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## Music Education, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism – Can We Talk?

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# Music Education, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism – Can We Talk?

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*Anti-racism: An action-oriented, educational and political strategy for institutional and systemic change that addresses the issues of racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression (sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism).*

BROACHING THE CONVERSATION

David Theo Goldberg (cited in Smith, 1999, p. 45), argues that one consequence of imperialism is that Western ways of viewing, talking about, and interacting with the world at large are intricately embedded in racialized[1] discourses. For those interested in critical education, this suggests that we "decolonize" our speech, our thought, our methodologies, and our pedagogies. Decolonization is a process that engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels, and involves developing a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations, and values informing various practices (Smith, 1999, p. 20). Decolonization may be easier said than done, however. As Meiners argues, "Western culture has equally complex and deep investments in the maintenance of an indigenous, primitive 'other.' The image of native/other is *already and always* waiting in the imaginations of Western readers" (Meiners, 2001, p. 118, italics in original). Although her comments relate specifically to ethnographic research narratives, I believe that a great deal of thought in music education also remains under the influence of lingering colonialism, relying upon what Meiners refers to as the "fabricated construction of a native/other" (118).

This paper is a beginning attempt to "decolonize" our understandings of multiculturalism in music education. I will first consider the ways race is embedded as coded language in discourse, and the ways our use of coded language hinders our ability to talk about race directly.

In that regard, I address the silence that sometimes results when we name race and racism explicitly. The next section of the paper looks at official multiculturalism and multiculturalism within music education as racialized discourses. The final section of the paper investigates motivations in North America for engaging in multiculturalism in music education, drawing upon the literature of postcolonial and anti-racism studies, and then connects this motivation to the ongoing project of decolonization within educational discourse. Throughout the paper I include excerpts from interviews conducted with members of the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir (MFYC) to show how racialized discourses inform the thinking of the adolescents who took part in my doctoral research, and why the project of decolonization is crucial as a catalyst for substantive change within music education.

Learning to bring race into the dialogue is, I believe, absolutely necessary for those educating for social justice. My personal motivation for this paper began as a response to the vision statement of the College Music Society[2] that I address throughout the essay. As someone whose pedagogical approach is one of anti-racism,[3] the vision statement raised a red flag that suggests to me our decolonizing efforts (which in music education are usually framed as multicultural forms of music education) still have a long way to go. Yet we need to find ways to work through the discomfort that talking about race invokes, so that we are able to communicate with our students better, and to help them understand the power issues inherent in racialized societies, as well as in music education practices incorporating multiculturalism.

DECOLONIZING DISCOURSE: RACIALLY CODED LANGUAGE

Decolonization is a process that seeks to analyze the "complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices" (Smith, 1999, p. 2). Colonialism as an economic system was rooted in racism. Although the countries and peoples formerly subjugated have since regained their independence, the system's effects continue to wield influence in many of the ways that we think and express ourselves. In the Foreword to *Music and the Racial Imagination,* Baker writes that

> the traditional "music" of a traditional musicology represents a pretty corked
> vintage, well past its prime. Cultivated in the soil of 'race,' it has frequently left a

> dull residue of stereotype, condescension, and error as a substitute for useful knowledge (Baker Jr., 2000, p. xii).

Baker refers here to musicological writing that continues to privilege European art music as being of "high" or "highest quality," an attitude that implies, either tacitly or sometimes overtly, that popular musical forms and folk or indigenous musics are somehow worth less on the value scale of human activities. Musicology did not arise as a discipline in isolation, however; like so many discourses, the ideologies of colonialism led music scholars to sing this tune. The conquest of peoples and countries, and the trade in human bodies associated with colonialism required justification in order to exist alongside Enlightenment philosophies of "universal man." Jules Harmand, in 1910, reveals the type of thinking that served to justify colonialism:

> The basic legitimation of conquest over native peoples is the conviction of our superiority, not merely our mechanical, economic, and military superiority, but our moral superiority. Our dignity rests on that quality, and it underlies our right to direct the rest of humanity" (cited in Said, 1993, 17).

This notion of moral superiority, intertwined with related notions of "aesthetic value," became deeply ingrained in European and North American thought. Despite the fact that such thought is now discredited, it has not yet disappeared, as the following excerpt from the College Music Society vision statement indicates:

> American culture is experiencing a cycle of aesthetic poverty. This condition is marked by society's (1) seemingly universal desire for the most immediate and *primal forms of artistic expression* and communication at the exclusion of the deeper and more meaningful forms; (2) serious deterioration in the expectation of quality and decency in culture; and (3) the contribution of the symptoms of this cycle to the sources of some of our society's greatest problems (crime, homelessness, depression, etc.) (Harding, 2005, italics added).

This statement provides, I believe, an example of the type of residue about which Baker writes. Language such as "primal forms of artistic expression" calls upon an always and already Other whose music, the statement implies, is to be feared because the people who claim that music as theirs are (wrongly) held responsible for crime, homelessness, and other social problems. The statement is indicative of the imperial attitudes prevalent during the period of colonial conquest, but that linger in our current understanding.

Our educational discourses have developed reliance upon codes to imply what we do not wish to state outright. For example, Kincheloe and Steinberg (cited in Hesse, 2000, p. 15) write that "multiculturalism is a term used as a code word for 'race,' much in the way that 'inner-city issues' signifies that race is the topic being referenced." Sleeter and McLaren, in a synopsis of the development of multicultural education in the United States, state that "the term 'culture' rather than 'racism' was adopted mainly so that audiences of white educators would listen" (Sleeter & McLaren, 1995, p. 13).  However, in avoiding direct language when talking about race we also severely weaken the possibilities for achieving racial equality through multiculturalism. Pollock (2004) writes, "the de-raced words we use when discussing plans for achieving racial equality can actually keep us from discussing ways to make opportunities racially equal" (14). We find ourselves in what Gilroy (2000) calls a "lost position," one to which we have navigated in part because we made use of the "unreliable charts supplied by covertly race-coded liberal or even socialist humanisms" (18).

