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For the women who made space for us in their lives: our mothers, Ida and Ethel. And for our children, Jamil, Patrick, and Er whose voices we celebrate.
INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that adult education programs operate in the teeth of a system for whom racism and sexism are primary, established, necessary props of profit (Audre Lorde, cited in Thompson 1983, 133). In this chapter, rather than explicate the effects of this system on the Other, I examine how the notion of Whiteness is central to, and embedded in, the discursive and material practices of this system. Yet talking about Whiteness is risky business, theoretically, politically, and practically. It runs the risk of reifying and privileging the (White) self at the very same time when social theorizing promotes understandings of identity as complex, historical, contingent, and located. It also runs the risk of maintaining a hold on that public space where other stories could be (hooks, 1990). However, I think explicit discussions of Whiteness are necessary to foreground the paradoxes of Whiteness described as everything and nothing, literally overwhelmingly present and yet apparently absent (Dyer 1997, 39; see also Morrison 1992). Moreover, these paradoxes are themselves situated and contingent, and who is named or names themselves White, for example is open to change over time.

Furthermore, the terms “Blackness” and “Whiteness,” as in Australia, are associated with histories and constructions somewhat different from those in other countries. Black in this context most often refers to a range of indigenous subject positions associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and White to a range of White settler subjectivities. Meaghan Morris, cited in Ang 1995, 69), although some would prefer to call these White colonizer subjectivities. My use of the term “Whiteness,” for example, is influenced by past experiences as a (White) educator in Aboriginal adult education in Australia, and my understandings of this subject position are profoundly shaped by the binaries set up within this particular context. I maintain use of the terms “Black” and “White” here to foreground my concerns about the resounding silences around discussion of White racial formation (Omi and Winant 1994) in adult education literature in general.

In this chapter I show how recent writing within the fields of feminism and cultural studies detail the discursive strategies that enable Whiteness to be positioned unquestioningly as the invisible norm, a norm that appears to have no tangible effects on pedagogy. I maintain that these strategies are assisted by dominant discourses of liberal (adult) education and are central to the notion of adult learning principles. To demonstrate this, I explore three conceptual frames commonly deployed in adult education literature: debates about andragogy and pedagogy; the abstraction of the neutral facilitator; and the notion of target groups. The latter is a common policy and provision technology (Butler 1999) used in Australia to address the funding and pedagogic needs of disadvantaged groups, while generally remaining silent on the ongoing needs of those advantaged by skin color (but also by gender, sexual preference, physical mobility, geography, and financial security).

SELECTING A POINT OF “ARBITRARY CLOSURE”

The category human has no meaning when spoken in White. Hinarani Bannerji, cited in Smith (1987), 222

Over the last 15–20 years, theoretical developments in social theory have challenged the status of the sovereign subject, formed at birth and engaged in a process of maturation that culminates in the development of a rational, free-willed, agentic subject: the adult. Many of these developments attempt to destabilize the White (male) Western canon, which feminists and scholars of color (both problematic terms, I admit) have also critiqued for decades. Yet somewhat different questions and challenges have emerged from the literature of new social theory. Much of the writing from women of color, cultural studies, and
postcolonial critics argues that, in the process of decentering the Western canon, imperialism, colonialism, and racism continue to be influential in distributing resources to the mythical norm (Lorde 1984, 116). Theory that attempts to destabilize the canon offers new possibilities for rethinking the subject in ways that move beyond the less elastic frames conjured up by conventional sociological analyses of identity. Yet, like many adult educators and other cultural critics with backgrounds steeped in concerns for social change, I am ambivalent about these conceptual and linguistic shifts. I recognize the capacity of new theoretical developments to bring complexity and richness to theorizing identity. On the other hand, many researchers and practitioners in adult education are unaware of the extent to which everyday practices are both saturated and situated by humanistic discourse (Usher 1993b, 17), or the degree to which notions of Whiteness are imbricated with/in humanistic discourses of adult learning principles.

In a contradictory move, I want to bring some arbitrary closure (Hall 1987) to the language of new social theory by talking explicitly about the effects of Whiteness on educational practice. Like Hall, I use this strategy to signal that while discourse is endless, "I need to say something, something just now." It is not forever, not totally universally true (Hall 1987, 45). But I need to talk, critically I hope, about this notion of Whiteness that seems so ever-present yet intangible in the dominant literature of adult education. Investigating Whiteness has helped me to see its effects on policy and pedagogy; effects that are difficult to see, precisely because of my location within White discourse(s).

