

White socio-spatial epistemology

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Recent work by geographers concerned with the enduring presence of racism has called for an interrogation of the privileges and contingencies of whiteness. Central to this project of denaturalizing White Identity has been the disclosure of its co-constitution with a host of social practices. Building on the work of critical theorists in the humanities and social sciences concerned with masculinist and post-colonial epistemologies, this paper outlines a socio-spatial epistemology of whiteness. Whiteness's central tenets are an essentialist and non-relational construction of space and identity that underwrite its claims to be realized independent of an Other. Spatially, this refusal manifests itself in the deployment of discursive categories associated with scales, boundaries and extensivity in ways that reify space into discrete, unrelated parcels. We discuss some of the implications of this non-relational construction of space and identity in the context of residential segregation and spatial mobility. The paper concludes by noting that historically and geographically specific forms of whiteness have drawn upon a common socio-spatial framing and that further study in this field will benefit anti-racist activism by disclosing the workings of racialization in numerous human geographic contexts.

Key words: whiteness, socio-spatial epistemology, feminism, post-colonial, racism.

Introduction

In a recent assessment of the study of 'race' in geography, Bonnett (1997) offers both a critique of earlier studies—noting the lack of attention directed toward the study of white identities—and a two-fold programmatic agenda for future geographic inquiry on whiteness. The first part of his agenda involves the historical-geographic study of the emergence of white identities during the early modern period. The second invites attention to the contemporary formation and reconstitution of

white identities, a project equally attuned to the different regional and national contexts within which white privilege operates. Both aspects of this agenda, he offers, will contribute to a broader social-scientific effort to understand the multiplicity of whiteness and its intersection with other social formations, particularly class.

We agree with Bonnett that geography has much to learn from and contribute to the growing literature on whiteness (e.g. Allen 1994, 1997; Bonnett 1996a, 1996b; Delgado and Stefancic 1997; Dyer 1988; Fine, Weiss, Powell and

Wong 1997; Frankenberg 1993; Hill 1997; Ingatiev 1995; Ingatiev and Garvey 1997; Jackson 1998; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Morrison 1992; Nast 2000; Roediger 1992, 1994, 1998). Disclosing the geographically and historically contingent construction of whiteness can certainly help to denaturalize White Identity—the normative and often unspoken category against which all other racialized identities are marked as Other. Likewise, locating whiteness in contemporary terms can enrich our understanding of a wide range of social practices. In the case of the USA, for example, this strategy might help deconstruct discourses of ‘the people’ that underpin popular conceptions of the American polity; these operate in everyday social language and the media, and are institutionalized in legal codes and public policies, affecting domains as diverse as immigration, law enforcement, zoning and neighbourhood segregation, education and health care, and the constitution of public space and housing.

We believe that our understanding of such domains can also be enhanced by a focus on how whiteness works as an *epistemology*, that is, as a particular way of knowing and valuing social life. Our interest in epistemology is not based on a fault line between, on the one hand, whiteness as a conceptual framework and, on the other hand, whiteness-in-practice, for any such division would be tenuous. Nevertheless, we believe that there is much work to be done on the former before researchers can claim to have threaded the dialectical connections between the two. Here we discuss two epistemological aspects of whiteness. The first of these, the social construction of whiteness, relies upon an essentialist and non-relational understanding of identity. Whiteness offers subjects who can claim it an opportunity to ignore the constitutive processes by which all identities are constructed. In effacing their construction, ‘white’ people can paradoxically hover over

social diversity just as they become the yardstick for its measurement. This first moment is then linked to a second framing, a segmented spatialization that parallels the non-relational epistemology of white identities. This spatial epistemology relies upon discrete categorizations of space—nation, public/private and neighbourhood—which provide significant discursive resources for the cohesion and maintenance of white identities. It also relies upon the ability to survey and navigate social space from a position of authority.