**The Sounds of Silence**

As a white middle-class woman who has decided that my pedagogical and scholarly efforts in music should be grounded in an *anti-racism* praxis[4] within which I work toward the goal of eliminating racism and the intersecting oppressions of sexism, heterosexism, and ableism,[5] it is important that I strive to make racial and other codes apparent. The unmasking of coded language may serve as a first step toward removing from music education "methods that uphold White racial domination through an 'us and them' dichotomy" (Bedard, 2000, p. 56). Moving beyond the "us and them" thinking indicative of cultural whiteness allows for space to integrate "other forms of knowledge, histories and cultures into the curriculum" (56), a primary goal of anti-racism and critical multicultural education.

When an opportunity arose on a music education listserv to discuss the aforementioned CMS vision statement and its implications, I therefore offered the following in response to a suggestion by one discussant that the phrase *primal forms of artistic expression* "bordered" on racism:

> Cathy Benedict's response was, I believe, kind in her observation that "primal forms of artistic expression" borders on racism. Racism is not defined only as overt statements or actions of prejudice. Racism is also (and more importantly) the injury that results to individuals and entire groups through statements, actions, and closed systems, whether or not injury was intended. Denigration of cultural expression is not only a left-over colonial attitude, it is a criterion upon which practitioners of "primal artistic expressions" are sometimes denied access to university music programs, devalued in school systems, and as a result of the devaluation, disengage from or pushed out of the education system at frighteningly young ages. . .

The dialogue, which had until the point of my posting been rolling along vigorously, then came to an abrupt halt. Although any number of factors may have prompted this cessation, I think the discomfort that arises for many people when race is brought into the discussion may have contributed to the sudden silence. As Toni Morrison writes in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination:*

> [T]he habit of ignoring race is understood to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture. To notice is to recognize an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body. According to this logic, every well-bred instinct argues *against noticing* and forecloses adult discourse (Morrison, 1992, p. 9-10, italics in original).

My work as anti-racism scholar has taught me to expect this sort of dialogic aversion to use of the "R word," but somehow, I had hoped that a forum made up primarily of educators interested in critical pedagogy would welcome an opportunity to discuss the ways race was an "absent presence" (Morrison, 1992) in the CMS vision statement.

I should not have been surprised at the sudden silence, however. Pollock (2004) writes that many educators fear that talking publicly in racial terms risks being labeled as "racist" (148). Dei (2000) suggests that in conventional discourses race is the "category that often gets lost . . . in part because of the discomfort of speaking about race and racism" (16). The discomfort that arises when talking about race among white educators has been labeled "white talk," which results in "strategies such as derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counter arguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent, interrupting speakers and topics, and colluding with each other in creating a 'culture of niceness'" . . . (McIntyre cited in Solomon, Portelli, & Daniel, 2005, p. 156). In my response to the CMS vision statement, I had

dared to name race as the absent presence, and among the reasons for my colleagues withdrawing from the discussion may be that talking about race is too often uncomfortable territory.

**The Codes of Race and Racism in Official Multiculturalism**

Scholars writing about multiculturalism often separate the concept into *official multiculturalism* (that designated by governments and other policy making bodies including school boards) and *popular* or *grassroots* multiculturalism (Bannerji, 2000; Hesse, 2000) (the forms of multiculturalism that take shape as lived realities in ethnically diverse communities). The two concepts are intertwined in that official policies for enacting multiculturalism have direct impact on individual's lives.  Yet what occurs at the level of the local community may differ markedly from those official policies, based as they are upon notions of monolithic cultural particularities that conflict with the hybridities of daily life in diverse communities. In writing about multiculturalism in Britain, Hesse refers to the cultural entanglements that occur in local communities and between individuals as *multicultural transruptions* that unsettle dominant discourses of how "'ethnic minorities' *ought* to be integrated into 'Britishness'" (Hesse, 2000, p. 18).

Similar dominant discourses are at work in Canada and the U.S.[6] although each nation has its own unique prescriptions for belonging. Hesse asserts that multicultural transruptions continually challenge the dominant discourses and categorizations defined by government policy-makers. He writes, "the promise of democracy is subject to indictment as a foundational ruse by emergent multicultural transruptions" (19). In this view, policies of official multiculturalism that claim to promote equality for all fail to address inequality, thus belying the promise of democracy. Official policies also fail to allow for recognition of ongoing cultural entanglements that make defining any group according to rigid racial or ethnic criteria impossible.

In Canada, official multiculturalism has been argued to be a hegemonic discourse[7] based upon codes that subsume race as a category within the language of culture and multi-cultures (Dei, 2000, p. 16). Although multiculturalism as a discourse has

potential (under certain circumstances) for providing a 'major framework for analyzing intergroup relations and its ability to confront racism . . . in the 1980's the former emphasis on race and racism was replaced with an emphasis on cultural diversity (Bannerji, 2000, p. 18).

Bannerji, citing Angela Davis (1996), argues that this shift in emphasis began the slide from well-intentioned liberal pluralism to its co-optation as a tool for "diversity management" (27). References to color as the cognate of race thus slipped into notions of multi-culture and ethnicity (30), becoming code words for race. For example, the Canadian government, in constructing official multicultural doctrines, carefully avoided notions of race or color, instead opting for the language of visibility, and in the process created the subject position of "visible minority." The absent presence embedded in the language of visible minorities implies that the majority is "invisible." In writing about whiteness in the black imagination, hooks suggests that "white people can 'safely' imagine that they are invisible to black people, since the power they have historically asserted . . . over black people accorded them the right to control the black gaze" (hooks, 1992, p. 340).

