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ARTICLE

An Endarkened Learning and Transformative Education for Freedom Dreams: The Education Our Children Deserve

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Student 1: “I live in [name of county located in a state of the American Deep South] County—we have a high school graduation rate of about 98%, something like that. Sounds great, right? But---very few people in our county go on to college or have Bachelor degrees. You make significantly less money if you don’t graduate from college. The average income in our county is around \$35,000 per year. [A big industry company name] is the big employer in our county. They donate a lot of money to our school system. If you ask me, they are training their own reserve of ready-to-go minimum wage workers and it’s us.”

Student 2: “You should move.”

Student 1: “I can’t. My family lives there---my grandmother, my husband’s family.”

Professor: “Or maybe now you have even more reason, perhaps a responsibility, not to move.”

----Class discussion in Educational Foundations course, Fall Semester, 2010

What kind of education do our children deserve? Whose vision of education will prevail? Should we provide our children with an education that prepares them to meet the needs of big industry companies, as hinted at in the epigraphs above: Is this the kind of education our children deserve? Or, as the student suggests, by noting the disjuncture between the county’s medium salary and its high school graduation rate, should we provide our children with an education that prepares them to critique and transform the existing and historical dominance of big industry companies: Is this the kind of education our children deserve?

These questions are significant and point to important matters of struggle and unequal power to decide what counts as valued knowledge and who controls it. As Gordon (1990) argues,

“The 21st century will be marked by the struggles of people of color for position, credibility, and respect within Western societies; and the struggles will have global implications. The greatest battle will be for control over who educates minorities within Western societies and the nature of that education.” (p. 88)

Pointedly, by asking what kind of education our children deserve, we assert that not only are our children not receiving the kind of education they deserve, but there is also a gap between what they deserve and what they receive. The authors agree with Wright (1957) regarding the kind of education our children deserve: We are “convinced that we all, deep in our hearts, know exactly what to do, though most of us would rather die than do it” (p. xvi). The evidence of this, moreover, is everywhere to be seen in U.S. public schools; to paraphrase James Baldwin (1965/1985), it might as well be written in the sky.

Our aim in this essay, following Horace Mann Bond (1968), is to examine the “strangely weird controversies” and “apparent contradictions” derived from the “crazy-quilt world of unreality” in education within a society that “proclaims equality, opportunity, and democracy as goals, while simultaneously brutalizing, degrading, and dehumanizing African Americans [and other communities of color] by every instrument and means of the culture” (p. 308). Drawing from the traditions of the Black freedom struggles (DuBois, 1935/1998; Marable, 2006) and the literature on Black teachers and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994), we attempt to address the following main questions: 1) If our children do not now receive the kind of education they deserve, then what kind of education are they receiving? 2) What is the kind of education our children deserve, and why do they need it? 3) From where can we find a source of knowledge to develop this kind of education? 4) What does this kind of education look like in action, and what are its components? 5) Why isn’t this kind of education already happening, and what can we do about that? We have used these five questions as guides for organizing the rest of this essay.

The Whiteness of Equality in Education and Public Schools in the United States

Unfortunately, there is overwhelming evidence suggesting that our children indeed are not receiving the education they

deserve. Conditions in contemporary United States public schools are nearing apartheid-like status. Education is a White world (Juarez & Hayes, 2010)—teachers, teacher educators, and other architects of education in the U.S. are predominantly White (Sleeter, 2001). At the same time, students of color are the coming or already established majority population in many school districts across the nation.

Sadly, many Black and other students of color are today taught by teachers who would prefer not to teach them. At present, there is a rapidly growing and disturbing, pipeline-like connection between public schools serving students and communities identified as racial minorities and economically poor, and U.S. prisons (Burriss & Welner, 2005; Lipman, 1998; Wacquant, 2001). Students who are male and Black or Latino, for example, have a much greater chance than their White counterparts of completing at least one stint of time in prison rather than attending or graduating from college, i.e., one in three and one in six, respectively, for Blacks and Latinos, as compared to one in seventeen for Whites (Alexander, 2010; Children's Defense Fund, 2007; Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010).

