ANTIRACIST TEACHER EDUCATION AND WHITENESS: TOWARDS A COLLECTIVE
HUMANIZATION

By

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ABSTRACT

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Using Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) as theoretical grounding, this three-article

dissertation offers perspectives on antiracist teacher education praxis, and the ways that White

teacher educators can be more thoughtful and critical of our participation in perpetuating

Whiteness. Across the articles, I explore how my attempts to embody antiracist praxis as a White

teacher educator are still fraught with performances of Whiteness.

In the first article, I use interviews from student-nominated exemplary social justice

faculty to describe concrete practices of antiracist teacher education praxis. The four practices

that emerge include: model vulnerability, shift agency to students, build community, and pose

questions. Consistent across these findings is the belief that teacher education should be a project

in collective humanization; and further, that it must be grounded in critical race theories.

The second article follows my attempts to employ each of the four practices listed above

throughout one semester of teaching a diversity-related course. The purpose of this article is to

highlight the tensions I feel trying to embody this pedagogical stance as a White female teacher

educator. My findings, presented in the form of fictionalized vignettes, reveal very concrete ways

that I continue to perform Whiteness as I attempt to subvert it. I therefore argue that White

teacher educators must engage with more critical tools--such as autoethnography--to identify and

combat the impact of our best intentions.

The final article is a poetic inquiry that explores one of the aforementioned practices--model vulnerability--through a more critical lens. Vulnerability is something commonly described in normative ways, particularly in the work of Dr. Brené Brown. I explore how, as a White woman, I have more freedom to express emotions such as vulnerability without fear of repercussion or of being perceived as weak. Moreover, through using poetry as both a method of inquiry and subsequent data to analyze, I find that even the process I use to write and think about Whiteness is, in fact, reflective of my Whiteness. We as teacher educators therefore must be mindful not to describe vulnerability in normative ways that do not take into account the ever-present sociopolitical context in which we live--a context that privileges the humanity and feelings of White people while disparaging the humanity and feelings of people of Color.

By using CWS across all three articles of this dissertation, I am able to highlight myriad ways that my Whiteness continues to operate insidiously even as I attempt to counter it. I offer considerations for other White teacher educators who want to move their praxis closer to being actively antiracist, ultimately hoping that more will endeavor to do this kind of work.

For my mom, Annie--I love you to the moon and back.
And for Natalia--the first teacher I had who made me want to be a teacher.

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As I sit down to write these acknowledgments, I am absolutely overwhelmed with gratitude. I am struck by how many seemingly insignificant decisions led me to apply to this program--and thereby have led me to the people I have come to know and love as a result of doing this Ph.D. The last four years have seen many tears and a whole lot of joy. Through it all, I have been able to rely on a core group of people to encourage me, challenge me, and to make me a better human (and therefore a more kind and humanizing scholar). In my life, there has not been a single accomplishment or beautiful event that has happened in the absence of community. This dissertation would not have been possible without so many people, but I'm going to name a few of the ones who have been especially key to my growth and perseverance through the process.

To my mom, Annie: you are my first best friend and biggest fan. For the sacrifices you've made for me over the years (the ones I know about and the ones I don't), for the times you've put the needs of others above your own (which I know is more often than not), and for showing me what being a mom should look like: thank you. This is for you. And to my dad, Tony: I miss you. Thank you for the ways you helped me grow into the person I am; a person who was able to persevere and complete something of this magnitude. I know you're proud, even though you aren't here to say so.

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INTRODUCTION

"The world does not need white people to civilize others. The real white people's burden is to civilize ourselves." - Robert Jensen

"White people should recognize that the best way to be good allies is to go work among their own people (white people) to create more allies." - Dr. Brittney Cooper

This dissertation is a three-article exploration of what it means to be a White antiracist teacher educator, and how I grapple with my own Whiteness while attempting to embody antiracist praxis. Teachers in the United States have long been predominantly White and female (Goldstein, 2014), and that trend continues today with nearly 80% of the teacher workforce (Carter Andrews et al., 2019). Teacher education programs reflect similar demographics (Sleeter, 2017), making self-study work for White teacher educators timely and relevant for several reasons.

First, educators who do not learn about privilege and systems of oppression and engage critically with their own positionality tend to recycle institutional racism (Matias, 2013a). Second, the current national climate is as tense around discussions of racial conflict as ever. Research shows that "Whites now view themselves as an embattled and even disadvantaged group, and this has led to both strong ingroup identity and a greater tolerance for expressions of hostility toward outgroups" (Valentino et al., 2018, p. 25). Thus, even though racism has always been present in our society, Whites have felt emboldened since the 2016 presidential election to be more overt in their displays of racism and prejudice. Finally, and equally as important, the work of addressing Whiteness in education has long rested upon the shoulders of people of Color. It is our responsibility--White teacher educators--to critically examine our praxis with the intention of moving our field toward a more antiracist orientation.

Patel (2015) notes that, "We must pause and reconsider social justice precisely because it has a hold on educational research, appearing so ubiquitously as to carry sizable assumptions of goals and approaches" (p. 89). This work is an extensive mobilization of Patel's pause; using Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), I turn a mirror to myself to examine the ways that my best intentions have never equaled (and never will equal) impact. As one of my participants, Zack, mentioned, critical learning takes place when we're confronted with our own cognitive dissonance. With this work, I explore the ways that I continue to perform Whiteness in my attempt to be antiracist and to be wholeheartedly committed to social justice. My rationale for doing so is twofold: (1) to grow closer to being what Love (2019) calls a *courageous coconspirator* (p. 118), and (2) to be able to model this to other White teacher educators and future White teachers. My overarching line of inquiry seeks to answer three general questions:

1. What is antiracist praxis in teacher education?

2. How do I, while trying to engage in antiracist praxis, perpetuate Whiteness?

3. What steps can I and other White teacher educators take in order to more critically examine the ways we perpetuate Whiteness?

Synopsis

Each of the three stand-alone articles highlights a different part of my overall line of inquiry. The first article theorizes concrete antiracist praxis from the perspectives of student-nominated exemplary social justice faculty. With these practices as a starting point, the second article is an autoethnographic study highlighting my attempts to embody antiracist praxis. Finally, the third article utilizes poetic inquiry to consider how my best intentions as a White teacher educator still fall short. Although the three articles differ in their respective bodies of

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supporting literature and methodological approaches, they are all written through the theoretical framing of CWS.

A CWS lens, which necessitates the exploration of a person's identity and context in the racial formation process, is a fitting theoretical framework to explore how Whiteness serves to undermine the goals of antiracist teacher education. Nayak (2007) specifies that CWS as a field is underpinned by three primary beliefs: "Whiteness is a modern invention...it has changed over time and place; Whiteness is a social norm and has become chained to an index of unspoken privileges; the bonds of whiteness can yet be broken/deconstructed for the betterment of humanity" (p. 738). For these reasons and the fluidity with which Whiteness has been constructed and deconstructed over the years (Fields, 1982; Roediger, 2007; Roediger, 2018), CWS seeks to deconstruct the ideology and institution of Whiteness in an effort to understand how its historical and modern-day interpretations have operated in society.

Finally, the subscription of Whiteness in teacher preparation programs is inherent support for White supremacy because it invariably reifies a system which has historically disadvantaged minoritized groups. Whiteness has long been the operating standard in every aspect of the educational system (Sleeter, 2001; Picower, 2009; Leonardo, 2009; Matias, 2013a; Matias, 2013b). For these reasons, I heed the call of Stovall and Watkins (2005), who argue that educational researchers must dedicate their work to developing praxis that actively counters Whiteness in education.

Article 1: **"My Job is to Unsettle Folks": Perspectives on a Teacher Education Praxis Toward Antiracism**

This article is an extension of my practicum manuscript. Using phenomenographic case study (Glesne, 2016; Stake, 1996) with semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005), I

explore antiracist teacher education praxis through the perspectives of student-nominated faculty. I ask one primary research question: *How do exemplary antiracist scholars define and describe their implementation of antiracist teaching?* Based on interviews with four faculty members, I found four concrete practices that serve to move teacher education pedagogy closer to antiracism: 1) model vulnerability; 2) shift agency; 3) build community; and 4) pose questions. These practices are further explicated and understood as existing at the intersection of humanization and criticality. I ultimately argue that teacher education must be a project in humanization in order to be truly antiracist, and that teacher preparation programs must be grounded in critical race theories.

Article 2: **"I Feel This Enormous Weight": Tensions of Antiracist Praxis for a White Female Teacher Educator**

The second article employs autoethnographic methods (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011) and draws upon both Freire's (1970) theory of *conscientization* to answer two research questions: *(1) What is it like to attempt antiracist praxis as a White female teacher educator?;* and (2) *What tensions arise when reflecting upon these findings?* Using researcher memos, a student survey, and classroom video, I critically analyze my own praxis throughout one semester of teaching ED 101[1] . I write up the findings in the form of two fictionalized vignettes (Caine et al., 2017), which allow me to interact with and analyze my data in imaginative ways, providing rich and vivid detail grounded in my experiences teaching the course. Here, I highlight the tensions I found when examining the beliefs I hold about teaching alongside my praxis. I discuss navigating discussions of White supremacy and humanization (including if there are limitations to who teacher educators should humanize), and how far, exactly, I can push the thinking of my

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[1] Anonymized course on human diversity, power, and opportunity in social institutions.

White students. I ultimately conclude that there are myriad ways that my intentions of being antiracist become entangled with the impact of my Whiteness. Finally, my findings suggest that more White teacher educators should use CWS to interrogate our own praxis if we hope to model *life-giving ally relationships* (Love, 2019) to future White teachers.

