup> then it seems clear that propaganda is incompatible with democratic education. Whether propaganda is concerned with urging preapproved truths on the reader (or viewer), taking shortcuts to belief, or correcting errors and imbalances, it starts from an established perspective and seeks to convert others to that perspective. The success of propaganda consists not in persuading others of the correctness of any particular claim but rather in persuading them of the essential rightness of the stance as a whole; implicitly or explicitly, the reader or viewer is invited to embrace the one position and to reject the other. Indeed, it may be that propaganda cannot succeed on any terms other than wholesale acceptance and rejection. Certainly its most common use is in simplistic dichotomies, whether in reference to competing brands of soft drinks, candidates for office, or social issues such as abortion and gun control. However, important distinctions can be made between propaganda in its crude form, as indoctrination, and propaganda in Locke's sense of *reactive* argumentation and correction. It is with propaganda in the latter sense that I shall be chiefly concerned. But because the notion that anti-oppressive education is indoctrinatory has come to hold considerable sway in the popular media, that set of claims must first be addressed.

**Propaganda as Indoctrination.** In its crude form, propaganda fails as education because it fails to teach us how to respond discriminately, does not even raise the question as to whether judgment ought to be reserved, but urges foreclosure on the basis of ready-to-hand, knock-down arguments. Students as well as teachers may be guilty of substituting propaganda for education. Some students know before class ever begins which answers they will find, combing the reading materials for evidence in support of their position while ignoring counterevidence, as if schools were a strategic training ground in propaganda and counterpropaganda exercises. Some teachers, for their part, may treat instruction as the passing on of ready-made answers to ready-made questions. Yet it is not simply the

assumption of predetermined answers that distinguishes crude propaganda from education: whether in the form of mathematical equations, history dates, French grammar and spelling, or the results of chemistry experiments, fixed right answers are common enough in education. What sets propaganda apart from education is its discouragement of careful thinking. Whereas education imposes process or procedure upon our responses, subjecting them to the discipline of formal organization, crude propaganda frames understanding *for* us and then invites us to regard it as unframed, as obvious, as something to be taken at face value.<sup>38</sup> Superficially, it resembles argumentation. Skeptics are invited to compare opposing positions and to “see for themselves” whether this cola isn’t hands down the winner or whether one political candidate doesn’t have in bucketsful all the virtues that the opposing candidate sorely lacks. Unlike argumentation, however, crude propaganda usually does not invite further, more probing inquiry. Instead, it offers its conclusions as self-evident and definitive.

**Charges of “Political Correctness.”** According to its loudest critics, anti-oppressive pedagogy is propaganda, pure and simple. Pedagogy that identifies traditional knowledge as andro-, hetero-, or Eurocentric, for example, is said to substitute an anti-male, anti-straight, or anti-white “approved” version of history or literature (or whatever), for the hard-won, objective standards that define Western knowledge.<sup>39</sup> The only warrant provided for such claims, many critics argue, is their political correctness: that is, their agreement with a particular ideological agenda. This portrayal of progressive pedagogy and cultural theory as grotesquely exaggerating differences and shamelessly promoting divisiveness has managed to set the terms for any mass media discussion of the issues.<sup>40</sup> To take perhaps the most familiar example of such a portrayal, a fair number of people seem prepared to believe that “feminist political correctness” *both* defines all feminism *and* is attributable to an extremist, fringe group of man-hating, arms-bearing, bra-burning pinko-communists devoted to a career of spinsterly, pursed-lipped policing of others’ happiness. These people, we are solemnly warned, do not represent the majority of American women. (It is difficult to say whether the marginality of this quaint camarilla would come as a surprise to its members. We would have to find them before we could ask.) The degree to which such caricatures of progressive pedagogy and discourse have succeeded in passing themselves off as sensible is, I think, an indication of the degree to which issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the United States are already polarized—and thus an indication of the impasse offered to further argument.

Ironically, the hostility toward African Americans, Hispanics, feminists, gays, and lesbians, as well as other groups advocating a politicized pedagogy, is not confined to those who protest against all radicalizing of the curriculum. Some left-wing critics, too, see the newer counteroppressive pedagogies as a form of petty indoctrination. In their view, radical social and educational critiques will become hopelessly Balkanized unless the

various subgroups abandon “identity politics” in favor of a unified leftist theory.<sup>41</sup> “Political correctness” is said to flatten out arguments, leaving only interest groups. Russell Jacoby conjures up an anxious scene from

Professor Group Thought’s classroom: “Thank you, Mr. Kafka, for giving us the perspectives of the white male. . . . No, I’m sorry, Mr. Sartre, we have already heard the white male view. . . . That goes for you too, Mr. Lenin, please sit down.”<sup>42</sup>

Characterizing the p.c. classroom as one that reduces dialogue to group turn-taking, Jacoby emphasizes both what is lost (we wouldn’t hear from Sartre, we wouldn’t hear from Lenin!) and the crudity of what replaces the canon.

Education becomes inverted, a program to group stereotypes and false generalizations. Even terms like “Eurocentrism” are objectionable, as if a homogeneous European culture existed—as if Adolph Hitler and Anne Frank represented the same world.<sup>43</sup>

The “group thought” attributed to particular positions most often refers to feminist, gay, or lesbian theories; some critics tend to be a trifle squeamish about race, preferring to ignore it altogether and to let feminism stand in for all “divisiveness.”<sup>44</sup> But, as indicated by Jacoby’s objection to designations of Eurocentrism (or, as he puts it, “even Eurocentrism,” implying that this category, at least, is not so entirely absurd as the others), in the last analysis race-centered approaches can be considered just as reductively ideological as feminist approaches.

But while right- and left-wing charges of political correctness have created quite a furor in education, this framing of the issues is too reductive to raise any serious theoretical questions. Obviously, those satisfied with the existing canon will resent having it challenged; to them, no doubt, it seems clear that the established canons (whether left- or right-wing) are objective, and that challengers who call attention to alternative perspectives are being self-serving, demanding that their doctrinaire views replace actual knowledge. But since the only “argument” raised by those fulminating against political correctness is their insistence that established canons of one kind or another are not politically problematic, whereas alternative approaches are, they beg the question. The issue at stake is precisely whether the established canons and curricula privilege particular political perspectives.

I mention the political correctness issue primarily to differentiate it from the Lockean question, which is whether education can be anti-racist without taking existing arguments as its point of departure. Propaganda in the sense of reactive argumentation need not be indiscriminating—in fact, it may be exquisitely, minutely discriminating, concerned with the most subtle nuances of understanding.<sup>45</sup> Many well-intentioned corrections to textbooks, for example, constitute a form of propaganda in this sense, insofar as they seek to adjust imbalances, correct misperceptions, increase minority representation, or dispel myths.<sup>46</sup> The trouble with propaganda in this sense, as Locke points out, is that it invokes the very assumptions it is

intended to discredit. Because it takes the form of amendments to an otherwise fixed framework, the effect is likely to appear disproportionate, even monstrous. If we assume whiteness as the norm—the framework—any appeal to specifically black issues, historical figures, or points of view will leap out as a radical departure from the supposedly neutral standards that govern the basic textbook narrative. We may well ask whether anti-racist education, even if not to be dismissed on the grounds of political correctness, might still represent a form of propaganda in Locke's sense.

### **Theoretical Objections to Anti-racist Education**

One objection to an explicitly anti-oppressive focus in education is that, at best, such an approach can do no more than traditional liberal education aspires to do, while, at worst, it may serve to exaggerate or otherwise distort the problems that racism poses for knowledge in a democracy. Since liberal education seeks to dismantle all forms of bias by directing attention outward, toward the general and the universal and away from the merely idiosyncratic, knowledge or value claims explicitly referenced to a minority group or indeed any identifiable group (with the curious exception of children) are considered problematic because particularistic. Essentially, the objection here is that anti-racist education needlessly fixes on race as “the” problem, when all forms of bias are equally abhorrent. Anti-racist pedagogies and curricula, however admirable in intent, insist on the relevance of racial differences and thereby undercut the possibility of a truly colorblind society. The appropriate solution, from the perspective of liberal education, is not to abandon the ideal of a universal education but to apply it more rigorously.