The normative centering of whiteness in Canada implicated in the term *visible minority* allows hegemonic whiteness to remain unnamed, suppressed, and beyond discussions of race. It "permits whites to entertain the notion that race lives 'over there' on the other side of the tracks, in black bodies and inner-city neighborhoods, in a dark netherworld where whites are not involved" (Williams, 1997, p. 7). "The state of being unmarked (and therefore 'normal' or 'ordinary') is both constitutive of, and an effect of, structural advantage and power, and the cultural authority that that power brings" (Mackey, 2002, p. 21). Bedard (2000) suggests that throughout histories of colonialism and imperialism, white people have known and defined other peoples through racialized imageries that are then reflected in the knowledge systems they create (42). The reflection of these racialized imageries may be seen both in policies and in educational practices. From this perspective, Canada's official multicultural discourses do little to dismantle systemic racism, to the degree they are rooted in a center of normative whiteness and framed in language that is racially coded.

In locating multicultural music education within the larger social histories of North America, I recall Morrison's arguments regarding the Africanist presence in American literature

as the "other" against whom white literary authors construct notions of what it means to be "American." Morrison bases much of her commentary on the founding of the U.S. as a "nation of people who *decided* that their world view would combine agendas for individual freedom *and* mechanisms for devastating racial oppression" (Morrison, 1992, p. viii, italics in original). Although Canada's history of nationhood does not exactly mirror that of the U.S., the internal founding division (British and French) of Canadian identity worked to marginalize other ethnicities and further colonize First Nations people. The founding division and its resultant exclusions are still in effect and have become, Bannerji (2000) argues, more pronounced since multiculturalism became official policy in 1972, by constructing multi-cultures as that against which white Canadians define themselves. Bedard theorizes that "in Canada, race is used in differing ways; multicultural discourses are utilized to mask discomforting racist practices and policies, allowing most Canadians the illusion that we live in a relatively non-racist country" (43).

The following excerpt from my interview with seventeen year-old Mississauga Festival Youth Choir member Kate, a Canadian citizen whose parents emigrated from Sri Lanka, illustrates how the multicultural discourse of ethnicity and difference influences her thought and her self-identification in ways that construct hard boundaries between various ethnic groups, boundaries that may contribute to prejudice among groups:

> (Hear Kate)
>
> Debbie: Do you have times where you feel like it is really important to stand up and say, "No, I'm Singhalese," or other times where maybe it doesn't matter so much or where you would say, "No, I'm Canadian," or whatever?
>
> Kate: Well, in Canada it's not really—you don't really need to say you are Canadian—it's not really an issue. Your close friends, you can say "Oh, I'm Canadian" now, and they'll be really happy for you. But yes, I sort of a get a little mad if people say, "Oh look—that Indian girl," or "You're Indian" and I'm, like—no, no I'm not. I don't know—maybe because for me it's the way I grew up. There is a difference—although we are so close to India as a country, physically, I don't know what it is—I just don't like it when people call me Indian. I don't like being called Tamil, even though it's still my country—I don't want to be called Hindu, or Pakistani—it's sort of like calling the Polish, I mean, Portuguese uh—

Debbie: Spanish?
Kate: Yes, Spanish or like calling Canadians
Debbie: Like calling Canadians Americans (she nods agreement). (Interview,
February 8, 2004).

## Multicultural Music Education as Racial Project

Jocelyn Guilbault (2000) argues that some discourses "construct musical projects in racial terms, and by doing so, inscribe them as racial projects" (p. 436), where racial projects are considered to be those that "combine representational/discursive elements with structural/institutional ones" (Winant, 2000, p. 182). As Guilbault writes, "within such a perspective, musical discourses are therefore conceived not as the mere reflection of racial projects, but rather as being actively engaged in their very production" (436). Radano and Bohlman write that "discourses about music fundamentally derive from the construction and deployment of racial categories" (Radano & Bohlman, 2000, p. 8), even though racial categories have been called "fake units of human diversity" (Pollock, 2004, p. 18).

I would posit that multicultural music education as a product of discourses of both music and multiculturalism is likewise a racial project that produces and reproduces racialized understandings of the music of the world; and that race is coded into the terms "ethnicity," "culture," and the "multicultural" within both official multiculturalism and music education discourse. By invoking these codes, any discomfort that may arise when talking about race is effectively avoided, while racialized understandings are at the same time produced and reproduced through musicking (Small, 1998). Such understandings sometimes emerge in language that denigrates particular musical practices while elevating others. For example, terminology such as "aesthetic poverty" and "primal forms of artistic expression" seen earlier in the CMS President's remarks imply a musical hierarchy based upon racialized and racist assumptions about practices of music in today's world.

As a pedagogical practice, multiculturalism has been criticized for its failure to interrogate biases and power relations built into the foundational principles of both Canada and the U.S., thus allowing systemic racism to remain unchecked. Part of this failure to interrogate may result from the use of racially coded language that then goes unrecognized as such (for

example, with the CMS President whose remarks prompted this paper). As Radano and Bohlman have put it, "a specter lurks in the house of music, and it goes by the name of race" (Radano & Bohlman, 2000, p.1). Within music education, our failure to recognize how race haunts our projects of multiculturalism contributes to reproducing the status quo, where some forms of music making are valued, while others are denigrated under the rubric of "aesthetic poverty." Recognizing the racialized nature of the multicultural discourse in music education serves to "challenge the hegemonic structures (and symbols) that keep injustice and inequity in place" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 271).

