

Z E U S L E O N A R D O

RACE,
WHITENESS, AND
EDUCATION

Critical Social Thought series

Race, Whiteness, and Education

In the color-blind era of post-Civil Rights America, race is often wrongly thought to be irrelevant or, at best, a problem of racist individuals rather than a systemic condition to be confronted. *Race, Whiteness, and Education* interrupts this dangerous assumption by reaffirming a critical appreciation of the central role that race and racism still play in schools and society. Author Zeus Leonardo's conceptual engagement of race and whiteness asks questions about its origins, its maintenance, and envisages its future. This book does not simply rehearse exhausted ideas on the relationship among race, class, and education, but instead offers new ways of understanding how multiple social relations interact with one another and of their impact in thinking about a more genuine sense of multiculturalism. By asking fundamental questions about whiteness in schools and society, *Race, Whiteness, and Education* goes to the heart of race relations and the common sense understandings that sustain it, thus painting a clearer picture of the changing face of racism.

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Contents

Series Editor Introduction	ix
MICHAEL W. APPLE	
Acknowledgements	xiii
Permissions	xv
Introduction	1
1 Critical Social Theory: <i>An Introduction</i>	13
2 Ideology and Race Relations in post-Civil Rights America	27
3 Marxism and Race Analysis: <i>Toward a Synthesis</i>	45
4 Futuring Race: <i>From Race to post-Race Theory</i>	61
5 The Color of Supremacy	75
6 The Ontology of Whiteness	91
7 The Myth of White Ignorance	107
8 Race and the War on Schools in an Era of Accountability	127
9 Race, Class, and Imagining the Urban ZEUS LEONARDO AND MARGARET HUNTER	143
10 The Souls of White Folk	167
Notes	187
References	189
Index	205

Series Editor Introduction

In his influential book, *The Racial Contract*, Charles Mills grounds his arguments in the following statement:

[We need to recognize] that racism (or as I will argue, global white supremacy) is *itself* a political system, a particular power structure of formal and informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties. (Mills, 1997, p. 3.)

Mills calls this a system for a particular reason. For him and for many others who have been so important to our understanding of the nature of race and racisms, these dynamics are not simply add-ons to the ways life is lived in our societies. Rather, they are truly *constitutive*; they form fundamental building blocks for the very structures of society, for the construction of our commonsense, and for the formation of our daily lives. He calls this a system of global white supremacy because the way it works out inexorably privileges specific groups and contains a logic and a set of “unconscious” rules and assumptions that disenfranchise people of color in nearly every sphere of social life.

More specifically in education, similar arguments have been powerfully made. The influence, for example, of Critical Race Theory is increasingly visible within critical educational studies, with powerful interventions being made by Gloria Ladson-Billings (2009), William Tate (1997), David Gillborn (2008), and the author of the book you are about to read, Zeus Leonardo (2005).

With all of its visibility in public discussions, in daily life, and in institutions such as education, health care, and so many others, however, “race” is extremely complicated. It is not a biological entity, but a social one. What “it” means, how it functions, its complex connections to other dynamics of differential power—all of this requires not simply slogans but disciplined and careful historical, empirical, and conceptual analysis. Obviously, it also requires constant political action by social movements that contest its power (Anyon 2005). The task is to connect the critical analysis to these movements so that there is a dialectical relationship between committed action in education and elsewhere and the reflexive understanding of the complexities surrounding race and racisms—and then a re-immersion in the personal and political activity that challenges the relations of domination that so clearly characterize our societies (Apple, Au, and Gandin 2009).

Zeus Leonardo is one of the very best in engaging with the kinds of reflexive

analysis that are so necessary at this time. In this book, he gives us a sophisticated reading of what race and white supremacy actually mean in education and in the larger society, how we can more fully understand it, and why many of the theories and policies that have arisen to counter it may be flawed. In the process, he demonstrates that some of the usual ways critical scholars have tried to understand race and whiteness (by, say, reducing them to the workings of our economy and class relations or seeing racism in schools, the legal system, or the economy as largely the product of prejudice) are much too simplistic. Drawing on some of the most thoughtful literature in Critical Race Theory, philosophy, history, and critical education, Leonardo provides us with essential tools and insights that both challenge and enlighten.

