Multiculturalism Beyond Tolerance

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Abstract

Cultural diversity cannot be viewed as simply the celebration of selected cultural manifestations of subordinated cultures aimed at securing better relations with dominant cultural groups. This view sustains a notion of ideology that systematically negates rather than makes meaningful the cultural experiences of subordinated cultural groups who are, by and large, the objects of dominant cultural policies. That is, the selective celebration of subordinated cultural values outside of a power relations framework can never prepare us to develop a deeper understanding of the tensions and contractions generated by the almost always asymmetrical multicultural co-existence.

In this paper, I want to argue that, as we enter the twenty first century, one of the most pressing challenges facing educators is the specter of an "ethnic and cultural war," which constitutes in my view, a code phrase that engenders our society's licentiousness toward racism. Central to the current cultural war is the facile call for a common culture and the over-celebration of myths that attempt to inculcate us with beliefs about the supremacy of Western heritage at the same time as the dominant ideology creates other instruments that degrade and devalue other cultural narratives along the lines of race, ethnicity, language, and gender.

Introduction

In the past two decades or so, the issue of cultural diversity has taken on a new importance among educators. Unfortunately, the debate that has emerged tends to recycle old assumptions and values regarding the meaning and usefulness of cultural diversity. The notion that cultural diversity is a matter of celebrating, in a situated context, some surface structure features of subordinated cultures still informs the vast majority of multicultural programs and manifests its logic in the renewed emphasis on viewing the cultural worth of others through the lens of dominant Western cultures.

I want to reiterate in this paper that cultural diversity cannot be viewed as simply the celebration of selected cultural manifestations of subordinated cultures aimed at securing better relations with dominant cultural groups. This view sustains a notion of ideology that systematically negates rather than makes meaningful the cultural experiences of subordinated cultural groups who are, by and large, the objects of dominant cultural policies. That is, the selective celebration of subordinated cultural values outside of a power relations framework can never prepare us to develop a deeper understanding of the tensions and contractions generated by the almost always asymmetrical multicultural co-existence. For this reason, I prefer to highlight some cultural facts that are seldom incorporated in our facile understanding and implementation of multicultural education programs:

1) Multiculturalism is never a mere co-existence of various cultural groups organized symmetrically. In general, the co-existence of cultural groups are mostly distributed asymmetrically. Thus, the comprehension of multiculturalism depends more on the power relations between dominant and subordinated cultural groups than the understanding of cultural behavior patterns of subordinated cultural groups.
2) Multicultural research is, by and large, a study about other cultural groups as cultural objects. It is rare when research models provide us the opportunity to study and analyze the cultural characteristics and behaviors of dominant cultural groups that belong, in most cases, to the white race. The ideological differences generate, on the one hand, discrimination and,on the other hand, cultural resistance. As educators, we must analyze the tensions and conflicts produced by the relationship between discrimination and resistance so that these tensions and conflicts can more appropriately be negotiated pedagogi-

cally. These cultural conflicts can only be understood through a rigorous analysis of the dominant ideology and its role in generating, shaping, and maintaining cultural subjugation.

3) As Paulo Freire always indicated, cultural differences exist and they are always cut by factors such as class, race, ethnicity, and gender. We often treat culture as a monolithic entity and we have a predisposition to ignore the intimate relationship between culture, class, ethnicity, race, and gender (Freire and Macedo, 1995: 377-402). For example, in Boston, Massachusetts, we seldom discuss these differences when we analyze Puerto Ricans and we almost always collapse these cultural factors into ethnicity. By doing so, we fail to understand that the failure of Puerto Rican students in the Boston Public Schools has more to do with their class position than their ethnicity. Middle and upper-middle class Puerto Rican students enrolled in the Boston Public Schools always succeed even when they experience English language difficulties.

   What never discussed in the multicultural school debate in the United States is the obvious fact known by most educators: school success almost always depends on the class positions of the student population. In other words, middle and upper class students generally succeed in school while lower class students tend to experience greater school failure. When we confuse class position with ethnicity or race, we can easily reproduce the myth that Puerto Rican and African-American students are genetically wired to be inferior intellectually.

4) With rare exception, multicultural program development and research presuppose that the study and analysis of subordinated cultural groups can and should be done through the dominant languages and never through the subordinated languages. The issue of language as a cultural and political tool is seldom discussed. That is, the celebration of the suborninated cultural values via the dominant language fails to take into consideration how language can be used to reproduce dominant cultural values. It also ignores the role of language in cultural liberation. It is important to note that subordinated languages should never be sacrificed since they constitute the best medium through which subjugated students give meaning to their cultural experience in the world.

Given the high level of racism and xenophobia we are witnessing in the world today which are exacerbated by the rapid globalization, I will attempt to situate my analysis of multiculturalism within a framework

that brings to the fore the issue of race relations. By emphasizing race issues, I do not, however, negate the importance of other important cultural factors discussed above. I will, whenever possible, address the interactions of multiple cultural factors that can either function to reproduce the interests of dominant cultural groups or lead to cultural production where specific groups of people produce, mediate, and confirm the mutual ideological elements that emerge from and affirm their daily lived experiences.

