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Contracting race: writing, racism, and education

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3bx0r92q>

Journal

Critical Studies in Education, 56(1)

ISSN

0076-6275

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Publication Date

2015-01-02

DOI

10.1080/17508487.2015.981197

Peer reviewed

In *Critical Race Theory and Education*, the methodological focus unarguably falls on counter-storytelling, which is a mode of research that speaks back to white majoritarian narrative lines of understanding. This essay is concerned with a related but different methodological question in line with this special issue's theme of poststructural theory and educational policy, particularly poststructuralism's focus on writing. For this, I turn to Charles Mills' racial contract as methodology to generate insights on how race, in particular people of color, are written into law and history in document form as well as into a common sense that takes the spirit of the contract as its assumptive form. In short, what can a poststructural interpretation of Mills' framework offer education policy research? In attempting this move, the article does not focus on other poststructural tenets, like uncertainty (Mills speaks with a good dose of certainty) or indeterminacy (it would be reasonable to identify Mills as a racial determinist). As such, education is a form of racial contract that writes children and students of color into a subjecthood that positions them as the "cursed share" of the general racial contract. Epistemologically, ontologically, and existentially, students of color are written into the contract as subpersons, where they function as alibis for the provision that Whites are always already persons, a principle that is parasitic on personhood of color.

Although it would be inaccurate to claim that Mills is a poststructural race philosopher, it is possible to interpret his work through a poststructural lens. This hermeneutic project was Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) engagement with Marxist movements when they used Derrida's principle of undecidability through which the process of hegemony would be understood. That is, although Marxism is a modernist discourse with well-known trappings, Laclau and Mouffe's poststructural intervention

makes it possible to speak of “post-Marxism” as a way to establish the centrality of indeterminism within the determining features of class struggle, hegemonic relations as the supplementary side of class relations, and the role of radical contingency in building class solidarity. Closer to the topic at hand, Derrida (1985) is helpful when he argues that the work of racism is constituted through a chain of signifiers that makes language central to its enactment. Put simply, no language, no racism. The injurious function of language means that race becomes a social relation that recruits language to do its work. Although the following explication of Mills’ contract theory gestures towards a materialist understanding of race and racism, this is only possible with an equally rigorous appreciation for the writing of race, captured through the metaphor of the contract.

Below, I present the main terms of the contract, as they appear in the sub-contracts of Mills’ theory, such as the spatial, epistemological, cognitive sub-contracts. It is important to keep in mind that these sub-contracts are by no means separate and represent analytical moments of the main contract. Furthermore, other than its institutional form, education is not a separate sphere from the racial contract. Rather, I conceive of the racial contract as having an educative function, not unlike Gramsci’s (1971) contention that the capitalist nation consists of an educative dimension. Finally, I end with the racial contract’s gaps to determine the possibility of its own demise, which requires the active signing off from the terms of the contract. That is, I sketch ideas about ways to counter-act (i.e., counter-write) the racial contract as part of a corrective to the history that interpellates people of color as its targets. Both Whites and people of color have a stake in the rewriting of the contract, where in the end they are imagined as neither Black nor White but free. To be sure, black and white subjectivities are not symmetrical

and historically have functioned as polar opposites. The abolition of whiteness is precisely a position of anti-whiteness such that the racial contract promotes the problematic love of whiteness (Matias and Allen, 2013). It is driven by the history of blancophiliogenesis, or the narcissistic drive to turn the world into the image of whiteness (Leonardo, in press). By contrast, negrophobogenesis operates in the opposite direction whereby Fanon (1967) described racism's ability to produce self-loathing in the Black subject. It makes sense that "Black is beautiful" is the politics of self-love in order to abolish blackness as we know it in the U.S. Blackness emerges from the other side as the universal standard of humanity, not unlike the working class within Marxist theory (see Lukács, 1971). In this last portion, I spend some text on what Whites' role may look like in signing off the contract, such as the case of white "race traitors" within the white abolitionist proposal, recast as the "epistemological traitor" in education. The epistemological traitor is not a replacement for the race traitor, just as the racial sub-contracts do not displace the general racial contract. The epistemological traitor is the specific form that the race traitor takes in the realm of education.

