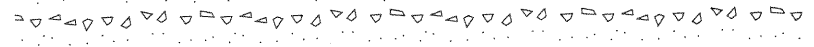
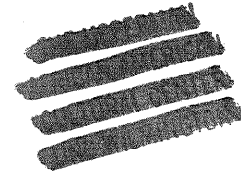


Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education:



A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies



Mwalimu J. Shujaa, Editor



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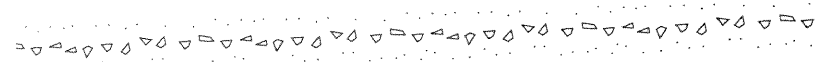
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employ liberatory and emancipatory pedagogy in schools and other learning institutions and situations.

In concluding, let me state that this book essentially offers a critical examination of the schooling and education of Black people in the United States of America. While the emphasis is on the United States, the analyses presented here are thought to have a great deal of relevance for Black people in other societies where, as in the United States, white-supremacist ideology has produced institutions that sustain anti-Black racism. Nah Dove's chapter on Great Britain, the only contribution whose social context is not the United States, attests to the likelihood that the analyses presented here are generalizable to other social contexts.

1. I use the term African in the Pan-Africanist sense put forward by Kwame Nkrumah: "All peoples of African descent, whether they live in North or South America, the Caribbean, or in any other part of the world are Africans and belong to the African nation." See "Extracts From Class Struggle in Africa" in *Revolutionary Path* (London: Panaf, 1973), 517.

Education and Schooling: You Can Have One Without the Other*



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In African-American folk language the phrases "going to school" and "getting an education" are typically used in ways that imply that "schooling" and "education" are overlapping processes. It is not uncommon to hear people say, for example, "I am going to finish school and get a good education." The implied expectation is, of course, that "education" will be an outcome of "schooling." However, African-American folk language also contains expressions to signify that "going to school" is not always thought to be

* Earlier versions of this chapter were (a) presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1992 and (b) published in *Urban Education*, 27(4) (1993), 328-351.

consistent with "getting an education."² Anyone growing up in an African-American community has more than likely heard the rhyming verse:

bought you books and sent you to school,
but you still ain't nothing but—an educated fool!

This is obviously an insult intended for someone for whom "schooling" has not overlapped with "education." This type of signifying is often reserved for college-trained persons who are perceived to look condescendingly on the common folk in the community because they consider them uneducated. Folk expressions are instructive because they reflect reality as it is experienced and interpreted in African-American communities.³ They bring to light the fact that African-Americans have long understood that schooling can both serve as well as betray their interests.

In this chapter I argue that a strategic differentiation between "education" and "schooling" is fundamental to the transmission, maintenance, and development of an African-centered cultural orientation and identity. I contend that "education" and "schooling" are different processes and that, while it is possible for them to overlap, it is also probable that most African-Americans receive more schooling than education. Using the United States as a social context, I present a conceptual model that links the process of schooling to the perpetuation of existing relations of power within the society. I use examples taken from interview data collected during my involvement in an earlier study of African-American participation in independent African-American schools to support the model.⁴

Conceptual Background

The failure to take into account differing cultural orientations and unequal power relations among groups that share membership in a society is a major problem in conceptualizations that equate schooling and education. Cultural orientations "involve cognitive, affective, and directive processes in people's strategies to solve problems.

... They are tenacious, persistent, superorganic principles that resist pressures for change brought about by the institutional transformation of society."⁵ However, cultural orientations must be understood to exist in the context of group historical experience.⁶ The African-American cultural identity has been and continues to be influenced by the U.S. social context, but it is essential to note

that the African-American cultural orientation also represents an experiential context. Thus, while African-Americans exist within the U.S. social context, they also exist within an African historical-cultural continuum that prelates that social context and would continue to exist even if the nation-state and its societal arrangements were to transform or demise.

Schooling is a process *intended* to perpetuate and maintain the society's existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements. All societies must provide a means for their members to learn, develop, and maintain throughout their life cycles adequate motivation for participation in socially valued and controlled patterns of action.⁷ However, what is crucial to understand for this discussion is that when multiple cultural orientations exist within a nation-state, it is the leadership among the adherents to the politically dominant cultural orientation that exercise the most influence on the "concepts, values, and skills" that schools transmit. Such is the case with White Anglo Saxon Protestants in the United States. It is the leadership within this cultural group whose world view largely determines what is socially valued and controls patterns of action within the society. Education, in contrast to schooling, is the process of transmitting from one generation to the next knowledge of the values, aesthetics, spiritual beliefs, and all things that give a particular cultural orientation its uniqueness. Every cultural group must provide for this transmission process or it will cease to exist.