WHITENESS: AN (ADULT) EDUCATION AGENDA

Despite the emergence of a significant body of literature interrogating identity, the study of Whiteness as an (adult) education agenda is minimal. It is more often framed in terms of dominance or the mainstream. There is very little work which balances the tensions between a macro perspective on white/Western hegemony [as] the systemic consequences of global historical development over the last 500 years (Ang 1995, 65) and the everyday pedagogic practices which emerge in adult education settings.

In the evolving field of studies of Whiteness there are concerns about this new intellectual fetish (Fine et al. 1997, xiii), which may be yet another way to appropriate space for White interests. Nevertheless, current discourses of education are of little help to educators who want to disrupt what appear to be determining structural systems, yet fail to recognize the complicitous ways in which both liberal and oppositional discourses might reinscribe the White subject. With Frankenberg, I maintain that a more useful strategy in adult education is to assign everyone a place in the relations of racism (Frankenberg 1993, 6; emphasis in original).

However, there are also risks in a call to consider White people a race, just as the term "race" is problematic for people of color. Notions of race call forth discourses of biological essentialism; discourses that are not only unhelpful in theorizing pedagogy, but also downright dangerous in terms of their deployment around difference. Rather than be drawn into this risky territory, I have found Omi and Winant's use of the term "racial project" to be helpful in understanding racial formation as the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed (1994, 55). This process involves historically situated projects in which human bodies and social structures are represented and organized (p. 56; emphasis in original). Thus [a] racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics and an effort to reorganise and redistribute resources along particular racial lines (p. 56; emphasis in original). My task in this chapter is to understand the effects of White racial formation and the subsequent ways in which these effects are written out of adult education theorizing through a process of discursive deracialization (Rattansi 1992, 14); the systematic removal of detail about racial formation in explaining social phenomena.

LOOKING AT WHITENESS

Many researchers have begun to explore the concept of Whiteness as a lived experience of social construction. Ruth Frankenberg (1993, 1) describes it as

a location of structural advantage, of race privilege, a standpoint, a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society, a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.

For David Roediger (1994), examining Whiteness is one way of shifting the understanding that it is unmarked. An exploration of the terms and conditions of Whiteness foregrounds the reliance of the category White on a corresponding category Black, yet at the same time exposes the illusion of both as natural categories (Roediger 1994). Studying Whiteness foregrounds the questions of when, why, and with what results so-called White people have come to identify themselves as White (Roediger 1994, 75), or not, as well as revealing the material and moral conditions which have accompanied such positionings.

While many non-White people see and feel the effects of Whiteness as systematic and monolithic, there is an emerging body of work which suggests otherwise. Whiteness may be framed in a multitude of ways:

• as an individual characteristic, personalized and therefore not in need of examination at all;
• as evoking individual guilt and thus needing to be denied, confessed, and/or reconciled (Friedman 1995);
• as an unstable category in danger of imminent collapse (Dyer 1997);
• as a form of extreme behavior which in its most violent or unusual forms can be disavowed by ordinary White folk (Dyer 1997);
• as a terror (hooks 1990) or something to be feared; and
• as victimized, a view which reflects the resentment many middle- and working-class Whites feel in response to the changing economic and cultural circumstances evolving from greater perceived diversification of public life; hence Whiteness is seen as in need of equal treatment (Gallagher 1995).

This brief summary does not cover all of the literature falling under the guise of studies of Whiteness, nor is it aimed at formulating a grid on which to map a new shifting White identity. It is also not intended to diminish the monolithic effects of Whiteness foregrounded by some non-White scholars. Rather, it is aimed at providing a means by which White adult educators might refocus explorations of pedagogy in order to develop a language that enables critical engagement with understandings of Whiteness, rather than re-doub[ling] its hegemony by naturalizing it (Fusco, cited in Gallagher 1995, 173).

In the preceding paragraphs on looking at Whiteness, many of the writers I have quoted are academics, and it could be argued, adult educators. Yet little of their work seems to find its way into the body of work cited by researchers and practitioners in adult education. Furthermore, the problem with many local strategies for responding to Whiteness within educational settings is precisely that they are located within social institutions of education. Educational strategies, therefore, are often incorporated into what Basil Bernstein calls pedagogic discourse: a discourse that places many constraints on everyday practice (Bernstein 1996). For example, Bernstein suggests that

pedagogic discourse [is] a rule which embeds two discourses; a discourse of skills of various kinds and their relations to each other, and a discourse of social order... Often people in schools and in classrooms make a distinction between what they call the transmission of skills and the transmission of values. These are always kept apart as if there were a conspiracy to disguise the fact that there is only one discourse. In my opinion there is only one discourse, not two, because the secret voice of this device is to disguise the fact that there is only one. (1996, 46)

In drawing on Bernstein’s work here, I intend to show how practices within education settings are implicated in the process of discursive deracialization by generally refusing to foreground how constructions of Whiteness guide adult education provision.

