Teaching Anti-Racism[*]

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Abstract. This paper is a discussion of the application of democratic and anti-racist educational principles in a college setting. The paper explores both the implications of pedagogical theory for anti-racism and the implications of anti-racism for pedagogy. After giving a brief description of the conditions encountered in an economically and intellectually impoverished region of the country, the paper outlines an application of John Dewey's educational theory to college instruction. Then, after an account of what racism is, the paper reapplies Dewey's model to the teaching of anti-racism, and with the help of Paulo Freire's theory of educational *praxis*, readapts Deweyan principles to the task of reconstructing our classrooms as models of anti-racist communities.

> Whoever is a teacher through and through takes all things seriously in relation to his students – even himself.[1]
>
> – Friedrich Nietzsche

> [T]he oppressor, who is himself dehumanized because he dehumanizes others, is unable to lead this struggle.[2]
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> – Paulo Freire

Parents generally know more than their children, but typically can't articulate that knowledge very well; hence, the need for authority. To the extent that this authority is exercised without articulation and reason, education is missing. Paternalism, the idea that authorities are in a position of superiority much (if not exactly) like parents, is not only antithetical to education insofar as it is authoritarian; it is also incapable of providing the care one finds in parenthood.

Anti-racism, as practiced by many white educators, suffers from the paternalistic impulse and thereby fails to produce its intended results. The problem is that there's a built-in assumption, often unnoticed and rarely acknowledged by those preaching anti-racism, that those who suffer evil are to be protected and cared for as if they were children. They are perceived as inferior, epistemically, organizationally, and even morally, to their would-be saviors. And the anti-racists have an internalized sense of superiority, which is only strengthened by every person and institution that legitimizes their power.

Teaching also suffers inherently from the paternalistic impulse and is ineffective to the extent that this impulse remains unchecked. Teaching anti-racism, therefore,

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is doubly prone to failure because the internalized superiority of the teacher as "all-knowing teacher" is most often coupled with that of "well meaning white person." The purpose of this paper is to suggest strategies for overcoming the paternalistic impulse in both teachers and in anti-racists, and most importantly, in white teachers of anti-racism.

Initial Seizure:[3] Teaching in South Georgia

When I came to my first teaching position in South Georgia, fresh out of grad school and 5 years of teaching assistantships, I found a population of students who were – by most academicians standards – two notches below those I had been teaching as a grad student. I found myself quite comfortable at first using the "lecture and discussion" method that many see as "progressive." My students liked me, they did well on their quizzes and tests and everybody seemed happy. The only problem was that I wasn't educating them.[4]

The reason they had done fairly well, even with some of the more difficult stuff, is because they had been conditioned to "listen" to what the teacher said and repeat what has been said on the exam. I remember commenting to a friend that my students did about as well as those that we had taught together in grad school because even though they were "less bright" they were also less cynical, more willing to listen to what I had to say. I was pleased with this, but came to see this willingness as artificial. It's not that they were willing to *listen* so much as willing to be *told* what to do and think. In short, I came to realize that I wasn't getting through to them. They – and we – are the product of a society that is thoroughly authoritarian. Although this is certainly true of the United States generally, it is particularly true in the Deep South. Campus dynamics are no different. From the top we have a President dictating to administrators, who in turn dictate to the faculty, who then dictate to the students. And the President of the institution is also trapped in this hierarchy, having to answer to his superiors in the State System. All the while, few people are really listening and even fewer know what time it is.

From Recognition to Perception: Educational Theory

It wasn't long before I knew that something had to change, but it took me a few years to figure out that all my idealizations about the need for teaching through application had been conceived *a priori*. John Dewey's educational theory, which I had studied but had little opportunity to apply as a teaching assistant, could not be fully appreciated except in the context of practice. It was actually a colleague whose ideas were wrought on in the context of work here in Georgia, who, though he hadn't read Dewey, got me to revisit my idealizations and work out an educational *praxis* for my campus and its unique population of students.[5]

Returning to educational theory in the light of my experiences, I found some crucial concepts in pragmatic education. I outline them as follows:

1) the **pragmatic model of thinking** and inquiry in John Dewey's *How We Think*;[6]
2) the **educational psychology** arising from (1);
3) the **institutional theory of self** developed by George Herbert Mead in *Mind, Self and Society*;[7]
4) the **social philosophy** in Dewey's *Democracy and Education*,[8] which makes the democratization of our institutions a primary end-in-view of modern education.