Why is such a more detailed and nuanced understanding so important for those of us in education? The data on school achievement consistently point to the intersections of class and race—and to the immense and continuing power of race as a defining marker of differentiation in the institutions of this society (Ladson-Billings 2006; Ladson-Billings 2009; Gillborn 2008). This is clearly ratified in the empirical research that has been done on the discriminatory effects of our seemingly never-ending fascination with reductive high stakes testing in state after state throughout this country and others (see, e.g., Au 2009, Lipman 2004; Valenzuela 2005; McNeil 2000; Gillborn and Youdell 2000). Indeed, as I too have demonstrated in *Educating the “Right” Way*, a very large portion of the dominant models of school reform nationally and internationally have their roots in the ways race is thought about and constructed, in the fear of the “Other” and a clear sense of pollution and danger surrounding their culture and very bodies (Apple 2006).

This is very much an international phenomenon. As Stuart Hall showed in his critical analyses of the rise of conservative policies in England, for example, issues of “law and order” and the repressive forms of authoritarian populism that they spawned and that were spawned by them had much of their grounding in racial worries and assumptions. Economic anxieties were *dialectically* connected to an entire history of racializing discourses and practices. They weren’t the automatic workings of economic dynamics, although they were clearly connected to these dynamics. They were both produced by and themselves produced a creative ideological process of political disarticulation and rearticulation, a process that required hard political and ideological work on the part of rightist movements. This is exactly what we are seeing in the United States as well with the growing influence of neoliberal and neoconservative policies in education and so much else (see, e.g., Apple 2006; Buras 2008; Pedroni 2007).

Leonardo fully understands this; and he fully understands what is at stake in our struggles to understand and challenge the ways in which race and especially whiteness function. His critical reading of such “reforms” as No Child Left Behind Here, for instance, is but one example of the kinds of insights this book

can provide. While I have argued that it is impossible to fully understand reforms of this type without placing race as one of the key nodal points, he goes further. His critique gives even more power to the points that I, Gloria Ladson-Billings, David Gillborn, and others have made about the dominant tendencies in educational reform in all too many nations (Apple 2006; Ladson-Billings 2006; Gillborn 2008). He also builds on and then goes beyond earlier books in this series, such as the rightly well-known volume by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States* (Omi and Winant 1994).

Leonardo is one of those rare individuals who can combine personal accounts of some of his own experiences with compelling critical interrogations of our conceptual and political assumptions. He has produced a book that is “unsettling.” I mean this in two ways. First, it unpacks some of the all too easily accepted assumptions that so many of us—including critical educators—have about race and in the process challenges us to think more deeply about some of the most critical issues besetting us. And second, it makes it much less easy for democratically and critically committed educators to serve up easy answers that don’t either involve taking risks or taking our politics as seriously they deserve. In so doing, Zeus Leonardo gives us what we need—a powerful set of analytic and political tools that are unsettling in the best sense of that word.

Michael W. Apple

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Acknowledgements

Some time ago, I pursued graduate studies in order to delve into race and explain it to myself, if not also to others. Instead, I received a solid background in Marxist studies from Peter McLaren. For this, I am thankful to Peter, who showed me the indispensability of class analysis in education. That said, I had unfinished business and worked my way back to race, but no longer as something I took for granted. My understanding of race developed into a complex relationship with class, sometimes harmoniously, sometimes at loggerheads. Charles Mills and David Roediger's work helped me appreciate this productive tension, enabling me to push the limits of both frameworks. Their thoughts on race and class are the clearest in extant. They also confirm the importance of writing with courage.