Students of color, males in particular, are also more likely to be tracked into low-status curricular programs and classes, and special education (Blanchett, 2006; Lleras, 2008; Valencia, 1991); male students of color are more likely than White students to be subjected to culturally biased assessments and harsh forms of discipline, including long-term suspensions and expulsions from U.S. public schools (Johnson, Boyden, & Pittz, 2001; Lewis, 2003). Students of color are more likely than White students to attend unfunded and highly segregated schools characterized by insufficient and lesser quality resources and facilities and to have short-term and under-prepared teachers in large classes outside of their areas of certification (Darling Hammond, 2004; Noguera, 2003).

Clearly, the education that our children are receiving is profoundly unequal. Is this unequal education the kind of education we believe our children deserve, and therefore, the kind of education we continue to give them? Or do we as a nation justify this kind of unequal education for students of color because we see them as *other people's children* (Delpit, 1996), who do not deserve an education equal to that of White children?

To restrict access to an equal and quality education from people of color helps to perpetuate and sustain the historical and systemic supremacy of Whites, which is “a racialized social system that upholds, reifies, and reinforces the superiority of whites” (Leonardo, 2005, p. 127).

It is true that education has both oppressive and emancipatory functions. Historically, the textbook has been used just as often as the bullet as the weapon of choice in securing and buttressing racial domination (Watkins, 2001). At the same time, those who oppress have never yet been able to completely control what the oppressed have done with the learning proffered them (Freire, 2004). The planters of society in the American South, for example, wanted slaves to learn to read the Bible as a way to more directly and completely teach them to be humble, content, and obedient servants (Cornelius, 1991). The slaves themselves, however, tended to use this reading instruction to further their own freedom-oriented agendas and counter-claims positing that all people, including Blacks, were equally God's children and therefore not to be subjugated one to another (Harris, 1992; Mills, 1999). Learning thus became empowering and about more than merely consuming information.

Transformative Education: The Education Our Children Deserve

What kind of education do our children deserve? They deserve an education that emphasizes the public in public education (Fine, 1990) and teaches that “public service supersedes private opulence, institutional fairness triumphs over individual greed and the common good prevails over group xenophobia” (West, 1993, p. ix). This is the kind of education our children deserve, the kind that will work against the existing and historical system of White supremacy.

Today we live in times that are dangerous, albeit dangerous in ways different from those of the past (Baldwin, 1963/1985). Dangerous times always require dangerous education (Shujaa, 1994; Webber, 1978). A dangerous education is a transformative education, one that is “understood as a fundamental requirement of human freedom in a civilized world” (King, 2005, p. 3). A transformative education is dangerous because it enables individuals and groups to work toward transforming existing conditions of oppression.

Historically in the slave quarter community, a transformative education meant learning that *us ain't hogs* despite the prevailing wisdom of the times which taught and practiced exactly the opposite (Haymes, 2001). In the segregated classrooms and communities of Jim Crow America, for example, Big Mama, the grandmother of one of the authors, and women like her provided their young charges with a transformative education by teaching them that they did not need to be subservient to White people; neither were they to be limited in any way by dominant society's understandings of Black

people (Hayes, Juarez, & Cross, in press). “Real education means to inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better” (Woodson, 1933/2000, p. 29).

Education is thus clearly about much more than teaching our children the ABCs. For a very long time now, however, some children more than others, have been getting too much schooling and not enough education (Shujaa, 1994). Indeed, far too many children are still receiving a *mis-education* (Woodson, 1933/2000).

As Baldwin (1963/1985) once observed, children born in the era of the Third Reich were educated to the purposes of the Third Reich—to become barbarians. “Education occurs in a context and has a very definite purpose. The context is mainly unspoken, and the purpose very often unspeakable. But education can never be aimless, and it cannot occur in a vacuum” (p. 658). In the tradition of Woodson (1933/2000), we too must ask, Educated to do what? Educated to work for whom?