A MOTIVATION FOR MULTICULTURALISM: THE "UNCANNY DOUBLE" IN MUSIC EDUCATION

By acknowledging that race is coded into discourse, we are able to interrogate more deeply our motives as music educators, asking ourselves—what drives our desire for multicultural music education? Scholars in postcolonial studies suggest that perhaps the motivation is not as altruistic as those of us who teach music probably want to believe. Ahluwalia (2002) calls upon Freud's concept of the *uncanny double* to analyze the psychic ambivalence that may have played a part in a 1992 Australian judicial decision to grant a Torres Strait Islander aboriginal group proprietary rights over their land; rights that, of course, the Torres Strait Islanders had always maintained that they held.  Ahluwalia argues:

> At the very time when Anglo-European Australia appeared to be shedding its racist past by dealing with the indigenous population, it was more interested in self-redemption and atoning for its sins. Although proclaiming the dawn of a new era characterized by the recognition of Aboriginal people, it sought simultaneously to draw the indigenous population within its own unmistakably Anglo-European liberal referents (p. 188).

Applying this example to music education prompts us to wonder if we are experiencing a similar sort of psychic ambivalence. In the opening chapter of *Teaching Music Globally*, (Campbell, 2004) suggests that the book is located within a discussion related to "the infusion of world musics into particular instructional contexts ranging from children's classes and secondary school music programs, to theory, history, and culture courses" (1). Such language frames multicultural music education in North America as an attempt to draw indigenous musical practices into western musical referents. McCarthy et al. write that such framing, while important

in many ways, also produces less desirable results: "While multiculturalist intervention into the hierarchical space of race thinking and cultural absolutism was important, it also served to celebrate otherness and diversity within narrowly construed notions of shared values and assimilable ways of life" (McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby, 2005). Our attempts to understand indigenous musical cultures through sometimes narrowly defined Western referents also serve to obscure the nature of multiculturalism as a racial project. As a result, race "hovers and haunts barely noticed, well hidden . . . beneath the rigors of the scholarly apparatus" (Radano & Bohlman, 2000, p. 1).

**Racial Alterity's Commercial Value in Choral Music Education**
Multicultural approaches to choral music education, which have gained widespread acceptance within the discipline over the past two decades, have brought a wealth of musical diversity to our choirs. Unfortunately, though, repertoire choices featuring musical cultures from around the globe often are made in the spirit of 'spicing up' concert programs of predominantly western art music, a form of musica exotica (Campbell, 1994), or what hooks calls the "commodification of Otherness" (hooks, 1990). Programming on this basis is symptomatic of what Gilroy (2000) terms, "'corporate multiculturalism': the barren terrain where work on 'race' is overshadowed by . . . cultures of simulation in which racial alterity has acquired an important commercial value" (p. 52). Indeed, multicultural education is "increasingly being sold as a way of enhancing the cultural capital and economic opportunities of all students, including students from the dominant group, in a context of increasing globalization" (Kymlicka, 2004, p. vii). As a result, teachers and conductors sometimes operate from an ethic that encourages including 'something different' on the program in order to fulfill school boards' or parents' expectations for multicultural content. This, too, speaks to the ways multicultural education has become part of a hegemonic curriculum.

Racial alterity's commercial value casts its shadow even on music programs seeking to promote a deeper understanding of musical culture. The pressure to program ever more diverse music for concerts creates a condition wherein teachers frame music as an autonomous entity by default, as a result of decisions to forego using precious rehearsal time to teach the social,

economic, and historical contexts that are important aspects of multicultural education. Sometimes, however, the decision to forego teaching these contexts has less to do with lack of time than it has to do with the habit of ignoring race. One of my graduate students remarked recently: "I wanted to begin teaching the blues to my band, but I was afraid to talk about many of the things associated with the blues genre, like race and social class—I was afraid someone would misinterpret what I was saying." Yet without such contexts, we are handcuffed in our attempts "to develop in students an understanding of the cultural thought and practices of populations across the globe" (Campbell, 2002, p. 28).

<center>ANTI-RACISM: BEYOND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION</center>

How can we begin to move toward cultural understanding if we fail to recognize where and how race is coded into our own cultural thought and practice? I have for some time questioned whether the goal Campbell articulates of "understanding cultural thought and practices of populations across the globe" is in itself sufficient to make the substantive changes necessary to eliminate racism, particularly when we avoid race talk in discussions of culture. Racism is not simply about prejudice or a lack of understanding; it is a systemic problem that functions at both institutional and interpersonal levels (Lee, Menkart, & Okazawa-Rey, 1998, p. 4). As educators, we are part of a system that has perpetuated racism. As critical educators, therefore, we need to ask how our own praxis might serve to identify and dismantle not only racism but the intersecting oppressions of sexism, heterosexism, and ableism as well.  As hooks writes, "multiculturalism compels educators to recognize the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shared in the classroom. It forces us all to recognize our complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind" (hooks, 1994, p. 44).

These are the issues, I believe, that ultimately led me to anti-racism education studies in my own search to develop a more meaningful praxis related to multicultural music education. How is anti-racism education different from multicultural education? *Multiculturalism* works with the notion of our basic humanness and downplays inequities of difference by accentuating shared commonalities, while *anti-racism* education seeks to identify, challenge, and change the

values, structures, and behaviors that perpetuate systemic racism and other forms of societal oppressions (Dei, 2000, p. 21).

## Anti-racism and Feminism

The goals of anti-racism share common ground with philosophies of anti-oppression that include feminism. However, while the description above may be congruent with feminism's objectives, there is a difference in focus between the two. Feminism employs gender as the primary lens for analysis while the saliency of race provides the primary analytic criterion for anti-racism.  Thus one difference[8] between the two philosophies derives from the analytical focus that is predominantly at stake. *Anti-racism* acknowledges where gender and other issues intersect with race; *feminism* acknowledges the intersection of race and other issues with gender. Some scholars refer to their writing as "anti-racist feminism" (Brewer, 1993; Calliste & Dei, 2000; Razack, 2000; Wing, 1997) or occasionally the converse, "feminist anti-racism," which is perhaps a more accurate description of my own praxis. Incorporating both anti-racism and feminism into pedagogy require that, as a teacher, I must not only be aware of my own position of privilege, I also need to facilitate the type of environment in which my students may come to better understandings of race and privilege. This type of environment emphasizes interrogating the role that race as social construct plays in the music included in (or excluded from) a curriculum, its social context, and our ability to understand it.