Article 3: **Disagreeable Mirror: When Vulnerability is Whiteness**

This work is inspired by Baldwin's (1965) idea of a *disagreeable mirror*. I want to note that, when Baldwin uses this term, he refers to the color of his skin as a *disagreeable mirror* for White folks--that "a great deal of one's own energy is expended in reassuring white Americans that they do not see what they see" (p. 47). Thus, to build upon this idea as a White person in the service of antiracism, I look at myself through a disagreeable mirror. I do this in order to question what I believe to be true about my intention and practice with the goal of identifying my own performances of Whiteness and how I can continue to work against White supremacy through my praxis.

Vulnerability is something not commonly discussed amongst P-12 teachers or teacher educators. Historically, teachers have been taught to leave their personal lives at the door and to keep emotion out of the classroom (Goldstein, 2014; Dunn, Moore, & Neville, in press). These rules of emotion, whether spoken or unspoken, are both raced and gendered, with Black women in particular being substantially more policed and monitored in their emoting (Lorde, 1983; Diaz-Strong, Luna-Duarte, Gómez, & Meiners, 2014). When "model vulnerability" emerged as a primary component of antiracist praxis in my first article, I was struck by the ways that my expression of vulnerability as a White woman might be problematic. Grounding my understanding of vulnerability in Brown's (2006, 2013, 2018) work, I explore one primary research question: *Considering my social positioning as a White female teacher educator, how*

might my employment of vulnerability reify Whiteness? Using poetic inquiry to explore this question, I ultimately conclude that, within the context of teacher education at a PWI, we must acknowledge that vulnerability is not as accessible to educators of Color as it is to White educators; and thus cannot be described so normatively. Moreover, my employment of vulnerability, when not examined with intentionality and through the lens of a disagreeable mirror (Baldwin, 1965), reifies harmful raced constructs of vulnerability and emotion.

Overall Significance

As noted in the epigraphs above, it is White people's job to educate other White people. At a time when almost 80% of teachers are White women (Carter Andrews et al., 2019) and 90% of teacher preparation programs are White (Sleeter, 2016), this work is as important as ever. Hate crimes continue to rise while supported by the rhetoric of a blatantly xenophobic and racist president (SPLC, 2019), and Black communities are being disproportionately infected and killed by one of the worst pandemics the world has seen (Thebault, Tran, & Williams, 2020). Decades of research would agree, citing such approaches as *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1995), *critical multicultural education* (Banks and Banks, 2009), *culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2010), and *antiracist teaching* (Kailin, 2002; Blakeney, 2005; López, 2008; Ohito, 2019). While the literature on these approaches to teaching and pedagogy is vast, there is more work to be done on what this looks like in a teacher education classroom. This dissertation provides a unique contribution to the field by using an empirically-grounded approach to theorizing antiracist praxis, and putting forth the first autoethnography of a White teacher educator using race-based theory.

White teacher educators need to get serious about our commitment to social justice, and to do this, we must start with ourselves (see Matias & Liou, 2015). My work suggests that, in

order to do this, White teacher educators must use tools like autoethnography and multiracial critical friends groups to critically examine our praxis in the classroom, how it aligns with our purported goals of antiracism, and how it might still contribute to the pervasive Whiteness that exists at PWIs. Scholars (particularly of Color) have been researching Whiteness for generations. It is time for White teacher educators to not only do work grounded in CWS, but to do that work about ourselves--we must call ourselves to task with our commitment to abandon Whiteness.

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ARTICLE ONE -- "MY JOB IS TO UNSETTLE FOLKS": PERSPECTIVES ON A TEACHER EDUCATION PRAXIS TOWARD RACIAL JUSTICE

I've just been more intentional bringing [race] to the surface, trying to make it normal for my students to talk about issues of race and racism in class. I think my job is to unsettle folks, and to make them so uncomfortable that they're open to other kinds of possibilities. I tell my students in the beginning of the semester--if I just got up here and said everything you've been told your entire life, then there's really no learning that takes place, right? That learning takes place when we're confronted with ideas that don't go with what it is we kinda know to be true about the world. --Zack, Teacher Educator

How can teacher educators create a space where their students--future teachers themselves--are invested in sitting with the discomfort necessary to confront issues such as race and privilege? Conversations about race in the teacher education classroom are often treated as obligatory check-boxes, leaving majority White future educators with few to no tools to combat racism in schools (Love, 2019)--let alone to confront their own positionality and contributions to systems that perpetuate inequity. This lack of preparation is irresponsible at best, and negligent at worst. The treatment of race, racism, and Whiteness as fleeting afterthoughts in teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith, Ell, Ludlow, Grundoof, & Aitken, 2014; Sleeter, 2017) demonstrates just how committed the educational system is to maintaining Whiteness as a status quo. As Zack notes in the opening quotation, it is necessary to disrupt normative frameworks of the world that teacher candidates bring to the classroom, and to do so in ways that call students *in* to sit with and explore their discomfort. This begs the question: what does antiracist or critical race-oriented teacher preparation actually look like? I investigate this question by seeking the knowledge of student-nominated teacher educators who exhibit exemplary social justice praxis. I am intentional to use the term *praxis* throughout this manuscript, which Freire (1970) describes as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 36). Unlike the term *practice*, which can be understood in many different ways depending on context, *praxis* concretely suggests that teacher educators make pedagogical choices in reflective ways and with

the intention of transforming the world around them. Specifically, I focus on one overarching research question: *How do exemplary antiracist scholars define and describe their implementation of antiracist teaching?* By exploring this question, I add to the existing field of literature and theory on antiracist praxis through an empirical exploration of antiracist pedagogy (henceforth referred to as ARP).

This is vital and timely for several reasons. First, educators who do not learn about privilege and systems of oppression and engage critically with their own positionality tend to recycle institutional racism (Matias, 2013a). This means that the over 80% White teacher workforce continues to see the world (and especially the role of education) through a White lens, unequipped with the tools necessary to disrupt the racism and bias that run rampant in schools. Second, the current sociopolitical climate across the globe is as tense around discussions of race and xenophobia as ever. Right-wing extremism is on the rise and knows no geographical bounds; indeed, White supremacy insidiously invades human interaction and policy from South Africa (Heleta, 2016; Crush and Ramachandran, 2017) to Europe (Hondius, 2017; De Genova, 2018) to Latin America (Góngora-Mera, 2017; Grosfoguel, Maldonado-Torres, & Saldívar, 2015). Research shows that "Whites now view themselves as an embattled racial group, and this has led to both strong ingroup identity and a greater tolerance for expressions of hostility toward outgroups" (Valentino, Neuner, & Vandenbrock, 2018, p. 25). What this means is that, even though racism and xenophobia have always been present in global society, Whites (in the U.S., in particular) have felt particularly emboldened since the 2016 Presidential election to be more overt in their displays of racism and prejudice. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported over 200 incidents of harassment and intimidation in just the first three days after Donald Trump's election victory in 2016 (the majority of which were anti-Black and anti-immigrant). This is not

surprising since Trump had the endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan; White nationalism and the

rise of the alt-right has placed people of Color and other marginalized groups in the dangerous

wake of hateful rhetoric and actions. This has spread to schools, too (Dunn, Sondel, & Baggett,

2019). Just one day after Trump's election, students at a middle school in Royal Oak, MI chanted

"Build the wall!" as a Mexican-American student sat curled up and crying in the corner (Dickson

& Williams, 2016). How can teachers and administrators be expected to handle these situations if

they are not steeped in understanding the negative implications of Whiteness and racism?

Developing actively antiracist teacher preparation praxis to move toward social justice

will help prepare educators to be responsible and critical when (not *if*) situations like that of

Royal Oak arise. This involves coming to a common understanding of what social justice in

education means--as Dunn (2017) describes, terms like *equity* and *diversity* are increasingly

common, but rarely commonly defined. In the neoliberal context of teacher education, such

rhetoric "subverts the goals of critical multicultural reforms [and] blocks *real* reform" (p. 2,

emphasis in original). It thus becomes necessary for teacher educators (especially those of us

who are White) to critically examine our social positioning and the ways our best intentions

often fall short in the classroom. By studying the perspectives of exemplary antiracist educators,

we may glean insights into strategies that will help our pedagogy move toward racial justice.

Below, I provide an overview of the major tenets of Critical Whiteness Studies, including

how I conceptualize the terms *race*, *racism*, and *Whiteness* for the purposes of this study. Next, I

review select literature on antiracist teaching and critical multicultural education, with the aim of

establishing what antiracist teaching is and why it is necessary. By foregrounding my work with

these bodies of theory and literature, I establish the need for an empirical exploration of antiracist

teaching praxis at the higher education level.

Theoretical Framework

I ground this work in Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS). CWS, like Critical Race Theory (CRT), focuses on the functionality of race. Specifically, it allows us to focus more directly on the role of Whiteness in examining matters of racial inequality. It has developed thus far in two waves (Barnes, 2017), though I will focus on the second. This wave recognizes context in racial formation and centers upon how people perform Whiteness (often unintentionally) to uphold institutional racism. Barnes (2017) describes three characteristics of Whiteness in the second wave that differentiate it from the first: "Whiteness is powerful and also power-evasive, Whiteness employs various techniques to maintain power, and whiteness is not monolithic" (p. 288). Whiteness is upheld in these contexts in various ways, but include such evasive techniques as colorblind[2] discourse (Frankenburg, 2001) and strategic ignorance (Mueller, 2017).

Nayak (2007) specifies that CWS as a field is underpinned by three primary beliefs/tenets: "Whiteness is a modern invention...it has changed over time and place; Whiteness is a social norm and has become chained to an index of unspoken privileges; the bonds of whiteness can yet be broken/deconstructed for the betterment of humanity" (p. 738). For these reasons and the fluidity with which Whiteness has been constructed and deconstructed over the years, CWS seeks to deconstruct Whiteness in an effort to understand how its historical and modern-day interpretations have operated in society.