The first two concepts, the pragmatic model of thinking and educational psychology, basically tell us that thinking begins in the context of activity, specifically when a problem of some sort is perceived. Call it Peirce's irritations of doubt,[9] or Mead's problematic,[10] but however you put it, there is no (reflective) thinking – and hence educating – until a problem is perceived. And there are no problems without activity. Hence "learning" outside of the context of ongoing activity and related struggles is thoughtless thinking at best. An educator, accordingly, is one who finds where the student is, what he or she is doing, and introduces new material in a context of problems and projects alive in the minds of the students.

Item (3), the institutional theory of self, is one that is often ignored but is extremely important – especially as we start discussing issues such as racism and sexism. Basically, the relevance of the institutional theory of self is that selves are built, not found, that the building process is ongoing, not beginning or ending upon the completion of some degree program, and that this building process takes place through social interaction and not merely from the placing of bits of information in the mind-receptacles we sometimes call students. We are who we are by virtue of our institutional roles and our institutions are what they are by virtue of how we carry out those roles. What this means is that unless otherwise checked, the values embedded in our institutions, be they Christian love or white supremacy, will become internalized by us and shape us into executors of those inherited values. And it makes no difference if those values remain unstated; what matters is what we routinely live out in practice.

The latter point about social interaction and the construction of the self points to social philosophy – item (4) on our list. It is only in the democratization of those institutions that we can have fully developed selves (i.e., that we take on our roles as *our own*). It is only through democratic interactions that selves can be *re*constructed into persons who behave with a greater degree of democratic accountability. And if we don't have democratic processes underlying higher education, where *can* we expect to find them? Education, higher or otherwise, can never be one way. Nor, however, is it simply a two-way relation, and certainly not forty two way relations between one teacher and forty students, each of them having nothing in common beyond the common element, teacher.

What this idea of education entails is radical democracy; but I am *not* proposing a system where there is to be no guidance, nor one in which students can arbitrarily choose their course of study.[11] I propose a setting in which students not only

participate and interact, but that they do so with each other as well as with the instructor. This is a setting in which they must be allowed to, coaxed into, or even forced (not literally) into taking initiative in their studies and apply those studies to their interactions with the institutions which make them who they are.

Consummation? Reconstructing Practice

All these things considered, the last several years have been ones of reconstruction of the content of classes I teach – from Fundamentals of Philosophy, to a variety of Applied Ethics courses, to finally, courses in Anti-Racism.

Before discussing Anti-Racism, I'd like to share two examples from an off campus course in "Business Ethics." I begin here because successes there helped me to rethink my success on the main campus and reconstruct my teaching. The students off campus are typically working professionals who are taking classes in order to improve themselves (usually, that means 'get more money', but not always); they are not business majors and that makes them more teachable (i.e., they haven't been exposed to an onslaught of implicit claims as to the moral preeminence of profit maximization masquerading as objective economic analysis). Anyway, many students in the class – usually half – choose as term projects something that has direct bearing on their professional life.

One such student, who worked for a local power company, did her project on the recent policy of downsizing in her company. Using the Deweyan model of reflective problem-solving (i.e., his normative extension of the descriptive model of thinking expressed in *How We Think*) I asked her to first describe the case in question (start with the concrete!), explicate what is at the root of the problem, describe the values present and those thwarted by the current policy, consider alternates, evaluate them by virtue of what problems they'd solve and which they'd create, and then suggest a course of action and defend it against possible criticisms.

Another student worked on the cause of morale problems in her workplace. I asked her to take a look at the institutional structure and the levels of accountability and discretionary responsibility. She had identified a particular manager as the source of the problem but I challenged her to see that under an organization properly structured, such an individual would either reform or get kicked out of the system. She then mentioned to me that come to think of it, the same sorts of problems had existed with previous managers, only in this case the problem was more acute because of greater advantage this individual had taken of the structure which makes for no accountability in this given managerial position. As with the other student, the goal of her paper is to propose a solution to the existing problem(s). In her case, she made a restructuring proposal, based on a review of various management theories that were created to increase accountability and workplace democracy.