Both of our epistemological framings exceed the causal capacity of whiteness. Indeed, in what follows we draw upon epistemological critiques raised by feminists and post-colonial theorists. Our critique of social epistemology is already well established in feminist criticisms of masculinist thought (Haraway 1991; Harding 1987), while our claims about spatial epistemology have their correlatives in geographic critiques of both masculinist and colonial spatiality. Rose (1993), for example, draws attention to the masculinist bias in mainstream spatial epistemology (also see Massey 1994), while Gregory (1994), writing from a post-colonial perspective, attributes to that same epistemology a colonial, ‘cartographic anxiety’ (also see Mitchell 1988 and Willems-Braun 1997). In pushing whiteness through these critiques, we are not attempting to unseat feminist or post-colonial contributions to the study of epistemology. To do so would ignore the historical fact which both colonial and masculinist subjectivities—in all their historical and geographical variability—emerged prior to modern whiteness. Similarly, Cartesian and Euclidean spatiality predates whiteness. Our argument, rather, is that whiteness can tap a rich epistemological field from which to gather its authoritative and distanced subjectivity. And not last, we note that whiteness is not distinct from either colonialism or masculinity. Though not

developed here, a furtherance of our aims would involve study of the intersections between white, colonial and masculine epistemologies (e.g. McClintock 1995).

In what follows, we outline the central components of white socio-spatial epistemology. We then briefly look at two representations of whiteness, one in the context of neighbourhood segregation, the other pertaining to spatial mobility. We conclude the paper by calling for further theoretical developments along the above lines, and for additional substantive investigations of the domains within which whiteness-as-epistemology is articulated.

White socio-spatial epistemology

Our understanding of both epistemological moments builds upon recent attempts to construct anti-essentialist and relational theories of both identity and space (e.g. Bhabha 1994; Friedman 1998; Jacobs 1996; Keith and Pile 1993; Kirby 1996; Massey 1994; Nast 2000; Natter and Jones 1997; Pile and Thrift 1995; Pred 2000; Rose 1993; Sibley 1995; Soja 1996; Young 1990). We follow in the tradition of these contributions, but with specific attention to the question of whiteness. Our first moment, social epistemology, relies upon a relational understanding of identity construction, as formulated by Laclau and Mouffe (1985). Their anti-essentialist theory assumes that identity is the product of categorization, a process, following Foucault, by which unmarked social alterity is discursively organized as difference, and differences are aligned into 'nodal points' of social identification. This discursive process works through the 'constitutive outside', wherein identities are constructed, not through an inherent, self-asserted positivity, but through the negation of difference. Selves therefore emerge through the process of refusing the

Other, and identities can thus be said to contain at their 'centre' an absent presence—the 'trace' of the Other that is at once constitutive of identity and the raw material for its destabilization.

Through this constitutive process, described and extended by numerous identity theorists (e.g. Bhabha 1994; Butler 1993; Hall 1991; Morrison 1992; Natter and Jones 1997; Pred 2000), identities emerge with three characteristics (Jones and Moss 1995). They are, in the first instance, *contingent*, both historically and geographically. Identities are part of an open and ongoing social process, for it is only across particular constellations of social power that this or that discourse is made available for the construction of identity. As Morrison notes, the construction of white American identity depended upon the deployment *as* difference of a particular aspect of social alterity:

These slaves, unlike many others in the world's history, were visible to a fault. And they had inherited, among other things, a long history on the meaning of color; it was that this color 'meant' something ... One supposes that if Africans all had three eyes or one ear, the significance of that difference from the smaller but conquering European invaders would have also been found to have meaning. (1992: 49)

Identities are also *differentiated*, in that subjects never occupy a single system of difference. Thought discursively, no constitutive process operates along a single axis of negation; instead, the discursive formations drawn upon in the construction of identities are complex and interlocking, intertextually linked to a host of social axes. Resonating across the field of whiteness are discursive formations of class, coloniality, masculinity and sexuality (Gallaher 1998; Kimmel 1996; McClintock 1995; Morrison 1992). Third, identities are *relational*,

dependent upon the Other for their meaning and constitution. This relationality is the product of a distributed field of discourse that is never exclusively contained by one or another side of the category around which identities are constructed (Natter and Jones 1997). As Morrison describes the trace of the African American Other within white America: 'It is no accident and no mistake that immigrant populations ... understood their "Americanness" as *opposition to the resident black population*' (1992: 39 emphasis added). Similarly, as Hall notes in his reflections on the stubborn presence of racism in multicultural Great Britain:

The English are racist not because they hate the Blacks but because they don't know who they are without the Blacks. They have to know who they are *not* in order to know who they are. (1991: 16 emphasis in original)

For us, whiteness's social epistemology can be located precisely in its opposition to this relational understanding of subjectivity. As an asserted positivity (i.e. 'I am White'), whiteness presents itself as a self-actualized achievement, realized in the absence of an Other. The social distancing documented in studies of whiteness (e.g. Roediger 1992) depends upon this independent conception of identity, and this, in turn, protects whiteness from destabilization. In lieu of any recognition of the constitutive trace of the racialized Other, white America resorts to hegemonically reproduced claims about a shared European heritage, affiliated genetic stock or 'bloodlines', and a common national experience to account for its existence.