Bernstein’s work resonates with writers who are critical of liberal discourse. MacCannell (1992), for instance, proposes that liberal humanistic discourse provides a scaffold for the ideas and beliefs we are able to speak into existence. In relation to the interests of this chapter, such a discourse frames White engagement with the Other in quite specific terms, through grammar and rhetoric as well as in social and economic relations (MacCannell 1992, 122). This is illustrated by my contention that adult education theory has a number of strategies for naming the Other, but few apart from reference to the mainstream to deal

with White practices. The power of this rhetoric presents challenges for thinking through (Frankenberg 1993) the implications of Whiteness as a racial formation (Ceci and Winant 1994, 55–56) and the effects of that formation on pedagogy. I contend that what are claimed to be the intangible qualities of Whiteness within texts, and the elusive recontextualizing principles (Bernstein 1996, 47) of pedagogic discourse (which work in concert to render the interrogation of Whiteness problematic), are not unmanageable tasks for adult educators.

So, how do adult learning principles establish a conceptual terrain within pedagogic discourse to elide the influences of Whiteness on practice?

THREE CONCEPTUAL FRAMES WITHIN ADULT EDUCATION LITERATURE

In the preceding sections of this chapter, I provide a framework for rereading the literature in adult education and, at the same time, draw attention to practices of discursive deracialization (Rattansi 1992, 14), practices which normalize Whiteness and particularize Otherness. Specifically, these practices include debates about andragogy and pedagogy, the notion of the neutral facilitator, and the deployment of target groups as a means of securing desired funding and appropriate pedagogic practice for minority groups (Chapters 13 and 14 in this book).

I want to spend some time on all three of these frames, looking at how the wider research literature on Whiteness might help to destabilize some of the canonical elements of adult learning principles.

DEBATES ABOUT ANDRAGOGY AND PEDAGOGY

In adult education much has been made of the distinctions between andragogy and pedagogy. Modern andragogical approaches are drawn predominantly from the work of Malcolm Knowles, and his work is frequently referred to where debate is framed around the adult/child binary. Rather than focusing on the adult/child debate, though, I draw attention here to the assumptions of liberal individualism built into the literature on adult learning principles and the degree to which this work continues to promote generic (White) understandings of the adult learner. For example, in the recent Australian Review of National Policy—Adult and Community Education (ACE), the principles used to guide that review were as follows:

• Adults learn most effectively when they are actively involved in decisions about management, content, style, and delivery of their learning.
• Adult learning is fostered through a curriculum and methodology which involves collaboration between teacher and learner.
• Adults are capable of learning throughout life.
Deconstructing Exclusion and Inclusion in Adult Education

- The individual learner is the focus of the learning process in ACE.
- Adult learning acknowledges the skills, knowledge, and experience adults bring to the learning setting. (Kelly Associates 1997, 20)

A similar set of adult learning principles appears in the Teaching and Learning Facilitator’s Guide (TAFE NSDC 1992, sec. 2.1) a staff development package for novice adult and vocational educators.

An astute reader may well ask why I would begin with these populist frameworks when work of this kind has been challenged and found wanting by many good researchers. I contend that these challenges seem to have had little effect on the way in which adult learning principles have been established as a taken-for-granted fact. In fact, they so resemble common sense that one would seem malcontent to challenge them. The principles operate as a regime of truth, a connection between power and knowledge which is produced by, and produces, a specific art of government (Gore 1993, 55; emphasis in original). This results in claims for a universal form of adult education practice as well as the development of technologies to prescribe conduct in learning settings (Foucault 1988).

Examples of these technologies include self-directed learning, neutral facilitation, negotiated curriculum, the importance of relevant content, and so on (also see Chapter 21 in this volume).

In elaborating on Knowles’ work on self-directed learning, for example, Burston 1994, 6-7) indicates the clear preferences embedded in the model:

independence over both dependence and interdependence; isolation over relation; the individual over society; the explicit over the implicit; the straight forward and highly directional over the tentative, the groping toward, and the divergent; the cognitive over the emotional; the objective over the subjective or intersubjective; and the logical, scientific, and highly measurable over the artistic and non-numeric.