For the context of this article, race is understood as a fluid, historical context-dependent and socially constructed concept, while racism is "any attitude, action, or institutional structure or any social policy that subordinates persons or groups because of their color … it involves the *power* to carry out systematic discriminatory practices in a broad or consuming manner" (Sue,

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[2] I use the term "colorblind" here because it is the term used by the cited author. However, to avoid ableist language, I choose to use "color-evasive" in the rest of the manuscript (see Annamma and Morrison, 2018).

2012, p. 31, emphasis added). Whiteness is understood as a hegemonic ideal that permeates

teacher education across the country. Matias and Zembylas (2014) define Whiteness as follows:

> If blackness is a social construction that embraces Black culture, language, experiences,
> identities, and epistemologies, then whiteness is a social construction that embraces white
> culture, ideology, racialization, expressions, and experiences, epistemology, emotions,
> and behaviors. Unlike blackness, whiteness is normalized because White supremacy
> elevates Whites and whiteness to the apex of the racial hierarchy. (p. 290)

Whiteness is perceived by Whites as the status quo, or *normal*, to the extent that many White

teachers have a difficult time describing what being White actually means. It is powerful through

operating as the "norm," yet simultaneously power-evasive by avoiding responsibility through

claiming neutrality or ignorance. Marx (2006) describes interactions with several White teachers

for whom their Whiteness is invisible and neutral. Gen, for example, could not identify a single

characteristic of White culture: "Do we have a culture? I mean, because we are all so different.

We all come from so many different places. I really don't know how to answer that" (p. 47). The

other young women in Marx's study recognized Whiteness as it contrasts with Color, assessing

Whiteness as the "normal" and all-American experience. Indeed, "the development of white

identity in the United States is closely intertwined with the development and progress of racism

in this country" (Helms, 1990, p. 49). But what does this mean for teacher education?

Teacher preparation programs continue to be almost entirely White—approximately 90%

(Sleeter, 2016). Many scholars suggest that programs are designed based on a White-centric

model, which inherently reifies racist institutional practices (Chapman, 2011; Picower, 2009)

that continue to oppress people of Color. For example, Sleeter (2001) and Love (2019) both note

that White teacher candidates often get no further training than one diversity-related course, yet

are expected to teach children of Color with no knowledge of their communities or histories.

Matias, Montaya, and Nishi (2016) describe the subscription of Whiteness as inherent support

for institutionalized White supremacy because it tacitly (or overtly) reifies a system that has historically disadvantaged minoritized groups. Through employing strategies such as color-evasive discourse and strategic ignorance (see Mueller, 2017), White students (and thereby Whiteness as a construct) maintains power by insidiously operating as the "norm" or standard by which all other things are measured.

Review of Literature

Scholarly literature exists in abundance on teaching toward racial justice in the fields of teacher education and multicultural education. Black scholars, in particular, have been working cross-disciplinarily to interrogate the effects and implications of Whiteness long before CRT was first used in teacher education research (see Baldwin, 1963; Fanon, 1967; Crenshaw, 1989). Myriad terms are used to describe pedagogy grounded in social justice, including but not limited to: *culturally responsive teaching* (Gay, 2010), *critical multicultural education* (Banks and Banks, 2009), and *culturally relevant pedagogy* (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The aforementioned terms argue for anti-oppression writ large (including such social identity markers such as dis/ability, LGBTQIA+, linguistic background, nationality, and others) while *antiracist teaching* (Kailin, 2002; Blakeney, 2005; López, 2008; Ohito, 2019) strives for anti-oppression as it relates to race. However, I argue that antiracism is also necessarily intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989), meaning that my use of the term foregrounds anti-oppression of all social identity markers.

Antiracist teaching - What is it?

Multiple scholars have offered definitions and theoretical explorations of what, exactly, antiracist teaching is. Some definitions include: transformation through challenging individuals and structures that perpetuate racism (Kailin, 2002), "explicit instruction on confronting racism without reservation or risk of ostracism" (Blakeney, 2005, p. 20), and an "orientation toward

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teaching aimed at deepening understandings of how racial subjugation functions in schooling"

(Ohito, 2019, p. 2). Consistently spanning these definitions and approaches is the central idea

that antiracist teaching contains what Kinloch (2018) terms *necessary disruptions,* which

"encourage us to think about how we teach, what we teach, why we teach, and who we teach,

especially as we work alongside students in classrooms … and attend to ongoing racial unrest"

(p. 4). In other words, we as teacher educators must be constantly mindful to calibrate our

instruction and engagement with discussions about racism based upon context. Matias and

Mackey (2015) raise Critical Whiteness Pedagogy as a tangible set of practices for critical race

educators to employ in the teacher education classroom. To move beyond sometimes surface-

level explorations of White racial privilege (such as McIntosh, 2001), the authors argue that

using theoretically-grounded pedagogy is a way to engage teacher candidates in "honest yet

painfully-critical self-reflection of their own emotions, behaviors, thought processes, and

reactions to the readings, the professors, and the course's concepts" (p. 35).

Most scholars also agree that antiracist teaching begins with critical self-reflection of the

educator paired with a careful examination of whose voices are (not) represented in curricular

choices (Lyiscott, 2019; Kishimoto; 2018; Shim, 2018; Teel, 2014; Bell, Love, Washington, &

Weinstein, 2007). Kishimoto (2018) builds on this concept by arguing that ARP requires another

crucial and fundamental piece: the educator must also advocate for institutional and social

change beyond the walls of the classroom. This is to say that ARP is a lifestyle choice. She goes

on to say that an antiracist teaching approach should,

> (1) challenge assumptions and foster students' critical analytical skills; (2) develop
> students' awareness of their social positions; (3) decenter authority in the classroom and
> have students take responsibility for their learning process; (4) empower students and
> apply theory to practice; and (5) create a sense of community in the classroom through
> collaborative learning. (p. 546)

Kishimoto's rich literature review outlines over a decade of research on antiracist teaching, ranging from professional development necessary for ARP (see Blakeney, 2005; Hosford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011) to particular strategies for incorporating ARP (Grosland, 2013; Kandaswamy, 2007) to a focus on the social positioning of faculty attempting to incorporate ARP (Adams & Love, 2009; Bell et al., 2007). While they may diverge in specific focus or population, what is consistent across these works is the necessity of explicitly confronting racism through challenging individual and structural actions and systems that perpetuate racism. It involves dealing with the cognitive dissonance that so many White teachers and teacher educators evoke during conversations about race, and doing so in environments that empower learners to both confront their own privilege and to actively resist oppression.

Antiracist teaching - Why do we need it?

The case for critical race pedagogies, like antiracist teaching, is well-documented (Matias, 2013; Matias & Liou, 2015; Sleeter, 2001; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Cambell, 2005). The current sociopolitical moment in which we live, however, makes it just as important as ever. Au (2017) notes that multicultural education is simply not enough in the wake of the "Trump effect" (a term coined in Costello, 2016). He poses an important question: can someone who is anti-Black (or anti-LBGTQ, anti-immigrant, anti-Islam, etc.) be entrusted to teach students? Multiple cases of outwardly racist teachers have arisen since that fateful day in 2016 when Donald Trump was elected President. Several teachers at majority Hispanic schools made disparaging comments about immigrants being lazy trouble-makers (Chasmar, 2017; Collier Public Schools, 2017). Hateful emails and bomb threats plagued John Muir Elementary School in Seattle, Washington as a result of a planned event to celebrate Blackness. If teachers are not prepared to combat hate in schools, what example does that set for children? In a day and age

when this violence is not only becoming more prevalent, but also its perpetrators more emboldened, what can education do?

Dunn (2017) answers this question by proposing what she terms a *revolutionary multicultural education* that would get back to the activist roots of the original movement. The purpose of antiracism cannot be to simply appear good-intentioned to stakeholders and say that it is social-justice oriented; rather, it must make continuous efforts to combat terms like *social justice* and *civil rights* as mere buzz words. What might an antiracist framework look like in the context of teacher education? First, it seeks to equip all members of the school community with the tools necessary to actively combat racism. Its aims go to the roots of the educational system to challenge how education is done, who benefits and who does not, and who chooses the narratives presented at whose expense (Nieto, 2017; Apple, 2004; Freire, 1970). In addition to giving students the opportunity through field work and other experiences to cultivate honest and open relationships in order to humanize the process of teaching and learning (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994), it is necessary to help them begin the process of becoming educators through critical self-reflection. Helping students along in White racial identity development (see Helms, 1990) begins with teacher preparation programs taking ownership of the ways in which they uphold Whiteness (Sleeter, 2017). This is not an easy task, as often times "[teacher educators] are not aware of, nor are they prepared for, how emotionally draining, mentally taxing, and vulnerable they must make themselves in order to be true White allies" (Matias, 2013, p. 73).

Summary

While the literature on antiracist teaching/pedagogy is growing, there is more work to be done. I see my research building upon Kishimoto's (2018) piece, in which she details several explicit components of ARP (noted above). Whereas she conceptualizes this praxis theoretically

based on her extensive personal experience, I extend this by adding an empirical component to theorize what this praxis looks like through the eyes of student-nominated antiracist teacher educators.

