



Power Surge: Writing-Rhetoric Studies, Blogs, and Embedded Whiteness

Comments

"continue to replicate ideologies unknown to them by..."

I've read the sentence extracted above six or eight times and I still can't get my head around it.

To whom does "them" refer?

And is the list of items following "by" restrictive or illustrative (that is, "unknown to them by X Y and Z, but possibly known to them by other avenues", or "replicate ideologies by methods X Y and Z")?

I'm not sure that the thesis "X can advance racism if we don't resist it in our own X" gains much additional rhetorical power if you insert "blogging" or "academic publishing" or "posting quibbles in the comments fields of blog entries". The general statement "Racism is bad, we should resist it," to which I heartily assent, pretty much covers blogging. Blogging may be an excellent platform for re-enacting the consciousness-raising exercises of a previous generation, though it may be that the average college student today already has much greater access to alternative sources of information than the college student of a generation ago.

If racism is deeply rooted in human culture, then it is no surprise that it might be found in hardware and software (along with everything else that humans do). But from what I know of lawsuits concerning racial preferences at Microsoft, or stories about offensive graphics in clip art, I'm not sure that cyberculture is any more racist than any other human endeavor. Opening the Internet up to everyone entails opening it up to racists and bigots, but we can always hope that a rational person, when faced with a ranting diatribe on one side and a reasoned rebuttal on the other, will choose to be persuaded by reason. Idological "fisking" can certainly help in that area.

The meme that "On the Internet, nobody knows you're a dog," supports the belief that cyberspace can at least possibly be a space where communities can break through the old biases and prejudices, so of I see the value of reminding bloggers of the possibilities.

Posted by: [Dennis G. Jerz](#) at July 3, 2004 04:02 PM

This obtuse diatribe is a good example of the rampant HORSE-S!\$% in academia today.

"...An idea, expressed in too many words, is as useless as a drug dissolved in too much water..."
-Lao tsu, China ca. 600 B.C.

[Mark Tulk, Lansing, Michigan USA]

Posted by: [Mark Tulk](#) at July 3, 2004 06:05 PM

I concur. However, we should all acknowledge that going to Mars is a priority.

<http://www.sendbobbtomars.com>

Indubitably.

Posted by: [bob](#) at July 6, 2004 12:00 PM

Ms Welch,

I found myself wanting you to expand with examples from blogs on the 4Es. Why these four? And what is the "it" that is targetted in your rendition? I am a bit perplexed because one of the 4Es reads "Embed it" and in the sentence following the listing there is a reference to challenging the "embeddedness of racism". I am just a tad confused by the "it" in the 4E listing. Am I correct in surmising that the "it" refers to different referents? Can you please E-laborate? Thanks

Posted by: [Francois Lachance](#) at July 6, 2004 01:22 PM

Mr. Lachance---

"it" = rhetoric

All Best, Bnjmn

Posted by: [Benjamin Harris](#) at July 7, 2004 03:53 PM

Mr. Jerz---

quote: "I'm not sure that cyberculture is any more racist than any other human endeavor."

Very good point. But there was some idealism in the mid and late 90s and that the WWW wouldn't stand for white white and more white. In reading this blog, it seems to me that racism is being uncovered in a place where we don't usually talk about it---and not blatant bigotry, but those subtle strains of racism that form and inform (what may seem to be) the most innocuous of messages.

If there are a lot of sources related to racism as it is built into our hardware and software, I would appreciate a list.

Thanks, Bnjmn

Benjamin Harris, Trinity University, San Antonio, TX

Posted by: [Benjamin Harris](#) at July 7, 2004 03:58 PM

RE: Welch's argument of "Enthymeme" in order to correct faulty premises leading to racism ... But the faulty premise of this argument is that racism is the result of a flaw in knowledge or of ignorance. Such logic is classically Greek, classically academic, and classically misguided.

Start from a different premise: say, that racism is the result of the will (more Hebraic and Kantian), then it's not simply a matter of changing internal logic, but changing the internal persona that sustains the logic.

Why do academics constantly overprivilege knowledge in the fight against racism?

Posted by: [Invisible Sun](#) at February 2, 2005 11:49 AM

BTW, when Ms. Welch writes about "whiteness embedded" in rhetoric, her description is not very substantively entailing.

I'd like to see some examples of whiteness in rhetoric; else I fear she is making whiteness an ontological (rather than cultural-rhetorical) category. For instance, perhaps she might be willing to respond by dissecting my two posts here and analyzing any whiteness she sees embedded therein.

Posted by: [Invisible Sun](#) at February 2, 2005 12:50 PM

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