Education and schooling processes are not mutually exclusive, they can and do overlap. There are aspects of schooling that can serve the common interests of all members of a society, regardless of their particular cultural orientations. Carol D. Lee, Kofi Lomotey and myself list three such areas of overlap.⁸ We believe that public schools in the United States can and should:

1. Foster the development of adequate skills in literacy, numeracy, the humanities, and technologies that are necessary to negotiate economic self-sufficiency in the society;
2. Instill citizenship skills based on a realistic and thorough understanding of the political system, and support such citizenship skills by promoting questioning and critical thinking skills and teaching democratic values⁹;
3. Provide historical overviews of the nation, the continent, and the world which accurately represent the contributions of all ethnic groups to the storehouse of human knowledge.¹⁰

The attainment of goals such as these would constitute a significant step toward providing all citizens with the kinds of skills needed for full and equal participation in the society.

While the broad dissemination of these skills would, no doubt, be of benefit to the society, it would do little to enable individuals who lack adequate knowledge about their own cultural history to put such skills to use for the uplift of their cultural communities. We acknowledge this limitation of schooling and conclude, ultimately, that it is an inappropriate interpretation of public schooling's societal role to expect that it will provide for . . .

the achievement of ethnic pride, self-sufficiency, equity, wealth, and power for Africans in America. . . . These goals will require a collective (although not monolithic) cultural and political world view.¹¹

The world view we speak of can only be transmitted through a process of education strategically guided by an African-American cultural orientation and an understanding of how societal power relations are maintained. Moreover, it is the responsibility of each adult generation of African-Americans to ensure that the educational infrastructure for transmitting this knowledge to their progeny exists.

The first step in fulfilling our responsibilities to our culture is to develop collective practices for determining what cultural knowledge is to be transmitted. This could begin among groups of families, within organizations, and eventually include entire communities. The next step is to assess the extent to which our cultural knowledge is being transmitted in schools, churches, early childhood programs, and other settings where organized learning takes place. The third step is to create new resources to satisfy any aspects of the cultural knowledge base that are not addressed by existing facilities.

In this infrastructural model, independent African-centered schools represent institutions fully committed to collectively determining what aspects of cultural knowledge are to be transmitted. This process is reflected in the schools' curricula and the means by which the curricula are developed. In the current reality, however, relatively few of our children attend such institutions. The majority of our children are in European-centered public, private, and religious schools. The process of assessing the extent to which our cul-

tural knowledge is taught must include an examination of what is happening to our children who attend these schools. The inherent shortcomings must be met with demands for culture affirming curricula. However, while these struggles are being waged, resources must be created to provide for the transmission of cultural knowledge among students who attend European-centered schools. Here, the Black supplementary school movement in the United Kingdom offers a useful model.¹² The supplementary schools operate on weekends and evenings to provide a culture affirming environment for students who would otherwise be at the mercy of Britain's state-run schools. In the United States, Saturday academics, after school programs, rites-of-passage organizations and study groups have been developed to facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Our ability to meet our cultural responsibilities is facilitated by our understanding of the linkages that exist between the process of schooling and the oppression of people of African descent. In the next section I analyze factors that influence our understanding of these linkages and suggest the conditions that are necessary for making critical distinctions between schooling and education.

The Strategic Differentiation of Education and Schooling: A Conceptual Model

Figure 1 is a conceptual model that represents decision making about schooling and education as a flow that bifurcates at four critical points. The model shows how decisions are influenced by the interplay between a society's structural conditions and members' achievement expectations and perceptions about the quality of their lives (achieved outcomes). Structural conditions are the "institutionalized arrangements of human life."¹³ The influence of society's structural conditions on an individual's achievement expectations is cumulative. Schooling exerts an influence on members' achievement expectations through policies (e.g., tracking and testing), reward systems (e.g., grading and awarding credentials), and patterns of human interaction (e.g., social inclusion and exclusion) that reinforce and are reinforced by the society's structural conditions.

Bifurcation #1 represents any point in a person's life at which s/he evaluates the quality of his/her life. An individual will probably do this several times in the course of a life span. The individual will either conclude that the quality of his/her life is consistent with his/her achievement expectations or that it is not. The upper branch