## An Example of Anti-Racism as Praxis

In *Music and the Racial Imagination*, Deborah Wong investigates various moments in performances by Asian Americans that call upon bodily re-enactments of characteristics traditionally thought of as African American. Her essay, framed as a response to Ingrid Monson's "exploration of authenticity" in "The Problem with White Hipness: Race, Gender, and Cultural Conceptions in Jazz Historical Discourse" (1995), seeks to provide a "another encounter between bodies where performance is a constitutive moment for an activist response to racialized inequities" (Wong, 2000, p.58). Wong offers as an example a moment in Philip Gotanda's play, *Yankee Dawg You Die*, when two Asian Americans recognize their impersonations of African-

American bodily movements as "corporeally enacting the cultural memory of other racialized representations" (59). This idea resonates deeply for me as a white teacher drawn to world choral music for my community youth choir, the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir (MFYC). Our performances, too, are corporeal enactments of racialized memories and cultural meanings. Contextualized within an anti-racism pedagogy, the music brings the global into the local MFYC culture and into the moral life-worlds of the choir members (Beck, 2002, p. 17) as potentially constitutive moments of response to racialized inequities.  I believe our repertoire choices, contextualized within this anti-racism pedagogy, constitute multicultural transruptions, which Hesse (2000) describes as "any series of contestatory cultural and theoretical interventions which, in their impact as cultural differences, unsettle social norms and threaten to dismantle hegemonic concepts and practices" (17).

For example, when MFYC sings freedom songs from the anti-apartheid movement of South Africa, we not only discuss the history of apartheid in South Africa, we also make links to the history of racism in North America, to the ongoing apartheid of Canada's First Nations people, and to racism as it is manifest in today's society. This approach has enabled us to experience some exciting moments of transformation. For example, on August 6, 2003, the Mississauga Festival Youth Choir performed for Prison Fellowship International's (PFI) quadrennial convocation in Toronto. We had been invited to perform for this event in part because of our reputation for performing world music but, not insignificantly, also because we are known locally as an "ethnically diverse" choir.[9] Our pre-performance rehearsals of the South African freedom song *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona* familiarized choir members with the anti-apartheid struggle of South Africa,[10] the significance of this particular song to that struggle, and the importance of that struggle to the world today.

The audience for the PFI event numbered more than 900 people from over 180 countries. The audience received us well right from the beginning of our performance; but when we began to sing *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona*, the members of the South African delegation spontaneously jumped to their feet, dancing and singing along with us. It was a particularly powerful moment. Although the video footage taken during the performance does not show what happened in the audience, if you listen carefully you can hear the South African delegation, many of whom had

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been political prisoners under apartheid, clapping and stomping as we sang; the choir members' faces reflect both their surprise and joy at the delegates' impromptu performance. The moment created a palpable excitement in the hall that stayed with me for several days afterwards.  (Watch the video.)

One year and a half later, during their interviews[11] with me, many MFYC members commented on the impact of this moment: some choristers understood for the very first time that *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona* was a "real song" that held deep meaning for the South African delegates to the PFI convocation. Yet, had we not contextualized the song in rehearsals, had we not discussed apartheid, racism, and the ongoing fight for social justice, the social and praxial meaning of this moment may have been missed. Instead, however, we shared a profound socio-musical experience with the South African delegates and other members of the audience because choir members had at least some background concerning the social and historical context of the song.

I do not mean to imply that this experience was the same for every individual in the hall that night. I recognize that the South African delegates experienced the moment differently than those of us on stage or those in the audience. The delegates' exuberant and spontaneous dance arose from a deep understanding of the significance of *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona* to the anti-apartheid movement. For some, their personal experiences under the system of apartheid may have been relived in that moment; for other delegates, the moment may have enabled them to experience anew the deep joy that accompanied a hard-won freedom. For the MFYC members, however, this experience made real (as opposed to being an abstract bit of history) the various discussions we had during rehearsals about apartheid. Our rehearsal talk about the resistance movement, and the ways in which the freedom songs helped to bring solidarity to those oppressed under apartheid, suddenly became a living moment for my students, a moment in which they grasped, even if fleetingly, a deeper understanding for themselves of that particular song. In the *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona* moment, I believe a space was opened for what I have termed *multicultural human subjectivity* (Bradley, 2006*)*.

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**Defining Multicultural Human Subjectivity**

The concept of multicultural human subjectivity refers to the type of identity or self-understanding (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000) that may develop within individuals living in societies experiencing increasing "glocalization"[12] (Robertson, 1992). By approaching music education through a pedagogy of anti-racism that strives to make apparent power relations in society, many (if not all, as is suggested below) members of the MFYC appeared to have developed a sense of cosmopolitanism, defined as an outward-looking, interculturally sensitive moral and ethical standpoint (Beck, 2002; Brennan, 1997; Roudometof, 2005). The term *multicultural human subject* attempts to disrupt those fixed categories that often shape subjectivities and reinforce inequalities within discourses of race, ethnicity, gender, nationalism, and ableism.