Charles Mills' (1997) philosophy of the Racial Contract (henceforth RC) begins from his engagement of mainstream social contract theory in philosophical discourse. While he does not reject the notion of the social contract in principle, he does not accept its speculative form that projects an ideal world among Whites at the detriment of people of color, specifically Blacks. In other words, the social contract describes a world written by and for Whites, in terms that respect their rights and standing. Although working class and other marked Whites, such as women, admittedly share the minimal returns of whiteness, as presumed persons they are nonetheless benefactors of the RC within its

discursive ontology. In this, Mills accomplishes a move no less significant than Marxist materialism with respect to the problems of Hegelian idealism. We are reminded of Marx's thesis of the "camera obscura," wherein a certain inversion of the actual world takes place in idealist philosophy, which then has to be put back onto its feet through materialist philosophy. Regarding social contract theory and its cousin, white ignorance, Mills writes, "Obviously such a starting point crucially handicaps any realistic social epistemology, since in effect it turns things upside down" (p. 17). Mills' explication of the RC is the attempt to put the racial heavens back in order, to write people of color back into existence. It is worth mentioning that Mills' framing of the racial contract is fundamentally built on the antipodal relationship between whiteness and blackness, although his general theory of white supremacy accounts for Whites' incorporation of non-Black people of color. This latter point attests to the global reach of whiteness, its expansive grasp that affects all racial groups under its thumb.

Mills' framework is a materialist counterpoint to the tradition of idealist social contract theory that perceives of a literal (codified in laws and policies) and symbolic (embedded in common sense) agreement that at best obscures the innerworkings of racism or at worst is the central apparatus that makes it possible. More to the point, Mills' materialism is a form of corporealism that differs from Marxist economic determinism insofar as race is what Mills understands as a system of body politics functioning under a "cauczoid somatic norm." That is, not unlike Fanon's (1967) version of corporeal materialism, Mills "stretches" Marx's economic theory to account for the "epidermalization" of the economic relation. It is a social relation written onto the body of the individual reimagined as a racial subject. The philosophy is a form of hard-

headed realism. Or as Mills (1997) simply states, “If you start with this, you will end up with that” (p. 102). It is radical as a politic but conservative as a methodology as it puts forth a social epistemology grounded on the assertion of true world disfigured by the social contract. At its heart, it is not constructivist and argues that the truth of race relations is apprehensible. As such, Mills affirms the tradition of demystification so central to critical theory from Marxism and on, this time at the service of racial analysis.

For Mills, the RC is more indicative of the actual world we live in, rather than a conjectural situation put forth by idealist social contract theory.

My claim is that the model of the Racial Contract shows us that we need another alternative, another way of theorizing about and critiquing the state: the racial, or white supremacist, state, whose function inter alia is to safeguard the polity as a white or white-dominated polity, enforcing the terms of the Racial Contract by the appropriate means and, when necessary, facilitating its rewriting from one form to another (1997, p. 82; italics in original).

To be clear, to Mills the RC is real and not a projected theory of an ideal society; it is what actually exists. Inasmuch as the RC is a theory, it is not a form of what Althusser (1976) calls “theoreticism” but a scientific theory (sans Althusser’s fetishism of science) of the existing society and its logical consequence, which Mills understands as the system of white supremacy. Mills’ Racial Contract Theory benefits educational policy scholarship insofar as it provides a framework for understanding a nefarious and existing agreement that drives how students of color enter the educational plot, Blacks in particular. This has certain advantages, including a description of how people of color are included, that is, written into, rather than out of, the contract. Consistent with

postructuralism's focus on writing, this explication unearths the discursive process whereby the contract is given form and function.