Along the way, for over a dozen years Ricky Lee Allen has provided an intellectual friendship that keeps me sharp and searching, able to fight the good fight. Since my brief career at University of St. Thomas, no one else has been my provocateuse like my close friend, Seehwa Cho. She is as brilliant a thinker as they come and I remember her as much for the good conversations we shared as I do her enthusiasm for intellectual life. My transatlantic best friend, Dave Gillborn, reminds me that warm relationships are as important as our commitment to the project of emancipation. It is nice to find a colleague who brings both.

A career is not made alone. We get some help along the way from people who believe in our work. Special thanks go to Henry Giroux, who published my first book on ideology in his series with Praeger. This current book is not disconnected from that project and Henry's support since then has not gone unnoticed. Michael Peters occupies a special place in my career. He has kept me busy by including me in his intellectual projects and providing outlets for my ideas. Michael is a true colleague and an ally who has done a lot for me. Michele Foster also deserves my appreciation for the collaborations over the years. Few people are more committed than Michele to the advancement of people of color. Michael Apple has been an important influence on my work and it is a distinct pleasure to have this book appear in his series. He has done so much for the critical Left in education. I, for one, cannot mention one without the other. Thanks Michael. Last, much appreciation goes to my editor at Routledge, Catherine Bernard, and her staff for shepherding this book from proposal to print.

During my year in Seattle, at the University of Washington, my only regret is that in Jim Banks' stead, I was physically away from him and could not

interact face to face on a regular basis. We made up for this through frequent communications and subsequent meals together. Jim, many thanks for welcoming me into the family of the Center for Multicultural Education. My colleagues at UW and the Educators for Social Justice (you all know who you are) welcomed me into Miller Hall without hesitation. Thanks for your camaraderie and hospitality. To my Seattle brother, Jonathan Warren, it gives me pleasure to watch our kids grow up together. I relished the many dinners at your house with Michelle and the children, talking race politics and then putting away the toys. It has become our ritual to which I look forward.

I mention Seattle not only because it was important for me professionally but personally as well. In a span of six months during 2005–2006, my father, Jesus Leonardo, and brother-in-law, Brian Fitzhugh, passed away, and my second child, Zoë, was born. Sadness and joy were mixed together as I tried to make sense of these events' larger meaning. It confirmed that a complete life was full of both. This book is dedicated to all three people, particularly my daughter, Zoë, in whom the resolve of her Lolo and her uncle's mischievous innocence live on.

To many scholars, being productive is a mysterious concept. We get things done despite all the busyness and are not quite sure about the magic formula. Some say it is about having extended focused time, others say it is about weeding out distractions. Whatever the case may be, I know that I am most productive when I am happy despite the feeling of being overcommitted, producing at my best even at my busiest. Along with my daughter, my wife, Maggie Hunter, and son, Maxwell, confirm for me that a good professional life is an extension of a happy personal life. I am lucky to have both.

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Introduction

Recently, I attended a family gathering and became reacquainted with cousins whom I have not seen since the late 1970s. Thirty years have passed and like me, these “innocent boys” have grown into men with their own families, careers, and immigrant stories of the United States. During the luncheon, where I gorged myself on *lumpia*, *adobo*, and *pancit*, one male cousin recalled how he and I fought with other boys. I laughed uncomfortably, struggling to recall the scenes from my childhood without clear referents. My cousin assumed that I knew exactly to what he was referring. However, I did not recall engaging in too many fights, let alone with my cousin in tow. But it was a reunion and I went along with his “fond” remembrance; I wanted to connect. As he continued his story, he filled it in with details, in particular an altercation with Mexican boys in a Southern California park. It was at this moment that I remembered with precision the scene from my childhood, and the flood of memories came from the fight that should have been insignificant. He considered it a bonding moment, something he and I shared as young boys, a masculine story no doubt. Of the several memories he could have relived with me, he considered this one worth remembering three decades later. I was amazed that he recalled a memory that I had also thought about for over thirty years, one of my clearest introductions to race relations in a U.S. context. It was obviously meaningful to both of us, but perhaps for different reasons. My cousin did not know that I had been trying to make sense of that moment for some time now and it was not the appropriate occasion to seize the opportunity and analyze its racial significance. But this is precisely what I had been doing these many years, sometimes with my students, spouse, or friends, although this is the first time I have written about it. After this brief return to my earliest memories of the USA, my relatives and I continued with the reunion and enjoyed the rest of the afternoon under overcast skies in the Bay Area.