Whiteness's social epistemology has a spatial parallel. This also operates non-relationally, with space understood as being comprised of discrete and bounded objects and spatio-temporal units that can be readily delineated, known and assigned 'attributes'. Writing about

mainstream spatiality more generally, Dixon and Jones (1998) describe three co-ordinates of this mechanistic and segmented spatial epistemology. First, *Cartesian perspectivalism* (Jay 1992) lineates the world with respect to a single point. This marking of space is a precondition for the assignment of subjects to social space, itself a marker of white privilege (Frankenberg 1993; hooks 1992). Second, *ocularcentrism* 'privileges vision from [this] elevated vantage point from which the world may be surveilled in its totality' (Dixon and Jones 1998: 252). At this visionary point one is as likely to find—relative to any other constellation of identity—the omniscient white (male) subject, secure in his position as a surveyor of the social terrain. Third, these two moments cohere in the *epistemology of the grid*, a spatial procedure for segmenting social life such that it can be measured and interrogated (Dixon and Jones 1998: 251; also see Gregory 1994). This tripartite framing is the epistemological foundation for all manner of socio-spatial boundaries.

Although this spatial epistemology predates whiteness, it has come to work in the service of it. The grid epistemology offers whiteness a rich set of discursive categories, most significantly: *scale* (nation–region–locality–neighbourhood); *boundaries* (of nation, home/workplace, public/private); and *extensivity* (distance, direction, connectivity, mobility). In everyday invocations of these categories, both white and Other subjects reify social space, locating social subjects and attributing characteristics to places. This process of categorical naturalization is the spatial correlative of whiteness's non-relational social epistemology. In its solidification, it underwrites private property and the construction and orderly maintenance of segmented social space, from gated communities to redlined districts, from nature 'preserves' (including, for example, all-white golf courses) to office towers (white by day,

brown and black by night). Further, by providing a framework for maintaining social order across space, this epistemology is the precondition for smooth mobility across zones, from the daily commute to leisure travel. And, through the ocularcentric dimension of this epistemology, space is given over to continuous transparency, as can be seen in the increasing illumination and surveillance of public space (McCourt and Dahlman 1998). Finally, that white epistemology does not invoke relational spatiality—comprised of dialectically overdetermined flows and connections that give rise to space as an open, vibrating, paradoxical, enfolded, heterogeneous and indeterminate field (Doel 1999; Massey 1993; Natter and Jones 1997; Rose 1993)—is epistemologically consistent with white identity theory's effacement of the relationally constituted trace. It is this consistency that provides the connective '-' in white socio-spatial epistemology: in effect, whiteness refuses the trace, both socially and spatially. We now turn to two representations of white epistemology.

Distance and boundaries

One socio-spatial elaboration of white epistemology is through the production of what the African American novelist and essayist James Baldwin referred to as 'distance'—a term he employed to reference the simultaneous creation of hierarchically ordered status and spaces. Insofar as social status and spatial differentiation are intimately linked, Baldwin wrote that:

[o]ne can measure very neatly the white American's distance from his conscience—from himself—by observing the distance between white America and black America. One has only to ask oneself who established this distance, who is this distance de-

signed to protect, and from what is this distance designed to offer protection? (1998 [1965]: 725)

For Baldwin, the spatiality of life in segregated America raised uncomfortable questions: why, if we are equal, do we not live in the same neighbourhoods, go to the same schools, work at the same jobs, and worship in the same churches? In effect, why, if there is no *difference* between us, is there so much *distance* between us (also see Bloomer 1996)? In posing these questions, Baldwin referenced not only the absolute distance between inner city and suburb, but also social positioning more generally in which differentiated spaces are produced by, and productive of, hierarchical status. The co-ordinates of this positioning are delineated in terms of strict social binaries (centre/periphery, self/other) and their associated proximities (here/there, domestic/foreign). Simultaneously marking and making difference by bounding white and Other in their respective places, this racialized geography has been reproduced on and through the built environment throughout American history: the *ante bellum* configuration of the 'big house' on the avenue with 'servant' residences in the basement or along the alley way; the Jim Crow era's front and back of the bus; and contemporary suburbia's *cordon sanitaire* of interstate highways, municipal zoning and gated communities (see Davis and Donaldson 1975; Groves and Muller 1975; Kelley 1994; Kellogg 1982; Massey and Denton 1994).