Multicultural human subjectivity is a processual, emergent category of practice characterized by acknowledged feelings of connectedness to people in other places and cultures, in open-mindedness toward previously unfamiliar cultures, and through concern for social justice. Choir members' descriptions of their experiences with world choral music in the MFYC often suggested a developing multicultural human subjectivity. As an emerging category of practice, multicultural human subjectivity suggests that some choir members were able to recognize themselves in others, and recognize others within themselves. The disposition for acquiring the cultural capital of multiple languages through performing global song is likewise indicative of an emerging multicultural human subjectivity in glocalized societies. Within an anti-racism pedagogy, the desire to learn more of other cultures by experiencing the music of those cultures goes beyond 'cultural tourism,' suggesting instead *cosmopolitanism* as an ethical outlook that "cares for the souls of others" (hooks, 1994). Such cultural interests may encourage the development of sincere respect for the people of those cultures. The corporeal re-enactments of racialized memories (Wong, 2000) that occur when global song is performed may be read as performative[13] acts of resistance to rigid categorizations of race, nation, ethnicity, gender, and ability; acts that in some circumstances provide profound moments of recognition across such differences. Such moments of recognition hold potential for a developing multi-consciousness characteristic of multicultural human subjectivity.

It is not my intention in this paper to suggest that experiences in MFYC are solely responsible for any attitudes choir members expressed in their interviews that are indicative of multicultural human subjectivity. It is important to acknowledge that some of the young people who join the MFYC do so because of its reputation for performing world musics, or because of its visible racial and ethnic diversity. Thus, the participants in the study were to some degree self-selecting. My doctoral research, from which this paper is drawn, sought to recognize the perilous and pervasive ways in which globalized and transnational cultural artifacts influence our lives in North America, consciously and unconsciously shaping the identity formation of some of us. Some of the participants in my study, therefore, may have already been open to the possibilities of multicultural re-formation as a central aspect of who they are, while others may not have been so insightful about their identity constitution. For the latter, joining a choir such as the MFYC would have held potential for a significant life transforming experience. For those who already had some understanding of the way discourses work to constitute identities, MFYC membership reinforced possibilities for multicultural re-formation.

**Divergent Discourses**

With the foregoing description of multicultural human subjectivity in mind, I will share some of the descriptions that MFYC members provided of the particular moment when the South African delegates to the PFI Convocation leapt to their feet to dance while we sang *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona*. Amber, a sixteen-year old white Canadian, describes the impact of this experience for her:

>   (Hear Amber File 1)
>
>   Debbie: Any particular experiences you have had with MFYC that you feel are
>   especially meaningful for you?
>   Amber: The Prison Fellowship—I always go back to that. I loved that—I loved
>   seeing people who knew it [the song]—that was so cool. Now I want to go
>   to like Ghana and do the Bobobo and everyone will know it—that would
>   be so cool . . . . And they just started cheering and they got up dancing,
>   and it felt very powerful, because they knew what it was, and we knew
>   what it was. Like we're so used to our parents going, "Oh, that was an
>   interesting, fun piece," you know what I mean? But they don't
>   understand—but this was like—they are dancing and we know the dance!

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It was so cool! I can't really describe it but it was like that barrier was just gone.  (Interview, March 29, 2004).

Amber's exclamation, "they knew what it was and we knew what it was" suggests to me that this was a moment of recognition that, for her, transcended race, ethnicity, and nationality—although her words simultaneously acknowledge the existence of those boundaries. Gilroy (1993) argues in *The Black Atlantic* that such moments of recognition, "produced in the intimate interaction of performer and crowd," (102) are actually signifying practices mediated through the body. Gilroy suggests that in "black music" as a cultural practice, this musical recognition produces "the imaginary effect of an internal racial core of essence" (102). I co-opt Gilroy's argument for my purposes here. Although I, too, reject notions of essential internal cores, racial or otherwise, is it not possible that in Amber's moment of recognition, she realized a non-hegemonic possibility for humanity that transrupts boundaries of race, ethnicity, and nation? Anzaldúa refers to this as *mestiza* consciousness, a consciousness of the borderlands (Analdúa, 1987, cited in Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 267). Might it not also indicate potential for a multicultural human subject?

Turning now to Ricky's description of that same moment:

(Hear Ricky)

Debbie: I wanted to go back because you talked about the sense of pride from doing African music. Can you talk about that a little bit more?
Ricky: Oh! It was when we sang at that government thing. What was that?
Debbie: Last summer?  The Prison Fellowship?
Ricky: Yes. And uh, we started singing Bobobo—or no, we started singing Gabi, Gabi and uh. . .
Debbie: *Haleluya! Pelo Tsa Rona*.
Ricky:  That's it. I started smiling and people started looking at me and going (points and nods), and people started jumping up and carrying on and all. It just felt really cool that I could sort of be in Africa, sort of, mentally, for that little bit of time.
Debbie: So, were people in the audience actually pointing at you?
Ricky: Well, I could see them looking at me going (nods his head as if trying to get someone to look in a particular direction).
Debbie: So making eye contact as if, "You're one of us, brother" kind of thing?
Ricky: Yes, exactly. That's what it felt like. (Interview, March 6, 2004).

Although for Amber, a young white woman, this experience transcended racial boundaries, for Ricky it produced a moment of heightened racial awareness, which Tatum (1997) theorizes as part of his emerging racial identity as a black male in late adolescence. Ricky's description of the moment also points to another effect of this particular musical performance: as he described it, he "could sort of be in Africa, mentally, for that little bit of time." Frith (1996) asserts that when we perform music, we construct "imaginative cultural narratives" through which we "absorb songs into our lives and rhythm into our bodies" (121), and Ricky's comments appear to support this assertion. However, although these imaginative cultural narratives may work to soften boundaries constructed through discourse, as Amber's comments suggest, by the same token they may just as easily reinforce stereotypes and prejudices, as Diana illustrates:

(Hear Diana)

Debbie: Has doing music from Africa in any way influenced the opinions or beliefs you might have had about that music?