Methodology

In this study of exemplary teacher educators, I employ phenomenographic case study (Glesne, 2016). Stake (1995) describes case study as a way to look deeply into a particular topic. The phenomenographic aspect refers to the study of a particular phenomenon through investigating how people experience or think about something. It assumes subjectivity, which is to say that it acknowledges that people view and construct the world in different ways. There are multiple truths, and upon examining variation in human understanding and experience, we may glean insights into broad truths about the world and society in which we live (Marton, 1981). Marton and Booth (1997) describe that "there is no real world 'out there' and a subjective world 'in here'. The world [as experienced] is not constructed by the learner, nor is it imposed upon her; it is constituted as an internal relation between them" (p. 13). A way to gain these insights is through interviews and case studies. Josselson (2013) explains that "the aim of interviewing is to document people's experience, self-understanding, and working models of the world they live in, so that we may later attempt to make meaning of these phenomena at levels of analysis beyond simple descriptions of what we heard" (p. 2). Because the aim of this project is to understand how antiracist teacher educators conceptualize the enactment of their praxis, interviews are a kind of narrative research that is ideal for answering my research question.

Participants

This project took place at a major research university in a mid-sized Midwestern city. The participants for this study were selected using community nomination (Foster, 1993;

Ladson-Billings, 1994). Rather than starting with my own perceptions of what exemplar antiracist scholars look like, I designed a short anonymous survey for students from all levels of the College of Education, asking for feedback on which faculty members they felt exhibited a commitment to antiracism and justice. After two weeks, I selected four faculty members to interview based on consensus from students. It is worth noting that I restricted my potential participants to faculty only (versus graduate instructors), which I decided based on the assumption that the faculty participants would be more experienced with and steeped in this work. Once they agreed to be interviewed, I asked all participants to provide a self-description.

Darren. Darren self-identifies as a Black male. He earned his Ed.D. from an urban research university.

Zack. Zack self-identifies as a Black male. He earned his Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis on urban schooling.

Elaine. Elaine self-identifies as a White female with a Ph.D.

Dot. Dot self-identifies as an African American/Black female. She has a doctorate in Education and attended PWIs for most of K-12 and higher education.

Data Generation and Analysis

Data sources included interviews and researcher memos. Interviews were intentionally semi-structured (Fontana & Frey, 2005); although I came prepared with a list of questions (see Appendix A), I also wanted to allow for the conversation to evolve organically. In this way, I was able to get a sense of how instructors viewed themselves and their responsibilities as antiracist scholars. Each instructor was interviewed two or three times: first for approximately 60 minutes (all four participants), a second time with a follow-up of about 30 minutes to address any new issues from subsequent data analysis (three of four participants), and one final time to

member-check my emerging findings (three of four participants). In total, I spoke with each

participant for approximately two hours each.

The phenomenographic interviews were all recorded. After transcribing, I engaged in

several rounds of coding to derive the themes presented in my findings. First, I read through all

the interviews again to re-familiarize myself with the content and to take note of things that stood

out to me. I then used open and thematic coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011; Saldaña, 2015;

Glesne, 2016) line-by-line to identify primary themes and patterns that emerged. Then, with

focused axial coding, I was able to get finer-grain codes and patterns based on my preliminary

open coding (see Table 1 for an example).

Table 1

Example of selective code and associated subcategory with participant quotations.

Primary Code	Example Quotations and Associated Subcategories
Model vulnerability	**Subcategory: Model mistake and self-awareness** "[My coauthor and I] specifically called out our own previous writing where we talked about West African immigrants. And we repositioned that to talk about immigrant youth from West African communities … [We published this piece in] AERJ using the term *West African immigrants*…which was too encompassing of folks. So I've shared that in class." (Darren, first follow-up interview) "There's a divulging I do that I hope is demonstrative. Like it demonstrates to students the type of self-awareness reflection that I would want them to be doing…I will say explicitly, 'As a cisgender heterosexual male, my perspective—,' right? I think more importantly just this awareness of this positionality that I have, and knowledge in the kinds of experiences that I've had, the things that I don't have to deal with that some of my colleagues have to deal with, right?" (Zack, first interview) **Subcategory: Implicate oneself in larger systems of oppression** "I will say, 'Look, I grew up in the Midwest.' And I'll also say, 'In many ways, I'm a lot like you. And that may be problematic, because it means that we might not notice things.' I'll try to use my own limitations and partiality as a kind of example." (Elaine, first interview) "So I tell students about the anxiety that I had being around students with disabilities when I was in elementary school, having a lot to do with just the lack of exposure—lack of meaningful opportunities to engage and learn from and be with students who had challenges in school. So I talk about those discomforts that I had and the kind of recognition of them as a space where I could see that being a challenge for me in my understanding, or better serving students from that community…I'd share those aspects about myself so that people can understand." (Zack, first follow-up interview)

Table 1 (cont'd)

Subcategory: Model productive ways to dialogue

"I oftentimes am voicing perspectives that *I* don't believe in, but I believe exist, just so that we can get it on the table and deal with it as a class … our job [as teacher educators] is to start a conversation." (Zack, first interview)

"So it's about your body language, it's about all of that. And so that is a skill, right? You can't be there, like, yelling at folks…they're gonna shut down…There must be some way in which I create some kind of learning space where [students] are like, 'Okay. I'm willing to kind of keep hearing this and seeing how I can reflect on my own opinions and positions.'" (Dot, first interview)

Because phenomenography honors and privileges the voices and experiences of participants, I was intentional to involve them in each step of the coding process. Thus, I subsequently conducted my first follow-up interviews with participants, in which they reviewed their transcripts and we discussed anything they would add, take out, or modify. In another effort to ensure their words would be accurately represented, after deciding codes and sub-themes, I conducted one final follow-up with each participant as a member check. When each participant approved of how I had characterized their descriptions of praxis, I proceeded with my findings. Figure 1 illustrates the steps of this process.
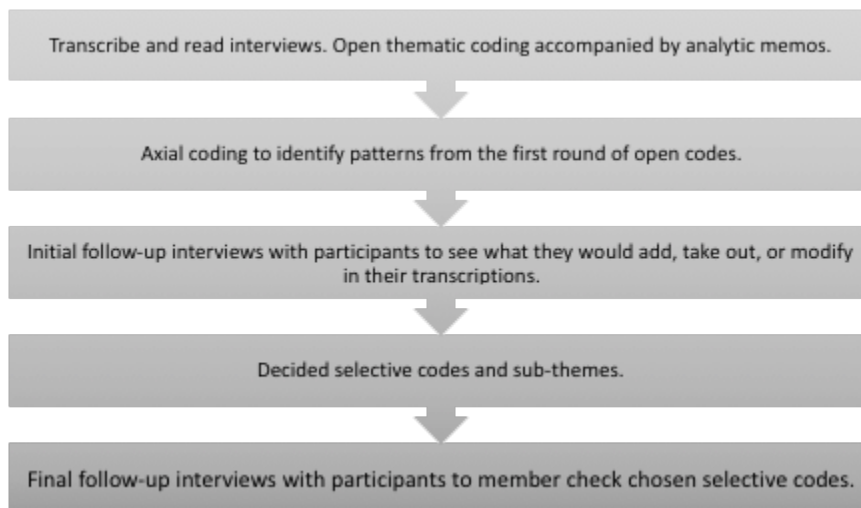
Figure 1. Process of data analysis.

Throughout data collection and analysis, I kept a researcher journal to memo my thoughts, questions, and reflections. I concurrently wrote theoretical memos to focus on how the patterns I identified developed, and how they integrated with both my theoretical framework and the foundation of literature from which I draw for this study. I take the same stance as Emerson et al. (2011) that data analysis is both inductive and deductive at the same time, similar to someone "who is simultaneously creating and solving a puzzle" (p. 144). Such memo practices help researchers to work through assumptions regarding what they want to study and the people with whom they work to study it (Josselson, 2013). For these reasons, I memoed at varying stages throughout the research process, both formally and informally.

Researcher Positionality

I am a White female teacher educator. Although those are not the only aspects of my identity that I critically examine on a regular basis, they are the two through which I best make sense of who I am both personally and professionally. I enter my work in agreement with Helms' (1990) description of how to develop a positive White racial identity through intentionally abandoning racism and developing what she terms a non-racist White identity. To achieve this, Helms notes, "he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another" (p. 49). I understand that as a White female educator, I have been "raced" as part of a system that has afforded me systematic advantages, cultural practices that are often unnamed, and a certain lens through which I view the world and by which my world is shaped (Frankenberg, 2001). I hope to continue to grow in this knowledge and a constant dedication to self-reflection in my research and teaching praxis, issues that I explore more in-depth in later work.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore one primary question: *How do exemplary antiracist scholars define and describe their implementation of antiracist teaching?* My participants defined and described implementing their praxis in myriad ways. The most commonly used terms to describe their particular antiracist pedagogical praxis were *humanizing* and *critical*. To them, humanizing[3] and critical pedagogy working toward antiracism looked like four concrete moves: model vulnerability, shift agency to students, build community, and pose questions. Figure 2 shows an abbreviated visual of these moves.
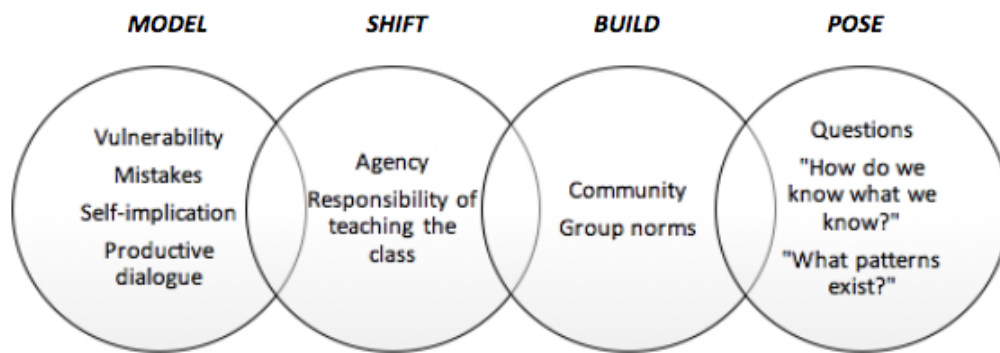
Figure 2. Described pedagogical moves of participants.