Let me retell the story as an adult remembers a significant childhood memory. On that typical summer day in Harbor City, Los Angeles, my two male cousins and I walked up the slight hill of a busy main street to the public park, dribbling our basketball on the sidewalk. The neighborhood was mixed in both race and class, with many immigrant Latinos and Asians as well as established whites and blacks attending the same schools. Those were the days of the Iran

hostage crisis, the spike in oil prices and gas rations, the rise of the Carter administration. But these world affairs mattered less to a young boy than the end of disco, the arrival of Michael Jackson's "Off the Wall" album, and Kareem's legendary hookshot. When we arrived at the park, we reached the basketball court and began playing like the boisterous boys we were. I was a recent immigrant from the Philippines, green to the U.S. color line. There were no other kids on the court. A few minutes later, a couple Latino children whom we assumed to be Mexicans approached us. One of the boys took the basketball from my hands and hit me in the chest, warning "No Chinese allowed." He threw the ball on the grass and stared at me. My cousins were incensed and ready to fight. For one reason or another, including the fact that we were outnumbered, we chose to walk away dribbling the ball on the sidewalk on our way back home. We were partly dejected but enjoyed the rest of the afternoon playing other games. We did not debrief much about it, apparently unconcerned with a rather mundane interaction. However, the event made a definite impression on me.

I clearly remember being more puzzled by the fact that he called me Chinese than being concerned about the pain that pulsed from my diaphragm where the boy hit me. The event did not frighten me from ever visiting the same park again as I returned there many times. I walked away from the incident asking myself, "Why did he think I was Chinese?" As a Filipino, I considered my ethnic group clearly distinct from Chinese. It stuck with me for years, so much so that years later I consider the event one of my clearest introductions to race relations in the USA. As a Filipino American, I learned then and from subsequent racial events in my life that a new identity was in the making for me—a racial one—particularly the burden of being "yellow." In addition, I was already learning the ideal types of racial classifications as I assumed that my adversaries were Mexican rather than only Latino. In fact, as a new immigrant the category Latino was quite new to me despite the fact that I was aware of blacks and whites. There were representations of blacks and whites in the Philippines, usually through the armed forces and movies but not much of Latinos, and certainly not Asians as a pan-ethnic descriptor. I was not Asian before I stepped on U.S. soil. Ultimately, I learned that race was a source of conflict and brotherhood at the same time. The conflict between yellow and brown was punched into me at the same time that Chinese and Filipino proximity became a forced reality. I became a brown Yellow.

In the years since, the ironies of race have also set in as many Latinos and other racialized peoples (mis)recognize me as Latino, some of whom speak to me in Spanish before English based on changes in my physical appearance since childhood. I often take these moments as an embracing, rather than a hostile, move unlike my childhood example. I fluctuate between struggling to follow Spanish and informing the person that I do not speak the language. When I inform my interlocutors that I am Filipino, they fluctuate between

being apologetic and assuming wrongly that Filipinos understand Spanish as a result of Spain's colonization of the islands.¹ As an adult, I sometimes also hear directed to me in subtle ways, "No Mexicans allowed here." Being racially ambiguous is a burden in a color-centered nation but it is also a gift, perhaps in Du Bois' sense, insofar as it exposes racial ambiguity and provides insight. I occasionally wonder about that kid who affected me in ways he never intended. I am tempted to assume that he never gave the event a second thought after it happened. Perhaps he has.