Diana: Uhm, no—not really, although the rush of the music, the tempo and stuff—I could tell that Africans were a more primal society than a sophisticated society like Victorian, because I can hear that in the music. Like when I hear the Bobobo stuff—it makes everyone in the audience want to sing right along, even if they don't know the words, whereas in a sophisticated society, like with Mozart and stuff, people in the audience will just go quiet and listen to it. I personally think music from a sophisticated society is like—it's more the music you listen to, you don't sing to. Whereas societies like West Africa, Ghana, that kind of thing, the songs they make up—they're meant to be sung by everyone. (Interview, April 6, 2004).

Diana's words sting like a slap in the face, a strong example of the alchemy of school knowledge (Popkewitz, 1998) (or in this case, choir knowledge). Alchemy refers to the way socially produced disciplinary knowledge is unhinged from those social moorings and reduced to unambiguous, abstract concepts for the purpose of transmission as school subjects (27). Although Diana has some of the concepts right, what she has wrong is frighteningly so: "primal versus sophisticated societies" (recall the CMS President's phrase, "primal forms of artistic expression").[14] I know she did not hear that from me; nonetheless, it is part of the way she thinks about performing African music, a vestige of a racist, colonial discourse singing in her head even as she performs the music of West Africa. That we spent a considerable amount of rehearsal time

studying the cultural context for West African music through an anti-racism lens, and that she, too, took part in the PFI concert, seems to have made little difference to Diana, at least in her choice of language in this particular discussion. Her comments are a painful example of how meaning can never be secured by pedagogical practice (Simon, 1992, p. 68). Discourses of race, ethnicity, nation, gender, religion, ability, sexism and heterosexism, to which our students are exposed daily through media, schooling, family, and peers, also influence their attitudes and self-understanding.

At the time of the interview, Diana was sixteen years old and enjoyed reading Victorian novels. Although it would be easy to say she was just going through a passing phase, it is difficult to know what it might take to disrupt the literary colonialist discourse that appears to have as much influence on her thinking as MFYC's anti-racism rehearsal discourse. Even though Diana, as a choir member in her third year with MFYC, had experienced South African music framed within an anti-racism pedagogy on many occasions, and although she had participated in two intensive West African drumming experiences, those experiences do not seem to have replaced stereotypes in her thinking, and may actually have contributed to reifying them. She may not be the only MFYC member for whom our African musicking experiences reified stereotypes or otherwise reinforced the precise type of thinking that pedagogically I hoped to disrupt. A few other choristers used language suggesting that their personal imagined cultural narratives of Africa are based upon charitable organizations' television campaigns. Their reliance on media images discursively constructs an Africa where most children are starving, few if any are able to attend school, and everyone lives in poverty—the salvation tropes of a lingering colonialism. This is not to diminish the monumental challenges Africa faces or to suggest that those of us in the west turn a blind eye to African issues. However, these conditions are not the sum of life in Africa, and the tropes deny possibility for African agency in dealing with the issues. Although in rehearsals with MFYC I have always tried to present balanced information about Africa, the competition from media and literary discourses is fierce, as Diana's remarks indicate.

Educational researchers have attempted to determine how anti-racism pedagogy may contribute to changed attitudes and beliefs among adolescents. Here, too, the findings are mixed.

Kehoe and Mansfield (1993) describe a study by Segawa designed to assess if anti-racism education reduces "belief in a just world"[15] scores among students. Segawa's findings were inconsistent among the groups involved in the study. For one group, belief in a just world scores were reduced, for the other, there was no significant change between pre-test and post-test scores.  This does not suggest, however, that anti-racism education is ineffective; rather, it speaks to the need for more research on its potential impact. "The implication of research on practice depends not on the size of effects but on the costs and benefits of any change in practice" (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1993, p. 6).

<div align="center">RETURNING TO THE CONVERSATION</div>

Diana's choice of words in the foregoing interview excerpt leaves me disquieted.  As the MFYC's teacher-conductor, I have always tried to make apparent to my students the ways in which language masks prejudice through various racial codes. Brantlinger wrote the following over twenty years ago, yet the words still ring true:

> The work of liberation from racism and the politics of domination is far from over.  Discourse—that most subtle yet also inescapable form of power—in its imperial guise persists, for example, in the recent assumptions about the antithesis between "primitive" or "backward" and "civilized" or "advanced" societies . . . (Brantlinger, 1985, p. 199).

Perhaps this is why I reacted so strongly to the vision statement for the CMS, discussed earlier in this paper.  If we as critical music educators are unable to discuss the racial coding of terms such as "aesthetic poverty" and "primal forms of artistic expression," how can we expect to engage in meaningful communication with student populations who are increasingly diverse and cognizant of the implications of race to their location in society? As DeNora (2000) reminds us, music is a powerful tool through which individuals construct identity. How do we, then, as teachers, use that tool; what kinds of people are we helping our students to be? Do our music education practices provide a new lens through which we can imagine what it means to be human, and does that lens help our students understand how power perpetuates inequality through racialized discourses, including the discourse of multiculturalism? When we teach from a

multicultural perspective, are we teaching for social justice, or perpetuating the status quo?

The time is long overdue for us to engage in conversations that acknowledge the ways in which music and our discourses about music are racially coded. Gilroy (2000) offers an "unapologetic reminder of how deeply culture has been associated with race" as part of his optimistic argument that an ethical cosmopolitan culture may move humanity toward an eventual erasure of race (282) and toward what he terms a *planetary humanity*. My own research relating anti-racism education and choral music to an emerging multicultural human subjectivity suggests that such a planetary humanity may be attainable in the distant future. But to be attainable, we must actively work toward that ideal by identifying otherwise coded or tacit racialized thinking and exposing systemic racism. Omi and Winant state unequivocally: "Despite exhortations both sincere and hypocritical, it is not possible or even desirable to be 'color-blind.' Opposing race requires that we notice race, not ignore it" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p.158-159).