Model Vulnerability

Modeling is a practice commonly cited in the literature of teacher education (Conklin, 2008; Loughran, 2013), and can mean any number of things. In the context of this study, modeling is specific to the concepts of demonstrating vulnerability, making mistakes, implicating oneself in larger systems of oppression, and establishing productive ways to dialogue. When approaching topics that can be challenging, such as systemic racism and

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[3]The term *humanizing*, in addition to Freire's (1970) conceptualization, is understood in this article as praxis "built upon respect, trust, reciprocity, active listening, mentoring, compassion and high expectations" (Bartolome, 1994, p. 188). In the context of teaching, it empowers students to empower themselves.

privilege (race, class, sex, ability, etc.), an instructor move that can help is to implicate oneself in these systems. In an effort to relate to majority-White preservice teachers, Elaine notes that she points out how her positionality makes it difficult to recognize particular perspectives:

> I look like most of them … And I will say, look, I grew up in the Midwest … In many ways, I'm a lot like you. And that may be problematic, because it means that we might not notice things … I'll try to use my own limitations and partiality as a kind of example.

The choice of a self-identified White educator to implicate herself this way--naming the fact that she has limited perspective simply due to her race and upbringing--could be a way to make conversations around race and privilege approachable for White students, while remaining critical at the same time. Of course, this approach could also be seen as re-centering Whiteness and catering to White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). Educators of Color can also point out their limitations through different social identity markers. Zack, for example, will often insert his positionality by prefacing statements with something like, *As a cisgender heterosexual male, my perspective…* This divulging of self acknowledges how certain lived experiences inherently affect the lenses through which we view the world. The ability to engage in this kind of perspective-taking and to take into account the necessary impact our social identity markers have on our lives and praxis, he suggests, is essential to engage in antiracist praxis. Zack also shared,

> So I tell my students about the anxiety I had being around students with disabilities when I was in elementary school, having a lot to do with just the lack of exposure--lack of meaningful opportunities to engage and learn from and be with students who had challenges in school. So I talk about those discomforts that I had and the kind of recognition of them as a space where I could see that being a challenge for me in my understanding, or better serving students from that community.

Allowing students to see their instructor as someone who has struggled (and even continues to struggle) to overcome certain challenges is a move that ultimately humanizes both ways: the educator, who admits to struggling to understand certain perspectives; and the students, who see their learning situated somewhere that makes space for misunderstanding and a lack of lived

experience. Darren would agree. He shared a story of a time that he, himself, was called out by a doctoral student for using a pejorative term (*West African immigrants*) and subsequently submitted a correction to a major journal in order to fix the mistake: "And we repositioned that to talk about immigrant youth from West African communities. Because Africa's a geographic region...it's vast and varied, complex religions, linguistic, and many other differences and distinctions. [The term I previously used] was too encompassing of folks." He proceeded to read me the correction he sent, saying that a necessary part of his stance-taking as an educator is "positioning teaching as learning." He shares this with students in an effort to model that we are all continuous learners in our pursuit to be equitable in our pedagogical praxis. This recalls Freire's (1970) *praxis*, which contends that all humans must engage in intentional, reflective, and meaningful pursuits of knowledge in order to be free.

Also important is demonstrating to students how dialogue around issues such as racism can be productive. Dot shared her concerns that instructors can sometimes come across as aggressive when broaching these topics, which she said shuts students down before a dialogue can even begin. She adds,

> So it's about your body language, it's about *all* of that. And so that is a skill, right? You can't be there, like, yelling at folks … they're gonna shut down … And I think that plays out with my students, which is why I don't get this resistance that a lot of people talk about. There must be some way in which I create some kind of learning space where they're like, 'Okay. I'm willing to kind of keep hearing this and seeing how I can reflect on my own opinions and positions.'

This quotation suggests that modeling the ability to have critical and courageous conversations in ways that do not belittle or minimize students' lived experiences appears to be especially important for and representative of Dot's praxis.

Shift Agency to Students

Agency is also a theoretically rich and complex idea (see Bandura, 1989; Edwards and D'Arcy, 2004; Edwards, 2007). Lipponen and Kumpulainen (2011) define agency as "the capacity to initiate purposeful action that implies will, autonomy, freedom, and choice" (p. 812). The overarching argument for agency in teacher education is that students do not simply repeat what they see; there is critical thinking involved when students are given the power to form their own opinions and make their own decisions in response to how they process pedagogical material. Through the lens of this study, agency refers to a move to treat students' lives, thoughts, and work as texts to read, discover, and unpack together--it shares the onus of teaching with the class in a way that recalls Freire's (1970) approach to praxis. This involves treating students as unique individuals with their own personal set of lived experiences--all of which the class can learn from as a collective. As Elaine notes, "I don't assume that they're blank slates, and certainly I don't assume they've all got the same set of ideas and experiences that they're drawing on that let them consider these ideas differently or more deeply." Zack would agree with this statement, sharing that he often introduces opposing viewpoints simply for the sake of getting a perspective on the table to unpack as a class. He calls this a "pedagogical tool," asserting that,

> ...I believe in the equity perspective, right? That it's important to represent the perspectives of those that have been marginalized. I recognize a large portion of that is done through the readings that I have people do. And I will raise those points in class as well. But I think it's also important to raise contrasting points of view even if they don't ...fit with my own beliefs, because we know that there are real people who...might be thinking this as well…I do see that connection to a humanizing approach.

Treating the discussion of unpopular or opposing viewpoints as something to unpack and learn from as a group transforms the educational space into a place of critical inquiry and dialogue. Of course, a careful balance must be struck--opposing viewpoints to be discussed should not include

those rooted in White supremacy or any ideological foundation that questions the humanity of those in the room, or of anyone.

Another way to shift agency to students is by allowing them space to critically examine their own work. Darren shares the idea of "equity audits" where he scaffolds an assignment to help preservice teachers identify patterns in curricular design:

> Folks first do some autobiographical work…but then secondly they conduct an equity audit of their placement. But then thirdly, we've had them working on a unit plan across the semester, and they specifically have to conduct an equity audit of their unit plan…So in this text, we're sort of interested in, you know, what's the percentage of characters of Color? What's the percentage of gender and socioeconomic diversity? That sort of thing.

This strategy is clever, first encouraging students to look at the work of another person in order to identify whose voices are privileged and whose are not. This distances the students themselves from their own roles in perpetuating systems of oppression. Only after they have done these initial audits on others' work do they critically examine their own. The practice of perspective-taking on a regular basis builds capacity to be able to critically examine one's own curricular choices in the future.

Build Community

The work of building relationships and community in a classroom has been documented for decades as a critical element of both student engagement and teacher wellbeing (see Cornelius-White, 2007; Warren and Lessner, 2014; Quin, 2017). Freire (1970) also noted the importance of learning as a social process. Similar to the transformational nature of *praxis*, he contended that "human nature is expressed through intentional, reflective, meaningful activity situated within dynamic historical and cultural contexts" (Glass, 2001, p. 16). This necessitates communication among participants to co-construct meaning. Particularly in classes that discuss topics such as race and gender, it is difficult to be willing to express one's feelings and opinions

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without knowing who is in the room. There are multiple ways for teachers to facilitate this, but all have the same goal: learn one another's names, stories, and lives to the extent possible. Zack shared the importance of daily check-ins with class. Rather than diving right into material (particularly in a class with mostly freshmen), instructors can ask something as simple as, "How's it going?" Beginning class with this sort of "family business" (see Warren and Lessner, 2014) allows students space to share anything from the mundane to the exciting to the sad. This also allows instructors an opportunity to model vulnerability (as discussed in the first section) by sharing personal details about their lives to the extent they are comfortable doing so. Similar to modeling vulnerability, several participants noted the importance of sharing their lives with students. Speaking on her experience with teaching an undergraduate equity course, Dot noted,

> I do bring myself into the class. I share stories from my childhood or from my children's experiences now in school. But overwhelmingly several of them appreciated hearing those. So maybe in some ways for them, that humanizes some of the concepts--hearing my own schooling experiences…and I was like, wow, this is interesting. I've never had so many students comment on the utility of me bringing my full self, or you know, more of myself into the instruction. And I do that because it's who I am, but I don't know, something about this group that seems to be really resonating.

Building community certainly seems to involve the instructors; reciprocity exists both in learning and in sharing one another's lives.

Another community-building move is to set clear expectations from the beginning for how to deal courageously with difficult topics of conversation. Darren mentioned building community norms to "draw clear expectations" for how "we seek for students to talk with one another, to build from one another's strengths." There is power in asking students what *they* feel are important norms to keep in mind when tension inevitably arises. This creates an environment where students are more likely to show up as their full selves and engage in meaningful conversation. They hold themselves and each other accountable to the norms they co-construct as

a community. Likewise, an instructor's ability to "push back" depends very much on context; when you have built a relationship with the student, they are likely to receive that pushback differently than they would if you knew nothing about them.

Pose Questions

Pedagogical questioning, similar to the moves described above, has a rich body of literature citing its importance (Chin, 2007; Wolfe and Alexander, 2008; Ginsburg, 2009; Heritage and Heritage, 2013). All participants described grounding their praxis in such questioning, creating a classroom culture where students are encouraged and even expected to do the same. Questions that participants shared, such as, "How do you know what you know?" and, "Can you say more about that?" encourage students to unpack seemingly 'common sense' statements to get deeper into the underlying assumptions they hold. Zack shared,

> I think my job is to unsettle folks. And to make them be so uncomfortable that they're open to other kinds of possibilities … I tell my students at the beginning of the semester, if I just got up here and said everything that you've been told your entire life, then there's really no learning that takes place, right?