The Spatial Sub-contract

A facet of the RC is the partitioning of the social world into “light” and “dark” spaces. This process happens literally through colonization and other crimes against people of color as well as through the semiotic by attaching differential meanings among social groups. Through colonization, a spatial demarcation is enforced to expropriate lands and resources for the material advantages and cultural pleasures of European Whites. The demarcation cements into the policy of the “color line,” a process described by Du Bois (1989) at the turn of the 20th century. This means that, when possible, global spaces occupied by people of color become reimagined as wastelands in need of being rediscovered by and for European Whites (Allen, 2002). It is important to note that the needs of indigenous or native peoples are not primary in this consideration. Before colonization, these spaces exist as “natural” places that need to be converted into socio-political territories to be administered by Whites. Under indigenous rule, they are lands or territories, which are not the same as societies. It is justified by the condition that savages are not human, at least not in the fullest sense of the word. Because they are “[l]ocked in a different temporality, incapable of self-regulation by morality and law, they are humanoid but not human” and their “equality” with Europeans would be oxymoronic (Mills, 2007, p. 27). As Mills understands it, societies belong only to the European imaginary that constructs them as rationally organized, instrumentally cultivated, and fit for civilization. All else is empty and requires the European hand to realize their potentiality.

The spatial dimensions of the RC come with multiple levels of violence. They are as disruptive of existing communities or collectivities through displacement as they are of redefining them through incorporation into the “new” society. For the RC functions as much through commission as it does through omission (Ladson-Billings, 1998). It is not defined solely by its power to exclude but through its ability to include or write into the contract how people of color are to be constituted as subjects of the agreement. As Mills (1997) distinguishes,

In the social contract, the crucial human metamorphosis is from “natural” man to “civil/political” man, from the resident of the state of nature to the citizen of the created society. . . The establishment of society thus implies the denial that a society already existed; the creation of society requires the intervention of white men, who are thereby positioned as already sociopolitical beings (pp. 12-13; italics in original).

In the eyes of whiteness, the spatial reorganization of the world makes that world knowable through military means flanked by a cultural apparatus. It is global in scope, necessitating a global theoretical framework for understanding white racism or planetary apartheid without denying that it takes particular forms in local places. Du Bois (1989) predicted as much when he observed that no corner of Earth has been left untouched by whiteness so establishing a spatial haven for Blacks (recall Liberia) is dogged by the reminder that the social contract’s reach is immense and appropriates lands that are transformed in the image of whiteness. The irony is that as part of their ontological make up, Whites later misunderstand their own image and creation. They cannot know what they have done and still remain White.

After we note that it took white Europeans to name, like the son-of-god, “dark” spaces on the globe and bring them into existence, a racial economy of language practice clarifies the process whereby people of color coming into being. The “[i]mplication [is] that if no white person has ‘been there,’ cognition did not take place: ‘New England,’ ‘New Holland,’ ‘New France,’ – in a word, ‘New Europes,’ (also ‘New Mexico’)” (Mills, 1997, p. 45). As an extension of the transcendental mind or cogito, idealist social contractarians are disembodied bodies, occupying space vis-à-vis people of color as the surrogate, corporeal other. In this sense, the mind also represents a territory, a cognitive space that is full for Whites and empty for people of color. It is part of the overall “conceptual territory” (Mills, 2007, p. 27) discovered by Europeans. Like the land that lies in waste, indigenous people’s cognition wallows. They cannot convert their fields into an economic industry for profit because their minds are not industrious. Like the limited returns they reap from their natural resources due to unscientific agricultural methods, their inability to reason likewise presents a ceiling to their mental flourishing. It would have been enough that Europeans expanded their conquest to the west in North America. It did not stop at the shores of the Pacific Ocean. They pushed to the last frontier of indigenous cognitive space. It became a policy of colonizing the mind of others, usually through the violence of education or its euphemism of reculturation: eradication.