The reason I mention these cases is that they express to me the success in (a) using Dewey's model of reflective problem solving, (b) applying Dewey's discus-

sion of interest and discipline,[12] and (c) in getting the student to see the usefulness of philosophical reflection. Beginning with an activity they can call their own, having a realizable end-in-view and learning material *by using it*, is the very best any teacher can hope for.

Of course not all cases are success stories (even when they are, the students pull it off with varying degrees), and this particular population of students is unique. Most of the students on the main campus, by contrast, are young ones just out of high school without the lived experience that gives older students the motivation to *do* something. The young ones, for me – at least initially – were the ones who gave me the greatest challenge.

The challenge was basically this: Deweyan education requires that there is already activity; yet our educational institutions remove instruction from most activity, save those abstract exercises which are so removed from everyday courses of events that the theory practice rift is almost indelibly stamped on our consciousness by the time we leave elementary school. They study starvation in other countries but are sheltered from the abject poverty across town. They write letters to the President of the United States, but never to the editor of the local newspaper. Every social problem considered and civic duty performed tends to separate students from, rather than connect them to, their communities. So enter college freshmen: typically, they've done very little and have been discouraged from doing so. They can't wait to get out of school so they *can* do something, but they have no idea what that something would be (except of course that magical carrot we call 'more money'). There are many nodes of cynicism in the minds of young college students, and the one which (perhaps) blocks us from getting through to all the others is the idea that education has nothing to do with the real world.

So what can we do to best serve the traditional student? In addition to the changes in content outlined above, I came to see that there must also be a change in form. Pedagogically, I found it necessary to change the basic *structure* of my courses. The emphasis on application mentioned above means very little unless students engage each other, hold each other accountable, and take personal responsibility for their work, especially inasmuch as that work has an effect on their class mates. And when we come to issues such as racism, responsibility and accountability taken on even more significance. In fact it has been the subject matter of racism that has impressed on me why it is that that structures must change. Racism, in short, speaks to why form and content must change at once.

More Seizures: Racism and Anti-Racism

The subject matter – content – of racism and anti-racist organizing is a subject that has made it most apparent to me that format – structure – must be addressed before the content can be dealt with. For this realization and the analysis to follow I am indebted to an antiracist organization called the People's Institute.[13] Here are four

key components of anti-racism from the People's Institute model that I have tried to implement in my teaching:

1) **defining and undoing racism**: overcoming the trap of inevitability through analysis and recognition of historicity;
2) **teaching the history of racism**: historical stages of racism and the recognition of race as a social construct;
3) **leadership development**: overcoming the structure of domination by cultivating leadership and independence;
4) **accountability**: overcoming domination by multidirectional accountability.

The first component, which involves tools of definition and social analysis as a means of undoing racial injustice, challenges the common perception that racism has always been with us and thereby checks the persistent sense of inevitability among both "whites" and "people of color." This analysis points out that collectively we have failed to remember that racism, as an idea and a practice, has evolved and continues to do so. There's a tendency for us to conceptualize racism in terms of what it was – overt bigotry and physically violent behavior – and hence, in the absence of such practice, we see no racial problems. Although violence and bigotry are still very real, a closer look shows us that racism is not limited to these things. Like sexism, racism involves more than conscious feelings of superiority on the part of some individual; racism exists as *systems* of domination and oppression that continue to perpetuate themselves even after individuals cease to be conscious of the harm they do. The violence becomes part of regular practice, is justified, and then slips into invisibility. The working definition of racism, according to this analysis is "**Race Prejudice plus Power**,"[14] where 'race' is understood as a social construct rather than a natural kind, and 'power' is understood to be socially legitimated (i.e., institutional). Examples of this embedded racism range from racial tracking in the public schools to the numerous Black, Native American, and Latino men who have died at the hands of police men following "proper procedures" in recent years.

The teaching of the history of racism – the second component identified above – speaks to the need to overcome inevitability by showing the historicity of racism. It also helps to unveil the form and structure of racism and its relation to the foundations of this society. Racism endures to the extent that it is *seen* as enduring, to the extent that its construction is veiled, and until we begin to see that and *how* it was constructed in stages, it will always be seen as permanent. But once we unveil the construct of racism, we can begin to see that it can be *de*constructed, or, dismantled. Once we see that since it was *done*, that it can be *un*done, we can begin to consider *how* we can undertake the task of undoing racism. And once we understand this history, we will be able to see how we continue to live it out in our lives, from our schools, to our churches, to our anti-racist organizations. We will be able to see that only in the deconstruction of our own enterprises that racism will be undone. Keeping that in mind, I will briefly digress here and provide a reading of the history of the race construct. What will become apparent, I hope, is that each of the stages

identified will suggest a plan (or plans) of action that we must follow in any effort to dismantle racial supremacy.