Zack also notes that he will push back on students' comments in ways that are gentle but critical. By interrogating ideas rather than people (something Dot also mentions), students are positioned as co-learners and researchers of their classroom (Freire, 1970)--yet another way to shift agency. When one engages students through a culture of problematizing and questioning, difficult knowledge can be approached in a way that prioritizes curiosity in exploring the origin of ideas. This ties into creating tension, because tension is where folks learn.

Posing questions (Freire, 1970) can also be done in ways that empower students to notice what is going on in their classroom. Elaine notes that "asking questions first isn't what they're expecting. They're expecting this sort of direct instruction transmission stuff." Rather than

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presenting all the facts on a particular topic first (such as race or disability), Elaine often chooses to pose questions in an effort to help students come to their own conclusions,

> I'll say, "How are we confident that we know about race in the room?" Or maybe we'll start with disability. "Do we know?" And I'm not asking anybody to identify. But do we know? "Was it okay that we made assumptions about race? On what basis were we making assumptions about who we were? Skin color? Is that race?" … And [then students realize] "Oh, race is less obvious and clear than I thought."

This move is also related to shifting agency to students in that it asks *them* to notice assumptions they had previously made with the purpose of disrupting the truths they took for granted.

Discussion

Before beginning a discussion of these findings, I first want to note that writing about anything prescriptively—especially something as important as antiracist pedagogy—is problematic. It is even more problematic for a White scholar such as myself to do this. I therefore begin by acknowledging that the practices I discuss here likely look different for different teacher educators. Specifically, moves such as modeling vulnerability and posing questions are undoubtedly received differently by White students when made by White teacher educators versus teacher educators of Color. A teacher educator pushing back on problematic comments can have serious consequences; for example, Rodriguez (2009) notes that her attempts at being vulnerable and honest about her experiences with racism as a woman of Color led students perceiving her as "weak" and sometimes "aggressive." In addition to the serious emotional distress this causes, it can also impact a faculty's chances for promotion and tenure. In other words, I want to stress that these findings are not a catch-all for all teacher educators. Rather, I see them as a starting point upon which to build and continue to unpack.

As findings suggest, some concrete pedagogical moves are necessary to support students in learning how to pose challenging questions. I would argue that one cannot as successfully

"pose" until the instructor has modeled vulnerability, shifted agency, and built community. This does not mean, however, that the first three exist in a linear fashion. Indeed, teacher educators must constantly model what it looks like to implicate oneself in larger systems of oppression if they expect their students to do the same (Ohito, 2019). Similarly, Zinn, Proteus, and Keet (2009) assert that mutual vulnerability is an effort rooted in solidarity with fellow humans, disrupting normative frames of knowing and being in a classroom. Moving from this modeling to shifting agency is an act of humanization, as is the move between shifting and building (and vice versa). These first three categories build upon and strengthen one each other, constantly moving back and forth, to create a foundation of trust upon which critical questions can be engaged. This all points to concerted efforts to break and deconstruct the bonds of Whiteness; to identify it in order to tear it down and build upon a foundation rooted in humanizing and critical praxis. Based upon this understanding and the findings above about the praxis of exemplary antiracist teacher educators, I assert two arguments: (1) teacher education must be a project in humanization, and (2) teacher preparation programs need critical race theories.

Teacher Education Must Be a Project in Humanization

All participants pointed to pedagogical praxis that seeks to exist at the intersection of humanization and criticality. I therefore argue that teacher education writ large must seek to be humanizing at both individual and structural levels, because humanization moves us closer toward antiracist praxis (ARP), and ARP is necessarily both critical and humanizing. I want to note that, although I studied individuals for this project, I am making claims about structures. I make these claims with the understanding that structures—like teacher education--are made up of individuals. We know that the educational system was built by White people, for White people—and continues to operate that way today (see Goldstein, 2014). And today, as I

mentioned previously, education as both a profession and a structure is made up mostly of White people. This means that, for structural change, we need to look at the individuals making up those structures. In other words, I argue that studying the praxis of exemplary teacher educators is a worthwhile way to glean insights into enacting a structural shift away from Whiteness and towards antiracism at a more programmatic level.

Recalling CWS scholarship discussed previously, teacher education must seek to disrupt the normative frames that the 90% White preservice teacher population carries. The humanizing approach to education, first coined by Freire (1970), is linked to structural and social aspects of human suffering and liberation. Bartolome (1994) describes humanizing pedagogy as one that is built upon respect, trust, reciprocity, active listening, mentoring, compassion and high expectations. Specifically, "teachers play a significant role in creating learning contexts in which students are able to empower themselves" (p. 188). Likewise, Paris and Winn (2013) maintain that "research for equity with young people happens in processes of human relationship, respect, and care" (p. xix).

Del Carmen Salazar (2013) agrees, noting that "humans are motivated by a need to reason and engage in the process of becoming" (p. 125). The shift from learner to teacher and co-creator of knowledge represents a necessary shift for students to feel empowered and validated. This happens through relationships, which Raider-Roth (2005) notes as the best way to create space for acquiring new knowledge of any kind. Dot supports this assertion, saying that,

> I think part of the humanizing pedagogy is getting students to think about really difficult topics like racism, sexism, homophobia, you know, xenophobia...as not just abstract ideas, but actually tied to the human condition for individuals that might be sitting in class with them.

Mere acknowledgement that there are likely individuals in the room who suffer interpersonal and systemic oppression because of one of their social identity markers is powerful. As Elaine noted,

teacher educators can simply pose questions like, "Do we know? How do we know?" in order to encourage students to think. This counter narrative (Treviño, Harris, & Wallace, 2008) of who is in the room can help students to realize that the people who endure oppression are human beings just like them who operate and exist in the same spaces they do. This especially helps White students move along in their White racial identity development (Helms, 1990) by shifting their frames of reference.

This process of humanization also bolsters students' critical emotional literacy (Matias et al., 2016) by supporting critical reflection; indeed, this recalls Lyiscott's (2019) question: "How in the world are you going to address the sociopolitical systemic magnitude of racial injustice without deep self-awareness of how to navigate your own personal struggles?" (p. 14). Her concept of *vision-driven justice* requires an honest self-reflection of who and where we are as humans before we can ever hope to engage in transformational work toward racial justice. This all supports Kinloch's (2018) call to reframe teaching and learning as *projects in humanization*. Of course, enacting this humanizing pedagogical praxis with preservice teachers requires a firm theoretical grounding, which leads me to my final argument.

Teacher Preparation Programs Need Critical Race Theories

In order for teacher education to be a critical project in humanization, teacher preparation must be grounded in critical race theories--further addressing the *critical* component of ARP pedagogy that participants all noted. At the heart of ARP is a desire to disrupt normative frames and ways of knowing, which requires a firm rooting in theory. Love (2019) notes that, "theory does not solve issues--only action and solidarity can do that--but theory gives you language to fight, knowledge to stand on, and a humbling reality of what intersectional social justice is up against" (p. 132). She goes on to explain the ways that different theories--such as CRT, Asian

CRT, Latinx CRT, Dis/ability CRT, Tribal CRT, and CWS, among others--can give students the historical knowledge, context, and footing in just how huge systemic oppression is. She astutely notes that "teachers of all backgrounds walk into classrooms never studying the history or culture of the children they are going to teach. So, how can teachers be culturally relevant when they have not studied culture?" (p. 128). Both Love (2019) and participants in this study point to the necessity of ARP being intersectional (Crenshaw, 1989); that is, "race" is neither unidimensional nor does it exist in isolation. It intersects at any given time with many other social identity markers, including but not limited to gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, dis/ability, nationality, and linguistic background. Understanding these nuances is necessary to adequately prepare teachers to be responsible with their future students, and theory gives us the ability to achieve that nuance.

CWS scholars would absolutely agree. The grounding of teacher preparation programs in critical race theories (including but not limited to those mentioned above) would be a concrete step toward disrupting the White-designed model teacher education has historically and contemporarily followed (Chapman, 2011; Picower, 2009). Because these programs perpetuate Whiteness (Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016) by way of stereotyping communities of Color and having only one catch-all diversity course (Love, 2019), shifting to critical race pedagogical praxis would center curricular choices around voices and experiences that speak to the complex nuances of intersectional social justice--equipping future teachers to enter classrooms with a more comprehensive understanding of the students they will encounter and teach.

Implications and Conclusion

Teacher education, both at individual and structural levels, must seek to be both humanizing and critical in order to be antiracist. The findings of this study suggest concrete ways

that teacher educators may attempt to embody this kind of pedagogical praxis, and also offer suggestions for teacher education/preparation writ large. Implications of these findings are varied.

We know that a wide array of literature exists on Whiteness in teacher education, and that antiracist praxis is difficult in an era of standards and accountability. We also know that there are critical masses of teacher educators (often of Color) carrying the emotional burden of doing antiracist work in what often feels like a silo. Departments of teacher education need to do better not only in supporting faculty individually and with professional development opportunities, but in the *freedom dreaming* Love (2019) suggests. At the individual level, the findings of this study provide empirically-based suggestions for teacher educators to engage preservice teachers in ways that are both humanizing and critical. They should also teach from the stance of freedom dreaming; preparing future educators to enter classrooms with strengths-based frameworks that help marginalized students thrive rather than just survive.