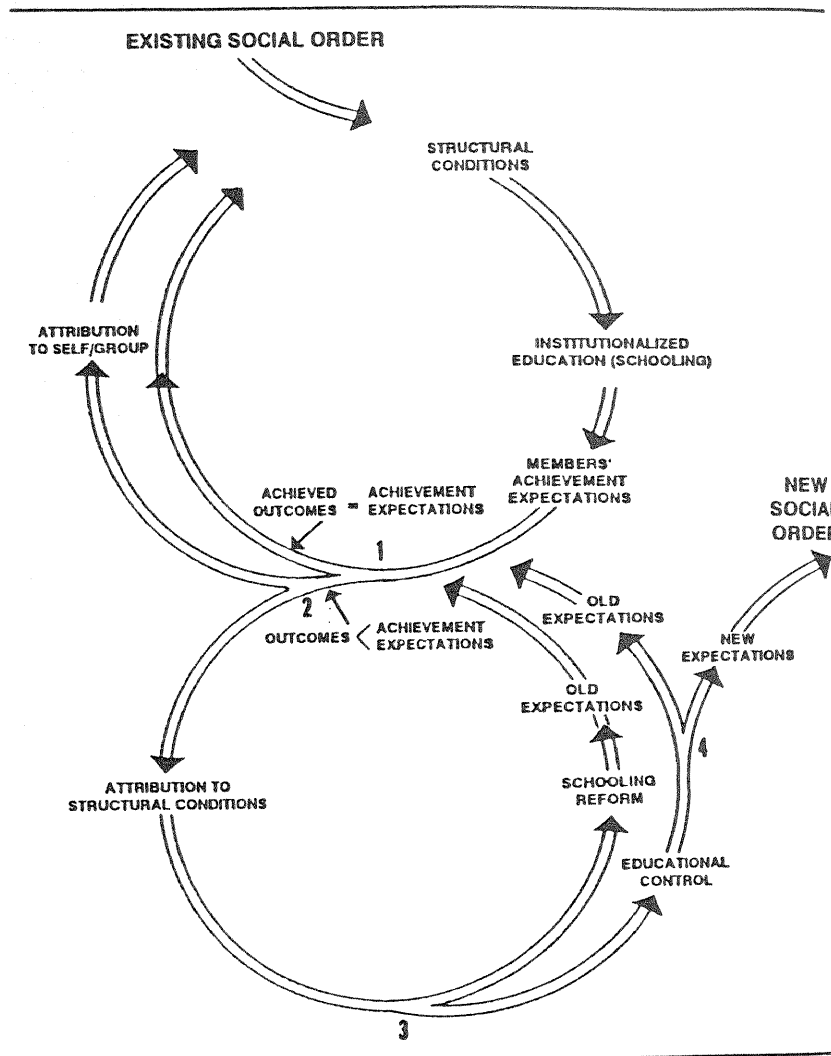


Figure 1

at Bifurcation #1 represents congruence between achievement expectations and outcomes. This situation exists when a person's perceptions about the quality of his/her life are consistent with his/her expectations. A person who expects to achieve prosperity and is prosperous is likely to be highly motivated to support the social arrangements that are believed to be conducive to his/her prosperity. Therefore, in the model, the path branches back toward the existing social order to symbolize the perpetuation of the prevailing structural conditions.

If the existing structural conditions contribute to expectations of poverty for an individual and s/he is, in fact, poor, s/he may fatalistically accept his/her condition. Believing that things cannot be changed, such individuals are unlikely to challenge the social order. Fatalistic attributions can occur among African-Americans because, as a group, we have experienced generations of oppression in the United States. When individuals believe that their subordinate condition is inherent in the order of the society, they may withdraw from what they consider to be a useless pursuit of social mobility.

Thus, in either case, prosperity or poverty, if the existing social order and its structural conditions are not challenged, the social order and its power relations are perpetuated. Consequently, the motivation to challenge the social order does not develop for two reasons. The first is because of the congruence between the individual's social expectations and the quality of life s/he is experiencing. The second is because of the individual's belief that the existing social order and its structural conditions should not or cannot be changed.

The lower branch from Bifurcation #1 represents an individual's unmet achievement expectations. These are attributed either to self or group characteristics or to the society's structural conditions. Bifurcation #2 illustrates these possibilities. The upward flowing branch symbolizes unmet achievement expectations that are attributed to self (individual) or group characteristics. The downward branch represents an attribution to the society's structural conditions. I will discuss the upper branch first.

The maintenance of the social order depends upon the development of this pattern of thinking among some of the society's members. It is one of schooling's functions to facilitate the "selection" of individuals to occupy low-status, but necessary, roles in the society. What better way to accomplish this selection process than to imbue some members with the idea that they (or their group) are

unworthy or unprepared for the quality of life they see enjoyed by others? The adoption of this kind of thinking has often led African-Americans to support all kinds of programs and projects intended to "fix" the things that are "wrong" with us. Individuals pursue these courses of action when they internalize explanations for unmet achievement expectations that focus on self/group deficits rather than explanations that de-legitimize the social order. This is as much a part of the selection process as pushing some members of the society toward high-status roles by enmeshing their thinking with the idea that they (or their group) can accomplish anything.

When African-Americans attribute unmet achievement expectations to their own characteristics, we see the realization of racism's ultimate impact as a strategy for maintaining and perpetuating social domination. Its most overt manifestation is the internalization of the racial inferiority ideology. The most insidious manifestation is the adoption of the "minority" perspective. In the former instance "Whiteness" is perceived as superior. In the latter case there is the perception that White people will always be in power because they are the majority. The internalization by African-Americans of White supremacist ideologies is painful to discuss (and many of us do not discuss it); but it can and does occur. Frazier illustrates this problem through a statement from an interview with a 20-year-old African-American high school graduate.