The editorial cartoon reproduced in Figure 1 (Pett 1994) is an illustration of the manner in which the distant white centre hovers over social diversity in the service of segregation. The editorial appeared in Lexington, Kentucky's daily newspaper, *The Herald-Leader*, in the wake of the shooting of a black youth by a white police officer in that city, and the subsequent protest by African American youth in

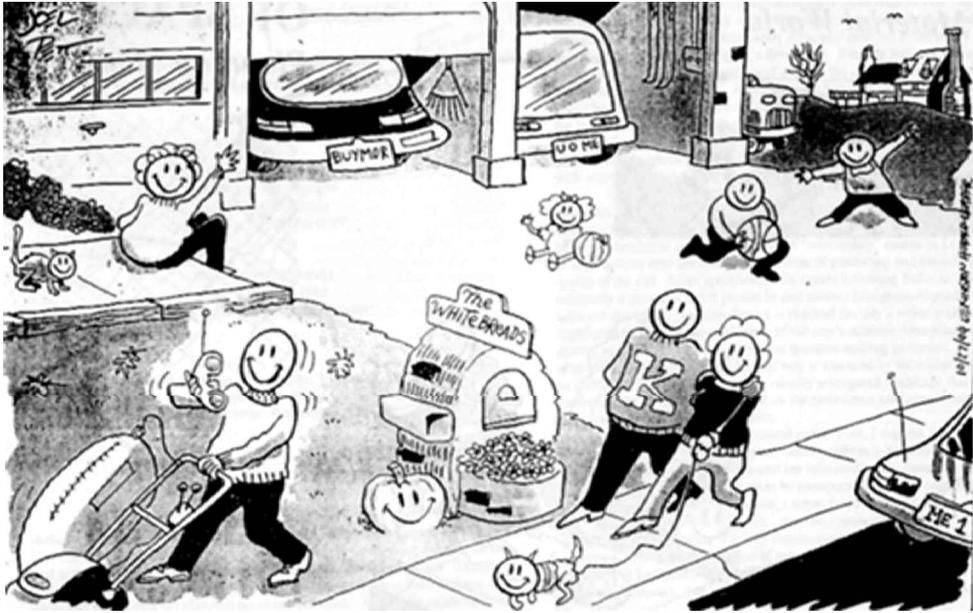


Figure 1 'Bluegrass-Aspendale? I think that's about a million miles from here' (Pett 1994).

the streets of downtown Lexington (see McCann 1999, for an extensive discussion). In response to a question over the mobile phone, the cartoon's protagonist, Mr Whitebread, replies, 'Bluegrass-Aspendale? I think that's about a million miles from here'. This neighbourhood on the outskirts of downtown Lexington is a predominantly black public housing project, and was home to many of the protesters who demonstrated their outrage over the shooting. The Whitebreads stand for the residents of Lexington's predominantly white suburbs, which lie to the south of the city—no more than five to ten miles away from Bluegrass-Aspendale.

Though Whitebread's comments reference the profound segregation of whites and blacks in Lexington, the exaggerated distance in his remarks point equally to an epistemological reading. His distanced response is possible only from the security afforded by a non-relational

subjectivity, housed comfortably within an orderly white space on which the contour lines of social status are traced. In effect, without a racialized Other and the various trappings of whiteness shown in the editorial, Whitebread would lose a rich source of his socio-spatial identity. And though Bluegrass-Aspendale is nearby, effectively the epistemological 'next-door neighbour' of Whitebread's suburb, his sense of geography, and the inscrutable smiley faces of his family and suburban neighbours, attest to Baldwin's distancing through Whitebread's easy and innocent denial of any connection between spaces of privilege and those of suffering. For, if his white suburb is to be maintained as 'safe', 'predictable' and 'orderly', then its socio-spatial complement must be epistemologically cordoned as the 'ghetto' and its putative inhabitants cast as 'menacing', 'volatile' and 'disorderly'. In short, white privilege is built upon Whitebread's and his neighbours'

ability to seal themselves from the socio-spatial traces of the Other.