Endarkened Learning: A Knowledge Source for Transformative Education

Transformative education, as DuBois (cited in Aptheker, 1973) has pointed out, means that our children must be taught to “to think and learn and do” (p. 77). We agree with Woodson (1933/2000) that it makes no sense at all to continue teaching any child, Black, White, or of any other racial background, that White people are the only ones whose knowledge, experiences, and contributions matter, which would perpetuate a system of schooling controlled by the dominant culture for its own interests. To do so is to continue to mis-educate all of our children (Shujaa, 1994; Woodson, 1933/2000). Today, as we have noted previously, this mis-education of all children is reflected by the inverse of colors in our prisons and universities—prisons being overwhelmingly populated by Latinos, and Blacks, and universities being overwhelmingly populated by Whites (Noguera, 2003; Wacquant, 2001).

To discontinue replicating Whiteness through public schools, a source of knowledge that is not based on or derived from Whiteness or used to justify White supremacy is required. We will need a source of knowledge that instead critiques and challenges Whiteness (DuBois, 1920/1995, 1920/1999).

The way to circumvent and go against Whiteness is to aspire to what DuBois (1940/2006) has named *the dark world*, a world that through its struggles for freedom opens up possibilities not imaginable to those tied to the historical dominance of Whiteness—the world of those who have for many generations and hundreds of years been on the wrong side, the bloody and violent side, of democracy—for, about, and by White people—in the U.S. (Olson, 2004). *The dark world* refers to the collective experiences, achievements, wisdoms, histories, and practices of communities of color that have been racialized and targeted by the historical system of White supremacy (Bell, 1992; DuBois, 1920/1995; Frederickson, 2002).

We are not trying to suggest that people of color necessarily have a better grasp on what a transformative education means. Rather, our point in drawing knowledge from *the dark world* is to draw from the Black freedom struggles as collective and historical experiences. As Maya Angelou (1993) put it, “When I am speaking of the Black experience, I am speaking to the human condition.”

All of us, regardless of our respective racial backgrounds, must learn to draw on and apply knowledge that is informed by and based on *the dark world*, which is learning that has been called *endarkened* (Dillard, 2000; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Wright, 2003). Endarkened learning is necessary to transformative education because it enables us to draw from a knowledge source that is not based on the myths or justifications of Whiteness. Endarkened learning provides us with a means to assess and transform the gap between the realities of race-based inequities and the ideals of democracy and freedom.

Consequently, we know what kind of education our children deserve—a transformative education—and we know what kind of knowledge source on which we need to build that education. Now what we need are some examples of what a transformative education through endarkened learning might look like in action.

Transformative Education in Action: What Does It Look Like? Where can We Find It?

Pointedly, and perhaps not so surprisingly, we already know a great deal about transformative education and endarkened learning, where to find examples of it in action, and what its components are. As Asa Hilliard (1997) has noted, “Many educators have been successful where currently popular educational theories would have predicted that there would be failure” (p. 133). There is a rich and growing body of research that documents the teaching practices and philosophies of

these effective teachers past and present. This research provides us with the knowledge basis necessary to transform education. As a society and as educators, we do not and have not systematically drawn on this body of research. As we discuss further below, there are vested reasons and interests that underpin learned ignorance of effective teaching and transformative education in the largely White world of teacher education and the K-12 teaching force.

To see transformative education in action, then, we must go back to the classrooms of experts and look at the teaching philosophies and practices of teachers like Big Mama and Ms. Mack, who are effective teachers of Black students and others expected to fail in schools. Our intent with this section is not to provide a how-to guide or cookbook for successful teaching of racial minority students: There will be no recipes provided herein. As we define it, following Ladson-Billings (1994, 2000), teaching and learning are cultural work, a way of thinking and thus approaching life and its many domains, not a technocratic, rational, objective, and mechanistic process or procedure. Our aim in this section is instead to show Big Mama and Ms. Mack as they think and go about teaching and interacting with students as examples of effective teaching distinctive from other teachers.