A first stage in the creation of racism, which might be called "pre-racism," was the promotion of cultural (and later, racial) superiority and the subsequent belief in natural hierarchies, which started around the 16th Century CE and continues today in more subtle forms. The enterprise of colonialism and the practice of slavery were the precursors to racism. Accounts from historians such as James Loewen, Howard Zinn, and A. Leon Higgenbotham[15] show how greed and ethnocentric fear, both still prevalent today, were used to create the foundation for the race construct. In these accounts, we find that historical factors like the colonists' difficulties with the natives and slaves, their anxieties over religious differences, and the visually apparent phenotypic differences between Europeans, Native Americans and Africans conspired to encourage domination. Though the concept of race did not yet exist in the 16th century, the stage was set for its development.

A second stage, what I call "unapologetic race-making," is the *institutionalization* of racial supremacy through the old and still widely used divide-and-conquer tactic. Beginning in the 17th century CE and continuing into the 20th century, there is a distinct pattern of colonial powers introducing discriminatory laws and practices. Many of us don't learn that the Africans[16] who came to North America in 1619 had a status very similar to that of white indentured servants.[17] Neither do we learn that a series of twists of fate along with the rapacious desire for profit from the ruling class changed that status in less than 100 years. One factor was that escaped European servants were hard to find, so there was a movement towards identifying servitude with Africans and dark skin.[18] More importantly, *alliances* between white servants, Africans, and natives created difficulties for the ruling elite, so laws were enacted to discourage if not prohibit inter-group interaction, severely punish whites who helped Africans escape or joined with native people's societies, and give disparate punishments for blacks and whites for the same crimes.[19] An important (and evidently desired) result of this was creating feelings of superiority and resentment between the groups. And the pattern continues on today, while most of us have no conception of how and why we feel as we do.

But ill feelings were not the only result of this trend in law-making. By 1705 Africans were legally removed from the family of man and relegated to the status of property. Africans came to be known as *black* (or Negro), black and slave became synonymous, and whiteness was born. Here's a list of important events in the founding of the race construct:

- the first legal reference to blacks as slaves came in 1659;[20]
- the casual killing of (black) slaves became legal in 1669;
- the first occurrence of the term "white" as a racial category in law was in 1691;
- interracial marriage became punishable by law in 1705;
- the first scientific use of term "race" was introduced in 1749.[21]

By the middle of the 18th century, the status of blacks was so dehumanized that Montesquieu wrote ironically: "It is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow, that we ourselves are not Christian."[22]

A third stage in the development of the race construct, which can be described as "internalized oppression and superiority," is the *perpetuation* of white status and racial superiority through the ordinary and legitimized process of socialization. The racism constructed through law had become an ideology (a *super*structure) and became imbedded in institutional structures (including individual psyches) and practice. This process began immediately following first stage, strengthened in the second stage, and continues on today – though again, often denied to exist. The significance of this internalization is profound. One consequence is that even if one removes the original cause – legal separation and domination – the results will persist in the institutions there embedded.

This fact explains how and why there came to be a backlash and a re-institution of racial domination only after a brief period of relative equality following the Civil War and the end of *legally* institutionalized slavery. From the Hayes Compromise of 1877, to Woodrow Wilson's segregation of the federal government in 1912,[23] to the reign of terror on blacks by groups such as the KKK (Tulsa, OK, 1921; Rosewood, FL, 1923, etc.),[24] to racial prerequisites in immigration (until 1952),[25] to racial segregation in housing, schools and churches,[26] the backlash by whites testifies to the power of internalized racism.