Rare is the university or college that has escaped the debate over multiculturalism and diversity. In some schools, the issue has given rise to extraordinarily volatile contexts where racism, anti-Semitism, anti-feminism, and ethnic xenophobia characterize campus life. In some instances, the high level of xenophobia has so much poisoned the campus environment leading to drastic measures such as the evacuation of "scores of minority students from [the Trinity College] campus [in Chicago] after menacing letters, including one in which a threat to shoot a black student was made, were received by at least three minority students" (Ferkenhoff, 2005: A3). This current incident is the continuation of the racial violence that characterized, for example, "the University of Massachusetts at Amherst –scene of some of the worst outbreaks of racial violence on campus in recent years– an African-American residential adviser was beaten up by a white visitor and feces were smeared on the door of his room. Enraged, scores of black students rampaged through a 22-story dormitory. Police had to warn residents not to leave their dorms" (Sanoff and Mimerbrook, 1993: 52).

In this paper, I want to argue that, as we enter the twenty first century, one of the most pressing challenges facing educators is the specter of an "ethnic and cultural war," which constitutes in my view, a code phrase that engenders our society's licentiousness toward racism. Central to the current cultural war is the facile call for a common culture and the over-celebration of myths that attempt to inculcate us with beliefs about the supremacy of Western heritage at the same time as the dominant ideology creates other instruments that degrade and devalue other cultural narratives along the lines of race, ethnicity, language, and gender.

In the last twenty five years a large body of literature has amply demonstrated the advantages of multiculturalism that range from greater cultural democracy to more harmonious intercultural relations. Ironically, while these studies unequivocally point to the underlining value

of multiculturalism, Western hegemonic forces are imposing themselves with arrogance and disrespect devaluing the dignity and integrity of subordinated cultures that are still struggling to sever the yoke of cultural imperialism. Against a backdrop of Western cultural hegemony, conservative educators continue to demonize any and all forms of multiculturalism while many liberal educators have selectively embraced a sloganized form of multicultural and diversity education as a means to address the current dance of bigotry that characterizes education in most countries, particularly in developed nations. In our conversation today, I want to also argue that before we can announce the existence of multicultural programs based on a truly cultural democracy, we need to denounce the false assumptions and naïveté that inform the present development of multicultural education which often lead to a form of "charitable paternalism." For example, instead of developing a cogent multicultural education that could teach us about the arduous and complex process of coming to cultural voice, a process that invariably involves tensions, contradictions, fears, doubts, hopes, and dreams, many educators (including many liberals) usually reduce the process of coming to cultural voice to a facile proposition such as "we need to empower minorities" (an euphemism for the oppressed) or "we need to give them voice". What these seemingly progressive educators fail to realize is that emergence of submerged voices almost always involves political clarity, pain, and hope. In other words, voice is not something to be given through an added on multicultural curriculum by those in power, for if one has the power to give voice, one must also retain the same power to take it away. What is important to understand is that cultural voice requires struggle and the understanding of both possibilities and limitations. For most subordinate cultural groups, coming to voice represents a process through which they come to know what it means to be at the periphery of the intimate and yet fragile relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. It also means that the colonized becomes fully aware that cultural voice is not something to be given by the colonizer. The very discourse of giving voice points to the inherent power and cultural arrogance which are usually inculcated in the psyche of the colonizers as well as the colonized, particularly in those individuals who remain unable to decolonize the mind. Thus, during the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa one may have heard, for instance, "the White South African minority government has decided to give the black majority the right to vote" where "to give the right to vote" is linguistically

and psychologically structured as a gift package. The true reality is that racial democracy in South Africa and elsewhere came about due to the persistent struggles of citizens who courageously resisted the oppressive yoke of white supremacy rule. We need to understand and courageously announce that cultural voice cannot be prepackaged as a gift. Cultural voice is a human right. Cultural voice is a democratic right. Against a landscape of charitable multicultural education, I want to propose that the failure of most multicultural education programs and curricula to achieve cultural democracy is primarily due to two fundamental factors: 1) the teaching of cultural tolerance as an end in itself and 2) the lack of political clarity in the multicultural education movement which, in turn, prevents even the most committed educators from understanding how the school of positivism which many of them embrace, informs and shapes multicultural program and curriculum developments, often neutralizing the possibility for the creation of pedagogical structures that could lead to an authentic cultural democracy.

The Paternalism of Cultural Tolerance

A simple analysis will readily show that there is preponderance in the field of multicultural education to teach tolerance. This posture is not only paternalistic but it also fails to critique its underlying assumptions so as to understand the power asymmetry that characterizes the constellation of cultures within which we live, particularly in the age of globalization. The emphasis on the teaching of cultural tolerance often fails to denude the privilege inherent in such posture. In other words, by promising the "other" a dose of tolerance so we can get along, not only eclipses real opportunities for the development of mutual respect and cultural solidarity but it also hide the privilege and paternalism inscribed in the proposition "I will tolerate you even though your culture is repugnant". The teaching of tolerance that is ushering multicultural education into the 21st century has brought with it highly complex and challenging realities that are still ill understood but have enormous ramifications for a more humanized world. Not only has the teaching of cultural tolerance not dealt with the great economic disparity created by the widening gap between the so-called first and third worlds, the resulting gulf between the rich and poor countries has manifested itself in unpredictable immigration patterns which has exacerbated our