To quote Donna Haraway (1991), there are no “subjugated standpoints” here. The “god-trick promising vision from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully” (p. 191) is breathtakingly apparent in this model of “adult learning,” yet nowhere is this vision explicitly informed by the notion that knowledge is always partial, never finalized. Contrary to the central tenets of dominant adult learning literature, the application of experiential learning techniques along with the exhortation to walk in the Other’s shoes will not result in, unmediated access to the knowledge and experience of the racialized (gendered, sexualized) body. There may in the end be some things we will never know.

What particularizes the White body, yet is ignored in analyses of adult learning principles, is what Dyer (1997, 23) calls spirit: get-up-and-go, aspiration, awareness of the highest reaches of intellectual comprehension and aesthetic refinement. The ethos of an adult education for all means that the specificity of the White body within andragogy, the body who can know, is obscured, and the prospect of not knowing is rendered immaterial.

EQUAL PARTNERS IN LEARNING: THE MYTH OF NEUTRAL FACILITATION

A second frame, which elides the power of Whiteness in shaping pedagogy, is the deferral to a methodology of neutral facilitation. Whether based on Knowles’ early claims for andragogy or revisited through more recent versions of adult learning principles, neutral facilitation valorizes the individual learner’s experiences and assumes that stories of experience will reveal the truth about learners’ lives. (See Usher 1993a for a more problematic reading of experience.)

Furthermore, many educators have talked about the challenge of connecting individual experience with wider issues of systemic power and privilege, yet they also recognize the limits of these practices when the mechanism by which they are facilitated is within a liberal discourse. A key element of feminist and radical adult education practice is the sharing of stories, yet this sharing process is problematic when differences are negotiated through the maze of practices which make up pedagogic discourse in learning settings. Often (White) educators look to the Other to be educated about the experience of being disadvantaged. Yet many writers (see, for example, Razack 1993; Camper 1994; Friedman 1995) have suggested that these stories are not heard. Underlying themes of the Other’s oppression and struggle are lost in White needs to reframe narratives of colonialism as stories of helping, followed by personal confusion when confronted with a past we were not taught. These writers suggest that telling stories of difference results in limited changes to individual or systemic practice.

The confessional and self-regulating nature of these storytelling activities (Foucault 1978), in the context of a group which may not share Omi and Winant’s historical and more expansionary views of racial formation, is papered over by the assumption of common educational goals. Such learning settings assume it is possible to leave the effects of racial formation in the corridor, beyond the classroom walls. Thus, we can forget for a moment that we are White while never forgetting that Others are not.

So, facilitation only feels neutral for those who can comfortably comply with the rules of small group and more formal learning settings espoused by adult learning principles. These rules include the requirement to confess to total strangers and to engage in critical thinking while at the same time suppressing emotion, contradictions, and moments of incomensurability. In such settings the power of Whiteness to shape issues such as authority, expertise, competence, power-knowledge, and what counts as real experience are central to the myth of neutral facilitation.

TARGET GROUPS

A third frame within the literature and practice of adult education, especially in Australia, is that of target groups traditionally conceived as minorities, or
individuals, disenfranchised by historical and systemic conditions of oppression and exclusion. More often than not this exclusion is framed in terms of individual differences and deficits on the part of the Other, rather than the version I forward here, which suggests there is much complicity from within educational systems.

Nevertheless, the concept of target groups is a core tenet of Australian educational policy. It rests on the assumption of a stable center and a struggling margin that aspires to the lifestyle and values of that center. The current Australian Adult Community Education (ACE) policy identifies the following categories of adults who are underrepresented in employment and training and in need of more adequate and responsive provision to meet their needs as:

- people from geographically isolated communities;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- people with a disability;
- older people;
- unemployed and people with low incomes;
- women and men with low levels of schooling;
- people with low literacy levels;
- young people. (MCEETYA 1997, 15)

The discourse of special needs that existed in an earlier version of the National Policy (MCEETYA 1993; see also Shore 1997 for a critique of this policy) has been reframed in this more recent document to reflect a more responsive approach to learners. However, the implicit message within this new policy still operates to represent ACE as a home for those people excluded from Lorde’s mythical norm (1984, 116). Those people represented by the target groups are invited to participate in ACE programs precisely because of their difference from the norm, their Other status.