Projecting beyond the ‘data’ in the editorial, Whitebread and his neighbours might justify suburban America’s contemporary landscape of segregation via a rhetoric which naturalizes inequalities in the economy, law enforcement and education system (Gallagher 1995). Again, witness James Baldwin writing on the manner in which an opaque and distancing whiteness is simultaneously created and justified through appeals to history and geography. Imagining the excuses offered for white privilege, Baldwin offered this rendition of ‘white guilt’:

Do not blame me. I was not there. I did not do it. My history has nothing to do with Europe or the slave trade. Anyway it was your chiefs who sold you to me ... I also despise the governors of southern states and the sheriffs of southern counties, and I also want your child to have a decent education and rise as high as capabilities will permit. (1998 [1965]: 723)

The passage suggests a desire to insulate whiteness from a critical gaze imbued with the power to know and condemn. Whereas some observers have posited a desire on the part of whites to imagine that they are altogether invisible to racialized Others (e.g. hooks 1992), the term ‘invisible’ can be interpreted to connote a wish to have no presence at all. Baldwin more persuasively divines a longing to present whiteness as an opaque façade that is at once apparent but whose depth is inscrutable—lest its true guilt be revealed. Likewise, whiteness does not represent its racialized Other as invisible but rather holds it in a state of transparent obviousness. For instance, studies have documented the slave holder’s desire to always know where his or her slaves were and what they were thinking (Blassingame 1979; Genovese 1976; Scott 1990). These rationales for white privilege

culminate in the representation of the white centre as opaque and unknowable and, ultimately, non-existent, while the racialized margins are presented as transparently obvious and ‘debased’—and thus wholly responsible for their conditions.

Additionally, we might assume that Whitebread’s sense of scale, easily demarcated from the neighbourhood to the world, is also complicit in distancing. For example, one can imagine him seduced by the tropes of scale beamed into his household during nightly newscasts. These newscasts not only speak to a White Centre, they are willing partners in scale construction—with their daily accountings of the Other bounded into segments like ‘The Nation’ and ‘The World’. Through such spatial constructions, Whitebread may rest assured that any disorder projected into his living room remains only virtual.

This sense of privilege and denial is complicated when we consider that the field of whiteness is marked by cleavages of gender and class such that white-skin privilege is unequally distributed (Wray and Newitz 1997). For instance, in response to a reporter’s inquiry regarding race relations in her gentrified inner-city neighbourhood, a wealthy, white resident of Lexington was quoted in the *Herald-Leader* as saying, ‘I feel more unsafe with poor whites down here [near my neighbourhood] than I do with blacks’ (Poore 1995). Used here as a point of contrast, blackness is presented as the unruly norm against which poor whites are marked as dangerous and disordered. One result of this is that the white working class, unlike their bourgeois brethren, cannot easily assume socio-spatial distance from racialized Otherness. The vulgar racism commonly ascribed to the white working class in the USA is perhaps the primary means of distancing and differentiating employed by them in the absence of class privileges that allow for the more subtle creation of

actual physical distance manifested in the neighbourhoods and schools of genteel suburbia.

Spatial mobility

In a provocative article investigating the prosaic character of white privilege, McIntosh (1997) notes some of the privileges of whiteness she has experienced. Among them are the following:

- I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race [*sic*] most of the time.
- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- If a traffic cop pulls me over ... I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
- I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen. (1997: 293–234)

This list invokes mobility through such questions as: 'Who can go where?' and 'When can they go there?' Whereas whites may consider McIntosh's encounters to be mundane, for those marked as Other, they carry the constant threat of psychic or physical violence. Clearly, one's experience with such events are conditioned by the racialized social order, but they also rely on a non-relational understanding of subjectivity. Those with whom McIntosh interacts construct her essentially, using her white body as a guarantee of her White Identity. Even in cases in which mobility can be linked to transgression and an engagement with the Other (e.g. Cresswell 1993; Jones forthcoming; McDowell 1996), the question 'For whom?' is always at the surface of the marked body's skin colour.