When the civil rights movement of 1950's and 60's challenged again white supremacy and changed much of the "re-legalized" racism, there was to be another backlash.[27] From Nixon's War on Drugs as a war on blacks,[28] to Reagan's Supreme Court appointees, to the dramatic increase of blacks in the prisons since the 60's, to the scaling back of welfare and Affirmative Action, we can see that until we remove the racism from institutional and personal practice, it will continue to reemerge again and again. The persistence of overt inequities in practices such as hiring and promotion policies, lending policies, renderings of public services such as police and fire protection, and allocation of educational resources and treatment of students, is not an accident – it has historical roots.

Praxis: Teaching Anti-Racism, or, Consummation is an End-In-View

Some version of this kind of social analysis and historical overview should be included in any discussion of racism (and which details to emphasize should be based on the population of students involved). Much of the problem we face as teachers and activists is ignorance of important details in our collective past, not to mention details about our present. But knowledge of history and social analysis do not by themselves undo racism (or sexism, for that matter). We must see how these constructed structures of domination are manifest in our own practices, and that changes in the content of what we say must accompany changes in form and

structure. Our means of engaging the subject must be compatible with the ends-in-view, and when we engage the issue of domination, we must engage it not simply as something other people do, but as what we all tend to do, even when trying to end domination!

If we return to the above list and consider the People's Institute's concepts of (3) – leadership development and (4) – accountability, the relationship between good teaching and anti-racism becomes more clear. The People's Institute models these concepts in the format of their activities and in the structure of their organization. Both in the community work that they do in New Orleans and in the conducting of their "Undoing Racism" workshops, they continually foster and promote new leadership and find and develop new channels of accountability.

With respect to leadership, the Institute's model is one in which leadership is sought and cultivated not only in the communities they serve, but also internally within the organization. "Core Trainers" for the Institute's workshops, for instance, are always accompanied by "Resource Trainers" and "Trainers in Training." Resource Trainers have a responsibility to participate in the discussion and to lead some of the sessions; Trainers in Training attend, observe, and occasionally participate. In this process, new leaders are created within the organization and more and more individuals find a voice and personal empowerment. The Institute also cultivates accountability, the flip side of leadership, both internally and externally. Their list of accomplishments in creating more accountability to people of color is long and impressive, but of special importance for our purposes here is the mandate for accountability within the organization. It is here, as in the case of leadership development, that their model gives guidance for pedagogy, since educators, especially those of social justice, must practice what they teach. The Institute addresses this mandate by not only creating a climate of equal accountability within the organization, but by requiring their "Core Trainers" to be actively engaged in community (anti-racist) organizing; requiring, that is, that they be accountable to their community.

Teachers of anti-racism, in the same fashion, must strive to develop leadership amongst their students (and colleagues) and be actively engaged in antiracist efforts in their community. Adding a fifth item to both of the above lists,

5) The concept of educational *praxis* in Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,[29]

we find at once a pedagogical mandate for leaderships development and accountability and a focus on overcoming oppressive practice. From a pedagogical standpoint, *praxis*, which Freire calls "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it,"[30] should be understood to mean not only a relationship between theory and practice, but also between teacher and student, liberator and liberated. Since there are hierarchical structures in place in all our institutions, cooperative leadership is most often discouraged – especially amongst non-majority groups, and those in positions of inferiority and dependency mostly stay in those positions (unless they are willing to assimilate and help maintain the system from the other

side). Freire and the Institute both tell us that our task as educators and activists is to break the cycle of domination and submission and create, instead, a cycle of leadership and accountability. And this task must be undertaken both outside of and within the educational or organizational setting.

In seeking to break down the traditional dichotomies of teacher/student, leader/follower, and liberator/liberated, Freire proposes such a cycle. He replaces these dichotomous relations with continuums of teacher-student, leader-follower, and liberator-liberated. In a discussion reminiscent of Dewey, Freire draws a distinction between the "banking concept of education" and "problem-posing education,"[31] In developing this distinction, Freire takes us to a level where issues like racism, sexism, and other forms of domination can be addressed. Freire not only establishes the connection between education and leadership development, but also stresses the importance of bringing people to the table as equals. Noting that the dehumanization *of the oppressor* makes him largely unfit for leadership, Freire tells us that social change must be *led by the oppressed*, no matter how much knowledge, passion, or good will is present in the oppressor.

