

# 'The Matrix'

*What schools need to know about the dimensions of race and migration in the European Union*



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# The 'Race' Matrix

Multi-culturalism

Assimilation

EAL

Diversity

Racism

Citizenship

Intercultural

Language

Class

Immigration

Equality

Identity

Bilingual

Immigrant

Eastern European

Black

White

Gender

Other

Migration

# Research A - Emel

- Sought to understand how young people conceptualise race, migration and education
- Comparative: British Minority Ethnic and Eastern European students
- One year ethnography
- Two Buckinghamshire secondary schools
- 30 participants (12-16 years old)
- Focus groups, field observations, photo elicitation, student diaries and interviews.

# Research B - Antonina

- Sought to understand Albanian students perceptions of England and experiences in schools.
- Comparative: Country of origin and English settings.
- London
- 12 Albanian participants (14-17 years old)
- Photo elicitation, interviews and observations.

# What Schools Need to Know...

The confines of young people's conceptualisations of race and racism alongside narratives about their opportunities and futures:

- a) Official discourses
- b) Micro-cultural peer relations
- c) School rules-denial of racism
- d) Teacher talk

# Official Discourse

- Equality
- Tracking
- Special cultural days/weeks etc.

*Kata: "...my one teaches that everyone should be equal that you know you shouldn't treat others lower or higher you just treat everyone like you know just equal and many people you know they are Catholic and should live to that."*

# Micro-Cultural Peer Relations

*Lidia: I'm, like, in the middle. I'm sometimes with those lot and that lot. But I don't laugh at people. I'm trying to be with everyone, like.*

*Lidia: For example, the cool people is, like, there are, like Black people, English, Asian. There's just, like, mixed groups.*

*Lidia: I feel, I feel better with English people than with Polish.*

*Lidia: Well, the Polish group always sticks together.*

*Emel: Why do you think that is?*

*Lidia: Well, they do hang around with the English people but the Polish just, like, stick together. I don't know why. They just do*

# Micro-Cultural Peer Relations

*Lena: It's quite funny.*

*Kata: Yeah. Everyone didn't want to talk to us they didn't want to work with us if they said anything they were not nice. It was like swearing and saying you know not nice things. There was some people who was saying to us for example like ohh ummm go away from our country you are not allowed to be here.*



# Micro-Cultural Peer Relations

*Abdul: English Defense League.*

*Emel: And how do you know they are racists?*

*Hasib: They try and keep the Paki's out.*

*[Giggling from the whole group].*

# School Rules

*Noah: Because I remember this incident that once happened last year. A teacher took a Sean's jacket, because the coat he was wearing was a leather jacket, it was black and nowhere in the planner because your clothing [in the school code] says it's a black coat and black coat or jacket and leather jacket is a jacket and maybe it was black so they had an argument. Although Sean won because it wasn't in the planner but this year because he said I'm pretty sure you're not allowed to wear it and it was just a big argument. And then this year he [a senior teacher] wrote in the planner that the only, there are no leather jackets allowed. So it was actually quite funny.*

*Emel: And why do you think he took the leather jacket?*

*Noah: I don't know why. Because it's black, it's a leather jacket and some teachers say, like what is it? Like, for black people who have patterns in their hair, they say it's gang-related but how really is it gang-related because like white people, they get to have their hair gelled up and, and that could be gang-related but how would they know?*

# Denial of Racism

*Maria: Racism? Um. Abusing, loudly abusing others using name-calling to a person or individuals for where they've come from or comments associated, like, against them for their race.*

*Emel: Okay. So what do you think bullying is?*

*Maria: Bullying is where you're so insecure that you want to name-call and pick around. You might think it's a joke on somebody else, making them feel horrible and doing it nearly all the time.*

*Emel: And is there a difference between racism and bullying?*

*Maria: I think racism is part-bullying.*

# Teacher Talk

*Isaac: So I went to another computer to see if they had touched it. Then Miss just shouted at me, then told me to sit down. And I said, 'Don't you shout at me! You don't need to shout at me because I just looked at the headphones'. And she called isolation. Yeah, for me.*