The creation of the subject of color makes it possible to argue for cultural projects, such as education, which treat people of color as tabula rasa to be filled with white intentions and civilized ways. It is a veritable and verifiable form of what Freire (1993) once called “banking education” where knowledge is deposited into the account

known as minority minds, this time with the added injury of civilizing them. Like the era of exploration claimed non-European spaces already populated with people, people of color's cognitive space is discovered by Whites in order to be populated by white habits of mind, through boarding school policies for native Americans (Dog and Erdoes, 1999), separate but equal schooling for Blacks (Holt, 1990), and linguistically or culturally irrelevant instruction for Asian and Latino children (Valdes, 2001). The disparagement of Blacks, for example, ghettoizes them into what Fanon (1967) once called the "zone of non-being," an existential space of nothingness undercut by the primary existence of white being. As a spatial metaphor, this zone is contiguous with what Mills calls "subpersonhood," a subject that deserves either sub or non-schooling. He continues,

[O]ne of the interesting consequences of the Racial Contract is that the political space of the polity is not coextensive with its geographical space. In entering these [dark] spaces, one is entering a region normatively discontinuous with white political space, where the rules are different in ways ranging from differential funding (school resources, garbage collection, infrastructural repair) to the absence of police protection (1997, p. 51; italics in original).

Regarding blackness, not only does the RC promote the ejection of the black body from white spaces as evidenced by one hundred years of ghettoization since the early decades of the 1900s (Massey and Denton, 1993) but the rejection of everything black, such as ways of knowing and feeling, unless they serve the commodification of blackness within white capitalism. In ghetto schools, the policy of white supremacy accomplishes two related processes. On one hand, it withholds from black students resources considered by Whites necessary for their own children. On the other hand, Whites either denigrate or

supplant people of color's cultural worldview to deprive them of self-recognition (Kozol, 1991; Anyon, 1997; Dumas, 2008).

The spatial regime of the RC recruits language to do its ideological work. Labeling "new spaces" is a convenient trope through which marking the world is tantamount to bringing it into the field of vision known as whiteness, with the Enlightenment as its philosophical source of light.

[A]s a general rule, that white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race are among the most pervasive mental phenomena of the past few hundred years, a cognitive and moral economy psychically required for conquest, colonization, and enslavement. And these phenomena are in no way accidental, but prescribed by the terms of the Racial Contract, which requires a certain schedule of structured blindness and opacities in order to establish the white polity (Mills, 1997, p. 19; italics in original).

Like the panopticon (Foucault, 1977), this super-vision includes everything in its line of sight except its own apparatus: the eye that sees. Yet another irony surfaces, which is Europe's veritable policy of race-blindness at the same time that it speaks of shepherding entire "societies" out of their darkness. In terms having to do with the racial reorganization of the planet, whiteness must fundamentally obfuscate its own involvement in this process. Whites become cognitively impaired to read their own writing, as it were. Ideological whiteness monopolizes the right to be enlightened about most matters except for the one creation towards which it reserves the right to remain blind: racialization of humankind, which is neither human nor kind. It does not misinterpret the world as such because it never meant to get it right from the beginning

(Said, 1979). It becomes an unmarked marker, a mapper whose position in the territory even a GPS could not locate, like a Euclidian observer whose coordinates are not part of the grid.

The spatial separation of white from black goes all the way down to the genetic constitution of society. From immigration to marriage, policy formation contributes to the creation of a racialized gene pool, which forms a horrifying helix between social regulations and the DNA make up to which they give rise. In addition, because educational rates of emigrés inform the selective immigration policies in advanced western nations like the U.S., education is complicitous with the way that a country's racial demography evolves. Ian Haney Lopez (2006) argues both that laws constructed the nature of U.S. racial identities through social mechanisms like the rule of hypodescent and “influenced the pool of physical features” (p. 82) available for progeny by constricting or expanding the criteria of who is or is not allowed to enter the country. Although the official policy of anti-miscegenation is no longer in effect, centuries of legal statutes inform social habits and cultural tastes to the extent that interracial marriage between Whites and Blacks are still quite low whereas it is apparently more acceptable between Whites and Asian Americans. With educational attainment also affecting racialized class segregation through neighborhood compartmentalization and city planning, the space-race nexus becomes a formidable wall of whiteness that people of color scale daily. It confirms Gulson's (2011) contention that “policy is spatial in form and in consequence,” at once cause and effect of racialization in the built environments of city life (Lipsitz, 2007). Thus, the spatial sub-contract is an agreement at the corporeal level among Whites, which drives what a nation's citizenry actually looks like.