already racist societies. For example, in the last few years, for the first time in human history, over one hundred million people immigrated from one part of the globe to another. With it, this exponential increase in immigration has given rise to a dramatic increase of racism and xenophobia. In France, the ultra-right National Front Party headed by Jean-Marie LePen, has mounted an incessant attack on immigrants, particularly the Muslims from former French colonies. In Germany, there has been a significant increase in the number of neo-Nazi groups who have been responsible for a number of house bombings against the Greeks and Turks. The Turks, in turn, have remain no less violent against the Kurds as they arbitrarily wiped out hundreds of Kurd villages killing over thirty thousand people and sentencing the remaining Kurds to a life of half-citizenry in the margins of ghetto existence. In Austria, Russia, and some Scandinavian countries, the level of anti-Semitism is also on the rise. Israel, in turn, fueled by uncontained racism, has elevated racist violence against the Palestinians and Lebanese to unacceptable levels. In Portugal the discrimination and segregation of Africans from the former colonies are attested by the inhumane ghetto reality that characterizes shantytowns that dot some peripheries around Lisbon. Similar levels of xenophobia are also found in Spain where Gypsies and North African immigrants are a constant target. The violent eruption against North Africans in the town of EI Ejido where 22 people were injured point to the outbreak of racism in a country that always claimed to be non-racist.

Even in Greece where many people would deny that racism exists, we would have to acknowledge the discriminatory practices leveled against Albanians and other recent immigrants. Against a backdrop of increased globalized racism and xenophobia, I doubt very much that the teaching of tolerance alone will enable us to critically understand how capitalist forces construct, shape, and maintain the cruel reality of racism. I also doubt that the teaching of tolerance could equip educators with the necessary critical tools to understand how language is often used to ideologically construct realities that veil the raw racism that devalue, disconfirm, and poison other cultural identities. Even within the multicultural education movement, most educators fail to understand the neo-colonialist ideology that informs the multi-cultural debate to the extent that they almost always structure their arguments within a reductionistic view of culture that has its roots in a colonialist legacy.

If we analyze closely the ideology that informs and shapes the present

debate over multicultural education and the present polemic over the primacy of Western heritage, we can begin to see and understand that the ideological principles that sustain those debates are consonant with the structures and mechanisms of a colonial ideology designed to devalue the cultural capital and values of the colonized. It is only through a full understanding of our colonial legacy that we can begin to comprehend the complexity of our multiculturalism in the Western countries. For example, for most cultural subordinate individuals in the Western nations, their multiculturalism is not characterized by the ability to have two cultures. There is a radical difference between a dominant person adopting a second culture and a cultural subordinate individual struggling to acquire and be accepted by the dominant culture. While the former involves the addition of a second culture to one's cultural repertoire (for example, a middle-class white American student who goes to Paris to learn French and enjoy the French culture), the latter usually provides the subordinate person with the experience of subordination in both his and her native culture which is devalued by the dominant values and the dominant culture that he or she is attempting to acquire, often under coercive conditions. This is the case for most lower class immigrants in the United States, particularly those from Third World countries. Both the colonized context and the asymmetrical power relations with respect to cultural identity in the United States (and other Western countries as well) create, on the one hand, a form of forced multiculturalism and, on the other, what could be called a cultural drama. That is, the reality of being forced to live in a borrowed cultural existence. This is an existence that is almost culturally schizophrenic – that is, being present and yet not visible – being visible and yet not present. It is a condition that invariably presents itself to the reality of cultures that have been subordinated – the constant juggling of two worlds, two asymmetrical cultures, and two languages of which the subordinate language is usually devalued and demonized. An example par excellence concerning how our society treats different forms of multiculturalism is reflected in our tolerance toward certain types of biculturalism and lack of tolerance toward other bicultural realities. Most of us have tolerated various degrees of biculturalism on the part of cultural anthropologists and language teachers that range from a simplistic form of anthropolizing the so-called primitive cultures to serious deficiency in the mastery of the foreign language on the part of many foreign language teachers. Nevertheless, these cultural anthropologists and

foreign language teachers, with rare exceptions, have been granted tenure, have been promoted within the institutions they teach and, in some cases, and have become "experts" and "spokespersons" for various cultural and linguistic groups in our communities. On the other hand, for example, if a teacher is a speaker of a subordinated language who speaks English as a second language with an accent, the same level of tolerance is not accorded to them. Take the case of Westfield, Massachusetts, when "about 400 people there signed a petition asking state and local officials to ban the hiring of any elementary teacher who speaks English with an accent" (Lupo, 1992: 19), because according to them, "accents are catching" (*The Boston Globe*, 1992: 16). The petition was in response to the hiring of a Puerto Rican teacher assigned to teach in the system. As one can readily *see*, any form of multicultural education that neglects to fully investigate this cultural drama and treat multiculturalism as having mere competencies in two cultures, invariably end up reproducing those ideological elements characteristic of the relationship between colonizer and colonized through which the colonized is always and falsely discriminated, devalued, and demonized.