It is in this way that mobility—mundane or otherwise—is racialized. A recent advertisement for MasterCard credit cards offers an illustration (see Figure 2). In it, two white men, presumably college students, are overheard contemplating a nighttime road trip in their bohemian sport utility vehicle. Set against the backdrop of the star-encrusted sky and open road, one of them says, 'Where do you want to go?', to which the other replies, 'I don't know, where do you want to go?' The caption across the bottom of the page reads: 'MasterCard. Accepted wherever you end up'. The scene calls forth classic images of carefree adventure associated with the road trip, that particularly American coming-of-age ritual. The easy assumption of mobility and the promise of easy acceptance (both social and fiduciary), marks MasterCard's two travellers as privileged, and, along with their classed and gendered identities, codes the escapade as 'fun'.

The image of carefree travel, however, raises the question, for whom is travel play, and for whom is travel better understood by making reference to its shared etymological roots with *travail*, to toil and labour, to suffer? The latter is the sense that emerges from bell hooks' persuasive rendering of black travel as an encounter with the terror of moving through places that whites have claimed as their own (1991, 1992; see also Curtis 1997). The situation of the white road-trippers stands in marked contrast to the experience of black travellers for whom travel is often a dangerous undertaking, fraught with uncertainty and the uneasy knowledge that one may *not* be 'accepted wherever you end up'. The long history of segregated travel, with its distinctly separate and unequal services, as well as contemporary incidences of police harassment associated with racial profiling ('driving-while-black'), testify to the array of threats that attend to racialized



Figure 2 'MasterCard. Accepted wherever you end up'.

Others when moving through white spaces: suspicion, surveillance, harassment and assault.

By hooks' telling, places are far from neutral or empty containers. Rather, they can be

charged with white supremacy and are co-constitutive in its production. Writing about the travails associated with the journey she and her siblings would make through a white neigh-

bourhood on the way to her grandparent's house, she recalled:

I remember the fear ... because we would have to pass that terrifying whiteness—those white faces on the porches staring us down with hate. Even when empty or vacant those porches seemed to say danger, you do not belong here, you are not safe. (1991: 41)

hooks' reading of even the 'empty or vacant' porches suggests a relational micro-geography: exposed on the empty street, vulnerable to surveillance by the white ocular gaze, the children had to pass through a gauntlet of houses whose inhabitants considered them to be out of place (see Cresswell 1996). Some whites are quick to state that they do not feel safe moving through black neighbourhoods, the implication being that they too are marginalized. The fact remains, however, that whereas most whites can avoid these places, thanks to limited-access highways and segregated neighbourhoods, no such opportunity exists for people of colour moving through the residential and commercial spaces of the USA. By linking terror with something so necessary as spatial mobility, McIntosh and hooks point toward the pervasive embeddedness of whiteness, demonstrating how, for those who are named as Other—by the police when pulled over for speeding or by teachers in a hallway—whiteness is about who is able to monitor the social spaces of travel.

Conclusion

A recent article by Kobayashi and Peake (2000) extends Bonnett's (1997) call for geographic research on whiteness. Arguing for more work on strategies of resistance, they sketch an agenda that seeks to make antiracist struggle more effective by taking into account the myriad geographic sites at which whiteness oper-

ates: in boardrooms, streets and in classrooms. Equally important, they elaborate a political agenda focused on the discipline. Noting that our disciplinary history is 'one of near silence on issues of racialization, silence based on an almost overwhelming inattention to the details of racial practice, a silence, in other words, dominated by whiteness' (Kobayashi and Peake 2000: 399; see also Dwyer 1997), they go on to note how mainstream spatiality is complicit with whiteness, and to suggest how geographers should respond:

The preoccupation with space ... often reflects the modern concept of territoriality and the positioning of dominant groups, instead of recognizing that such outcomes are deeply implicated in the rationale of a spatial organization of society based on Enlightenment notions of imperial civilization. Part of the agenda for the new millennium, therefore, must be the pressing need to make considerations of racialization a fundamental aspect of geographical understanding, in much the same way that more and more geographers have recognized that no human geography is complete without a consideration of gender. (2000: 399)

In elaborating a set of socio-spatial concepts that service whiteness, and in briefly drawing connections between them and social practices and spaces, this paper is an attempt to contribute to such an agenda. We have drawn the contours of a non-relational social and spatial epistemology, one whose fragmentations and segmentations are not simply 'caused' by whiteness, but which can be marshalled in support of it. This marshalling of epistemology *becomes* socio-spatial practice, deeply embedded in the hovering silence of white identity, in the historical and contemporary forms of ocularcentrism, and in the distancing and segmentations of white space. Though, as Bonnett (1997) argues, there exist many forms of white-

ness, distinguished historically and geographically, it is our view that they share a common, non-relational, approach to knowing the world. This view is consistent with Bonnett's inasmuch as various forms of whiteness can differentially tap a rich epistemological terrain.