Our chances aren't as good by any means as the White man's and never will be unless the White man's attitude changes and [Blacks] make adjustments in their training and study. It's a situation like that [which] makes fellows like me not want to waste years studying to do what? I know there's no difference between the White man and me, but I can't help feeling he is better than I am when he is trained to do his work and then has all the chance of doing it.¹⁴ [emphasis mine]

This excerpt provides an indication of the weight that racist treatment has placed upon this young man. He has to struggle with himself to avoid feeling that he, and not the structural conditions of his society, are responsible for the incongruence between his social expectations and the quality of his life. To the extent that he attributes his condition to himself, there will be no stress placed upon the society's structural conditions to change.

The overall concern here has to do with schooling's role in perpetuating this kind of attribution. Woodson opened the *Mis-educat-*

tion of the Negro with these words:

The "educated Negroes" have the attitude of contempt toward their own people because in their own as well as in their mixed schools Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin and the Teuton and to despise the African.¹⁵

Woodson's reasoning has been further developed by contemporary African-American writers, particularly in the field of psychology, such as Wilson,¹⁶ Akbar,¹⁷ and White & Parham.¹⁸ The critical issue is that the leadership within the politically dominant culture in the U.S. utilizes schooling to inculcate its world view as universal. The effects of exclusion that Woodson describes continue to be problematic for African-Americans because the nature of our schooling in U.S. society is unchanged. Essentially, this means taking the position that the support given the schooling of African-Americans by government and "philanthropy" is and has historically been intended to serve the interests of the politically dominant members of U.S. society.¹⁹

The lower branch from Bifurcation #2 represents courses of action that can occur when unmet achievement expectations are attributed to the structural conditions of society. Individual attention is focused on countering the society's structural conditions to make achievement expectations obtainable. This degree of consciousness is the basic prerequisite for social activism in education and other areas of social life. There is, of course, a long history of activism that has coalesced African-American constituencies to work toward achieving some measure of change in the structural conditions of U.S. society. The civil rights movement is a prime example. However, any reasonable analysis of the civil rights movement would indicate that not every African-American who opposed Jim Crow shared the same vision of the course of action that would best serve the interests of African-Americans in a post-Jim Crow society.²⁰

Marable argues that in the 1990s the belief that racial equality has been achieved is a post-Jim Crow spectre that haunts African-Americans.²¹ He explains why this belief has emerged and persists:

The number of Black elected officials exceeds 6,600; many Black entrepreneurs have achieved substantial gains within the capitalist economic system in the late 1980s; thousands of Black managers and administrators appear to be moving forward within the hierarchies of the private and public sector.²²

Marable continues with an explanation of why he considers racial equality to be an illusion:

The true test of any social thesis is the amount of reality it explains, or obscures. And from the vantage point of the inner-cities and homeless shelters, from the unemployment lines and closed factories, a different reality emerges. We find that racism has not declined in significance, if racism is defined correctly as the systematic exploitation of Blacks' labor power and the domination and subordination of our cultural, political, educational and social rights as human beings.²³

The significance of Marable's argument for this discussion is that it helps to illuminate the fact that African-Americans view their relationship to the social order in different ways. A key factor influencing such views is the tension between individualistic and group orientations. Some African-Americans view themselves as being essentially individuals competing with other individuals to achieve the best the society has to offer them. Others take the view that individual achievement has no significance outside the quality of life experienced by African-Americans as a group. An individual's perceptions about the legitimacy of the schooling options available to African-Americans will reflect the extent to which s/he has adopted an individualistic or a group orientation. Accordingly, not all African-Americans who attribute their unmet achievement expectations to society's structural conditions, reflect the same view of reality in their analyses of what needs to be done about schooling.

Bifurcation #3 symbolizes how differing interpretations of one's relationship to the social order are evident in choosing between public school reform (the upper branch) and the rejection of public schooling (the lower branch). In my conceptual model schooling reform is an avenue leading to the attainment of achievement expectations that reinforce the existing social order. My reasoning is that our notions about quality of life are relative. Achievement expectations are constructed within the societal context and shaped by its institutions and hierarchies. Schooling reforms are not intended to produce fundamental changes in the role schooling plays in reproducing both the value system of the politically dominant culture and the social ordering that serves its elite. For example, in a capitalist society like the United States the accumulation of personal wealth is held up as a standard for measuring success. Thus, many symbols of success take on meaning in relationship to the perceived

lifestyles of the wealthy. Many schooling reforms gain public support because they imply changes that will make these symbols of success accessible to more people.