# Convergence and Transformations



**'I treat everyone the same'  
or  
'My best friend is Black'.**

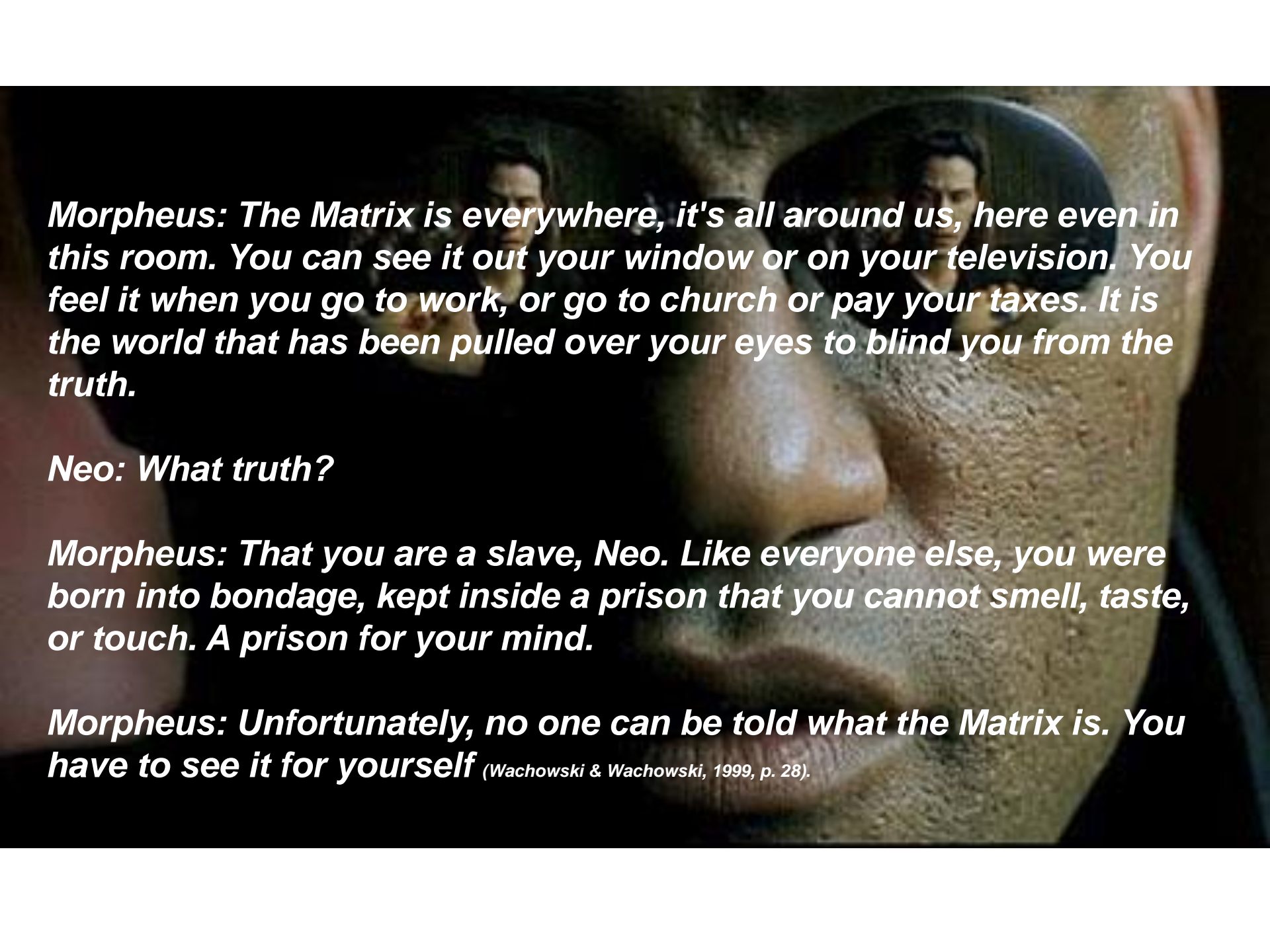


*(BBC, 2009)*

**'Do you speak English?'  
or even  
'I know a few Polish people'.**

# Challenges

- Ignoring racialised humour and blasé attitudes – ‘laughing it off’ mutates the boundaries of race and racist acts
- Transparency and motivations of school based initiatives
- Accepting subtle world-wide transformations: language, religion, money, future opportunities
- Given the **complexities** associated with the links between race and time, space and place, definitions of ethnicity and cultural identity are regularly redefined and transformed (Nayak, 2003) (DeCuir, J., & Dixson, A. 2004).
- Integrating critical awareness learning and aspirational practices.



***Morpheus: The Matrix is everywhere, it's all around us, here even in this room. You can see it out your window or on your television. You feel it when you go to work, or go to church or pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth.***

***Neo: What truth?***

***Morpheus: That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, kept inside a prison that you cannot smell, taste, or touch. A prison for your mind.***

***Morpheus: Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself*** (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999, p. 28).