A second, related objection is that anti-everything approaches to education start off on the wrong foot. The point is not only that such approaches adopt a negative tone (although that may be a problem too), but that, as Locke argued, they have no independent vision of the good, that they are defined by what is wrong with education as it stands and not by what education ought to look like. From the perspective of Afrocentrism, anti-racist pedagogy is reactive. What is needed is race-centered education of a kind that takes up issues of race in the context of a distinctive cultural heritage or a shared economic future rather than that of a political problem.<sup>47</sup> Whereas defining education in terms of social problems means adopting a deficit-remediation model and may mean assuming some universal standard that applies equally to blacks and whites, defining education in terms of an independent set of standards allows blacks to claim an authentic education (whether “authenticity” is constructed in essentialist or emergent terms). It thereby avoids both the one-sidedness of propaganda and its parasitic character.

The third objection that might be raised against anti-racist education is that it puts politics first and thus answers in advance the questions that education ought to enable us to address: “What is to count as fair? . . . as appropriate? . . . as democratic. . . ?” From a Deweyan perspective, none of

these things can be given in advance; the meaning of democracy is a matter of inquiry and reflection, and the great role of education in a democracy is that of preparing us to reconsider assumptions and rules of thumb that have served us well in the past but that may prove inadequate to the future. At one level, this objection resembles that of the backlash battalion, insofar as both objections reject any custodial role for language. But whereas the objection favored by the media vigilantes is that any political (or at least any left-wing or liberal) scrutiny of language is unnatural and impositional, the objection from the Deweyan perspective is that values of any kind, political or otherwise, describe a particular constellation of relationships within a particular social order and so cannot be treated as freestanding values capable of guiding all thought and action. “Anti-racist” is no more unproblematic a term than “American” or “family values” or “life” (as in “pro-”) or “democracy” or “freedom,” and thus is no more useful a starting point than, say, a traditional liberal arts orientation. From the Deweyan perspective, either approach tends to reify the very things it purports to examine. Given that anti-racist pedagogy addresses a definite conception of racism, it is forced to operate within the framework of existing race relations even while seeking to change them. In Locke’s terms, then, it is more akin to propaganda than to art. An emergent, democratic pedagogy would need to begin by changing the relations that shape our values and assumptions regarding race.

Finally, some leftists argue that intellectually significant but politically divisive distinctions may impede programs for social change. Whereas anti-p.c. leftists decry the loss of intellectual rigor that supposedly results from identity politics, coalitionist leftists worry about the loss of political focus. Concerned primarily with building a stronger leftist coalition, many recent critics of race-, culture-, sexuality-, and gender-specific analyses explicitly seek to include all forms of counteroppression. But while arguing that attention must be given to all forms of oppression, commentators such as Stanley Aronowitz and Svi Shapiro nevertheless argue that foregrounding identity politics may undermine solidarity.<sup>48</sup> From their perspective, the danger that rival political analyses pose is that competing frameworks of analysis—or, worse yet, academic turf disputes—will be permitted to overshadow the very real commonalities among anti-oppressive forces. Thus, to concentrate on anti-racist pedagogy or politics would be to act as if racial oppression were disconnected from other forms of oppression, or as if anti-racist pedagogy were more crucial than other egalitarian thrusts in education. Better, it is argued, to focus on those goals shared by the various forces of the left, whether socialist, feminist, anti-racist, postcolonial, ecological, or gay and lesbian.

### **Arguments Against an Inherently Propagandist Character**

Up to a point, I think, all four of these objections can be answered. The first objection in effect appeals to colorblindness as the educational solution to racism. It argues that, in a democracy, education must address the



common humanity of all groups as equals. To this end, therefore, it is necessary to erase the artificial barriers imposed by color, creed, class, or culture, as well as by gender or sexuality. From the liberal educator's perspective, the appeal to colorblindness accomplishes up front and on universal, generic grounds what the anti-racist approach can achieve only haphazardly and on political grounds. Yet, as discussed earlier, the colorblind approach itself assumes racism even in attempting to disallow it, for colorblindness is not a democratic principle unless color is stigmatized. Moreover, the appeal to colorblindness may amount to a refusal of knowledge rather than a generous indifference toward racial categories. Indeed, colorblindness is normally associated with whites specifically because a willingness to disregard race—to treat others *as if* race did not matter—is the prerogative of those in a position to decide whether it does or not. Bringing this fact home to white audiences in the 1960s, Dick Gregory would first warm up the audience with self-mocking humor, then, once he had them comfortable with their own comfort, he would challenge them: "Wouldn't it be a hell of a thing if all this was burnt cork and you people were being tolerant for nothing?"<sup>49</sup>

Colorblindness, in short, is a virtue parasitic upon prejudice. Taking its impetus from the refusal to "see" racial distinctions that tend to be read in stereotypic terms by whites, it is then generalized into a refusal to accept race as any more relevant to our understanding of a person than, say, eye color or shoe size, on the grounds that so-called group characteristics cannot be used to understand individuals qua individuals. In seeking to avoid racism by avoiding race, colorblind liberal education actually undercuts its own scholarly mission, for by refusing to address questions of race directly, it sidesteps one of the most pressing social questions confronting democracy in the United States. Such an education thereby risks promulgating either miseducation or non-education. Furthermore, insofar as the liberal arts orientation advocates adherence to abstract principles, it begs the question of how such principles already assume whiteness as their framework. Thus, from Locke's perspective, pursuing anti-racism within the terms of liberal arts education would mean taking a propagandist approach.

The second objection raises somewhat similar concerns, in that it argues that education ought to refer to a vision of the good and not serve as a mere corrective to the problematic. Yet appealing to an "independent standard" of the good, on the grounds that education ought to *confine* itself to the realization of goodness and refuse to consort with the corrupt is, surely quite literally, utopian. As Lisa Delpit has pointed out (in a somewhat different connection), well-meaning teachers who undertake an experience-based (read: "authentic") approach to literacy education for African American students deny them access to the language and codes of power no less than overtly racist teachers might, who refused to teach them on other grounds.<sup>50</sup> The appeal to "purity" and authenticity, in other words, may address one dimension of racism but ignore others. Given that the causes and effects of racism include (but are by no means restricted to)

economic relations, moral frameworks, ideological rationalizations, and white ignorance, racism cannot be eliminated through any single, purifying solution.<sup>51</sup> This is not to reject the arguments that have been made on behalf of a separatist African American education,<sup>52</sup> but rather to argue that approaches conceived as independent or racism (assuming such a thing to be possible) may fail to prepare students of address the multiple ways in which racism is likely to have an impact on their lives.

In fact, an anti-racist education might well include the celebration of diversity, instruction in cultural heritage, and self-esteem-building goals of Afrocentrism. As described at the beginning of this paper, the effects of racism include not only job ceilings and stereotyping but such various issues as low self-esteem among African American students, segregated residential and schooling patterns, and white and black ignorance of African American history. Anti-racist education would involve challenging whichever of these patterns constituted an issue in a particular educational setting. To say that anti-racist education would challenge such patterns, however, is not to say that it would do so by decrying them or by adopting a trouble-shooting approach. Rather, it is to say that education cannot aspire to inform and equip students for democracy if it does not itself begin with an understanding of social and political problems. Nor can it hope to secure individual flourishing for minority students without addressing the conditions necessary for such flourishing. Only if education promotes inquiry into social problems such as racism (which is not to exclude inquiry into other forms of oppression) can it hope to provide a form of education that will *count* as “authentic” or “positive” under the particular conditions that obtain in any given community.