Going Back to the Classrooms of the Experts on Transformative Education

Big Mama, now in her early 90's and retired, began teaching in her hometown in rural Mississippi during the Jim Crow era, her teaching career spanning over 70 years[i]. Here is what Big Mama explained about transformative education to her grandson Cleveland:

[The lessons] I tried to stress to [my students] were that.....other people in our community had made it which meant they could make it. The lessons that I [taught] were to show and help my students to understand that 'There is a way out of poverty [and] their circumstances and education was the way.' As Black teachers, most of us were really demanding. We didn't just specifically say it per se. But back then, you knew that they [all Black teachers] knew this is the way out of here [oppressive conditions].....It was not okay for my students to come into my class without their lesson. I understood that they may have picked cotton all evening the night before, but they still had to get it, and if they did not, there was some sort of punishment. (Hayes, 2006)

Like Big Mama, Ms. Mack also happens to be from rural Mississippi. We were introduced to Ms. Mack below through one of her students, himself now a retired teacher, as he talks about his experiences in school during his youth:

When I was in the 10th grade, Ms. Mack was the driving force. I didn't apply myself. I didn't apply myself because there was no one to pull me out. She was like a dentist extracting a tooth. She could pull it out. Sometimes it was painful, but yet she could still pull it out. She was honest. She was fair. Coming from where I came from, you know, I had been dealt a lot of unfair teachers. I thought they were all like that, but then I saw her. And I began to make honor roll and good grades. She could have looked at me as a poor country boy, but she understood. (Hayes, 2006)

As these reflections show, Big Mama and Ms. Mack illustrate patterned similarities in their beliefs about teaching and their teaching practices. We take our cues on what transformative education and endarkened learning look like by noting these patterned similarities. What we see with the pedagogies of both Big Mama and Ms. Mack specifically is a no-nonsense approach to education for those who are expected to fail in school, a transformative education.

As we look closer at the no-nonsense approach of Big Mama and Ms. Mack, we see that both teachers were well aware of and constantly kept in their mind's eyes the realities of White racism as the institutional conditions that systematically exclude their students and negatively impact their lives. Their teaching practices reflected this nuanced awareness of historical context---Big Mama knew that her students were likely picking cotton all night the evening before; Ms. Mack was aware that her students were seen as the devalued status of poor and country.

Both Big Mama and Ms. Mack used their awareness of the historical context of White racism to make warm, human connections with their students---they knew their students. Importantly, however, neither teacher looked at the students through a perspective of deficiency nor used the realities of being poor and country to excuse or justify low academic performance. Indeed, it is quite the opposite. Both teachers used their knowledge of the historical context to push their students even harder to excel academically. They were empathetic with their students because they understand the realities of White racism, while simultaneously using this knowledge to drive their students to achieve far above and beyond the low expectations of dominant society.

Furthermore, both Big Mama and Ms. Mack used their knowledge of White racism to model for and teach their students

how to differentiate between themselves and the negative perceptions dominant society has of them. They taught their students how to see through and then act on the ironies and paradoxes put forth by the racial knowledge of Whiteness. As the students learned that they were capable and could apply themselves, they also learned that their actions could change their circumstances. Students learned, sometimes painfully because there was some sort of punishment, that they had to excel despite, indeed, *because* of the harsh realities of White racism. As Big Mama put it, “There is a way out of poverty... and education was the key” (Hayes, 2006).

Both Big Mama and Ms. Mack thus focused on teaching their students to assess and change, to *transform* the world around them. Both teachers were demanding, but fair and warm with their students. The teachers both believed in their students and knew them and thus were able to pull out the best from them without losing sight of the realities of White racism. Both teachers were what Ware (2000) calls *warm demanders*. This term is often used to describe teachers who simultaneously convey a sense of warmth and caring for their students while demanding high levels of performance in the classroom and life from them. Teachers like Big Mama, Ms. Mack and other warm demanders, therefore, view their mission and role in education as one of responsibility for ensuring the survival and wellbeing of all students. Because warm demanders think about the children in ways that are not dependent on assumptions of deficiency, the teaching practices and strategies they use in the classroom are likewise not aimed at compensating for deficiencies. Contrary to traditional forms of schooling, transformative teaching is not constrained to mastery of the content standards alone. Rather, content standards are enveloped within the larger purpose of transformative education, as a necessary part of being successful in the classroom, but not as an end in and of themselves.