These categorizations reflect Australian educational concerns for equity and inclusivity, yet there are two problems with this. First, as Joan Scott (1992) notes, categorizations still leave in place a unified concept of identity (pp. 13–14), a stable unified subject, beneath the categorization Aboriginal, woman, and so on. This inevitably limits the ways in which complex theorizations of identity might evolve from such frames. Second, it blurs the specificity of the center that defines these categorizations and at the same time relies on them for its existence.

The offer to participate, particularly in forms of community education, is tied up with tolerance and differential treatment accorded to the Other. The move to include the Other is simultaneously a move to include and dissolve their difference; it ignores its assimilationist effects, elides Whiteness, and at the same time seeks harmony in the move. It is this desire for harmony that at times confounds strategies to think through issues of difference, and represses the possibilities for pedagogy that might emerge when we conceptualize Whiteness as a racial formation. People such as Russell Ferguson (1990) have been working through these tensions for many years. He claims that men cannot dissociate themselves from women’s issues, straight people cannot ignore the struggles of gay and lesbian people, and White people cannot declare themselves indifferent to racial politics. It is too easy for sympathetic self-effacement to become just another trick for quiet dominance (p. 13).

I believe that examples of sympathetic self-effacement in adult education often go unnoticed for two reasons. First, as Usher (1993b, 21) notes, adult education has for too long been oppressed itself to be overly concerned about the possibility of oppressing others.

ACE work in Australia is often undervalued and underpaid. Many educators in this field have had to fight to claim a legitimate space for their work as well as adequate funding for the learning groups they facilitate. One effect of this is that educators themselves may pay less attention to the ways in which adult education practices constitute oppressive regimes for participants.

Second, much of the dominant literature in adult education operates from a stance which desires to make the Other visible. Yet this often involves legitimizing from the center a space in which the Other can speak, where the Other gets to operate or be visible, only because of the largesse of the center. Listen to Mary Ann Bin-Sallik, who experiences this often:

We are getting weary of being asked to give our opinions and participating in decision making processes only to find that our opinions and participations have been what Freire regards as false generosity. I find it harrowing when educators seek my time and ask my opinions and then find all the excuses as to why my suggestions won’t work, or that the bureaucracy makes it difficult to implement change. I feel that I have been used to either help these people: a) to become neurotic teachers; or b) to feel comfortable with their neurosis; and even worse, I have been colluding with them. So I shall have to stop. (Bin-Sallik 1992, 14)

One challenge facing White educators is how to move our thinking beyond these positions because so much educational provision promotes the use of target groups and, wittingly or otherwise, consigns the responsibility for pedagogy, advocacy and social action to these Other streams. The Other, as learner, has the option to take up classes within these streams. White educators within the mainstream may have no requirement to engage with pedagogies which confront our own racial formation because, to use Rattansi’s words there is no problem (i.e., blacks) here (Rattansi 1992, 12).

Thus, the concept of target groups is fraught with conceptual dangers (Butler 1999) and pedagogical problems. I am not suggesting ACE policy should deny support for target groups or withdraw equity measures underpinned by under-
standings of target groups. Nevertheless, White educators may need to be cognizant of how this streaming displaces a responsibility to think through our own racial formation.

(RE)INTRODUCTION: MAKING CHOICES

I want to suggest that (White) racial formation of the kind elaborated by Omi and Winant (1994) needs to be foregrounded in adult education because it matters as much to the mainstream as it does to educators working in targeted streams. Much of the literature investigating Whiteness acknowledges the hegemonic conflation of being White/Whiteness with oppressive practices. It seeks to acknowledge this hegemony and at the same time move beyond reified categories of identity. Yet this particular quality, the oppressiveness of Whiteness, must not be ignored in the potential rush to render Whiteness more tangible. Like McIntosh (1988, 4), I have found that my schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. I suggest that those of us who might make a connection with the term “White adult educator” need to become answerable for what our schooling has taught us to see (Haraway 1991), or not see.

For White educators this involves an explicit choice, and Aileen Moreton-Robinson, an Indigenous Australian woman, believes we should not ignore this. She posits,

For Indigenous people, whiteness is visible and imbued with power; it confers dominance and privilege. White race privilege means white people have more lifestyle choices available to them because they are the mainstream. Belonging to the mainstream means white people can choose whether or not they wish to bother themselves with the opinions or concerns of Indigenous people. (1998, 39–40)

I am not convinced that all White people have access to the better lifestyle implicitly suggested by Moreton-Robinson. Nevertheless, it is time for many of us to make this choice, to bother ourselves with the opinions and concerns of the Other in ways that do change our practice. If we take Bin-Sallik, hooks, Moreton-Robinson, and Razack seriously, then we have to do the hard work to understand what a productive exploration of Whiteness might be for ourselves as much as for Others.