Future research on antiracist teacher preparation should also be rooted in humanization. Paris (2010) notes that this "requires that our inquiries involve dialogic consciousness-raising and the building of relationships of dignity and care for both researchers and participants" (p. 137). Just as relationships between teachers and students necessitate a dialogic process in which both parties engage in reflecting and becoming (Freire, 1970), so, too, must research point to how teacher educators can be more fully ourselves in order to engage in transformational and humanizing research and teaching.

Ultimately, the myriad barriers that participants identified as a challenge to implementing ARP (including student disengagement, a lack of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, and racist practices at the institutional level) all have one thing in common:

Whiteness. As Zack said, "These institutions weren't exactly established to wipe out White supremacy." Through the framework of CWS, we understand Whiteness as a social norm with innumerable unspoken privileges attached, and the data support this assertion. In addition to the ways Whiteness is perpetuated at structural levels in education writ large, we see also see it in the ways students tend to respond to antiracist pedagogical praxis (Matias, 2013b; Picower, 2012), and we see it in the way that some White faculty (such as Elaine) attempt to keep conversations about race "low threat" and "comfortably abstract." In the absence of a teacher preparation program's theoretical and historical grounding in critical race theories, it cannot hope to be social justice oriented.

While this might paint a bleak picture, we must remember that CWS also maintains that Whiteness can be broken down and deconstructed for the betterment of humanity. This deconstruction is exactly what these participants aim to do with their pedagogical praxis, showing that humanizing and critical approaches to teacher education are, indeed, already being enacted. In learning from exemplary social justice educators and doing the difficult work of constant critical self-reflection, we as fellow teacher educators can contribute to preparing teachers in more socially just and antiracist ways. We can move teacher education toward a more collective and critical humanization.

APPENDIX

Questions that describe what I want to know:

- What concrete practices do anti-racist professors enact with their preservice teachers?

- What difficulties do these professors encounter among white students who are asked to critically reflect on their racial identities?

- Do these professors feel supported by their departments to enact radical change in preparing antiracist preservice teachers?

Questions used in the interview:

- Tell me how you aim to go about teaching race and racism or social justice. Do you have a term for the type of pedagogy in which you engage?

- Tell me more about how you deal with these concepts (strategic ignorance, false empathy, etc.)

- What have been especially significant experiences that influenced how you teach?

- Could you tell me about your experience with anti-racist teaching?

- What concrete practices do you think are the most effective for anti-racist teaching? What makes certain practices powerful?

- What is most challenging about anti-racist teaching as a professor? (teacher evaluations, departmental pressures, publication, etc.)

- What experiences have you had that led you to pursue your research?

- Is there anything else you'd like to share?

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ARTICLE TWO -- "I FEEL THIS ENORMOUS WEIGHT": TENSIONS OF ANTIRACIST PRAXIS FOR A WHITE FEMALE TEACHER EDUCATOR

You must understand that in the attempt to correct so many generations of bad faith and cruelty, when it is operating not only in the classroom but in society, you will meet the most fantastic, the most brutal, and the most determined resistance. - James Baldwin (1963)

Do we want a humanizing society? Then how do we practice that? For educators, our job is to teach even the most detestable racist bc we believe humanizing education can transform a mind. As social justice advocates we want systemic change beyond simple call outs, shame tactics, and individualized punitive measures. As humanists, we want to embody what we so seek, not engage in what we abhor. If that is what we stand for then embody it. Listen, learn, teach with vigilance, patience, and above all love. - Cheryl Matias (2018)

Introduction

The students were sitting in rows, facing the front of the room as I sat comfortably cross-legged in a chair in front of them. As we approached the end of the semester, I was struck by how differently they used terms like "objective" and "subjective" in critical discussions and assignments. It seemed like it was something worthy of exploring as we wrapped up the semester. We had watched the film 13th a month prior, and several students had turned in reflections elaborating on their perceptions of its objectivity. The image of my Google slide was projected behind me, displaying anonymized responses to the question of the film's objectivity: "Decently objective...mostly from the point of view of peoples of color/people hurt by these systems"; "This film is objective in that everything they talked about they backed up with facts"; "They only interviewed a certain kind of person. It creates a bias by not sharing the whole story. It also talked about police in a negative light." After a class discussion on different ways of viewing objectivity and subjectivity (including questioning the idea that objectivity even exists), I paused to wonder aloud what, exactly, could be considered subjective about the murder of Eric Garner (one example of many that we'd discussed). I began, "Eric Garner was a Black man who was outside of a convenience store selling cigarettes. It is an objective fact that he didn't have a weapon. It is an objective fact that he said 'Why are you guys always hassling me? I didn't do anything wrong.' It is an objective fact that a police officer put him in a headlock, and multiple men held him down. It is an objective fact that he said, 'I can't breathe' 11 times. What's

subjective about that? I'm trying to grapple with this too...I can understand the hesitance to paint an entire group of people in one particular light. Especially when it comes to police officers, because my dad was a cop, and my mom was a cop. And they were both in the military-- that's where they met. So I have a lot of respect for law enforcement. At the same time, you can have a huge amount of respect and admiration for people, and understand that there are still systems in place--there are structures in place--that allow power to go unchecked. And when that happens, that's an issue. And so with issues like police brutality, you have Black men, women, and trans folks being disproportionately killed. And that doesn't mean that all police are part of that problem; it means they are part of a system that's perpetuating these inequities." -- Recording of class session, April 17th, 2019

This is one scene from the Spring semester of 2019, when I taught a course on human diversity, power, and opportunity in social institutions. Similar to the demographics of the large Midwestern university (and those of teacher preparation programs writ large), the class was predominantly White and female-identified. My plan that semester was to collect data to conduct an autoethnographic case study of my teaching in order to write this article. The first article of my dissertation, informed by the practices identified by student-nominated exemplary teacher educators, theorized antiracist praxis as being comprised of four primary moves: model vulnerability, shift agency to students, build community, and pose questions. I attempted to embody all of these practices with the goal of further reflecting upon them and of examining the tensions I found--including the ways that I still performed Whiteness[4] even as I attempted to subvert it. It felt, as I described in one of my researcher memos, like "an enormous weight on my shoulders." This paper is an exploration of two primary research questions: *(1) What is it like to*

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[4] My understanding and use of Whiteness aligns with Matias and Zembylas (2014), who note that, "If blackness is a social construction that embraces Black culture, language, experiences, identities, and epistemologies, then whiteness is a social construction that embraces white culture, ideology, racialization, expressions, and experiences, epistemology, emotions, and behaviors. Unlike blackness, *whiteness is normalized because White supremacy elevates Whites and whiteness to the apex of the racial hierarchy* [emphasis added]" (p. 290).

attempt antiracist praxis as a White female teacher educator?; and (2) What tensions arise when reflecting upon these findings? This article will begin by addressing my positionality; as a White woman conducting autoethnographic study, I ground my work by first acknowledging the ways that my social positioning impacts every aspect of my research and subsequent interpretation of it. I will then explore the affordances of autoethnography, its use thus far in the field of teacher education, and the theoretical underpinnings of Critical Whiteness Studies. Literature will be incorporated throughout my findings, which are presented in the form of two fictionalized vignettes to illustrate the primary tensions I encountered during this study. After each vignette, I will address my own Whiteness and the larger questions that come out of the analysis. Finally, I will offer implications for the field of Teacher Education and possibilities for future research.

Researcher Positionality

I am a White female teacher educator. Although those are not the only aspects of my identity that I critically examine on a regular basis, they are the two through which I best make sense of who I am both personally and professionally. I grew up in a predominantly White suburban city where the houses looked fairly similar. As Painter (2010) notes, "Sameness marked the suburban theme" (p. 367). My mom always told us that we moved there because it had "the best school district." Looking back, I see this "best school district" equated directly to higher socioeconomic status and thus Whiteness. Hannah-Jones (2020) notes, "For white kids, we clear the hurdles; for low-income kids, we expect them to jump over every hurdle" (n.p.). Race is something we did not talk about much, and that was relatively easy since our city was about 90% White. I was aware of it, but it was never something I had to confront. I was not cognizant of the subliminal messages about racial relations, racial presence, and racial existence. I was not aware of just how much privilege I had simply because of the color of my skin.

Concepts like White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) and White rage (Anderson, 2016) were unknown to me, and I thought that a "racist" was someone who held prejudiced beliefs based on the color of someone's skin. I would not say that I used the framing of minimizing racism in that stage of my life (Bonilla-Silva, 2017); rather, I tended to embrace color-evasive discourse that helped me feel I was not part of the problem.

About a month into my PhD program, I had a gut-wrenching, visceral experience with my own White fragility that caused me to do some serious soul-searching. After being called out in front of my cohort-mates for asking a microaggressive question, I began to think about the reactions of White people (including myself) when we are confronted with notions like White privilege, racism (personal or institutional), or police brutality. We often become defensive and even offended. I wanted to learn more. As I worked through these feelings, I found it was necessary to lean into the discomfort rather than away from it. This is to say that, rather than feeling threatened and dismissing it by blaming someone else for the way I was feeling, I took a step back to examine my own positionality (e.g., what my racial identity affords me at the expense of others) critically and how it could be contributing to the way I felt. I learned through examining this initial resistance that, as Tatum (1992) describes, "Many students, particularly White students, initially deny any personal prejudice, recognizing the impact of racism on other people's lives, but failing to acknowledge its impact on their own" (p. 203). Since then, I have dedicated my research to subverting Whiteness and White supremacy in every aspect of my life, personal and professional. It has directed my scholarship, my pedagogical choices, and the service activities in which I choose to engage.