Fracturing Cultural Identities through Scientism

Oppressive dominant ideologies have throughout history resorted to science as a mechanism to rationalize crimes against humanity that range from slavery to genocide by targeting race and other ethnic and cultural traits as markers that license all forms of dehumanization. If we did not suffer from historical amnesia, we would easily understand the ideology that informed Hans Eysenck's psychological proposal which suggest that "there might be a partly genetic reason for the differences in IQ between black and white people" (Eysenck, 1971). It is the same historical amnesia that veils dangerous memories keeping us disconnected from Arthur Jensen's racist proposals published decades ago by the Harvard Educational Review.

One could argue that the above cited incidents belong to the dusty archives of earlier generations but I do not believe we have learned a great deal from historically dangerous memories, considering our society's almost total embrace of scientism as characterized by the success of *The Bell Curve*, by Charles Murray and the former Harvard professor Richard, J. Hernstein. It is the same blind acceptance of "naive" empir-

icism that continues to fuel and shape both educational research and curriculum development, including multicultural programs with a misguided focus on testing and objectivity.

By and large the present debate over bilingual and bicultural education in the United States is informed by the positivistic and management models that hide their ideologies in the false call for objectivity, hard data, and scientific rigor. This can be seen, for example, in the comments of Pepi Leistyna's term paper on the political nature of bilingual and bicultural education: "These are unsupported politically motivated claims! [the Harvard professor called for] a more linguistic analysis" (Leistyna, 1998). As Leistyna recounts, this same professor told him: "I hope you have been reading some hard science." The false call for hard science in the social sciences represents a process through which "naive" empiricists hide their anti-intellectual posture – a posture that is manifested either through censorship of certain bodies of knowledge or through the disarticulation between theories of the discipline and the empirically driven and self contained studies which enables the pseudo-scientists to:

> not challenge the territorialization of university intellectual activity or in any way risk undermining the status and core beliefs of their fields. The difference [for scientists] is that this blindness or reluctance often contradicts the intellectual imperatives of the very theories they espouse. Indeed, only a theorized discipline can be an effective site for general social critique – that is, a discipline actively engaged in self-criticism, a discipline that is a locus for struggle, a discipline that renews and revises its awareness of its history, a discipline that inquires into its differential relations with other academic fields, and a discipline that examines its place in the social formation and is willing to adapt its writing practices to suit different social functions (Nelson, 1997: 19).

As these theoretical requirements make abundantly clear, Pepi Leistyna's professor arrogant dismissal of Freire's social critical theories unveil the ideology behind the prescription that Leistyna should have been "reading some hard science." The censorship of political analysis in the current debate over bilingual and bicultural education expose the almost illusory and schizophrenic educational practice in which "the object of interpretation and the content of the interpretive discourse are considered appropriate subjects for discussion and scrutiny, but the interests

of the interpreter and the discipline and society he or she serves are not" (ibid).

The disarticulation between the interpretive discourse and the interests of the interpreter is often hidden in the false call for an objectivity that denies the dialectal relationship between subjectivity and objectivity. The false call for objectivity is deeply ingrained in a positivistic method of inquiry. In effect, this has resulted in an epistemological stance in which scientism and methodological refinement are celebrated while "theory and knowledge are subordinated to the imperatives of efficiency and technical mastery, and history is reduced to a minor footnote in the priorities of 'empirical' scientific inquiry" (Giroux, 1983: 87).

The blind celebration of empiricism has created a culture in which pseudoscientists, particularly in schools of education, who engage in a form of "naïve empiricism", believe "that facts are not human statements about the world but aspects of the world itself" (Shudson, 1978: 6), According to Michael Schudson:

> This view was insensitive to the ways in which the "world" is something people construct by the active play of their minds and by their acceptance of conventional – not necessarily "true" ways of seeing and talking. Philosophy, the history of science, psychoanalysis, and the social science have taken great pains to demonstrate that human beings are cultural animals who know and see and hear the world through socially constructed filters (ibid).

The socially constructed filters were evident when Massachusetts, Arizona, and California voters passed a referendum banning bilingual education. While the school administrators and politicians were gearing up to disband bilingual programs, data from both San Francisco and San Jose school systems showed that bilingual graduates were outperforming their English-speaking counterparts (*San Diego Union Tribune*, 1998: 143). This revelation was met by total silence by the media, the proponents of English Only and political pundits. This is where the call for objectivity and scientific rigor is subverted by the weight of its own ideology.

What these educators do not realize is that there is a large body of critical literature that interrogates the very nature of what they consider research. Critical writers such as Donna Haraway (for a comprehensive and critical discussion of scientific objectivity, see Haraway, 1988), Linda Brodkey, Roger Fowler, Greg Myers among others have painstaking-

ly demonstrated the erroneous claim of "scientific" objectivity that permeates all forms of empirical work in social sciences. According to Linda Brodkey, "scientific objectivity has too often and for two long been used as an excuse to ignore a social and hence, political practice in which women and people of color, among others, are dismissed as legitimate subjects of research" (Brodkey, 1966: 10). The blind belief in objectivity not only provides pseudoscientists with a safe heaven from which they can attempt to prevent the emergence of counterdiscourses that interrogate "the hegemony of positivism and empiricism", but it is also a practice that generates a form of folk theory concerning objectivity believed only by nonscientists. In other words, as Linda Brodkey would so eloquently put it, "that any and all knowledge, including that arrived at empirically, is necessarily partial, that is, both an incomplete and an interested account of whatever is envisioned" (ibid, p. 8). In fact, what these pseudoscientists consider research, that is, work based on quantitative evaluation results, can never escape the social construction that generated these models of analysis from which the theoretical concepts are always shaped by the pragmatics of the society that devised these evaluation models in the first place (Fowler et al, 1979: 192). That is, if the results are presented as facts that were originally determined by a particular ideology, "these facts cannot in themselves illuminate issues that lie outside of the ideological construction of these facts to begin with" (Myers, 1986).