If there is one take-away from this section, we posit that it is that teachers who are warm demanders teach with authority, which includes teaching to the whole child as a member of a particular social group situated within a particular context and history (Ware, 2006). Being a warm demander is more than coming into the classroom and demanding a checklist of certain behaviors from students, especially from students of color. Effective teaching of African American and other students of color, then, is not about simply implementing a particular step-by-step technical remedy or plan.

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) assert that educators of students in urban areas have an obligation to cultivate this type of transformative education. Students deserve an education that provides them with strategies to challenge anti-affirmative action, anti-bilingual education, anti-immigrant, and heterosexist legislation and policies. A transformative education is a critical necessity for learning to counteract the results of ineffective, inappropriate, and often racist and sexist educational practices and policies that continue to push many students of color out of school.

Components of Transformative Education: What Can We Learn from Big Mama and Miss Mack?

What lessons, then, can we learn from Big Mama and Ms. Mack about transformative education? What are the components of a transformative education? How will we know transformative education when we see it?

For the purposes of this paper, we draw upon the works of Paulo Freire (1973), Gloria Ladson- Billings (1994), Lisa Delpit (1996), Audre Lorde (1984) and others to identify the characteristics and components of a transformative education. Importantly, a transformative education allows us to move beyond the superficial and liberal, pluralist notions of multicultural education. Currently schools are engaged in color-blind frameworks that do not go beyond fashion, folklore, and food as culture, but which ignore rich histories of activism, social engagement, and change. Our students do not deserve this kind of education because it minimizes the more significant and lasting contributions of people of color.

Transformative education has three major components. First, there is equity, which is equal access to the most challenging and nourishing educational experience. For us, equity is more than equal representation or physical presence within an educational program, but rather refers to full participation as recognized members of a community with equal access to valued resources and opportunities (Bell, 1997; Fine, 1990).

Lesson One—Equity. Big Mama and Ms. Mack taught their students about equity by emphasizing, working against, and addressing inequities in the classroom through education. Education, for both teachers, was the path to a better life and therefore to increased access to opportunities and the way out of inequities. Both teachers had a keen sense of their students as already of equal worth to Whites and therefore already worthy of equal opportunities. Using their strong sense of equality and a deep understanding of the historical realities of White supremacy, both teachers used this knowledge to push their students to excel academically and socially. By expecting students to have their lessons ready, despite working all evening the night before, both teachers displayed their commitment to using education as the way to equity for their students.

As Big Mama and Ms. Mack demonstrate, then, inequitable access to society's valued resources should not stop teachers from providing a rigorous educational experience for all students. Indeed, inequities become the catalyst and rationale for providing students with the most rigorous academic experience to achieve equity. Many schools are engaged in banking forms of education, where students are seen as empty vessels needing to be filled (Freire, 1973), and who leave high school either by graduation or by being forced out, often without the necessary tools to transform society (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Hayes, 2006).

Lesson Two---Activism. Achieving equity requires activism. Activism is a part of transformative pedagogy because it entails preparing students to actively involve themselves in public spaces and dialogues to help them gain access to the valued resources and opportunities they have either been excluded from or denied. This activism demands that students have an understanding of the inequities in society and the tools to begin fixing those inequities. According to Ayers, Quinn & Stovall (2009), activism moves students away from the deficit discourses of passivity, cynicism and despair, and toward the type of education required to critique current systems and become agents of social change.

Big Mama and Ms. Mack both focused their energies on actively working against the debilitating effects of White racism. Both teachers modeled for students ways that an education could be used to change the world around them for the betterment of all. Students were expected to use what they had learned in class to improve themselves and change conditions for others, even if they were forced to remain part of the Jim Crow sharecropping system. Students were not to simply accept the low expectations held for them by the dominant society. Instead, being poor and from the country became all the more reason to excel and thus change the world around them.