Beyer discusses this fallacy of schooling reform in a critique of *A Nation at Risk*.²⁴ He describes the rationale for the schooling reforms supported in that document as . . .

a pretext that justifies current social practices and institutions, a way of covertly supporting the *status quo*, a way of diverting attention away from basic social, political, and economic disparities and forms of oppression, and resultant forms of inequality. . . . By recasting the frustration, impatience, and anxiety that typify American social life in terms that safeguard those social institutions that support current inequalities, this report provides a "sleight of hand" that is at once ideologically ingenious and socially injurious.²⁵

Beyer's description illustrates how reforms can address changes in schooling's packaging and methods of delivery while reinforcing the individualistic and materialistic value orientations that serve the interests of those in power.

Fundamental change in schooling can only be accomplished within the framework of fundamental change in the society's power relations. While there are many who would cast schooling reforms as vehicles that can facilitate the attainment of unmet achievement expectations, I believe this is possible only when such expectations are not contradictory to the existing power relations. Reforms do not challenge schooling's role in the maintenance of status quo power relations in society. Therefore, in my conceptual model, schooling reform is placed on a path that perpetually leads back to decision making about whether or not the quality of an individual's life is consistent with his/her achievement expectations in the existing social order (see Bifurcation #1).

The lower branch at Bifurcation #3 represents the decision to seek a better quality of life by controlling the schooling process. This is accomplished by utilizing options outside public schools such as home schooling and independent schools. The rate at which African-Americans are enrolling in independent schools has increased steadily since the late 1960s.²⁶ The Institute for Independent Education reports that more than 330,000 African-American students are enrolled in independent schools.²⁷ The schools these students attend represent a wide range of types. Most

(226,590) students are in Catholic schools. The next highest category is independent neighborhood schools (52,744); these schools have predominantly African-American enrollments. The remainder are spread among schools associated with the National Association of Independent Schools and various denominationally affiliated Christian schools.

Ratteray and myself reported that independent neighborhood schools deal with cultural and religious orientations in a variety of ways.²⁸ In particular, we found that there were very definite differences in both the quality and quantity of the attention given to maintaining and developing African-centered cultural orientations among their students. All of the parents who were interviewed at these schools indicated that they had decided against public school, however, they expressed different expectations regarding the extent to which an African-centered cultural orientation was important to them in choosing their children's schools. Some parents' choices were influenced by concerns that a particular school might be "too Black" and others had consciously chosen schools that would help their children develop African-centered cultural orientations.²⁹ Thus, these schools can be viewed as vehicles that are used by African-American parents to pursue very different achievement expectations.

These varied expectations are symbolized at Bifurcation #4. In discussing these expectations I will use segments from interviews conducted with parents of students who attend African-American independent schools to illustrate how schooling and education are differentiated in their thinking. The left branch from the bifurcation point symbolizes decisions based on achievement expectations that reinforce the existing social order. Here, independent schools are used as alternative pathways to achieving goals that reinforce existing power relations and value orientations of the society's politically dominant culture.

One mother we interviewed in Baltimore believes that it is important for her children to believe in themselves. She wants the school to help her children develop enough self-confidence and motivation to work as hard as necessary to overcome any feelings of personal shortcoming relative to someone else. In addition to academic needs, the parent describes the school's contribution in terms that relate to the development of a positive self-image:

[School name] instills in the children a better self-image as far as living up to your full potential and trying harder, you know basi-

cally what you can do, and not having no one say that because you may be a little slower than the next child that if you don't work just a little bit harder, you can come up to the level of the child that you think you are a little slower than. . . . I think they instill . . . a better self-image in the children and give them a better motivation as to want to try harder. [1.002-94]

This mother is making a comparison that is based on what she feels happens to children in public schools and what she expects her children to gain from the independent African-American school they attend. She believes that success for African-American children is determined by the resolve that they have to overcome personal shortcomings. She favors the independent African-American school because she feels its teachers have the skill and dedication to develop this attribute in her children. This viewpoint implies a belief that individuals vary in their abilities and that relative shortcomings can be overcome through hard work, and an optimism about meeting achievement expectations. One does not get a sense that this mother enrolled her children in an African-American independent school because of a sense of contradiction between personal goals and mainstream notions of personal success. The African-American independent school is viewed as a way of offsetting barriers to achieving personal success. The barriers, however, are perceived in terms of personal attributes and not in the context of the structural conditions of the society. My interpretation is that this parent is not making a critical distinction between schooling and education. She is not challenging the social order, but attempting to offer her children an alternate means of access to its rewards.

Another parent we interviewed also sees the development of personal attributes as the most important contribution the independent African-American school can make. In this instance the personal attribute is described as "the ability to adapt." The adaptation is to being "a minority." What the parent wants is for her son to learn how to compete in U.S. society as a "minority." She is concerned that her child's enrollment in the independent African-American school, because its students are all African-American, may result in a "lack of exposure" to minority status.