I would warn educators that these evaluation models can provide answers that are correct and nevertheless without truth. A study that concludes that African-American students perform way below white mainstream students in reading is correct, but such a conclusion tells us very little about the material conditions with which African-American students work in the struggle against racism, educational tracking, and the systematic negation and devaluation of their cultural histories. I would propose that the correct conclusion rests in a full understanding of the ideological elements that generate and sustain the cruel reality of racism and economic oppression. Thus an empirical study will produce conclusions without truth if it is disarticulated from the sociocultural reality within which the subjects of the study are situated. For example, an empirical study designed to assess reading achievement of children who live in squalid conditions must factor in the reality faced by these children as accurately described by "a boy named Daniel in the fourth grade of an elementary school (1,500 children in attendance, 99 percent mi-

nority) in the large and sprawling district of Los Angeles" (Kozol, 2005: 172):

> The room smelled very bad and it made me sick to my stomach. There was blood all over the place... "I saw a rat," another child in the class named Ashley whose friends reported seeing one of the live rats climbing on her chair. "It was hard for me to breathe. I asked the teacher to send me to the nurse." "Ashley got sick because of dead rats," wrote another child (ibid, p. 172).

An empirical study that neglects to incorporate in its design the cruel reality just described (and this is often the case in our supposedly colorblind and classless society) will never be able to fully explain the reasons behind the poor performance of these children. While pseudoscientists will go to great lengths to prevent their research methodologies from being contaminated by the social ugliness described by Kozol in order so that they can safeguard their "objectivity" in, say, their study of under-achievement of children who live in ghettos, the residents of these ghettos have little difficulty identifying and understanding the root causes of their misery described by children in one of these ghetto schools:

> I see lots of thinings in this room. I see new teachers omots every day... I see pictures in my school .... I see arithmetic paper a spellings paper. I see a chart. I see the flag of our America. The room is dirty. ... The auditotium dirty the seats are dusty. The light in the auditorium brok. The curtains in the auditorium are ragged they took the curtains down because they was so ragged. The bathroom is dirty sometime the toilet is very hard. The cellar is dirty the hold school is dirty sometime... (ibid, p. 172).

What these children would probably say to researchers is that we do not need another doctoral dissertation to state what is so obvious to the people sentenced to live in this form of human misery. In other words, by locking children in material conditions that are oppressive and dehumanizing we are invariably guaranteeing that they will be academically underachievers. Once the underachievement is guaranteed by these oppressive conditions, it is then very easy for research studies as described in the *Bell Curve* by Richard J. Hernstein and Charles Murray which, in the name of objectivity, are disarticulated from the political, cultural, and social reality that shaped and maintain these oppressive

conditions, to conclude that blacks are genetically wired to be intellectual inferior to whites. Along the same lines, an empirical study that concludes that children who engage in dinner conversation with their parents and siblings achieve higher rates of success in reading is not only academically dishonest but also misleading to the degree that it ignores the class and economic assumptions that all children are guaranteed daily dinners in the company of their parents and other siblings. What generalizations can such a study make about the 12 million children who go hungry every day in the United States? What can a study of this type say to thousands upon thousands of children who are homeless, who do not have a table and who sometimes do not have food to put on the table that they do not have? A study that makes such sweeping and distorted generalizations about the role of dinner conversations in reading achievement says little about children whose houses are without heat in the winter, houses that reach dangerously cold conditions that led a father of four children to remark: "You just cover up ... and hope you wake up the next morning" (ibid, p. 39). If the father really believes the study results, he will suggest to his children, after they've all made it through another freezing night alive, that they should have a conversation during dinner the next night since it will be helpful in their reading development should they be lucky enough to make it through another night alive. What dinner conversation would the Haitian immigrant, Abner Louima, have with his children after being brutally sodomized with a toilet plunger by two white policemen in a New York police precinct? Would his children's reading teacher include as part of his or her literacy development the savage acts committed by the white New York police against their father?

These questions make it clear how distorted empirical study results can be when they are disconnected from the sociocultural reality that informs the study to begin with. In addition, such distortion feeds into the development of cultural stereotypes that, on the one hand, blame the victims for their own social misery and, on the other hand, rationalize the genetic inferiority hypotheses that are advanced by such pseudo scholars as Charles Murray and the former Harvard professor Richard J. Hernstein. What empirical studies often neglect to point out is how easily statistics can be manipulated to take away the human faces of the subjects of study through a process that not only dehumanizes but also distorts and falsifies the reality.