Nowhere is this corporeal separation more obvious in education than the policy of tracking. Whether or not educational scholars argue that tracking accurately reflects the bell curve of cognitive differences among students, incontrovertible evidence is available that the policy of tracking spatially separates students by race and class, particularly in multiracial schools (Oakes, 2005). A spatial demarcation of classroom, curriculum, and teaching dynamics, tracking is the more acceptable form of eugenics, the latter relegated to the racial contract of a cruel past. But as Mills insists, the contract is rewritten over and over again to produce ultimately the same result of white rule. Tracking and other forms of differentiation, such as college entrance exams like the SAT, replace eugenics as an outdated mode of transparent white supremacy with an updated technology of whiteness in the new regime that Bobo and Smith (1998) call “laissez-faire racism,” Bonilla-Silva (2003) refers to as “color-blind racism,” or the more general and insidious claims of post-racialism. Tracking and SAT scores are acceptable because measuring cranium sizes would be too creepy.

The Epistemological Sub-contract

Imperialism is one part military, one part knowledge project. Said (1979) is clear that Orientalism’s cultural mode enables imperialism to become a modern project. It requires the “gentleness of cultural understanding” to supplement the brutality of repressive power. With respect to the RC, a certain epistemological contradiction is at work. At the same time that Whites discover a people and place by making them objects of knowledge, they cannot know what they have created. With respect to those who actually know what has transpired, White or people of color, the RC deems them as epistemologically unrecognizable. Ironically, their knowledge is suspect as speculative.

People of color literally know too much, thus Habermas' (1989) regulative order of the "ideal speech situation" requires the absence of the racial other whose perspective is disqualified from graduating to the force of the better argument. The "real speech situation" is not sanctioned by the RC because speaking against it is epistemologically illegible and judged by the very standards of argumentation allowed by the RC.

In Mills' estimation, the RC is an agreement among Whites to misinterpret the world as it is. It is grounded on an epistemology that lacks consistency and defies logic but does not produce cognitive dissonance because it remains consistent with the RC. It appears in educational policies, such as No Child Left Behind, which recognize the existence of racial achievement gaps without causally tracing them as logical outcomes of the racial organization of U.S. society (Leonardo, 2007). Racial disparities in achievement that are regarded ultimately as unfortunate (even deplorable) conditions are not linked with the opportunity gaps to learn that students of color experience in schools. Yet the epistemological sub-contract functions psychologically for Whites (maintains white equilibrium) as well as socially (maintains white dominance in public life). The machinations and detours of white racial knowledge cannot be underestimated.

Thus on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions (which are psychologically and socially functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made. (p. 18; italics in original)

What results is a formidable white ignorance, although not in its classical sense but its willful version. Mills clarifies, “I will use ignorance to cover both false belief and the absence of true belief” (2007, 16; italics in original). His intent is not to shame Whites through a philosophical thrashing but to expose the structuring effect of racial privilege for white thinking. No longer just an expression of bad faith, the falsehood of white racial thinking is judged for its consequences rather its intentions. In a biting indictment of white epistemology, Mills asks us to

Imagine an ignorance that resists.

Imagine an ignorance that fights back.