Lastly, transformative education is about social literacy, which involves preparing students to acquire the discourse necessary to resist the fattening effects of materialism, consumerism and the power of the abiding evils of White supremacy, and to nourish an awareness of their identity (Ayers, Quinn & Stovall, 2009; hooks, 1995; Quijada Cercer, Gutierrez Alvarez, & Rios, 2010). Social literacy not only forces White folks to be held accountable for White supremacy, as hooks (1995) argues, but also allows people of color to go through a decolonization process and a process of radical politicization," thus allowing them to see through and critique the individualistic notion of pulling oneself up by the bootstraps with no accounting for White supremacy's historical pull on individuals.

Lesson 3---Social Literacy. Big Mama and Ms. Mack each valued critical literacy. They modeled and then taught their students to read the disparities between the ideals of equality for all and the conditions of systemic race-based exclusion they all lived within. At the same time, both teachers recognized the value of what their students came to class knowing from their cultural backgrounds. They then used this knowledge of the students' backgrounds and their knowledge of White supremacy to teach them to successfully navigate a world that was fundamentally hostile to all things associated with Blacks by pushing them to understand these deficiency-based perceptions, but without internalizing them.

The students of Big Mama and Ms. Mack learned that their actions could and did make a difference. Students learned that, like their teachers, they were expected to do more than mindlessly take their places at the bottom of society as prescribed by the dominant, mainstream culture. In today's world of almost uninterrupted and passive consumption of mass media images of Whiteness as goodness and unchanging in its apparent permanency (hooks, 1995), it hardly seems surprising that the social literacy lessons of Big Mama and Ms. Mack are just as important for students today as they were in classrooms of the past.

Why Our Children Do Not Receive the Education They Deserve? Transformative Education is not Spoken Here

In this paper, we started out by posing the question of what kind of education our children deserve and then answering it by pointing to a transformative education through endarkened learning. We now want to explore why our students do not and are not likely to receive the transformative education they deserve (Juarez & Hayes, 2010). Our intent in this section is not to offend individuals or groups, but to use our comments as a starting place and catalyst for public conversation about social-justice-oriented and democratic communities in education and society. In short, we want to use our discussion of why our children aren't receiving the education they deserve to begin thinking about how we too must change the world around us to actually facilitate giving it to them.

There are several reasons why students do not receive the education they deserve, the most important being Whiteness. Whiteness does not happen *behind* the backs of individuals White or racially Otherwise [pun intended], but rather *on* the backs of people of color (Leonardo, 2005). Individuals who are often, though not always, White, make daily choices that contribute to perpetuating Whiteness, thereby helping to ensure that transformative education is not realized.

We are not trying to argue that our children do not and will not receive the education they deserve because teachers, teacher educators, and others who choose Whiteness are bad people who do not care about our children and their future. We argue, rather, that individuals make choices, knowingly or not, that apply the racial power of Whiteness in ways that sabotage and abort efforts to provide our children with the transformative education they deserve. Consider, for example, the following, a composite conversation drawn from many actual conversations across many universities and colleges of education and many faculty meetings:

White male College Administrator: We need to be integrating technology more into our courses.

White male Full Professor: I use Skype and Web-chat in the classes I teach.

White female Assistant Professor: Integrating technology is important, I agree, especially since access to technology tends to be divided along racial and class lines. But, we also need to remember that integrated technology can be very effectively used to teach my child how not to be Latino and my neighbor's child how not to be Black. We have to think about what is the purpose we're trying to achieve? Where are we going with this technology? What are we trying to do with this technology?

[Long silent pause. No one in the room speaks or makes a noise. The college administrator looks directly at the junior faculty member, locking eyes in a long, hard stare and saying nothing—time seems frozen in an uncomfortable pause]

White male College Administrator: [Breaking the long silence by resuming the earlier thread of conversation as if the junior faculty member had not spoken] “What we need to do is to develop a rubric to evaluate the kinds of things we are doing to integrate technology into our courses and then help each other to make sure it is happening.”