Exposure to and the ability to cope with and adapt to being a minority, for lack of a better term, in the world is something that has to be developed. . . . In a black environment or a black school you can be under-exposed so that you develop a sense of com-

placency. . . . Or, that you don't develop your abilities to adapt. [1.003-338]

According to her perception of "minority" status, this mother believes that her son will always be competing with Whites for social rewards. Unless he learns to compete, she feels, he will not be successful in meeting his achievement expectations. Again, the African-American independent school is viewed as a means to overcoming barriers to achieving success in the context of the society's existing structural conditions. There is no challenge to the social order implied here.

The right branch from the bifurcation point symbolizes the strategic differentiation of education from schooling. This process is motivated by achievement expectations that are based on new values and the realization that the power to educate is conditioned upon freeing the process from the controlling influences of the politically dominant culture. Education becomes part of the infrastructure needed to preserve progress made toward the emergence of a new social order.

A mother in Washington, D.C. indicated that her son had negative experiences in public school even though he was enrolled in classes for the academically gifted. His inquisitiveness was stifled and often interpreted as insolence. This mother was raised "on the picket lines" and has always involved her children in community issues. She is deeply concerned that her children develop a commitment to uplifting African-American people. Several times during our interview she stressed that "each one must teach one" is a principle that she lives by and attempts to instill in her children. She also indicated that she wants her children to learn self-assuredness because she believes they would need it in order to overcome White racism. While we were discussing her feelings about her children's enrollment in an all African-American school she made this comment about her expectations of the schooling process:

In the first place, most public schools in the District are Black. So, I mean, there's no difference really here as far as that is concerned. The other thing is that nurturing and the positive imagery that takes place here is so necessary, I think, to making people who are well adjusted, strong, and creative who then can go out into the work force and say, you know, I respect you. You *will* respect me. . . . Because that's what I tell them, they don't have to like you and don't think that they will. You get along as well

as you can. You succeed as well as you can. . . . The whole thing is that while you're in the learning process, you need to learn from your own, with your own and that type of thing. [1.004-809]

She went on to describe what she perceives to be the role of the independent African-American school in providing education that will help her children to achieve what she expects them to as adults:

. . . I want the children to be taught not that you get educated and you learn as much as you can so you can work for someone else. But that we, you know, you get educated, you develop your own. They could even go so far as to have the junior achievement programs here, that type of thing. [1.004-926]

Evident in these statements is the mother's concern that her children be agents for change. She sees the independent African-American school and the home as extensions of each other in fostering the achievement of this goal. Thus, for her, involvement in the independent African-American school is a part of parenting:

These children are so awesome. You know? I mean, we have just heavy discussions at my household and I want them to be politically aware and economically sound. . . . They need to learn economics and these kids with these minds that are going out like this need to learn to manage money and that kind of thing. They could have a bank, a school store, anything in here. Those are some of the things I'd like to see develop and I'm on the curriculum committee. I'm going to try and work at that. [1.004-1048]

This mother is one who has made a strategic distinction between schooling and education. She acknowledges the importance of being prepared to earn a living amid the social conditions that exist. Beyond that, however, is the emphasis she places on helping her children appreciate the significance of contributing to the uplift of African-American people.

When African-American parents strategically differentiate education from schooling the decisions they make about where to enroll their children are based on their perceptions of the social and cultural realities that influence their lives. They involve careful consideration of other schooling options, most often public systems, that are well integrated into the societal infrastructure. They include assessments about the relationship of schooling to the social order

and schooling's role in the attainment of individual achievement expectations. Most significantly, these decisions entail taking stock of both one's individual and group relationship to the existing social order and determining how to provide one's children with the best preparation for assuming their responsibilities in the maintenance and perpetuation of an African cultural orientation.

Overcoming Schooling: A Cultural Imperative

My conceptual framework emphasizes the exigencies of our African cultural orientation over those of the nation-state (U.S.). Consequently, I treat schooling and education as differentiated processes. Schooling ties me to the social order framed by the nation-state. Education informs and locates my thinking within an African historical-cultural context.

Cultural orientation makes a difference in the way one critiques society. This can be illustrated through contrasting examples taken from the writings of John Dewey and W. E. B. DuBois. These men were social contemporaries, however the writings presented here indicate that they saw U.S. society in very different ways. First, consider Dewey's discussion of the function of education in a democratic society. In the following statement, he explains the criteria needed to evaluate education's role in a society:

Since education is a social process . . . a criterion for educational criticism and construction implies a *particular* social ideal. The two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent to which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness with which it interacts with other groups.³⁰

Of course, the social ideal that concerns Dewey is democracy. He regards a democratic society as one which . . .

makes provision for participation in its good of all members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life in so far democratic.³¹

He then describes the role of education in democratic society:

[It] gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder.³²

Dewey's notion that a particular kind of education can bring about change "without introducing disorder" is problematic. Although, by his own words, Dewey understood that the United States is "composed of a combination of different groups with different traditional customs,"³³ he, nonetheless, ignores the dialectics of domination and resistance associated with these cultural differences. There is no mention of how the power over institutionalized education held by the politically dominant members of the society is used to maintain the order he wants to preserve. He also avoids the issue of oppressed peoples' challenge to that power. For Dewey, social change is to be determined by the rational thinking of the politically dominant members of the society.