The third objection, that “anti-racism” is a political category to be decided on—an emergent standard and not a fixed point of reference—raises an important challenge to Locke’s notion of art as capable in itself of supplying (anti-racist) truth. Yet to use the argument to discredit the very concept of education referenced to political concerns would be to undercut the appeal to an emergent approach to democratic education. Power relations are woven into the fabric of our lives, goals, and values; it is not possible to *not* start with politics, any more than it is possible to not start with experience. True, we cannot begin by fixing a value to “anti-racism” and then measuring everything by that standard, yet if we are to begin at all, a good place to start (particularly for Deweyan pragmatists) is with the problems with which we already struggle. Racism, like other forms of inequality, represents a concrete problem with which to begin to investigate the concrete claims of a democratic education. Rather than conceiving of an anti-racist education as a blueprint for righteous teaching, we might think of it as one of the projects *of* teaching. As Dewey wrote in 1937, “Democracy . . . means a way of living together in which mutual and free consultation rule instead of force, . . . a social order in which all the things that make for friendship, beauty, and knowledge are cherished. . . . These things at least give a point of departure for the filling in of the democratic idea and aim as a frame of reference. If a sufficient number of educators

devote themselves to . . . find[ing] the answers to the concrete questions which the idea and aim put to us, I believe that the question of the relation of the schools to direction of social change will cease to be a question, and will become a moving answer in action.”<sup>53</sup>

Anti-racist education is meant to provide a framework for thinking about education in a democracy. Far from offering ideological shortcuts to equality, or suppressing public discussion of the issues, it poses the question of what is to count as democratic and egalitarian in a racialized social order, and asks educators, parents, and other interested parties to examine for themselves what is called for in the concrete situations that confront them. Where anti-racism differs from many alternative democratic frameworks is in asking parents, teachers, and administrators to address questions of race on terms other than those of common sense or of professional convention. Whereas common sense enjoins us to work with what we already know and can rely on, and professional conventions provide us with ready-made solutions to predefined problems, anti-racism as a framework for education invites educators and others not only to consider how best to describe the problem but to invent new responses. In support of that endeavor, it offers a theoretical analysis of racism, without answering in advance which of the many components of racism gives rise to any particular instance of the problem. The point, then, is not to provide a set interpretation with which to ensure politically correct solutions but to afford a theoretical framework capable of informing a rich responsiveness to educational questions.

The fourth objection, that anti-oppressive forces must work together for social change rather than splintering into separate identity groups, invokes an appealing coalitionist program—but without addressing the point of critiques grounded in theories other than that of class, which is precisely that class-based theories *cannot* address the multiplicity of forms of oppression. (Nor, indeed, can any existing theory account for “oppression” writ large.) Collapsing the theoretical analyses offered by anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-homophobic, and anti-classist stances means losing sight of the ways in which any given anti-oppressive theory may assume some other oppression as natural or unproblematic.<sup>54</sup> The appeal to a unilateral account of oppression risks replacing real understanding of the mechanisms of oppression with a neither-here-nor-there analysis that might too easily be read as political correctness—that is, as ideological labeling rather than thoughtful analysis.

To be sure, the intention of leftist coalitionists is to recognize diversity. Stanley Aronowitz, while arguing that Marx’s “critique of the categories of political economy . . . has never been more relevant,” nevertheless “dispute[s] . . . its claim to be able to subsume all political and cultural questions under its tent.”<sup>55</sup> Despite this caveat, however, Aronowitz’s proposal to replace socialism with radical democracy ultimately imposes a homogenizing synthesis. Amarpal Dhaliwal argues, for example, that the “narrative coheres through its lack of engagement with voluminous feminist writing on the topics,” in particular through a lack of engagement with non-white

and non-Western feminisms.<sup>56</sup> The criticism refers not so much to Aronowitz's own undertheorizing<sup>57</sup> as to the very possibility of a coherent Grand Leftist Narrative, given the heterogeneous issues that leftists face. Even to define certain groups as leftists may suggest too great a consensus among such groups. As Barbara Ehrenreich points out, there is no clear point of agreement between socialists and ecologists, for example, because the crucial concept of "enough" is referenced to quite distinct and potentially conflicting sets of standards.<sup>58</sup> Thus, she concludes that we "cannot graft some granola-style, less-is-better ecologism onto our own radical democratic . . . politics. If the left wants to have anything at all to say . . . it is going to have to reinvent a credible vision of abundance."<sup>59</sup> Her appeal to reinvention is a crucial point, for it refers to the necessity of rethinking and reimagining democratic goals rather than merely extending existing political goals so as to be more inclusive. If, from the point of view of previously excluded groups, the goals themselves have been imagined in problematic terms, simply extending the goals to members of those groups will not serve democratic coalitionist purposes.

Ehrenreich's challenge goes to the heart of the anti-racist enterprise as conceived in this paper. That enterprise, perhaps best exemplified in the work of Toni Morrison, Barbara Fields, and James Anderson,<sup>60</sup> is to understand how our very thinking is already caught up with assumptions that prevent significant change. The significance of anti-racist education in this regard has to do with informing how we understand and experience racism. As a political agenda, anti-racism is concerned with changing the ways in which race relations are organized to privilege whites. As an educational enterprise, anti-racism is concerned both with racial inclusiveness and with inquiry into the ways that race-thinking has shaped what counts as knowledge. Earlier, I indicated that one of the functions of anti-racist education is to foreground the issue of race in questions where its relevance might not be immediately apparent. This function is one of those that might be considered divisive by some leftists—but, as Dhaliwal and Ehrenreich suggest, sliding over such questions affords us an artificial coherence. To focus on differences is not necessarily a matter of political correctness or turf protection but may be a matter of intellectual rigor. Of course, to make sure that it is intellectually rigorous, and not merely a matter of a knee-jerk "anti" stance, anti-racist education must, as Ehrenreich indicates, do more than work within the terms of the existing discourse, however critically. Not only reform-minded but even revolutionary theoretical analyses tend to work within the boundaries of what *is*, to imagine what *can* be. To reimagine the future, we will need to problematize the ways in which our current understandings and assumptions are framed by existing conditions—even if we ourselves are already critical of those conditions.

Thus far, I have argued that anti-racist education is not inherently propagandist. Of course, this is not at all to say that it will not be, in particular cases. Insofar as education is conceived in terms of texts and curricula that, in and of themselves, transform racist attitudes and assumptions (leaving aside the question of interests and power), it is conceived as a form of

propaganda. But of course texts and curricula are not magical repositories of anti-racism that can, of themselves, transform racist sentiments, ideology, or structural relations. It is in how we conceive teaching itself, I believe, that the possibility lies for an emergent anti-racist approach to education. Pedagogy, like art, humor, and performance, can work to creating spaces in which the ordinary, everyday meanings we give to experience are problematized, revisited as if new and anything but self-evident. In such spaces, those party to the project—artist, audience, teacher, students—learn how to see and how to respond to previously unimagined possibilities. In this connection, let us return to Alain Locke, for whom art represents a more effective form of anti-racist education than does propaganda.

### ART AS EDUCATION/EDUCATION AS ART

Whereas propaganda, in Locke's formulation, refers to an emendatory or editing impulse, art refers to the development of new perspectives. The importance of art lies in its refusal to read social convention literally or to accept its terms, other than obliquely, playfully, or ironically. Appealing to art as an educational vehicle for anti-racism thus means *reconceiving* race and not simply assimilating blackness to the "neutral" standards that privilege whiteness.<sup>61</sup> In invoking art as the *opposite* of propaganda, though, Locke grants too much to art. By holding on to enlightenment assumptions about truth, Locke proposes a misleading role for art as somehow apolitical in contrast to propaganda as inherently ideological.