In my work as an educator, I have found three important stages to work through in undoing racism and in resolving the oppressor/oppressed contradiction found in traditional classroom settings: *de-centering dialogue, building classroom community, and institutionalizing peer accountability*. In constructing the first stage, teachers have to keep in mind that dialogue is not simply a matter of people coming together and discussing race relations. Real dialogue requires radical equality, a breaking down of barriers in such a way that painful truth will invariably come out. Yet truth rarely flows freely in settings in which a single power controls the discourse. Traditional classrooms are such a setting, since dialogue there almost always centers around the teacher, who wields power by virtue of grades, authority, eloquence, and who is trained to keep things under control. A first step, then, is to change the ground rules of the discourse and democratize the dialogue by removing the center. To effect the de-centering of dialogue, initial discussions of the subject matter should take place in small groups, and then follow-up can take place in larger group or whole group settings. These small peer group discussions almost always produce full participation from all class members and makes high participation in larger settings very likely. People are much more likely to find their voice in these kinds of discussions, no matter what their opinion happens to be. And though there are still going to be power relations based on gender and race in any setting, taking the class instructor out of the initial discussions and keeping the working groups small helps the participants sort out their differences on a personal and human level.

These discussions both create and are enhanced by classroom community. This stage of undoing racism must take into account that trust is always an issue in honest dialogue, and this issue can only be addressed through community. For this reason, teachers must take every opportunity to build relationships between the students. Working on common tasks where they are to be accountable to each other

on a routine basis is imperative. It is not enough to give them assignments to be completed occasionally outside of class; they must be engaged in ongoing discussions, projects, and exercises as part of the regular conduct of the class. Common efforts can vary enormously. They can be very personal discussions that never leave the small group, or they can be political action on local public policy and practice. They can be as simple as answering study questions together and then comparing their answers with another group, or they can be as involved as writing, producing and performing a play for the university and local community.[32] Wherever in the range of possibilities these actions fall, they must be chosen and completed together in an ongoing effort to build community. In one important sense, a given class is a success only to the extent that students enrolled in it maintain relationships after the end of the term.

Classroom community cannot fully be a reality without instituting a system of peer accountability. Members of the class, to be full citizens, must be responsible to each other not only in choosing and completing tasks, but also in *evaluating* each other's work. In short, the teacher must not only de-center the dialogue, but also de-center accountability. One of the implications of this de-centering is the institution of a peer evaluation process, where the role of the teacher is limited to helping create criteria of evaluation and administrating the results. There are many ways of doing this, and varying degrees to which it can be done. For most classes, I would not recommend having students grade each other's papers, but there is little reason to shy away from student evaluation of skits and other performances, and no reason to assign participation grades without student control and input. Any performer knows that he or she must know his or her audience, and who is a better judge of what the audience gets out a performance than the audience to which it is directed? Similarly, is there anyone more knowledgeable about who did their fair share of the work on a given project than the members of the working group?

These three stages of undoing racism and domination in the classroom correspond roughly, in reverse, to the three stages of racism developed earlier. *De-centering* dialogue helps to bring to the surface internalized feelings of superiority and inferiority and to deconstruct those feelings and the ideology which fosters them. *Classroom community*, based on this dialogue, helps to *un*make race insofar as the ideological sources of continued racial divisions between students are unveiled and confronted in an atmosphere of common pursuits and activities. Finally, *de-centering accountability* creates a mechanism by which the variety of prejudices and fears people tend to have are checked, without any one point of view being given a privileged status. These stages are not formulas for guaranteed success. Preoccupation with control, after all, is symptomatic of the mind-set anti-racism seeks to change. Thinking in terms of these stages, however, does help undo racism and other forms of domination insofar as this way of thinking addresses the need to confront the problem as form and content.

The mandate for teachers to cultivate and follow leadership by the students, especially students of color, is not easy. And it is doubly difficult for white

educators teaching anti-racism (as it is for men teaching anti-sexism), since this mandate requires that we not only reflect on our positions of privilege as teachers, but also as white people. Giving up privilege would not be so hard if only people could see that they have it. This is actually one area where the younger less experienced people are more open. It seems that as we settle into our positions, professions and lifestyles, we end up investing so much of who we are into what we do that the thought that maybe our doing well is at someone else's expense is too hard to bear. In place of that thought often comes what might be called 'arrogant humility,' which is the apex of privilege. How many of us have told oppressed and otherwise marginalized people that we understand their suffering and that we are going to help them, all the while being quite pleased at our humble gesture of kindness. And woe to any ingrate who refuses the gift!