DuBois and Dewey shared membership in the same society, but related to different primary cultural groups. Dewey's cultural orientation was European-American; DuBois' was African-American. DuBois presents a quite different analysis of education's role in society than Dewey. To begin with, DuBois focuses on the cultural conflict in the United States and its impact on the African-American cultural identity. He saw the legislation of equal rights in voting and education as the ". . . beginning of even more difficult problems of race and culture." He also reckons with the question of what would become of the African-American cultural identity in a United States where equality was supposedly the law of the land:

. . . what we must now ask ourselves is when we become equal American citizens what will be our aims and ideals and what will we have to do with selecting these aims and ideals. Are we to assume that we will simply adopt the ideals of Americans and become what they are or want to be and that we will have in this process no ideals of our own? . . . We would take on the culture of white Americans doing as they do and thinking as they think.³⁴

DuBois considered the cultural assimilation of African-Americans into the politically dominant culture in the United States to be unacceptable. He saw a clear dilemma for African-Americans—refuse to go to school or go to school and run the risk of becoming alienated from the African-American cultural community:

Here for instance, is the boy who says simply he is not going to school. His treatment in the white schools . . . is such that it does not attract him. Moreover, the boy who does enter the white school and gets on reasonably well does not always become a use-

ful member of our group. Negro children . . . often know nothing of Negro history. . . . Some are ashamed of themselves and their folk.³⁵

The dialectics of power do not escape DuBois' analysis, as they do Dewey's. The exigencies of culture, not society, establish imperatives for DuBois. He is unwilling to accept social arrangements that restrict the ability of the African-American to understand and appreciate his/her relationship to the African historical-cultural continuum.

Freire gives an indication of having reached conclusions similar to DuBois' regarding the importance of culture.³⁶ He points out that an attack on a people's culture is the first step in any process of domination:

Cultural identity is the first point the dominative people, or class, or nation, or individual [attempts] to destroy in the dominated people. In other words, there is no oppression, no domination without the attempt . . . to destroy the cultural identity of the invaded.

There is much to suggest that one of the functions of schooling in the United States has been to effect a gradual destruction of the cultural identity of African-Americans. This process has been justified as being consistent with the promulgation of a common American culture.

The common culture concept is inherently one-sided in favor of the politically dominant culture. It is put forth typically by people who already believe that their cultural orientation is "the" common culture. Consequently, they have little to lose by demanding the acquiescence of others. They assign little or no significance to the different cultural orientations of the people with whom they share societal membership nor are they concerned with the fact that other people attach importance to their own cultural identities. An illustration of how the cultural diversity in U.S. society is downplayed is found in Hirsch's discussion of his concept of cultural literacy.

By accident of history, American cultural literacy has a bias toward English literate tradition. Short of revolutionary political upheaval, there is absolutely nothing that can be done about this. . . . We have kept and still need to keep English culture as the dominant part of our national vocabulary for purely functional reasons.³⁷

Hirsch's is the particularistic view of an individual who is privileged and empowered by the politically dominant culture in the United

States. He is essentially arguing that the political dominance of the White Anglo Saxon Protestant is incontestable and all who live within its influence are compelled to accept it, if for no other reason than in the interests of national unity.

Hirsch's argument rests on a conception of social history that is in reality the history of the society's politically dominant culture. And therein lies the problem with "common culture." The United States is, as Asante³⁸ and others have argued, a hegemonic society, in which the relatively powerful members trace their ways of thinking, their philosophical foundations, and their canons of knowledge to the cultures of Western Europe. These people, over the generations, have used societal institutions and resources to glorify their Western European cultural heritage while, at the same time, devaluing through processes of omission, distortion, and misrepresentation knowledge centered in the cultures of others in the same society who do not trace their origins to Western Europe. African-Americans are among these "other" groups that are systematically oppressed through institutionalized relations of power and resource distribution based on race. "Whiteness" has served as the biological symbol of Western European cultural descent. Hare points out that immigrants who left Europe as Poles, Italians, Germans, or Russians, became "Whites" when they reached the shores of the United States.³⁹ They became part of an institutionalized set of social relations that offered them inclusion into the family of "Whiteness." Schooling facilitated this process for them because it was through schooling that they learned they could aspire to a place in the U.S. social order and its "common culture." "Blackness", then, becomes the criterion on which "non-Whites" are assigned to a caste status of perpetual subordination to "Whites."⁴⁰

Education is, indeed, a cultural imperative for African-Americans. Men and women of African descent in the United States and in the Caribbean have maintained a long tradition of cultural resistance based on the recognition that their abilities to preserve and perpetuate their own cultures have been consistently under attack. This thinking is evident among the published works of David Walker,⁴¹ Edward Wilmot Blyden,⁴² Drusilla Dunjee Houston,⁴³ Carter G. Woodson,⁴⁴ and W. E. B. DuBois,⁴⁵ to name just a few.