The art "of the people," specifically peoples of African ancestry,<sup>62</sup> is for Locke a source of insights uncontaminated by racist conventions, for, unlike academic art, it has not been subjected to "generations of the inbreeding of style and idiom,"<sup>63</sup> nor lost the capacity to see objectively. Beauty becomes a vehicle for truth. "The Negro physiognomy must be freshly and objectively conceived on its own patterns if it is ever to be seriously and importantly interpreted. Art must discover and reveal the beauty which prejudice and caricature have overlaid. And all vital art discovers beauty and opens our eyes to that which previously we could not see."<sup>64</sup> Art thus offers a way to break with old stereotypes and invent new forms, while remaining true to African Americans' distinctive heritage and expressive style.<sup>65</sup> As a pragmatist, Locke sees such art as a way to come to experience both with a fresh eye and with the funded experience (to borrow a Deweyan term) of a rich ancestral legacy.

Because, in Locke's view, art allows for the perception of truths beyond the perceived facts, it affords a representation of experience at once more objective, more inclusive, and more stirring than conventional, everyday language could allow for. The power of art to teach, for Locke, seems to be in part a matter of teaching how to see, how to respond, and how to appreciate. The artist, framing experience in fresh ways, teaches the reader or viewer to see possibilities and relations and beauty not previously ap-

parent. Because artistic communication works within non-literal media, it demands a response appropriate to its own rhythms, traditions, juxtapositions, and medium; by contrast, conventional communication relies to a large extent on self-evident meanings. By refusing literalness, the artist requires the audience to work at responding to his or her vision. And by setting aside conventional frameworks of meaning, the artist exposes them *as* conventions: as the means by which a given society has historically and institutionally made sense of experience. In a sense, art may be said to (re)create its audience, for the audience does not come to it with ready-made capacities for feeling and seeing, but learns from the piece how to be its audience.

Yet for Locke, the artist seems to be less a visionary than a naturalist—someone who observes nature directly, objectively, on its own terms. While he is particularly drawn to the possibilities of abstract art, and clearly does not think of objectivity in terms of anything like a transcription of reality, he does regard art as representing experience in more direct, expressive ways than is possible through everyday language, particularly insofar as ordinary language is a source of misrepresentation.

The difficulty I see with Locke's conception of art is that it appears to have an essentialist (although also pluralist) conception of beauty and truth, as if what art does is to strip away the sedimented accumulation of prejudice, convention, and convenient stereotypes, and leave bare the underlying reality. That he assumes this view of art seems clear to me both from what he says about the triumph of beauty and truth and from his characterization of art as the opposite of propaganda. On this view, propaganda is partial, reactive, and political in the sense of partisan. Art, by contrast, is whole, active, authentic, and implicitly above politics. Cornel West points out that Locke's view of art is a specifically middle-class conception,<sup>66</sup> and this observation speaks importantly to Locke's faith in art as a repository of truth and value. As Locke saw it, art would reframe social perceptions of race, and this in itself would help eliminate racism, by revealing the falsity or irrelevance of racism. In the place of racist ideology, art would present an objective representation of blackness that would allow blackness to be valued on its just merits. As argued in the opening section of this paper, however, racism is not to be explained as a matter of mistaken beliefs, although of course racism may be sustained in part by lies and errors. Far from being merely a gloss on reality, it *is* a social reality, one of the ways in which social privilege and power are organized, legitimated, and perpetuated.

Thus, as I see it, the advantage that art allows over propaganda is not that one is political and the other is objective. The art/propaganda dichotomy assumes that the difference is that art simply expresses experience or a vision, with no political overtones, whereas propaganda is instrumental and reduces vision to editing. But art, like its counterpart in pedagogy, involves selecting from experience, framing experience for an audience, and reworking experience. Because the experience of whiteness and blackness in our society is inherently political, neither art nor pedagogy ad-



dressed to race can escape politics. They can, however, refuse to use prevailing discourses (that is, literalism) as their medium, and they can refuse didacticism. It is here that art and pedagogy differentiate themselves from propaganda: insofar as art and pedagogy teach us how to see, how to rethink as well as think, they liberate us from reliance on what someone else tells us. Propaganda tells us what to think; art shows us another way to see. Most important, art engages a response. It takes us up where we are but at the same time shifts us, introducing us into new and surprising relations. No longer grounded in the familiar, we begin to construct fresh understandings, and in the process reconstruct ourselves.

I agree with Locke, then, that anti-racist education must create some working space set aside from the existing discourses of racism, but disagree with him regarding the nature of that space. I see it not as a politics-free zone in which political prejudices can be held at bay, so that a kind of racial innocence can be restored or preserved, but rather as a space reserved for experimentation, for play, and for performance. Much as we regard the theater as a site for the creation of new and absorbing narratives, rather than the representation of what is already known, I believe that the classroom can be a site for taking up possibilities in order to live with them. I say “live *with* them” in order to focus on the distinction between aesthetic experience and unexamined experience. We *live* certain possibilities without necessarily realizing them as only possibilities and not necessities. Art and performance are a way of framing possibilities so that they may be taken up in embodied experience and yet not be treated as finalities. In the classroom, this means teaching students how to see, read, and respond to a wide array of texts and works of art, and also teaching them to practice an art of their own.

While I believe that this is no less true of painting or poetry than it is of theater, dance, or music, for example, Locke’s identification of art with the presentation of meaning works in part through its appeal to art on the page or the canvas.<sup>67</sup> Shifting the aesthetic emphasis to performance allows us to foreground meaning-making as an interactive, temporal, and emergent enterprise in which the body as well as the mind is engaged. Using that conception of art as a metaphor for anti-racist pedagogy accomplishes several ends: it focuses on the act of framing meaning rather than on outcomes; it recognizes genres, codes, and other conventions of meaning-making as tools to play against as well as invoke; it considers meanings in the form of possibilities to be taken on and inhabited, to be taken up *as if* they spoke to one’s own experience, while recognizing their framing as intentional rather than naturalistic; and thus it treats meaning as provisional, as something to be invented and experimented with rather than apprehended as either out-there-and-fixed or inherent-and-subjective.

Pedagogy as performance might be said to draw on some of the same assumptions as did manual education in its non-vocational incarnation as hands-on, holistic learning. But whereas manual education was meant, in effect, to recreate the “natural” environments destroyed by industrialism, thereby grounding learning in supposedly organic contexts, pedagogy as

performance creates an “artificial” environment not meant to resemble “real life” but meant to shape expectations and experience in the ways that stage conventions, sports rules, and musical genres do. Actually, schooling in its existing forms already establishes a very particular performative context. Books, talk, clothing, films, clocks, broadcasting systems, writing, even chairs and halls acquire distinctively different meanings in school from what they might mean outside of school (although of course some meanings carry over, so that, for example, some people never voluntarily read a book, having done their time in school). Since schooling is among the least natural of environments, structuring education in terms of deliberately devised genre expectations regarding race does not exactly do violence to “natural” experience; and while aspects of such a project are bound to be uncomfortable, it is doubtful whether they would be particularly *more* uncomfortable than schooling is already. But of course the argument for the creation of a performance context does not rest on a “Why not?” claim but resides in the appeal to performance contexts as giving rise to *an* experience, in Dewey’s sense of the phrase. The idea is not to build on existing personal experiences but to create a counterpoint to ordinary experience, a distinctive moment in which experience becomes more focused and concentrated, more alive and awake, more attuned to its own contours and qualities. The educative value of such experiences is that they shift our connections to the world, not only providing the occasion for seeing and feeling in ways perhaps not ordinarily available to us, but specifically illuminating experience *as* framed by expectations and conventions.