Many children learn these lessons as they traverse their daily school life. These events inform educators less about this or that kid, this or that interaction, but more about the racial formation that is a reliable source of information at the same time that it is contradictory, a sense of both belonging and alienation, a process of our understanding as well as estrangement from one another. It strikes me now that at its best race theory is the move to remember our racialization, to reclaim the racial meanings of our lives not in order further to divide people from each other but to educate one another for mutual benefit. Ultimately, this is where I find the liberatory purpose of a critical study of race, which undergirds the otherwise abstract theories we have about our complicated racial formation. This is what this book is about: to use critical social theory in order to illuminate race as an everyday and educative process, to understand what we have made of race and what it has made of us, some of which we may no longer want to be.

In social theory, the critical tradition has enjoyed a long history, arguably traced to Kant's (2000) philosophical critiques of reason, the sublime, and beauty. Kant's interventions were so significant, it has been suggested that Western philosophy first became critical with Kant. Western epistemology and philosophy arose from the particularities of European culture and understanding. They are insightful, at times critical, but always partial like other ways of thinking. They are partial for two reasons. First, they are partial in the sense that Western thought represents a slice of understanding, not its whole. Second, they are partial because they articulate a preferred way of comprehending the world, that is, a politics. When it is constructed as the universal standard for rational thought and derogate worldviews of color in the process, European thought takes on a racial dimension. It becomes *articulated* with race and we witness its cultural particularity transform into a racial project. From Hegel to Kant to Marx, the procession of a white racialized worldview develops into a formidable phenomenon (Bernasconi and Lott, 2000; see also Churchill, 2005).

In education, the signifier "critical" is so central that no self-respecting educator or scholar would call himself "uncritical." It would be, as Eagleton (1991) has suggested elsewhere, akin to calling oneself "Fatso." An uncritical educator would quickly be labeled ideological, which is worse than being branded an idiot (Parker, 2005). No legitimate educator answers to the hail, "Hey stupid!"

To be uncritical is not to be an educator at all, at least not in any accredited sense, for only the most reactionary teacher education program would dare question the label of “critical.” There is also something about the critical project that is inherently leftist. It seems to speak for the oppressed, those at the receiving end of disparities from wealth to health. For example, in the USA it is considered an irony to call a republican politico critical although in these fickle times being a democrat does not make one a lifetime card-carrying member of the critical club. That said, Dinesh D’Souza is not considered critical but his critic Vijay Prashad is; Allan Bloom may be grouped with the first and Alex Callinicos with the second. Of course, criticality is always relative to a spectrum of political commitments and scholars may find the line of separation shifting, where one’s utopianism is, for another, nothing more than an ideology.

For the progressive left, being critical has become the norm. In a word: hegemonic. This is a good trend, if not a tradition, but as I will show criticality needs also to be delineated in specific terms lest it be stripped of its edgy and meaningful deployment, particularly for the study of race. Otherwise, the well-intended use of “critical” in education becomes meaningless . . . uncritical. If, in studying race matters, all treatises wave the flag of critical, then critical loses its differential status as something set off from commonsensical thinking. Critical thinking, critical education, and critical change are some forms of criticality that get taken up to suggest that schooling ought to distinguish between the epiphenomenal and essence of learning. As critical descends into common sense, it is in danger of becoming nonsense. Educators would do well to guard against this development.

In research on race and education, criticality enjoys some currency. With Ladson-Billings and Tate’s breakthrough 1995 essay, “Towards a Critical Race Theory of Education,” we might say that race theory in education becomes critical for the first time. I will not summarize the major tenets of a critical race theory in education here, which is largely a U.S.-based innovation, because there are many publications in extant that accomplish this task (Gillborn, 2008; Yosso, 2006; Dixson and Rousseau, 2005; Parker and Stovall, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Taylor, 1998; Tate, 1997). For my purposes, it suffices to say that race and racism are endemic to U.S. society.² This does not suggest that racism is pandemic or out of control and cannot be ameliorated. CRT in education is precisely that intervention that aims to halt racism by highlighting its pedagogical dimensions and affirming an equally pedagogical solution rooted in anti-racism. That said, CRT in education is a paradigmatic study of race to the extent that the problem of the color line is made to speak within a particular discourse, community, and postulates. For instance, the appropriation of Bell’s (1992) well-known, defiant injunction regarding the “permanence of racism” is understood within the particular context and constraints (in the Foucauldian sense) of a CRT understanding of education. CRT focuses its attention on conceptual and practical strategies to end racism, less on ending

race as an organizing principle.³ There are, as is usually the case, other competing paradigms for the study of race.