Woodson proposed that African-Americans establish a new program of education for themselves to undo the mis-education inculcated by schooling in the United States. He supports his reasoning in the following manner:

The so-called modern education, with all its defects, however, does others so much more good than it does the Negro, because it has been worked out in conformity to the needs of those who have enslaved and oppressed weaker peoples. For example, the philosophy and ethics resulting from our educational system have justified slavery, peonage, segregation, and lynching. The oppressor has the right to exploit, to handicap, and to kill the oppressed. Negroes daily educated in the tenets of such a religion of the strong have accepted the status of the weak as divinely ordained . . .⁴⁶

To Woodson, it clearly makes no sense to expect a system of schooling controlled by the politically dominant culture for its own interests to provide education for African-Americans. Yet, for the most part, this is what we have done.

I foresee no change in this situation that does not involve African-Americans taking control of our own education. When education is strategically differentiated from schooling, there is no reason this cannot be done. It means empowering ourselves to ensure that African-centered cultural knowledge is systematically transmitted to our children. In many cities, African-centered independent schools are providing a means for acquiring educational control. Where such schools do not exist or are not accessible, families, groups of parents, community-based organizations, churches, and rites-of-passage organizations can and have become networks for passing on cultural knowledge. This is our cultural imperative.

Conclusion

In concluding I want to share a personal recollection that focuses much of what I have said in this essay. In 1957, when I was a second grader at Frederick Douglass School in Parsons, Kansas, my teacher, Miss Lacy Clark, taught a lesson that illustrates how African-Americans who understood the importance of doing so have always had to make strategic distinctions between education and schooling. One morning Miss Clark asked us to stop what we were doing and put everything on our desks away. She then distributed to each of us a copy of a drawing that looked as if it had come from a coloring book. The drawing showed an autumn scene in which a group of children were playing among piles of raked leaves. There were oak trees in the drawing with leaves tumbling from their branches. The children were dressed warmly in caps, jackets, and scarves.

Miss Clark's instructions were simple. We were to use our crayons to color in the picture. Although it was not necessary, she

added an incentive—a prize would be given to the student who did the best job coloring the picture. Miss Clark collected our drawings when the bell for recess rang. When we returned after recess and took our seats, Miss Clark announced the winner of the prize. It turned out to a boy who had colored the faces of the children in the picture brown to match his own. He was the only student among this class of 25 African-American children to do so. The rest of us had colored in every detail of that picture except the faces of the children.

Because 1957 was the last year of Douglass School's existence, Miss Clark was doing what she could to prepare us for that inevitable day when our teachers and most of our classmates would be White. She knew that we would have to fight for our cultural identities in the formerly all-White schools. Miss Clark intended to prepare us to participate in and contribute to both the larger society and to our own cultural community. At times, her teaching emphasized knowledge specific to the African-American cultural identity she shared with her students; at other times its focus was on the second grade curriculum prescribed by the all-White school board.

As a teacher, Miss Clark was strategically differentiating between education and schooling. What she did for my classmates and me is done by many, but unfortunately not all, African-American teachers and administrators everyday. The actions of individuals like Miss Clark and the teachers and administrators described by Foster⁴⁷ and Lomotey⁴⁸ provide indications that human agency can and often does intervene in the reproduction of politically dominant ideology. The critical task confronting us is broadening our understanding of the role that the strategic differentiation of education and schooling can play in the success of African-American resistance to political and cultural domination and in guiding the development of our cultural nation in a new world order in which egalitarian relationships between cultures replace exploitative hierarchies.

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CHAPTER TWO

Black Intellectuals and the Crisis in Black Education

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Defining the Crisis

E. Franklin Frazier died in 1962. Ironically, it was that very same year that he began to speak of embarking on a new direction in his thinking—a change in course that caused him to reflect on matters that he had avoided for most of his scholarly life. As his life flame was about to go out, Frazier turned his attention to the problem of the Negro intellectual. In a 1962 essay, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual," he said among other things, that,

educated Negroes or Negro intellectuals have failed to achieve any intellectual freedom. In fact . . . it appears that the Negro intellectual is unconscious of the extent to which his thinking is

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