It follows that geographers attempting to overturn whiteness might well begin with an analysis of the forms of knowledge underwriting social practices and social spaces. Inasmuch as geography has contributed to those forms of thought, the discipline is complicit in these practices and spaces. A politics working in opposition to this epistemology of self-assertion and segmentation would thus pose challenging questions to the white centre: 'Who has the power to organize alterity into difference, and difference into identities?' 'How does this process vary historically and geographically?' 'Who is socially and spatially excluded in this process, and with what effects?' 'And, how can the security of white identities and spaces be deconstructed, destabilized and undermined?' Clearly these are only parts of an anti-racist political agenda, one that needs to operate on many levels. But by drawing attention to epistemology, we hope to connect theory and practice in ways that work on both the discipline and white society more generally.

Acknowledgements

This paper arose out of discussions at a National Science Foundation-sponsored research workshop on Race and Geography held at the University of Kentucky, 29 October to 1 November, 1998 (SBR-9810655). We thank the workshop participants for their stimulating discussions. We also thank Carolyn Gallaher, Linda Peake, Rich Schein and anonymous reviewers for their comments.

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Abstract translations

Épistémologie socio-spatiale blanche

Les travaux récents de géographes préoccupés par la persistance du racisme invitent au questionnement des privilèges et contingences associés à la race blanche. Central à ce projet de dénaturalisation de l'Identité Blanche est la volonté de révéler sa consti-

tution multiple par le biais d'une panoplie de pratiques sociales. En s'appuyant sur le travail de théoristes critiques des humanités et sciences sociales s'intéressant au masculinisme et épistémologies post-coloniales, ce travail met en lumière une épistémologie socio-spatiale du fait blanc. Ses principes de base sont une construction essentialiste et non-relationnelle de l'espace et de l'identité, sur lesquels se fonde la prétention à une identité blanche indépendante de l'Autre. D'un point de vue spatial, ce refus se manifeste à travers le déploiement de catégories discursives associées à des notions d'échelle, de frontière et d'extension qui raréfient l'espace en des unités discrètes et non reliées. Notre discussion porte sur les implications de cette construction non-relationnelle de l'espace et de l'identité dans un contexte de ségrégation résidentielle et de mobilité spatiale. La conclusion note comment des formes d'identité blanche historiquement et géographiquement spécifiques se sont élaborées à partir d'un même cadre socio-spatial et qu'une étude plus approfondie de ce domaine pourrait servir à un activisme anti-raciste en révélant le mécanisme d'attribution de la race dans plusieurs contextes de géographie humaine.

Mots clefs: race blanche, épistémologie socio-spatiale, féminisme, postcolonial, racisme.

Epistemologías espaciales blancas

Recientes trabajos de geógrafos que tratan la presencia endurecida del racismo han exigido un interrogatorio de los privilegios y las contingencias del blancor. A este proyecto de la desnaturalización de la Identidad Blanco ha sido fundamental la revelación de la co-constitución de ésta con una gran cantidad de costumbres sociales. Agregando a los trabajos elaborados por teóricos críticos de las disciplinas de humanidades y ciencias sociales que tratan de las epistemologías masculinistas y poscoloniales, este trabajo esboza una epistemología socio-espacial del blancor. Los principios centrales del trabajo son una construcción del espacio y la identidad esencialista y no relacional que apoyan las demandas del blancor a ser comprendido como independiente de un Otro. En términos espaciales, esta negativa se manifiesta en la utilización de categorías discursivas asociadas con escalas, fronteras y la extensividad de manera que hace del espacio parcelas discretas y no relacionadas. Tratamos algunas de las implicaciones

de esta construcción no relacional del espacio y de la identidad en el contexto de la segregación residencial y la movilidad espacial. El trabajo termina por notar que formas de blancor histórica y geográficamente específicas han recurrido a un esquema socio-espacial común y que más investigaciones en este

campo beneficiarán el activismo anti-racista por revelar como funciona la racialización en numerosos contextos geográficos humanos.

Palabras claves: blancor, epistemología socio-espacial, feminismo, poscolonial, racismo.