Imagine an ignorance militant, aggressive, not to be intimidated, an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly-not at all confined to the illiterate and uneducated but propagated at the highest levels of the land, indeed presenting itself unblushingly as knowledge. (2007, p. 13; italics in original)

Mills admits that the “white” in white ignorance does not necessitate that is a willful thinking confined only to Whites. To the extent that it is a doxastic condition, it can breed what is called “black racial ignorance,” which has different consequences for the so-called “ignorant” person. White ignorance is a form of morally false knowledge, which is different from your garden-variety ignorance. The upshot is that Whites have created a political system that is near impossible to comprehend rationally and requires Whites’ incoherence as part of their personal and collective development.

If Mannheim and others inaugurated the sociology of knowledge, an equally rigorous sociology of ignorance is necessary in order to unveil the social consequences of false forms of knowing. Whiteness is able to reconcile for itself something that it forbids

for other groups. In this case, Whites may be irrational and claim reason at the very same time. It is then possible to represent two irreconcilable positions, the one of ignorance the other of knowledge, in one epistemological system, which Whites would not tolerate of others. In fact, ignorance maintains their policy of domination, unable as they are to uphold the dearest tenets of the Enlightenment: e.g., rationality, autonomous thinking, detachment, and intellectual rigor. When it comes to matters related to the RC, Whites abandon these principles for unchecked emotion, possessive investment, and group defensiveness. They become fond of tautological reasoning and invest in certain policies of absurdity, as in “We rule the world because we are superior; we are superior because we rule the world” (Mills, 2007, p. 25). Or in a racial version of the cogito, “I think therefore I am White. I am White therefore I think” (Leonardo and Broderick, 2012). Yet speaking against this illogic is itself evaluated as irrational according to the RC whose discursive structure deems it unrecognizable. People of color might as well be speaking and writing in gibberish.

Bonilla-Silva’s (2003) study of white workers in Detroit confirms empirically Mills’ theoretical proposition when the former documents Whites’ incoherent statements about race at some point in his interviews. Bonilla-Silva finds that Whites use “verbal pirouettes” (p. 164) to avoid appearing publicly as racist. They clearly “see” race at the same time that they use colorblind discourse to justify Black racial standing in the U.S. Consistent with the epistemological dimensions of the RC, White racial knowledge becomes a form of mystification of the knowable world in exchange for a fictive (i.e., ideal) one. It is not a simple case of mistaken information because white epistemology accomplishes much ideological work, not to mention requires a lot of work to upkeep. It

qualifies as a form of knowledge if by this we acknowledge the white epistemological standpoint, (cf. with standpoint theory in feminism, see Hartsock, 1987; Smith, 1987; Harding, 1991; Collins, 2000) which is a white set of skills about knowing when, how, where, and with whom to participate in racial discourse (Leonardo, 2009; Schick, 2014). It is different from the ability to understand the basis of the RC all the while upholding its main features.

Because schooling is conceived as the “knowledge institution,” we see clearly the logical results of the RC’s epistemological sub-contract within education. As subknowers, people of color are targets of epistemological imposition within the industrial complex of knowledge from K-12, to college, and the professoriate (Harris and Gonzalez, 2012). Recalling his own educational experience, Mills retells,

One of my most educational early experiences after coming to the United States to teach was facing a graduate philosophy class in a southern, predominantly white university and realizing, to my astonishment, that what I had taken to be an uncontroversial banality-the centrality of racism and the subordination of blacks in U.S. history-was something that I was going to have to argue for. As a double outsider, nonwhite and nonAmerican, I understood for the first time the kinds of evasions of the past that must be routine in the high school curricula here. (1998, p. 12)

As such, we see that white students experience an education that is harmonious with their self-knowledge whereas students of color are alienated from theirs. The latter are schooled and have to fight for their right to a real education that is considered in breach

of the educational racial contract (Leonardo, 2013). Mills does not underestimate the stakes and warns,

The recent discussion of ‘multiculturalism’ is welcome, but what needs to be appreciated is that these are issues of political power, not just mutual misconceptions resulting from the clash of cultures. To the extent that ‘race’ is assimilated to ‘ethnicity,’ white supremacy remains unmentioned, and the historic Racial Contract – prescribed connection between race and personhood is ignored, these discussions, in my opinion, fail to make the necessary drastic theoretical correction. (1997, p. 125)

Even multiculturalism, which stands as one of the successful attempts to honor children of color, faces grim prospects if the RC co-opts it or capitalism commodifies it.