What needs to be fully understood is that educators cannot isolate

their so-called scientific objectivity from social class, and cultural identity factors that ultimately shape such objectivity. That is, an honest academic analysis must always include all pertinent factors (and their interaction with one another) that produce, shape, and guide multiple cultural realities – realities that usually exist in asymmetrical power relationships.

Conclusion

As I have attempted to demonstrate, before we can announce a more democratic pedagogy around multiculturalism based on a truly cultural democracy (this obviously would involve languages as factors of culture), we need to denounce the false assumptions and distortions that often lead to a form of entrapment pedagogy whereby dominant values are usually reproduced under the rubric of progressive approaches. However, to denounce invariably involves courage that, unfortunately, is short supply. During a conference in which I attempted to unmask the dominant ideology mechanisms involved in the present assault on bilingual and bicultural education, a woman approached me and said: "Thank you very much for your courage to say things that many of us are too afraid to say." Since I was taken by surprise, I did not know how to respond but managed to make a point with the following question: Isn't it ironic that in a democracy to speak the truth, at least one's truth, one must have courage to do so? She squeezed my hand and politely said goodbye. After she left I began to think that what I should have told her is that to advocate for the democratic rights of subordinate students and to denounce the inequities that shape their (mis)education, "it is not necessary to be courageous; it is enough to be honest" (Cabral, 1974: 16). And to be honest would require that we denounce those reactionary educators who believe that bilingual education [which is also a form of multicultural education] "is highly contentious and politicized… and there is a lack of clear consensus about the advantages and disadvantages of academic instruction in the primary language in contrast to early and intensive exposure to English" (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998: 29). To be honest would also require that we denounce the research industry that makes a living by pointing out the "lack of clear consensus" in the multicultural debate without providing alternative pedagogies that would effectively address the specificities of needs among subordinate students

while the same research industry remains complicit with the very oppressive structures responsible for the poverty and human misery that characterize the lives of a large segment of subordinate students who go to inner-city public schools. Let's take the Head Start research. Many white Head Start researchers are rewarded by the dominant ideology for their complicity with the doctrinal system. They are again rewarded through large grant awards to study the early exposure to literacy as a compensation for the poverty and savage inequalities with which many of these white researchers remain in total complicity. Often, these studies end up stating the obvious, pointing to the proverbial "lack of clear consensus" which, in turn, calls for more research. While the call for more research ultimately benefits the researchers themselves, it invariably takes away precious resources that could be spent to diminish the adverse consequences of the savage inequalities that inform the lives of most minority children. To be honest would require that reactionary educators acknowledge the existence of the intimate interrelationship between society's discriminatory practices and the "savage inequalities" that shape the (mis)education of most subordinate students. This would, invariably, point to the political nature of education that reactionary educators call "politicizing" education.

Politicizing education becomes a negative "shock word" to muffle rigorous academic debate concerning both the grievances and the educational needs of subordinate students. Only through a thorough deconstruction of the ideology that prevents subordinate students' sociocultural reality from becoming an area of serious inquiry can educators who want to falsely take politics out of education learn that it is erroneous to think that "[s]peaking a non standard variety of English can impede the easy acquisition of English literacy by introducing greater deviations in the representation of sounds, making it hard to develop sound symbol links" (ibid, pp. 27, 28). This position makes the assumption that standard dialects are monolithic and show no phonological variations which, in turn, restricts the "deviations in the representation of sounds, making [easier] to develop sound-symbol links" (ibid). Such posture is sustained only by a folk theory believed only by non-linguists. Anyone who has been exposed to the Boston dialect notices that its speakers almost always drop the phoneme /r/ in the final position as in "car", yet middle-class speakers of such dialect have little difficulty linking the dropped phoneme /r/ and its respective graphemic representation. This form of folk theory is possible due to the present excess in positivism whereby

numbers are elevated to an almost mythical status which, in turn, dismisses other fundamental factors that have important pedagogical implications that remain largely ignored. For example, as Celia T. Leyva recounts:

> Growing up, I was often reprimanded for speaking Spanish in class and even in the lunch room, and also discriminated against because I spoke English with a Cuban accent. I was ridiculed not only by classmates, but also by my teachers who insisted that I had to speak English like Americans do. Because of the humiliation I went through growing up, I felt the need to prevent my own children from similar situations, and robbed them the opportunity to learn my native language and, at the same time denied them their own culture". She later added: "I hated English and I hated learning it" (Leyva, 1998).

Perhaps more than the mere ability to link sound and symbol in English, factors such as linguistic and cultural resistance play a greater role in the acquisition of the dominant Standard English. Bell hooks painfully acknowledges that standard English, far from being a neutral tool of communication, for most African-Americans, the dominant standard English is viewed as the "oppressor's language [which] has the potential to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subject" (Hooks, 1996: 168). In learning the "oppressor's language", we are often forced to experience subordination in speaking it. Upon reflection, bell hooks states that "it is not the English language that hurt me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize" (ibid, p. 168). I would argue that the shaming, humiliation, and colonization non-speakers of the dominant standard English feel in their relationship with English, have a great deal more to do with the lack of reading success in the standard English than the mechanical struggles these students face in making sense of sound-symbol link due to unavoidable phonological variations found in all dialects, including the dominant standard English. The nature of the non-standard variety does not determine the subordinate students' inability to learn the ABCs, which, in turn, warrants that they be taught "how to learn". These students have little difficulty learning what the chief of psychiatry at San Diego's Children Hospital rightly describe as the "more relevant

skills of the DBSs (drive-by-shootings)" (Levine, 1993: 11) and other survival skills, which are vividly and painfully mastered by any student whose reality is characterized by violence, human misery and despair.