Like art, performative pedagogy must be responsive both to grand themes and to particularities. As an emergent and creative endeavor, it is probably no more susceptible than art to formulization, but a few examples may help to clarify the forms such a pedagogy might take in particular situations. Destabilizing habits or patterns connected to racialized settings might be one way to change the performance context of the classroom. One already familiar form that such a project could take would be to adopt the immersion approach used in many foreign language classes. An English or social studies teacher, for example, might use Black English Vernacular (B.E.V.) to frame a course that would include several of the following: grammar lessons, historical African American documents, oral histories, biographies, novels or mysteries, recordings of poets reading their own works, linguistics, theories of African American culture, movies, African mythologies, contemporary music, and in-class exercises in oral interpretation, writing, and role-playing. Framing a course in terms of B.E.V. helps institute a shift such that the privileged status of Standard English can no longer be taken for granted, while also making possible a much fuller and richer reading of the materials in the course.

On the other hand, the destabilization of racially constructed habits might be addressed to a project extending beyond the bounds of the classroom. For example, students might be asked to shift habits connected with where they shop or roller-blade, which magazines they read, or what kind of music they listen to; they might choose to visit a black church on

a regular basis, to attend N.A.A.C.P. meetings, or to select cinemas located in predominantly African American neighborhoods. The point in any of these undertakings is to shift the locus of experience so that whiteness is no longer the norm, the taken-for-granted context of meaning. Although such shifts may be educational in themselves, their primary purpose is to provide a point of departure, a context for study. Whatever students' racial identity, such a project asks them either to attend to blackness as context and standpoint or to attend to their own embodied participation in the construction of race relations; it thereby prepares a way for reading against the grain of conventional constructions of knowledge.

Yet another possibility is to denaturalize racial metaphors and white patterns of discourse: to construct a new "grammar" of race for the purposes of a particular course. Such a project is far more "artificial" (although also far less ambitious or demanding) than that of shifting race-related patterns of social experience, but it can serve a similar purpose in unsettling commonplaces so as to render the familiar problematic. Despite their literary character, metaphors are easily naturalized, while because of their dramatic resonances, they are potent vehicles for racialized meaning. As a result, they offer a valuable tool for denaturalizing and reframing race relations. At one level, changing or problematizing language appears trivial—the pointless, if politically correct, fussing of the so-called Word Police. But the power of language to privilege or denigrate is unmistakable. The racist traditions of whites calling African American men "boy" and refusing to honor married African Americans with "Mrs.," for example, testify to the deliberate use of language to shape and define race relations. Pedagogically, therefore, it is worth asking what happens if the language connected to white privilege is shorn of its overtones of purity and superiority. Do racialized constructions of meaning or assumptions regarding race neutrality become problematic if, say, the familiar dichotomy between black and white is disallowed? (Richard Wilbur suggests, for example, that the true opposite of "white" should be "yolk.")<sup>68</sup> What happens if "white" as a racial descriptor is traded in for the far more descriptive (but far less solemn) "pink"? If the passive voice (allowable in Standard English and preferred in many scientific discourses, but impossible in B.E.V.) is forbidden? If verbose abstractions must be surrendered in favor of particular claims? Or if ideals of masculinity and femininity are stripped of their Social Darwinist trappings? Any number of these shifts might be instituted at the outset of a class as the method of the course, much as methods are laid out in science courses; they could then be used as one of the tools for interpreting scientific claims, political rhetoric, advertising, sports imagery and conventions, literature, history texts, film, or painting, for example.

Finally, to use an example from college-level coursework, a performance orientation may take a specifically intellectual form. By beginning from theories "outside" the discourse assumed by particular texts, it becomes possible to frame those texts in ways that uncouple them from naturalized assumptions about race relations. Examining the merits of each side of the debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, for example,

might involve framing the debate as a specific genre within the performance tradition, so that particular moves would be identifiable as “playing the game” or “advancing the narrative.” What counts as meaningful and persuasive thus would be understood in light of the *kind* of public performance that the debate constitutes, including its audiences over time (and referenced in part to who does the scorekeeping). One way to accomplish that framing would be to enter the debate from an altogether different perspective—that offered by Barbara Fields and James Anderson, for example, or by Toni Morrison, or Carter G. Woodson. Taking up the debate in a performance vein also would mean treating each of the sides of the argument as opening up possibilities, rather than as describing “realistic” or “rational” positions. Thus, one would not simply read the positions literally and claim, for example, “Washington was being realistic; there was the very real danger of lynching at the time,” or, alternatively, “Du Bois was absolutely right; the Constitution provides us with our rights. No one is required to earn them.” Instead, the classroom project would involve understanding, appreciating, and critiquing each of the positions as a complex move in the attempt to shape race relations against a particular historical backdrop.

Developing such an understanding might take any number of directions, but it could not be referred simply to abstract principles or to individuals’ experience. Instead, it would involve *creating* an experience in which the elements of the debate were a point of departure rather than themselves setting the limits of the educational experience. Understanding the arguments might involve *rereading* them in the context of literature or of film, it might involve reframing them in the light of current issues, or it might involve reading them historically and hermeneutically, for example. However, one approached the debate, it would involve a shift at the outset, an appeal to participation and response/interpretation rather than analysis and detachment/rationality.

## CONCLUSION

The argument of this paper, then, is that anti-racist education is an indispensable mode of democratic education in a racist and racialized society, but that if it is to challenge rather than refine the ways that racism shapes thought and action, it cannot simply react to racist premises. Nor can it treat the classroom as an innocent space in which to avoid racism, as if anti-racist education consisted in “not giving children ideas,” rather like some versions of sex education. Instead, it will need to create performative spaces in which the commonplaces of racism can be unsettled—in which racism can be addressed as a framing of meaning rather than as natural, while alternative possibilities are played out within the performative constraints of the classroom. In this sense, anti-racist pedagogy is both personal and political. It asks us to become the kind of persons who can respond to as-yet-unimagined racial possibilities. And if we regard politics, at its best,

as a vital engagement over how to structure the possibility for democratic relations, anti-racist education serves as one of the tools for thinking and rethinking what it means to be a democracy.<sup>69</sup>

## NOTES

1. "Fairness" means not only procedural equality, or freedom from bias and prejudice, but also appropriateness in the sense of context-specific considerations that introduce legitimate distinctions. This is the modern liberal rather than the classical liberal orientation toward equality, justice, and fairness, and allows for recognition to be given to unfair advantages or disadvantages conferred by, say, wealth or age or physical differences. Of course, considerations of appropriateness have also meant that discrimination on the basis of gender, sexuality, race, and other categories has often been deemed valid because "appropriate," as in the case of gendered military assignments.
2. See, for example, Joyce E. King, "Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teachers," in *The Journal of Negro Education* 60, no. 2 (1991): 133–146; John U. Ogbu, *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); John U. Ogbu, *The Next Generation: An Ethnography of Education in an Urban Neighborhood* (New York: Academic Press, 1974); Gary Orfield and Carole Ashkinaze, *The Closing Door: Conservative Policy and Black Opportunity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Joe R. Feagin and Hernán Vera, *White Racism* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Mary Frances Berry, *Black Resistance/White Law: A History of Constitutional Racism in America* (New York: Penguin, 1971/1994); Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); and bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End Press, 1990). The works cited here disagree with one another on various points, but agree in identifying racism as something far more systemic than prejudice or error. While in several cases I would quarrel with the specific analyses offered, I find these works valuable in illuminating the institutionalized, embodied, and ideological character of white/black racism in the United States.
3. My perspective is that of a radical pragmatist. That is, I approach racism in terms of the strategic acts and institutionalized circumstances through which racial hierarchies are achieved and naturalized. Thus, I see racism not as mere ignorance, chauvinism, or even hatred, but as actions and institutional arrangements whereby the group in power consolidates its privileges at the expense of one or more outsider groups. Racist hiring practices, residential and educational segregation, and intellectual skewing of the kind that have long prevailed in history, philosophy, literature, psychology, and statistics, for example, all serve a highly practical purpose in legitimating and perpetuating white supremacy. It should be noted that addressing racism as ideological does not entail denying the material and structural operations of racism, or treating racism as just a matter of how we think. Rather, it is a matter of calling attention to the strategic function of ideology in naturalizing and rationalizing structural inequities. Research speaking to this position includes Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (eds.), *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143–177; James D. Anderson, "How We Learn about Race through History," in Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and Wil-



liam L. Barney (eds.), *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 87–106; and Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage: Random House, 1992).