Because the RC does not recognize people of color as persons, they exist in that netherland that fails to construct them as children in their youth and adults later in life. For example, black boys lack the innocence afforded to white children (Ferguson, 2001). The former is judged as criminal whereas the latter is dismissed as appropriately rambunctious for similar behaviors. Think of Trayvon Martin, ultimately a young boy whom George Zimmerman feared for his imagined larger-than-normal physical presence. Walking casually with his Skittles candy in a neighborhood where his uncle resided, Martin was accosted and fatally shot by Zimmerman after an alleged tussle. Zimmerman was found by the courts to be innocent of second-degree murder. Black children live in a social world that requires astute maturity in order to navigate social queues, a skill on which their life may depend on occasion. Or as Mills (2007) recalls James Baldwin who spoke of moments when black survival meant black silence in white company, Blacks

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become masters at deflection in order to avoid incurring white violence (Leonardo and Porter, 2010). Regarding young people of color, the myth of innocence many adults sentimentalize about children – the cornerstone of educational Romanticism from Rousseau and on - is lost on them, yet another sign of waste. On the other hand, once deprived of a rightful share to childhood, black men lack the providence necessary to care for their family, such as holding down a steady job and other markers of masculine development. In the eyes of whiteness, they are not men because they lack the credential of proper masculinity. Stuck between the Scylla of childhood and the Charybdis of adulthood, males of color are uncategorizable within the standard classifications of human development.

Whiteness as Bully and Signing Off the Contract

Harsh as Mills' message may sound, he does not consider the RC as infeasible or indomitable. Because a contract suggests participation by its targets and beneficiaries, like hegemony it holds out possibilities for dissenting (Gramsci, 1971). It may be rewritten, or better yet, unwritten. Although common sense compromises even the subalterns' good sense, they inhere radical sensibilities by virtue of their epistemological standpoint and social experience. This does not guarantee radicalization as a cognitive inevitability but suggests that, from Marx to feminism, the oppressed are able to build oppositional knowledge based on their objective experience. Concerning the dominant class, gender, or in this case, the master race, the situation is admittedly more meandering. Whereas Lenin distinguished that the oppressed require education to supplement their radical alterity, the oppressor requires both radicalization and education (Althusser, 1976). Whites would need more than information but self-

reconceptualization. In this last section, I would like to pose the problem of Whites' ability to sign off the RC. For this, I turn to the white abolitionist project.

Noel Ignatiev and his associates have called this new white subject the "race traitor" who refuses to honor the dotted line. Amounting to an act of racial sedition, white abolitionists, informed by Marxism and anarchism, argue that a critical mass of Whites would need to stop being white (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996). They radically question the RC to which many Whites have, sometimes unwittingly, signed on to as a way to cope with their own social injuries, such as class exploitation and patriarchy. Whiteness provides them an "in" at the same time it is thought of as an "out." In other words, oppressed Whites find their belonging in whiteness and its illusory promise of salvation from non-racial forms of oppression. But there is a cost. They must pledge their loyalty to the bully called whiteness. Like other bullies, whiteness exacts its price, mainly by exerting its social pressure for denigrated Whites to stay in line and abide by their loyalties to the white race and its quest for domination. They carry out the terrorism of whiteness at the same time that they are terrorized by it, usually capitulating to the demands and discipline of elite Whites.