To be honest would require that we reconnect with history so as to learn from the thousands of Chicano high-school students who, in 1968, walked out of their respective high schools as a protest against their miseducation. They walked out to demand quality education, cultural dignity, and an end to cultural violence. The passion, courage, and determination those Chicano students demonstrated will serve us well again as we attempt to refigure how to best educate subordinate students. Their courage, passion, and determination energized educators, political leaders, and community activists to coalesce so to address the urgent needs that Chicanos as well as other subordinate students were facing then. The needs of most subordinate students are, in a sense, greater today given the added vicious assault on civil rights and bicultural education. For this reason, teachers, parents, researchers and community members need to again coalesce with the same determination to not only provide quality education to all subordinate students but also to work aggressively to dismantle the social and cultural fabric that informs, shapes, and reproduces the despair of poverty, fatalism and hopelessness. To be honest would require that white liberals as well as conservative educators understand the underlying ideology in their assumption that what multicultural education needs is basic research. I would counter this argument by saying that what most subordinate students need is social justice and cultural and economic equity.

By incorporating subordinate students' cultural and linguistic processes forms of textual, social, and political analysis, educators will not only develop means to counter the dominant attempt to impose English and the dominant cultural values, but they will also need to equip themselves with the necessary tools to embrace a pedagogy of hope based on cultural production where specific groups of people produce, mediate, and confirm the mutual ideological elements that emerge from and affirm their cultural experiences. These include, obviously, the languages through which these experiences are reflected and refracted. Only through experiences that are rooted in the interests of individual and collective self-determination can we create democratic education. Cultural production, not reproduction by imposing dominant values, is the only means through which we can achieve a true cultural democracy. In this sense, multicultural education offers us not only with a great op-

portunity to democratize our schools but "is itself a utopian pedagogy" (Freire, 1985: 57). By the very fact that it is a utopian pedagogy, according to Paulo Freire,

> "it is full of hope, for to be utopian is not to be merely idealistic or impractical but rather to engage in denunciation and annunciation. Our pedagogy cannot do without a vision of man [and woman] of the world. It formulates a scientific humanist conception that finds its expression in a dialogical praxis in which the teachers and learners together, in the act of analyzing a dehumanizing reality, denounce it while announcing its transformation in the name of the liberation of man [and woman]" (ibid, p. 57).

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Περιληψη

Η πολυπολιτισμικότητα πέρα από την ανεκτικότητα

Η πολιτισμική ετερότητα, ως έννοια, δεν είναι απλώς το συνονθύλευμα πολιτισμικών εκδηλώσεων από διαφορετικές μεταξύ τους κουλτούρες, που στοχεύουν να διατηρήσουν καλύτερους δεσμούς με τις κυρίαρχες πολιτισμικές ομάδες. Τα διάφορα εκπαιδευτικά προγράμματα σπάνια λαμβάνουν υπόψη τους τα παρακάτω σημαντικά σημεία:

- Η πολυπολιτισμικότητα δεν είναι απλώς η συνύπαρξη διάφορων, συμμετρικά οργανωμένων, πολιτισμικών ομάδων,
- Η έρευνα για πολυπολιτισμικά θέματα είναι μια μελέτη για άλλες πολιτισμικές ομάδες που αποτελούν πολιτισμικά αντικείμενα. Όπως έχει επισημάνει και ο Paulo Freire, υπάρχουν πολιτισμικές διαφορές οι οποίες καθορίζονται από παράγοντες, όπως η φυλή, η εθνικότητα, το φύλο και η κοινωνική τάξη με διαφορετική επιρροή για κάθε περίπτωση μαθητών,
- Η δημιουργία διαπολιτισμικών προγραμμάτων προϋποθέτει ότι η μελέτη και η ανάλυση υποδεέστερων πολιτισμικών ομάδων μπορεί και θα πρέπει να γίνεται με τη χρήση της κυρίαρχης γλώσσας αυτών.

Ο Macedo στο άρθρο του εξετάζει την έννοια της πολυπολιτισμικότητας χρησιμοποιώντας τον παράγοντα «φυλή», χωρίς να μειώνει την αξία και των άλλων παραγόντων που