4. For example, bilingualism is far less an issue for African Americans than it is for Hispanics, and Native Americans who succeed in mainstream schools are more likely to face a conflict between traditional and professional knowledge than are more assimilated minority groups. For a useful international contrast to white/black relations in the United States, see Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993).
5. In making this distinction between racism and ethnocentrism, I am much indebted to James Anderson's discussion in "How We Learn about Race through History." (I first encountered the essay when it was delivered as the keynote address for Black Awareness Month at the University of Utah, in 1992). Anderson notes that, in a democratic society, racism may be necessary as a way of explaining away inequities that—democratically speaking—ought to be indefensible, but which the society is unwilling to eliminate. In a *non*-democratic society, by contrast, racism may be unnecessary as a framework of belief. If, in effect, "might makes right," then differential treatment of particular social groups requires no further ideological justification.
6. A dramatic—although unfortunately by no means unique—illustration of the burden-of-proof principle can be found in a *New York Times* news story concerning a young black man who was stopped and forced to remove his shirt when he could not prove that it was his own shirt. The incident took place on October 20, 1994, at an Eddie Bauer outlet store in Fort Washington, Maryland (a largely black and middle-class suburb of Washington). The young man explained that he had bought the shirt the day before, and although the sales clerk remembered him buying a shirt, since she "could not say for certain it was the same one he was wearing," the young man had to return (shirtless) to his home, find the receipt, and submit it to the security guards before he was allowed to have his shirt back. Now, of course, this ought to be an absurd story. Unless the young man came in shirtless and left with a shirt on, there was no reason at all to wonder if the shirt was his. It is a scenario that would be unimaginable if the "suspect" were not black. Yet when the mother of one of the young men contacted the store's headquarters, there was no response at all, and when interviewed by the *Washington Post* a month later, a spokeswoman for the store framed the incident in terms of generosity on the part of store management. "'The amount on the receipt matched the purchase, although the stub didn't specifically indicate whether or not it was the same shirt,' Ms. Engstrom said. 'But we gave him the benefit of the doubt and let him keep it anyway.'" Quoted in Steven A. Holmes, "Shoppers Falling under Suspicion," *New York Times* (national edition), Sunday, December 10, 1995, National Section, 17.
7. In this essay, I concentrate on "race" and "racism" as if they were discrete categories functioning in more or less straightforward fashion. Typically, however, racism is tied in with other forms of oppression and discrimination, both structurally and ideologically. Ideologically, for example, gender or class may be invoked in ways that buttress or exacerbate racist views: thus, the stereotype of "welfare mothers" draws simultaneously on race, class, and gender stereotypes. But sometimes gender, race, and class will be treated as competing categories. For example, "African Americans" and "women" may be treated as opposing groups, as when rape is equated with black men. Indeed, part of the dramatic, unstable, and elusive character of racism lies in its complex inter-



twinings with other forms of marginalization, including the ways that marginalized groups can be played off against one another. For the present purpose of arguing for anti-racist versus strictly multicultural education, I have chosen to concentrate on certain distinctive issues of race and racism, but this discussion should not be taken as exhaustive. For important discussions of some of the intersections of race, gender, and class, see, for example, Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1983); Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (eds.), *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1982); and bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981).

8. This argument is beautifully made in Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*.
9. bell hooks, "Gangsta Culture—Sexism and Misogyny: Who Will Take the Rap?" in *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 115–123. A different type of race/gender sleight of hand is described in Aniko Bodroghkozy, "'Is This What You Mean by Color TV?' Race, Gender, and Contested Meanings in NBC's *Julia*," in Lynn Spigel and Denise Mann (eds.), *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 143–167. Bodroghkozy argues that the TV show's apparent racial open-mindedness was achieved by displacing Julia's "difference" onto her sex rather than her race. In recent years, the media frenzy and inflamed public opinion over the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings and the O. J. Simpson trial in the United States suggest that blackness and being female continue to be treated as competing categories, such that affording one dignity permits us to demonize or trivialize the other.
10. Despite its importance in at least offering a foothold in the door of the history curriculum, Black History Month allows educators to append a footnote to history whereby individual black contributions to science, technology, literature, or civil rights, say, can be acknowledged and even highlighted without changing prevailing ideas concerning what history is or who it is really about. Far from changing students' assumption that African Americans have played little role in U.S. history, such an approach may reinforce their impression that black contributions are invisible unless made the object of special study. Moreover, it suggests that history consists only in individual achievements and that blackness is largely irrelevant to white history. By contrast, both African American culture (as in call-and-response patterns) and revisionist black history embrace very different assumptions about individual performance and achievement from those embedded in the traditional history curriculum.
11. A fairly common view holds that in "private" relations racial identity may be set aside or transcended. There are at least two problems with such a view. One is that the public/private dichotomy describes black experience far less than it does white experience. See Rose M. Brewer, "Black Women in Poverty: Some Comments on Female-Headed Families," *Signs* 13, no. 2 (1988): 331–339. The other problem is that the appeal to a private realm in which meanings are self-made and uncontaminated by the public realm ignores the ways in which embodied and cultural experience is, in Dorothy Smith's term, coordered with power relations. See Dorothy E. Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987).
12. Although often referred to as a natural state, colorblindness in a racist society represents an *ideal* to be achieved. Except for those who have not yet learned the social significance of color (some young children, for example, and at times immigrants), colorblindness is not a simple absence of racial awareness but a deliberate achievement.

13. Fields and Anderson both speak to this claim, pointing out that treating slavery as a tragic aberration is necessary to our desire to view American democracy as profoundly egalitarian. Inquiring seriously into the history of black-white relations in this country would call into question our most cherished assumptions regarding the nature of American democracy. My students have given me some insight into why race is such a difficult issue for Americans to think about critically. White students encountering analyses of race, class, and gender for the first time are likely to be most uncomfortable with discussions of race, I have found: they can accept gender differences as natural, if they are so inclined, and they can attribute class differences to the workings of a meritocratic workplace, but racial differences seem to them to allow for no other explanation than racial inferiority or cultural or economic deprivation. The more determinedly non-racist students are, the more likely they are to resist any acknowledgment whatsoever of racial differences, for acknowledging differences as relevant to social inquiry threatens to undercut the classical liberal belief that all persons are equal. Black students, particularly middle-class students, also may feel that discussions of racial differences in education are inherently racist, insofar as their concern is to be accepted as distinctive individuals rather than regarded as representatives of a race. Again, this is a classical liberal orientation.
14. The political dimension of education has been pointed out most pithily by Mark Van Doren, who wrote that "education is democracy, and democracy is education," a claim with which educators across a wide spectrum of political orientations might agree. The quote is from Mark Van Doren, *Liberal Education* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1943/1960), 38.
15. The classic definition of miseducation occurs in Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Washington, DC: Associated Publishers, 1933/1972). Useful definitions of non-education (which Dewey calls "drift") can be found in Orestes Brownson, "Decentralization: Alternative to Bureaucracy?" [1839] in Michael B. Katz (ed.), *School Reform: Past and Present* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 277–303; and in John Dewey, "Education and Social Change," in *The Later Works, 1925–1953*, series ed. Jo Ann Boydston, Vol. 11: 1935–1937, textual ed., Kathleen E. Poulos; associate textual eds., Barbara Levine, Anne Sharpe, and Harriet Furst Simon (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 408–417. The latter essay was originally published in *Social Frontier* 3 (1937): 235–238.
16. For fundamentalists, for example, any education that offers girls career possibilities is miseducative. For many turn-of-the-century progressives, liberal education was miseducation because it failed to prepare the working class for the workplace (or, more vaguely, failed to provide work opportunities for all students). Critics of vocational education, on the other hand, contend that since vocational education fails to inform students of exploitative and dangerous work conditions, let alone to provide them with the skills and knowledge necessary to challenge those conditions, it is itself miseducative.
17. While leftists and left-leaning liberals tend to regard schooling that ignores oppression as miseducative, agreement on that point does not yield identical solutions. For example, both Woodson and Delpit make strong cases for seeing liberal white education as miseducative for African Americans, but their recommended responses are almost diametrically opposed: Woodson offers a separatist solution whereas Delpit offers a strategic, access-to-power (and thus effectively assimilationist) solution. See Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro*; and Lisa D. Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children," *Harvard Educational Review* 58, no. 3 (1988): 280–298. (Of course, Delpit does not endorse a melting-pot ideal, a critical point in

differentiating her position from that of white conservatives. In terms of economic and structural goals, however, her position is assimilationist.)