In *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education* the authors write that there have been enormous social, cultural, and material dislocations since the mid 1990s, when the first edition of their book was published. As they suggest, these dislocations

> have destabilized any certainty around the traditional roles of learning in schools. And yet pedagogical work remains central to possibilities for a different global future . . . . This contested landscape of global inequality and marginalization . . . demands a different set of understandings as to what constitutes an engaged 'research imaginary' in education today. That is, how to contextualize and envision pedagogy and cultural work that might make a difference. . . . (McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby, 2005, p.xxviii).

What kinds of pedagogical work might contribute to the possibilities for a different global future? O'Toole (2005) asserts that we need "a theorized practice of performativity that makes apparent (and does not just imply) institutional critiques and multiple identities including gender, class, race, sexuality, patriarchy, and so forth" (307).  I wholeheartedly concur on this point. In a similar vein, McCarthy et al. call for the "capacity for intervention" where it is acknowledged that theory and critique are not ends in themselves. Anti-racism pedagogy fosters

this capacity for intervention, in that it calls for educators to re-imagine possibilities of alternative policy and collaborative practice to "respond to aspirations for participation and self-determination still pulsing in the everyday lives of the historically excluded and their allies in the centers and peripheries that divide our world" (McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby, 2005, p. xxviii). Music education has its own history of exclusion, a history that continues to self-perpetuate in part due to the imposition of colonial value judgments upon musical genres and practices. Rock musicians, West African drumming masters, North Indian classical musicians and many other specialists, unless they are also expert in Western art music, are not likely to find spots in North American university music education programs premised on Western classical music.

Meeting the challenge of collaborative practice demands that we move beyond thinking about music hierarchically and Eurocentrically. We might begin with the acknowledgement that "aesthetic poverty" does not refer to "other people's music," but may more appropriately describe our own lack of understanding of unfamiliar musical practices. Collaborative practice also means moving our curricular and program practices beyond the corporate multiculturalism that often guides our repertoire selections to a real inclusiveness that engages students and the communities in which they live. Multiculturalism is not just about expanding individual horizons or increasing personal intercultural skills; it is part of a larger project of justice and equality (Kymlicka, 2004, p. xvii) that demands we continue to make apparent to our students the power relations and racial coding embedded within music education practices, including multiculturalism. When we do so, our praxis may provide the type of space where many more of our students will experience the deep human recognition that Amber describes:  (Hear Amber File 2)

> Amber: And then you just sort of feel like you know more about the people—you can't really specify something because it is just a song, right? But it's, like, just something that they know and you know. And it's like a common bridge—like finding something in common with someone who is completely your opposite. . .

Can we talk?

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**Notes**

[1] The term *racialized* in this paper refers to differentiation or categorization according to race. As a result of such differentiation, individuals may perceive or experience life in racial terms. The *American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000.

[2] The excerpt in question is found on page 4 of this paper.

[3] The definition of anti-racism employed herein appears at the beginning of this paper. In the U.S.A., anti-racism is sometimes referred to as *critical multiculturalism,* linking it to critical theory and pedagogy. In Canada and Great Britain, however, the term *anti-racism* has gained widespread use as a way to differentiate it from liberal multiculturalism. Anti-racism critiques liberal forms of multiculturalism for failing to bring about change.

[4] In this paper, anti-racism is defined as an action-oriented, educational and political strategy for institutional and systemic change that addresses the issues of racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression (sexism, classism, heterosexism, ableism). It is most often used as a noun, but occasionally as an adjective (i.e. anti-racism pedagogy). It is not my intention to suggest a distinction between the adjectives anti-racism and anti-racist, and both terms appear interchangeably in this paper. Thus, I make use of both *anti-racism* and *anti-racist* in accordance with the usage employed by the authors cited.

[5] Ableism: discrimination in favor of able-bodied people.

[6] Although many nations have dominant discourses related to multiculturalism, the focus of this paper is on official multiculturalism in North America.

[7] Hegemony and hegemonic are used throughout this paper in the Gramscian sense indicating the interactions that enable a minority opinion (that of elite intellectuals and policy-makers generally) to become transformed into the majority (dominant) opinion.

[8] An in-depth comparison of feminism and anti-racism philosophies is beyond the scope of this paper.

[9] In this case, the MFYC membership's "racial alterity" served as a form of corporate multiculturalism for the PFI event planners.

[10] Many of the choir had no knowledge of South Africa's history of apartheid prior to our learning this particular freedom song.

[11] These interviews were conducted as part of my doctoral research (Bradley 2006) into the impact of learning and performing global song on adolescent self-understanding as "multicultural human subjects"

[12] Robertson describes *glocalization* as bringing the global into conjunction with the local. Originally concerned with marketing issues, the term has been taken up in academia in studies on intercultural communication. Its usage has grown in other disciplines to convey the intertwining of the global and the local, and to describe the increasingly complex relationship between the global and the local (Robertson, 1992, p. 173-174).

[13] Performative: In linguistics, relating to or being an utterance that performs an act or creates a state of affairs by the fact of its being uttered under appropriate or conventional circumstances, as a justice of the peace uttering *I now pronounce you husband and wife* at a wedding ceremony, thus creating a legal union, or as one uttering *I promise,* thus performing the act of promising. *The American Heritage ® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*_Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Published by the Houghton Mifflin Company. Butler (1990) made use of the term to theorize gender as performed rather than an "essence" of personhood. The term has since been utilized similarly in race theory and in cultural studies to describe the way acts (performances) create what is being performed.

[14] It is also possible to read Diana's statement as an example of a populist argument critiquing the elitism often associated with classical music audiences. Such an interpretation reframes Diana's words as an anti-aesthetic argument that stands in contrast with the CMS president's remarks.

[15] Belief in a just world suggests that individuals "get what they deserve" in society. It is a form of blaming socially disadvantaged people for the suffering they experience (blame the victim).

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