προαναφέρθηκαν. Με αφορμή κάποια περιστατικά ξενοφοβίας σε γνωστά Πανεπιστήμια των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών, επισημαίνει ότι η μεγαλύτερη πρόκληση που έχει να αντιμετωπίσει σήμερα ο εκπαιδευτικός είναι ο «πολιτισμικός πόλεμος», όμως η φωνή κάθε λαού είναι ένα δημοκρατικό δικαίωμα που δεν παρέχεται από καμιά ανώτερη φυλή ως «δώρο». Η διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση, στοχεύοντας στη διατήρηση της πολιτισμικής ανεκτικότητας, δεν έχει κατορθώσει να αποβάλει το στοιχείο της υπεροχής. Το διευρυνόμενο χάσμα μεταξύ πλούσιων και φτωχών χωρών έχει επιτείνει το φαινόμενο της μετανάστευσης από τις δεύτερες προς τις πρώτες και αυτό με τη σειρά του έχει οδηγήσει σε πιο έντονες εκδηλώσεις ρατσιστικών και ξενοφοβικών περιστατικών. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, οι εκπαιδευτικοί των διαπολιτισμικών προγραμμάτων, οι οποίοι διδάσκουν την πολιτισμική ανοχή, αδυνατούν να κατανοήσουν τη νεο-αποικιακή ιδεολογία που διαμορφώνει όλη τη συζήτηση περί πολυπολιτισμικότητας σήμερα. Μιας ιδεολογίας που διαφοροποιεί ένα πολιτισμικά υποδεέστερο άτομο που προσπαθεί να γίνει δεκτό από τον κυρίαρχο πολιτισμό από ένα πολιτισμικά κυρίαρχο άτομο που ανήκει σε δύο πολιτισμούς. Η κοινωνία μας, δηλαδή, δείχνει διαφορετικό βαθμό ανοχής σε άτομα που ανήκουν σε δύο πολιτισμούς με καθοριστικό παράγοντα το ποιος από αυτούς είναι κυρίαρχος.

Συχνά, οι εμπειρικές έρευνες οδηγούν σε λανθασμένα συμπεράσματα διότι δε λαμβάνουν υπόψη την κοινωνικοπολιτισμική πραγματικότητα. Δεν υπάρχουν, λοιπόν, γενετικοί λόγοι που το επίπεδο νοημοσύνης των μαύρων ανθρώπων είναι διαφορετικό από των λευκών, όπως είχε υποστηρίξει παλαιότερα ο Eysenck. Τέτοιου είδους συμπεράσματα συνάγονται από ποιοτικές αξιολογικές έρευνες οι οποίες δε λαμβάνουν υπόψη, για παράδειγμα, τις δύσκολες συνθήκες ζωής που έχουν να αντιμετωπίσουν αυτά τα άτομα. Οι λεγόμενοι «ψευδοεπιστήμονες» που επιδίδονται σε εμπειρικές έρευνες του τύπου «οι συζητήσεις μεταξύ γονέων και παιδιών στο δείπνο συμβάλλουν στην υψηλότερη απόδοση των τελευταίων στο διάβασμα», εμμένοντας στο στοιχείο της αντικειμενικότητας και αγνοώντας πλήρως την κοινωνικοπολιτισμική πραγματικότητα δε θα μπορέσουν ποτέ να εξηγήσουν τους λόγους για τους οποίους η απόδοση αυτών των παιδιών στο σχολείο είναι χαμηλή. Θα ήταν λάθος οι εκπαιδευτικοί να μη λαμβάνουν υπόψη τους παράγοντες όπως η κοινωνική τάξη και η πολιτισμική ταυτότητα που ουσιαστικά διαμορφώνουν αυτή την κοινωνικοπολιτική πραγματικότητα.

Απαιτείται «τιμιότητα» προκειμένου να κατοχυρωθεί το δημοκρατικό δικαίωμα στην εκπαίδευση όλων των μαθητών που ανήκουν σε υποδεέστερους πολιτισμούς. Η τιμιότητα αυτή περιλαμβάνει την καταγγελία όλων των αντιδραστικών καθηγητών που θεωρούν ότι η διαπολιτισμική εκπαίδευση δεν έχει περιεχόμενο, καθώς και όλων των ερευνών που επισημαίνουν την έλλειψη ομοφωνίας στην πολυπολιτισμική συζήτηση χωρίς να προτεί-

νουν εναλλακτικές παιδαγωγικές μεθόδους που να ανταποκρίνονται στις ανάγκες των παραπάνω μαθητών, ενώ παράλληλα εμμένουν στις υπάρχουσες καταπιεστικές δομές που ευθύνονται για τη φτώχεια και τη μίζερη ζωή τους. Η εν λόγω τιμιότητα περιλαμβάνει επίσης την προσπάθεια να εκπαιδευτούν αυτά τα παιδιά όσο πιο σωστά γίνεται. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι όχι μόνο θα τους παρέχονται ίσες ευκαιρίες στην εκπαίδευση, αλλά και ότι θα καταπολεμηθούν όλοι εκείνοι οι κοινωνικοί και πολιτισμικοί παράγοντες που δημιουργούν τις δύσκολες συνθήκες στις οποίες ζουν. Αυτό που χρειάζονται αυτοί οι μαθητές είναι κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη και πολιτισμική και οικονομική ισότητα. Η δια-πολιτισμική εκπαίδευση δίνει τη δυνατότητα να επιτευχθεί η πολιτισμική δημοκρατία μέσω της παραγωγής πολιτισμού και όχι της αναπαραγωγής κυρίαρχων πολιτισμικών αξιών, όπως είναι, για παράδειγμα, η επιβολή της αγγλικής γλώσσας στις υποδεέστερες πολιτισμικά ομάδες.