18. Lower-track curricula, especially, have been accused of non-educative programs. See Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); and Jean Anyon, "Social Class and School Knowledge," *Curriculum Inquiry* 11, no. 1 (1981): 3–42. Other critics say that schooling in every track is characteristically non-educative. See Linda M. McNeil, "Defensive Teaching and Classroom Control," in Michael W. Apple and Lois Weis (eds.), *Ideology and Practice in Schooling* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 114–142.
19. Orestes Brownson made much this argument in connection with the Irish "race" issues of the mid-nineteenth century. In his view, programs for education that specifically avoid controversy ask students not to think about anything that matters a great deal. See Brownson, "Decentralization."
20. Dewey points out that whereas the drift approach prides itself on being neutral, in actuality it serves whichever interest groups exert the greatest pressure, which are usually those of the dominant classes. See Dewey, "Education and Social Change," 412.
21. Of course, my point here is not that education ought not to address such concerns but that the *way* that schools do so is often non- (if not mis-) educative. See, for example, the analyses offered in Suzanne de Castell, "Literacy as Disempowerment: The Role of Documentary Texts," in David P. Ericson (ed.), *Philosophy of Education 1990* (Normal, IL: Philosophy of Education Society, 1991), 74–84; and Frank Margonis, "The Cooptation of 'At Risk': Paradoxes of Policy Criticism," *Teachers College Record* 94, no. 2 (1992): 343–364.
22. Dewey, "Education and Social Change," 416–417.
23. Included in the forms that anti-racist education might take would be deconstructive, standpoint, pluralistic, problem-based, and/or hermeneutic approaches.
24. Among others, see Cameron McCarthy, *Race and Curriculum* (New York: Falmer Press, 1990); Christine Sleeter and Carl A. Grant, "An Analysis of Multicultural Education in the United States," *Harvard Educational Review* 57, no. 4 (1987): 331–342; and William H. Watkins, "Black Curriculum Orientations: A Preliminary Inquiry," *Harvard Educational Review* 63, no. 3 (1993): 321–338.
25. This is what is usually meant by a liberal education: that is, an education conceived in generous and inclusive terms. Perhaps the major distinction between a traditional liberal education and the approach I am advocating is that whereas liberal education is about forming intelligent and responsible *individuals* (so that colorblindness, like other character traits, would be both a highly desirable virtue and a necessary intellectual standpoint), anti-racist education is about developing intelligent and responsible *relational ways* of understanding. In liberal education, the emphasis is placed on developing well-rounded and intelligent individuals, endowing them with the skills and habits associated with the social ideal of the educated person. In anti-racist education, the emphasis is on developing shared, *local* approaches to inquiry that take account of broader structural and institutional patterns of relationship.
26. Alain Locke, "Art or Propaganda?" in Nathan Irvin Huggins (ed.), *Voices from the Harlem Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 312. Originally published in *Harlem* 1 (November 1928): 12–13. Locke discusses parallel themes in connection with adult education in his essay, "Negro Needs as Adult Education Opportunities," in Leonard Harris (ed.), *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989),

- 254–261. (See especially pp. 256–259.) The latter essay was first delivered as a speech in 1938.
27. Artists and intellectuals in the movement differed as to whether African American artists should make a point of depicting blacks in a positive light. W. E. B. Du Bois invited a formal debate on the issue in the February 1926 issue of *The Crisis*. His own view, set forth in the October 1926 issue, was that “All Art is propaganda and ever must be” (“Criteria of Negro Art,” *Crisis* 32: 296). For discussions of the different views promulgated by both artists and writers of the Harlem Renaissance, see Romare Bearden and Harry Henderson, *A History of African-American Artists: From 1792 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), and Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics: The Literary Politics of African-American Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, 2d ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1991).
  28. Alain Locke, “Who and What is ‘Negro’?” in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, 210. Originally published in *Opportunity* 20 (February 1942): 37.
  29. Ironically, Locke’s educational agenda imposed its own set of social conventions on black artistic endeavors. As Cornel West has observed, many of the Harlem Renaissance artists and intellectuals—Locke in particular—sought recognition for the “New Negro.” What this meant, in practice, was that art was not supposed to step outside all social convention but was to conform to new, black, middle-class conventions instead of white, racist conventions. Locke’s appeal to art as offering a new perspective on race relations specifically selects out supposedly rawer, more emotional black art forms (such as jazz and preaching) in favor of refined art forms celebrating the New Negro. See Cornel West, “Horace Pippin’s Challenge to Art Criticism,” in Judith E. Stein (ed.), *I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts/New York: Universe, 1993), 50–51. Although this irony need not undercut Locke’s basic argument, it does suggest that the appeal to an educational agenda problematizes the claims made for artistic freethinking.
  30. As the wording of this sentence suggests, Alain Locke—along with Carter G. Woodson, Marcus Garvey, and many others writing on race issues in the twenties and thirties—assumed that “race” was a kind of natural as well as historical category. Believing in a distinct racial identity or genius on the part of each race, they sought to promote recognition and appreciation of blackness without allowing the recognition of difference to be framed in terms of a deficit.
  31. While pragmatism has traditionally been understood as heavily indebted to evolutionary theory, it is interesting to note that the emphasis that Locke and Dewey both give to *shifts*, as opposed to gradualist change, seems to anticipate a late twentieth-century version of evolutionary theory: Niles Eldredge’s and Stephen Jay Gould’s theory of punctuated equilibria.
  32. Locke, “Art or Propaganda?” 312.
  33. Locke, “Art or Propaganda?” 313.
  34. In this respect, Locke’s pragmatism takes much the same form as Dewey’s: logical, democratic, optimistic, scientific. Locke assumes that once racist ideology is discovered to be non-descriptive, it will be discarded as non-useful and anti-democratic. A more radical approach to pragmatism would discover racism to be exceptionally useful, however, regardless of error in representation, because it secures privileges for the dominant group.
  35. It is, of course, possible that identifying errors and recognizing a pattern of errors will lead to questioning the framework itself, and much corrective argumentation is in fact aimed at demonstrating the systemic character of particular errors, omissions, and lies regarding race. But since the attempt to teach