In that faculty meeting, which is based on actual incidents, all of the individuals in attendance are White. They are discussing the preparation of future teachers within the context of a college of education faculty and administration that are overwhelmingly White, who serve a school district with a student population and surrounding community that are at least half African American: White architects of Black education (Watkins, 2001). Note how the purpose of education is taken as a natural given, unquestioned, and most importantly, not up for discussion. Indeed, even the mere suggestion of talking about the role of technology in education is immediately shut down and literally silenced. There will be no exploration of the role of technology in exacerbating or challenging the existing racial hierarchy in U.S. society under this administrator's watch.

And this is important—there was a moment of choice here: The topic of technology as a way to assess and transform the surrounding world is introduced by the junior White female faculty member. In this moment, there emerged a choice to be made about Whiteness and whether to perpetuate or challenge it. The choice to perpetuate Whiteness was made as the university administrator used his institutional authority to literally shut off any further conversation about race, power, education and technology. By shutting the conversation down, he helped to maintain and perpetuate the silence that buttresses and protects the Whiteness in U.S. public schools and thus helped to sustain and further the systemic privileging of the experiences, beliefs, values, interests, and histories associated with White people. This choice for Whiteness was not made behind the back of the administrator in this scenario. In that moment, whether consciously or not, regardless of his morals or moral integrity, or his aims or intentions, that university administrator made a decision about Whiteness and used the institutional resources and authority available to him to ensure that transformative education was not even a possibility for conversation or exploration. In short, this administrator made a decision and enacted his decision to perpetuate rather than challenge Whiteness.

How many times a day are these kinds of choices and decision-making opportunities presented, made and acted on as teachers, teacher educators, administrators and vested others, including ourselves, go about our work in the realm of public education and elsewhere? We can only just begin to imagine. Yet, the evidence surrounding us is clear that most of the time, just as in this case, Whiteness, not endarkened learning, is chosen for our children's education.

At times when matters of race and culture are pushed to the unavoidable center of White attention, Whites will use their institutional authority to discipline and sanction those who do not conform to the silence about Whiteness as the normative standard: an example of racial power being deliberately enacted to re-establish and fortify Whiteness (Gillborn, 2005; Hayes & Juárez, 2009). Whites will choose textbooks, and other content that allow them to remain silent and misinformed about issues of race and racism. They will make sure that most of the people around them are other Whites or those who most closely conform to dominant White discourses. When deemed necessary, moreover, Whites will use

institutional authority to reprimand anyone who presumes to talk too loudly or vigorously about race and racism through reprimands, evaluations, and other institutional forms of sanctioning or punishment (Hayes & Juarez, 2009; Juarez & Hayes, 2010).

Choosing Differently: Making Choices against Whiteness to Foster a Transformative Education for Our Children

As we think about our experiences in the world of public education (both of us are former public school teachers), and as teacher educators ourselves, we conclude that as a society, we already know what kind of education our children deserve and we collectively work very hard to ensure that they never receive it. The two of us are aware that most people are not making decisions to maintain Whiteness because they do not like or care about our children and their futures. We realize that most people in education are very kind, dedicated, upstanding individuals who are, for the most part, very good and nice. *Niceness* and *goodness*, however, have little, if anything, to do with the kind of education our children deserve and why they do not receive it. For our children to have the education they deserve, a transformative education, we must together learn to choose differently, to choose against Whiteness and for a transformative education.

We must not continue to choose Whiteness. We must choose to work against Whiteness and toward a critique and transformation of Whiteness. We must also aspire toward *the dark world* and a transformative education, the kind of education our children deserve. Our future, like the future of our children, depends in important ways on the choices we make about Whiteness, for or against transformative education.

Our task now, therefore, is to actually provide our children with the education they deserve, a transformative education, instead of funneling our efforts into making sure that they never receive it. Both the path to transformative education and the consequences of our choices to continue maintaining and perpetuating Whiteness are already there and clear for us to see, like handwriting on the wall. We can and must choose to provide our children with the transformative education we already know they deserve and require to help build a better world for all of us.

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