I recognize that some White adult educators, particularly feminists, do work with the tensions inherent in the challenges posed by Razack (1993), while others work at listening to the voices of Others. It is not my intention to render this work invisible. I also acknowledge that this work often constitutes a difficult, at times painful process of self-reflexivity. What I have also found, though, is that this (White) pain often erases the effects of the stories of Others. I don’t subscribe to the notion of hierarchies of pain. I do think, though, that adult education theorizing would be more productive if it paid some explicit attention to how Whiteness is theorized within.

This work may in fact be done in collaboration with our colleagues and friends of color, but seeking approval for our learning is problematic. Furthermore, we cannot rely on them to smooth the passage and absorb the discomfort emerging from this process. Historically, the Other has been doing this for centuries, and despite the best of intentions, I believe many of the practices of adult education are designed to ensure that this dependency relationship continues.

NOTES

1. Adult education here refers to the adult and community education activities that occur in many neighborhood centers and TAFE colleges in Australia. These activities generally come under the umbrella of lifelong learning programs that are “learner centred, responsive to community needs, accessible and inclusive, diverse, varied and flexible” (MCEETYA 1997). They are often distinguished from programs offering a vocational or tertiary curriculum to adult learners. Although I believe the framework I offer here has relevance across all of these learning settings, I am referencing my work specifically to the adult community education field, which makes explicit claims for empowerment of its learners.

2. Despite the problematic nature of the strategy, I capitalize Whiteness (except where I have drawn on quotations) as a means of drawing attention to the socially constructed nature of the term.

3. Australia is also a highly industrialized country, albeit with pockets of “third” and “fourth” world conditions of existence. Located in the South, it nevertheless exhibits characteristics of the North and is further evidence of the paradoxes and limitations involved in the use of such terms.

4. Bernstein’s use of codes and pedagogic/regulative/instructional discourse may be read as somewhat deterministic. However, I believe his work provides a framework for understanding cultural work within educational institutions, and this point is at the heart of my concerns as to how the new scholarship on Whiteness (particularly that emanating from literary theory and film studies) might be deployed by adult educators.

5. Ruth Frankenberg identifies three aspects of “thinking through race” in her work on White women’s understandings of their racial locations: “first and most literally, it suggests a conscious process; second, it occurs within an already formed field of understandings of race, and third, it accepts that all bodies are ‘racially positioned in society’” (1993, 142). My thanks to Vicki Crowley for reminding me that Frankenberg did not intend to reinforce old binaries between thought and feeling in drawing on the term “thinking” through race.


7. This is a favorite metaphor used in adult education training programs to promote understanding of the issues and dilemmas confronting Others.

8. Aileen Moreton-Robinson guided my thinking here, prompting me to connect discourses of Western science, assumptions about the capacity to “know” embedded in adult education pedagogies, and alternative approaches to knowing.
REFERENCES


Chapter 5

An Invisible Presence, Sil Voices: African Americans Adult Education Professors

Sherwood E. Smith and Scipio A. J

The purpose of this chapter is to “give voice” to the experiences of African-American members of the Adult Education Professoriate regarding the impact of racism on their lives (Smith 1996). We believe that in giving voice to their experiences we can create a dialogue, a discourse about the ways in which African-American lives are intertwined and inter-connected. These voices have influenced the field of education. Through this discourse we can begin to change the way we think about higher education as well as society. Their stories, [Brown (Chapter 15), highlight the ways in which African-American educators have had to operate in order to succeed not only in education, but in American society.

It is important to note that we view racism as an idea and inferiority, based on pigmentation, that was created and perpetuated by them for their sociocultural benefit: scientific and economic (Colin and Preciphns 1991; Fique Welsing-Cress, 1972). As such, we believe that even African Americans/African Americanians has and conflicts racist attitudes, ideology, and practices.

The following will not be a discussion regarding the based upon our experiences, previous research, and the search participants, the question of its existence is a question we have decided not to become entangled in the sense reflected in Euro-American responses of: “Prove it,” “reacting?” and “We are tired of hearing about it.” As I stated: “for those of you who are tired of hearing ab