In addition to CRT, a Critical Theory of Race makes legitimate claims to a “critical” study of race, usually tracing its tradition to the Frankfurt School programme of emancipatory critique (Outlaw, 1990). Often, but not always, informed by a Marxist, critical interpretation of the Enlightenment, CTR is not typically U.S.-based and finds its inspiration in European philosophy. Some Marxist critical theorists of racism offer fundamental challenges to race thought, arguing that “race” is unavoidably caught in a reification of what is at heart an ideological concept (Cole and Maisuria, 2007; McLaren and Scatamburlo-D’Annibale, 2005; Darder and Torres, 2004; Miles, 2000; San Juan, Jr., 1992; Fields, 1990). In short, a critical study of race is not a study of race at all, but an analysis of class antagonism within capitalism, which gives rise to the reality of racial division that is not caused by racial structures *per se*. A Marxist-inspired version of CTR is not a racial analysis of race but a class analysis of racialization. In Fields’ (1990) case, the concept of race is antiquated, which had its usefulness in explaining 18th century U.S. society and has since outlived its utility for understanding the current formation. Darder and Torres (2004) consider critical race theory a veritable oxymoron, arguing that no theory oriented to the study of an ideological concept passes the litmus test of “critical.” In fact, a Marxist theory of race does not dodge the problems of reification if it focuses on an ideological concept like race, which leads Miles (2000) to argue that

In so far as Marxism asserts that all social relationships are socially constructed and reproduced in specific historical circumstances, and that those relationships are therefore in principle alterable by human agency, then it should not have space for an ideological notion that implies, and often explicitly asserts, the opposite. The task is therefore not to create a Marxist theory of “race,” but to deconstruct “race,” and to detach it from the concept of racism (p. 140).

In education, this means that race has to be bracketed as a dependent concept and does not explain a primary relation, a status which belongs to class analysis. In writing and conversation, race is set off in quotation marks (what some call square quotes) to designate its ideological status. Racism, on the other hand, merits critical study because, as Miles notes, it is rooted in political economy as an “ideological relation of production” (p. 141).

Yet still, Essed and Goldberg’s (2002) Race Critical Theory framework suggests that race is a discursive formation, which places the argument within the assumptions of a cultural studies or post-foundational critique of race. This school of thought promotes being theoretically critical of race and being race-critical of theory while still employing race categories, unlike a Marxist theorist of race who does not lend much credence to them. Dissatisfied with a critical

theory that does not tackle race and race theory that is not critical, Essed and Goldberg describe their project as “[C]ritical theory necessarily requires a focus, among others, on race: and racial theory cannot help but be, in a normative sense, critical. Race, critique, and theory, we want to insist, are constitutive of the possibilities of thinking each other in any satisfactory way” (p. 4). Goldberg (1990, 1993) maintains a continuity with “race men and women” who center race analysis (i.e., a racial analysis of race rather than a class analysis of race), while decentering and destabilizing essentialist renditions of it as biologicistic, pigment-oriented, or deterministic. RCT treats race as culture—or better, a cultural formation—not in the sense of ethnic theories, but part of the overall turn to studies of subject formation in social theory (see Cho, 2008).