Teachers of anti-racism must take leadership roles, but they must also reconstruct their notion of leadership and redefine their responsibility. Freire notes that "the leaders do bear a responsibility for coordination and, at times, direction – but leaders who deny praxis to the oppressed thereby invalidate their own praxis."[33] Freire is suggesting that praxis must be understood not only as a content – a concrete destination – but as also a form, or, process of activity which must be present in everyone. Dewey understood this when he identified democracy and education. One cannot take up one challenge without the other. The challenge of education is not one of filling receptacles, but of redirecting energies. The challenge of democratic liberation is not one of granting rights or power, but one of leadership development, accountability, and empowerment. And if we take them up *together*, the two challenges point to the same end-in-view. In the end, the form and content of democracy and education will do more than make us anti-racists; it will re-humanize us as we undertake the reconstruction of who we are.

Notes

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Vintage, 1966), Sec. 63.

[2] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1997), p. 29.

[3] The terms 'initial seizure,' 'recognition,' 'perception,' and 'consummation,' used in the section titles, are borrowed from John Dewey's esthetics. See his *Art As Experience* (New York: Perigee, 1934).

[4] The Latin root of 'education,' *educare*, means 'to draw out.'

[5] Louis Schmier is the name of the colleague. Schmier's book, *Random Thoughts: the Humanity of Teaching* (Madison: Magna Publications, 1995), chronicles his path to his teaching methods.

[6] John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1933).

[7] G.H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, Charles Morris, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

[8] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Free Press, 1944).

[9] C.S. Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief," in Justus Buchler (ed.), *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York: Dover, 1955), pp. 5–22.

[10] Mead, "Stages in the Act: Preliminary Statement," in *The Philosophy of the Act*, Charles Morris, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 3–25.

[11] See Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, Chapter 7.

[12] See Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, Chapter 10.

[13] The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond/1444 N. Johnson St./New Orleans, LA 70116. More about the People's Institute is developed later in this paper.

[14] This definition is the exact formulation of the People's Institute. Discussions of the definition can be found in Ronald Chisom and Michael Washington, *Undoing Racism: A Philosophy of International Social Change*, 2nd edn. (Peoples Institute Press, 1997), pp. 30–37, and Joseph Barndt, *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991), pp. 28–34.

[15] See James Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, (New York, Touchstone, 1995), Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the US* (New York: Harper, 1980), and A. Leon Higgenbotham, *In the Matter of Color: The Legal Construction of Race* (Oxford, 1980).

[16] My focus here is going to be on the African American experience, since this is most relevant to the work I do in Georgia. Were I teaching elsewhere, it would be more appropriate to focus on Native American, Latino(a), etc., experiences.

[17] Higgenbotham, Chapter 2.

[18] Zinn, Chapter 2.

[19] Zinn, Chapter 2, Higgenbotham, Chapter 2.

[20] This and the next three items are documented in Higgenbotham, Chapter 2.

[21] Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race*, 6th edn. (Walnut Grove: AltaMira, 1997), Chapter 1.

[22] Cited in both Loewen, Chapter 5 (p. 143), and Montagu, Chapter 1 (p. 73).

[23] Loewen, Chapter 5.

[24] Loewen discusses Tulsa incident in Chapter 5.

[25] See Ian F. Haney Lopez, *White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1996).

[26] See Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton, *American Apartheid*: *The Building of America's Underclass* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1993).

[27] This "backlash" account is presented as part of the history section of the People's Institute "Undoing Racism" workshop. The historians on staff are Michael Washington and David Billings.

[28] Haldeman's diary from 1969 is quoted as saying, "Nixon emphasized that you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to" (*The Nation*, Oct. 12, 1998, p. 9).

[29] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 2nd edn. (New York: Continuum, 1993).

[30] Freire, p. 33.

[31] The distinction is in Freire, Chapter 2.

[32] I have had the pleasure and good fortune of working with Tim Lee, a local playwright/student, who has produced two plays and two public programs using students in Anti-racism classes. The plays and programs not only serve to educate members of the university and local communities about the subject matter of the courses they are developed out of, but also enrich the students involved, both individually and collectively. Classroom community has been at its highest during those times in which we have produced these programs.

[33] Freire, p. 107.

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