- through the correction of error depends on students' being prepared to see the errors *not* as individual errors but as systemic misrepresentations, it in effect assumes that which it intends to produce, namely, the ability to step outside a racist framework in order to see it *as* racist.
36. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Privilege of Unknowing," *Genders 1* (1988): 102–124; and Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
  37. Locke, "Art or Propaganda?" 313.
  38. Betty Bardige has raised the important question of whether education that emphasizes distancing does not at times serve to suppress humanitarian, "face-value" responses, and I think she may be right—indeed, I would press the issue even further than she does. But the point here is not whether face-value responses ought to be encouraged in education; rather, it is that education cannot urge that preframed interpretations be taken as self-evident. On face-value responsiveness, see Betty Bardige, "Things So Finely Human: Moral Sensibilities at Risk in Adolescence," in Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor (eds.), with Betty Bardige, *Mapping the Moral Domain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 87–110.
  39. For a sample of these arguments, see the essays collected under "Attack on PC" in Patricia Aufderheide (ed.), *Beyond PC: Toward a Politics of Understanding* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 1992).
  40. There are, of course, important differences between the mainstream media and the media spokesmen for the reactionary right. Whereas archconservatives in the media sustain a relentless hostility toward members of minorities, especially politicized minorities, mainstream publications sometimes feature essays by liberals and even by leftists. Despite the occasional inclusion of voices criticizing the status quo, however, there is no sustained recognition of the contributions of intellectual or political activists. With the exception of token radical voices, therefore, the main thrust of centrist publications is to deny the relevance of social criticism. This is particularly evident in the mainstream press's taste for gratuitous asides, as in: "No thanks to feminism, female poet X is now recognized as one of the great writers of this century."
  41. See, for example, Russell Jacoby, *Dogmatic Wisdom: How the Culture Wars Divert Education and Distract America* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).
  42. Russell Jacoby, "Whither Western Civilization?" *The Nation* (March 9, 1992): 308. The article is a review of Paul Berman (ed.), *Debating PC: The Controversy over Political Correctness on College Campuses* (New York: Laurel/Dell, 1992).
  43. Jacoby, "Whither Western Civilization?" 308.
  44. If race is not ignored in discussions of political correctness, it is likely to be treated as satisfactorily covered under existing, class-based rubrics. For example, Christopher Hitchens published a puff piece on Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, a year or so ago, in which he took the opportunity to offer a furious indictment of feminism for polluting the pure stream of leftist radicalism. Interestingly, he simply ignored critiques of Eugene Genovese's attacks on black studies. See Hitchens, "Cultural Elite: Radical Pique," *Vanity Fair* 57, no. 2 (1994): 32, 34–35.
  45. Propaganda in this sense may be discriminating, but it does not invite discriminating *responses*. Whereas art teaches us not only to discern nuances but to respond to them, to see in them a key to larger meanings, propaganda in the sense of correction or reactive argumentation supplies us with careful distinctions that already have a fixed meaning. At best, such distinctions are refine-



ments of or adjustments in the prevailing ideology. At worst, they may become mere anecdotes or even fetishes, set adrift from their origins as reactions to a foil.

46. The results of pressures to diversify cultural representation in school texts have largely been unsatisfactory. Insofar as multicultural interest groups have sought to correct existing imbalances in history textbooks, for example, and insofar as they have succeeded, the outcome has rarely if ever been a coherent, freshly worked out understanding of intergroup relations. Either it has been a hodge-podge of addenda to the basic, conventional narrative of the text (what counts as history at any given cultural moment) or else it has been a patchwork of remnants of the old narrative stitched together with correctives to that narrative. For discussions of various politically motivated correctives to textbooks, see Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage, 1979), and Joan DelFattore, *What Johnny Shouldn't Read: Textbook Censorship in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).
47. Current forms of Afrocentrism stress a shared cultural heritage. See, for example, Molefi Kete Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987). Earlier versions (more or less contemporary with the Harlem Renaissance) stressed a shared, separatist economic future, whether in the United States or in Africa. See, for example, Woodson, *Mis-Education of the Negro*, and Marcus Garvey, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, Or, Africa for the Africans*, vols. 1 and 2, compiled by Amy Jacques Garvey (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1986 [orig. 1923 and 1925]).
48. See Svi Shapiro, "Education and Democracy: Constituting a Counter-Hegemonic Discourse of Educational Change," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 8: 3 (1988): 89–119; Landon E. Beyer and Daniel P. Liston, "Discourse or Moral Action? A Critique of Postmodernism," *Educational Theory* 42, no. 4 (1992): 371–393; and the 1994 issue of *Socialist Review* (vol. 23, no. 3) devoted to a symposium on "Radical Democracy," especially Stanley Aronowitz's lead article, "The Situation of the Left in the United States," 5–79.
49. Dick Gregory, with Robert Lipsyte, *Nigger: An Autobiography* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1986), 130–33.
50. Delpit, "Silenced Dialogue." This example also speaks to the specificity of race issues. For African Americans, access to the culture of power is usually assumed to be desirable. By contrast, for those Native Americans torn between a traditional life on the reservation and a "successful career" as measured by white standards, access to the culture of power is itself a problem. See, for example, Donna Deyhle, "Empowerment and Cultural Conflict: Navajo Parents and the Schooling of Their Children," *Qualitative Studies in Education* 4, no. 4 (1991): 277–297.
51. Apart from students needing to understand issues of structural and institutional racism, there is also the question of how education is to address *race relations*, as opposed to addressing different *races* in terms of their distinctive heritages—although even the latter approach presents some important problems. One problem is whether we want to accept "race" as reified rather than political category (since what is black in the United States may be white in Cuba). Another problem is how the kind of alternative education represented by Afrocentrism is to address white students. Presumably there can be no heritage- or experience-based rationale for an Afrocentric education for whites. It may be, perhaps, that an independent, "authentic" Eurocentric education needs to be devised for whites, but because our existing versions are informed and structured by racism, we would need to take on the problem of racism in white education before we could render it non-racist. Before it could be non-racist, in other words, it would have to be anti-racist.



52. A classic argument for separatist education for African Americans can be found in W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "Does the Negro Need Separate Schools?" *Journal of Negro Education* 4, no. 3 (1935): 328–335.
53. Dewey, "Education and Social Change," 417.
54. Of course, the objection to academic turf wars being fought at the expense of significant programs for social change is very much to the point. It is unlikely that sexism will be extinguished because Professor A. successfully trounced Professor B. in a respected journal or that racism will glide to closure because Professor C. sailed past Professor D. in a debate.
55. Aronowitz, "Situation of the Left," 24.
56. Amarpal Dhaliwal, "Response" to Stanley Aronowitz, in *Socialist Review* 23, no. 3 (1994): 85.
57. Dhaliwal, "Response," 82.
58. Barbara Ehrenreich, "Response" to Stanley Aronowitz, in *Socialist Review* 23, no. 3 (1994): 104.
59. Ehrenreich, "Response," 104–105.
60. Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*; Fields, "Ideology and Race"; and Anderson, "How We Learn about Race." Parallel undertakings addressing feminist, gay, and class issues occur in Pateman, Sedgwick, and Smith. See Carole Pateman, "'The Disorder of Women': Women, Love, and the Sense of Justice," in *The Disorder of Women* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 17–32; Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*; and Smith, *Everyday World as Problematic*. In each of these six works, the intellectual task is to discover how racism, sexism, homophobia, and/or class bias is *structurally* bound up with existing values, assumptions, social relations, and conceptions of identity.
61. As Toni Morrison's analysis indicates, any such assimilationist project is doomed to failure, for the supposedly neutral standards that apply unproblematically to whites are predicated on an implicit, hierarchical contrast with blackness. See Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*.
62. Locke, "Art or Propaganda?" 313.
63. Alain Locke, "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," in Alain Locke (ed.), *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1968 [1925]), 258.
64. Locke, "Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," 264.
65. Locke, "Legacy of the Ancestral Arts," 267.
66. West, "Horace Pippin's Challenge to Art Criticism," 50.
67. West's argument suggests that Locke conceives of education as form, as a kind of disciplining of primitive energies. Among the art forms that West says Locke omits from consideration are those most closely associated with performance: dance, jazz, blues, preaching, and sports. See West, "Horace Pippin's Challenge," 50–51.
68. Richard Wilbur, *Opposites* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 17.
69. An earlier, much briefer version of this paper was presented at a general session of the Philosophy of Education Society meeting in San Francisco, in March 1995. I would like to thank Frank Margonis, Larry Parker, and *Curriculum Inquiry's* anonymous reviewers for their detailed and insightful comments. I am also indebted to Ivan Van Laningham, Jessica George, David Blacker, Nick Burbules, and Steve Preskill for helpful conversations concerning many of the issues in the paper.