Gilroy’s (2000) new position “against race” follows along the same lines to suggest that race, as a mode of analysis and organization, has reached its limits as a viable alternative in a world that disturbs racial lines of association through diasporic and crosscultural-cutting relations that require new modes of understanding. No amount of resignifying race can escape its problems in a world that approaches the limits of race understanding, a condition of “post-race” (see also, Nayak, 2006). Gilroy (2000) warns that race “cannot be readily signified or de-signified, and to imagine that its dangerous meanings can be easily rearticulated into benign, democratic forms would be to exaggerate the power of critical and oppositional interests . . . [D]estroying raciology and transcending ‘race’ are more than warranted” (p. 12). Sharing some commitments with Ignatiev, Garvey, and Roediger, who support the abolition of whiteness, Gilroy seeks the abolition of race. Inherently a problematic relation, race may be supplanted by the conviviality of planetary humanism and Gilroy reminds us that dismantling race is not something to be feared but posed as a possibility.

In education, this means that race analysis proceeds with “no guarantees.” This suggests the necessity to analyze race in order to undo the relation itself, just as “we must be conscious of black and white in order to transcend black and white” (Wu, 2002, p. 27). The “post” in post-race signals the possibility of a social formation without race but this would be its most obvious reading. A more nuanced reading suggests that the post-movement opens new possibilities for critique, new questions to be posed about race in a way that was not possible heretofore. If race is to continue in the USA, it will be a nonessentialist relation or the risks become predictable (Omi and Winant, 1994). If race is to be dissolved, there is good reason for ending a relation that has, from day one, transformed education into enlightenment for whites and a burden for people of color. Post-race analysis suggests that an opportunity presents itself to critical social theory.

With these three schools of thought as the backdrop for this book, I will attempt to delineate the criteria for a critical study of race in education. In particular, I will pose the central problem of whiteness in education within a

general critical study of race. In doing this, the following chapters do not engage race paradigmatically. It is an affirmation of criticality that does not locate it in any particular school of thought and subject to its assumptions but instead recruits multiple positions on the matter of race, which I will call a *critical social theory of race and education*. It is guided by the spirit and claim that race in education is a complex issue that requires a critical framework that testifies to this very complexity. If this sounds a bit eclectic and trendy, this is not my intent. Rather, I would like to build a project around race criticality that is less possessive and more dialogic.

The book deals with current themes in critical social analysis of race and education. It represents my publications on race, critical social theory, and education from a span of six years, between 2002–2008. The first chapter provides the framework for the collection with an introduction to critical social theory and education, signaling the importance of discourse analysis and studies of ideology. Discourse analysis is defined in Foucault's sense of the deployment of power and language practices in order to achieve certain political ends. Ideology is defined in the reconstructed Marxist sense of favoring (without valorizing) the cultural field, of affirming cultural politics without divorcing it from the material organization of society, in the sense that Stuart Hall (1996a) and Terry Eagleton (1991) have used it. However, the book does not center the study of ideology on class relations but appropriates its usefulness for the fundamental study of race, without conveniently forgetting its Marxist roots and systematic analysis of ideology.

Chapter 1 introduces critical social theory as a multidisciplinary knowledge base with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge. It approaches this goal by promoting the role of criticism in the search for quality education. Through critical social theory in education, quality is proportional to the depth of analysis that students or subjects have at their disposal. As a critical form of classroom discourse, critical social theory cultivates our ability to critique institutional as well as conceptual dilemmas, particularly those that lead to racial domination or oppression. It also promotes a language of transcendence that complements a language of critique in order to forge alternative and less oppressive social arrangements. A critical social theory-based movement in education highlights the relationship between social systems and people, how they produce each other, and ultimately how critical social theory can contribute to the emancipation of both.

Chapter 2 is a general theory of racial ideology applied to contemporary U.S. society, what many social science scholars have placed within the "color-blind era." The color-blind era has been used as a generative description of post-Civil Rights in the USA, such as Bonilla-Silva's excellent book, *Racism without Racists*. In short, Chapter 2 sets the stage for the centrality of race and racism in contemporary U.S. society where race is assumed to be almost irrelevant and racism on the wane despite the findings of most critical race scholars.