Seeking the protection of the bully, poor Whites and white women enter a compromise with whiteness. To shield them from the maximum brutalities of capitalism and patriarchy, the RC promises buffer groups who shall bear the brunt of both social systems through the creation of a third: race relations. Men and women of color serve as the alibi for this sentiment and a policy of containment means that whiteness-as-bully requires that people of color become the new object of torment. The rub is that in this new regime, injured Whites are not considered equal with propertied, white males who

are able, through legally established means, to force them to fall in line. For example, maintaining low wages and limiting the rights of women in civil and professional life are evidence of the bully's ability to tighten the rope, as it were, so that the real lynching may take place. In all but the rare instances in history, this dynamic prevents the margins of whiteness to form solidarity with people of color, which would be a breach of their contract. Giving up their "milk money" to whiteness allows them to avoid direct violence as long as they agree that a group less worthy than they, is more deserving of real violence. Poor Whites or white women may be victims in their own right but they are not idle spectators in this process and are conceived as holding down the real victim.

Many, if not most, Whites sign the RC and do not notice the footnotes or fine print contained in the "document" because accruing its general racial benefits in terms of material wages and social honor is obvious. This does not suggest that they are duped into accepting whiteness, just that signing a contract involves a set of epistemological, spatial, and cognitive dispositions that Whites find irresistible absent of an apparatus of critical self-reflection (Roediger, 1991). If white supremacy only benefitted rich white men, working class Whites and white women would not cling onto whiteness so dearly and it becomes too convenient to blame the white elite for the maintenance of racism.

Mills calls it a

circular agentic logic: when they do good things, they are acting on their own; but when they do bad things-organize lynch mobs, participate in race riots, have hate strikes to exclude black workers from factories, sign restrictive covenants to maintain segregated neighborhoods [and the schools they produce]-it is at bourgeois behest. (2003, p. 166)

The poignant Bob Dylan song, “Only a Pawn in their Game,” does not sit well as its verse reifies the white working class’ dupery in their embrace of their “white skin.”

Taking racial inventory becomes Whites’ first step in the march towards race treason.

In education, the analogous figure to the race traitor is the epistemological traitor, or the teacher who, when it pertains to race, literally knows too much. As most U.S. teachers are white women, a certain race and gender contract needs to be highlighted (Leonardo and Boas, 2013). Because the educational RC is a specific form of the general RC, its particularities cannot be overlooked. White women teachers are the nearest potential figures to race traitors, here rebranded as epistemological traitors. With them, the educational RC develops into the force it has become; without their consent, it would be more difficult to enforce. It does not require the dissent of all teachers, but a critical mass of them, whose tipping point is determined historically. For example, it means breaking their oath of loyalty to whiteness and follow a pedagogy of racial disruption. From disciplinary policies that unfairly and disproportionately target black kids to the militarization of urban schools, white teachers protest an educational regime that actively creates their whiteness. As epistemological traitors, they recognize that epistemic violence has been part of the educational enterprise they help bolster through silence and complicity. This is a real choice that is available to white women teachers, despite the admission that it is a contradictory space because they put themselves at risk by actively working against their institution. But failing to do so puts them at a different risk as they are dehumanized by racism. As teachers currently comprise the largest labor union in the U.S., the metaphor of the contract is familiar terrain for them. Unfortunately, it is a white contract they sign. The task is for them to see it for what it is: a racial contract.

Yet the RC is not merely metaphorical because a “paper trail” (from laws to policies) does exist. Invoking Gramsci, there is an inventory but the key to the office remains to be found. Through counter-signings, race research centers subjugated knowledges in the sense that Foucault (1980) calls attention to their repressed but disruptive history. Mills’ RC as methodology emerges in a bold and new direction, representing what Althusser (1971) once called an “epistemological break,” which is the ability of social science to generate not only new knowledge, but a new theory of society. In this instance, a new theory of education is possible when the racial contract is unveiled. This materialist theory is captured powerfully through the metaphor of the contract, at once imagined and real. Insofar as it is abstract, educators function through its white imaginary and act according to its principles and policies. The RC is not a literal explanation for the origin of the races but a “theoretical strategy” (Mills, 2003, p. 223) to understand the racial form of an actually existing society. To the extent that it is real, the RC is institutionalized in school practices whose consequences for students of color have been grave and consistent. A new abolitionist movement is required for its undoing.

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