All of this considered, I enter my work in agreement with Helms' (1990) description of how to develop a positive White racial identity through intentionally abandoning racism and

developing what she terms a non-racist White identity. To achieve this, Helms notes, "he or she must accept his or her own Whiteness, the cultural implications of being White, and define a view of Self as a racial being that does not depend on the perceived superiority of one racial group over another" (p. 49). I understand that as a White female, I have been "raced" as part of a system that has afforded me systematic advantages, dominant cultural practices that are often unnamed, and a certain lens through which I view the world and by which my world is shaped (Frankenberg, 2001). I also acknowledge that, even as I write this manuscript to call out and shift my performances of Whiteness, it is inevitable that Whiteness will also be present in my writing; in what I do and do not include in vignettes, the ways that I frame my analyses, and other things of which I am not even presently aware. I hope to continue to grow in this knowledge and a constant dedication to self-reflection in my research and teaching praxis.[5]

Conceptual Framing

This work is conceptually grounded in Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and autoethnographic accounts of race, racism, and Whiteness in teacher education. By foregrounding these concepts, I am afforded critical lenses through which to examine my own praxis and to understand the sociopolitical context in which I teach. Furthermore, I position my work both within and as a departure from current autoethnographic accounts of race and Whiteness in the teacher education classroom.

CWS, like Critical Race Theory (CRT), focuses on the functionality of race. Specifically, it allows us to focus more directly on the role of Whiteness in examining matters of racial inequality. Nayak (2007) specifies that CWS as a field is underpinned by three primary

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[5] I am intentional to use the term *praxis* in my writing, which Freire (1970) describes as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 36). Unlike the term *practice*, which can be understood in many different ways depending on context, *praxis* concretely suggests that teacher educators make pedagogical choices in reflective ways and with the intention of transforming the world around them.

beliefs/tenets: "Whiteness is a modern invention...it has changed over time and place; Whiteness is a social norm and has become chained to an index of unspoken privileges; the bonds of whiteness can yet be broken/deconstructed for the betterment of humanity" (p. 738). For these reasons and the fluidity with which Whiteness has been constructed and deconstructed over the years, CWS seeks to deconstruct Whiteness in an effort to understand how its historical and modern-day interpretations have operated in society.

Undergirding CWS (as well as CRT) is the fundamental belief that race is a social rather than biological construct. That is, it was created by certain people (who deemed themselves as White) in order to separate themselves from other people (primarily Native and Black). The construction of this identity, Roediger (2007) notes, occurred through otherness because the "status and privileges conferred by race could be used to make up for alienating and exploitative class relationships" (p. 13). Race, and thus Whiteness, has also been constructed differently across time and between social classes (see Fields, 1982; Roediger, 2007; Roediger, 2018). But regardless of sociohistorical shifts, Whiteness has always been positioned as the status quo, ubiquitously maintaining and reasserting dominance in every aspect of the educational system (Sleeter, 2001; Picower, 2009; Leonardo, 2009; Matias, 2013a; Matias, 2013b).

My work thus aligns with Stovall and Watkins (2005), who argue that educators must develop praxis to counter Whiteness in education. It is with this understanding that I approach antiracist praxis--understanding that, despite my best efforts, I have been *raced* by a history and society that normalizes racism and White supremacy. The purpose of grounding this study in CWS is to provide a lens through which I can critically examine my pedagogical choices while understanding that, as a raced being, those choices will invariably reflect my participation in a system that perpetuates Whiteness. But it is through acknowledging this and committing to

continuous reflection that I can hope to subvert the system from which I and other White people benefit.

Autoethnographies in Teacher Education

Autoethnography is a relatively new methodology in the field of education broadly and teacher education more specifically. In reviewing the literature, I notice two primary things: (1) most teacher autoethnographies are from practicing K-12 teachers and do not incorporate a race-based framework; and (2) the three teacher educator autoethnographies that discuss race are written by scholars of Color. In other words, I have not found a single White teacher educator autoethnography grounded in a race-based theory--reflecting yet again the overwhelming Whiteness of teacher education (Sleeter, 2017). There are, however, a couple of sources in which teacher educators use autoethnography as a method with White pre-service and in-service teachers. Though this context is different, reviewing the findings proved beneficial when using this method for my own autoethnography.

Pennington (2007), for example, employed autoethnographic pedagogy with White pre-service teachers as a "place for our 'dysconscious racism' to be unraveled and brought to the surface" (p. 102). She implicated herself and her own experiences as a fellow White woman in order to invite discussions about race. Though she acknowledged that "bringing up the topic of my own Whiteness in an academic setting felt impolite, unprofessional and improper," and that doing so might have simply encouraged students to follow her lead, participants still showed a significant shift in their understanding of privilege and the implications of Whiteness. They reflected that they no longer considered themselves "saviors," that their previous views toward communities of Color had been condescending and misinformed, and that the privileges they were born into as White women had nothing to do with how hard they worked or what they

"deserved." Using CRT as a framework, the author concludes that "we must engage PSTs in critiquing and understanding their own culture as it relates to the Other as we model the same" (p. 110). This is, perhaps, the most helpful piece I take away: that modeling our own critical self-reflection as White teacher educators might invite White pre-service teachers to do the same. This aligns with Matias and Liou (2015), who argue that White teachers wanting to do critical race work must start with themselves.

Pennington and Brock (2012) also used autoethnographic pedagogy as a tool to help White in-service teachers examine their enactments of race in the classroom. With twenty teachers and a summer-long course, the authors sought to create a professional learning community in which their White participants could work through issues of privilege and positionality with one another--a community they termed "supportive yet critical" (p. 246). Using critical autoethnographic self-study, participants generated data over the course of three months that included personal reflections, fieldnotes from classes, and reading notes. Participants all shared their reflections at the end of the semester; most identified troubling patterns they noticed about their own practice. Victoria, for example, shared with the class that her good intentions had not necessarily aligned with impact, and that racism can manifest in very covert yet concrete ways--that "almost any white teacher would say they celebrate diversity, yet don't truly understand what that means" (p. 241). Another participant, Hayden, shared that her native-Spanish speaking students' language and culture were silenced and viewed almost entirely through deficit perspectives in their school. Overall, the findings reveal that critical autoethnography was a useful tool for teachers to use critical race perspectives to critique their own White identities and to challenge their pedagogical choices. Finally, the authors note that

participants showed evidence of advancing at least one to three steps in Helms' (1990) stages of White racial identity formation.

The autoethnographic teacher educator studies by scholars of Color discuss how a teacher educator's race impacts the classroom. Alexander (1999) speaks to the difficulties of being a Black male teacher educator who also works in academia. The cultural communities to which he belongs--Black men as the primary group, and the academic community as the secondary--present unique tensions when navigating this dual-membership. While being a Black man gives him an "in" in particular spaces (e.g., with other Black male teachers, Black male students, and his Black male participants), conducting ethnographic work as a researcher forces him to also consider himself an "outsider."

Rodriguez (2009) also uses CRT and autoethnography to examine her experiences as a Latina professor "othered" by White students through their resistance. She concludes by saying that White students, most often unable to identify with marginalized communities, likely do not see her as a "normal" (i.e., White) professor and thus do not treat her as a legitimate member of the academy. In addition to students' constant retreats to Whiteness (e.g., "I am really tired of being blamed as a White male"; "Are you sure those statistics are accurate?"), they also mistake her attempt to be "approachable" as weakness (as demonstrated by survey comments ridiculing her efforts to be vulnerable with them). This sentiment is echoed by Matias (2013b), who painfully recounts the ways she is traumatized daily by her White students as a woman of Color as she attempts to be vulnerable and truthful about her lived experiences with racism.

Finally, and most recently, Ohito (2019) concludes that Whiteness is the bedrock upon which White teacher bodies continue to exacerbate racial pain upon people of Color. Employing narrative inquiry alongside autoethnography, she uses artful storytelling to suggest that

disembodied pedagogy (which assumes *race* and *racism* are things abstractly existing "out there") precludes White pre-service teachers from overcoming a harmful mind/body dichotomy. In other words, when White pre-service teachers fail to acknowledge that race and racism have real, material consequences for the bodies of people of Color, they are unable to understand the impact their words and actions have as White people. She proposes "embodied pedagogy" in which teaching and learning are understood through the implications of whose bodies are in the room, meaning that students are guided through an understanding of how different bodies are impacted by race and racism.

My autoethnographic work operates from an understanding of how my body impacts what happens in my classroom. Building upon the aforementioned studies through using a race-based theoretical approach, I understand all of my generated data and subsequent analysis to be intimately connected to the lens through which I view the world as a White woman. Coia and Taylor (2009) astutely argue that,

> To be a teacher educator ... has a specific cultural meaning. People react to us, and we respond based on this cultural understanding of what it means to be a teacher educator … There are multiple meanings and we have room within these meanings to change them, but they are there and they are constraining. (p. 8)

Although this work was written over a decade ago, it remains true today. The U.S. cultural view of "teacher" has long been White, female, and subservient (see Goldstein, 2014), meaning that teachers who deviate from this view, and most particularly women of Color, are often met with microaggressions and even threats of bodily harm (see Matias 2013b for a particularly visceral account). It is for these reasons that autoethnographic work amongst White female teacher educators is necessary if the field hopes to address the ubiquitous and pervasive impacts of Whiteness. Coia and Taylor (2009) add that, in addition to understanding that "our identities as teacher educators are socially constructed," we as teacher educators must understand that

students react to our practice--positioning autoethnographic work as an iterative process of both being and becoming (p. 8).

Overall, teacher educator autoethnographies are relatively scarce. As I have been unable to find any autoethnographies by White teacher educators using race-based theory, this study fills an important gap in the field. Through attempting to better understand and problematize my own practice, I hope to be able to (1) improve that practice, and (2) encourage other White teacher educators to do the same through conducting similar research.

Methodology

Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) describe autoethnography as "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)" (p. 273, emphasis added). It has been described as both process and product, as conducting this kind of study requires careful planning in the generation of data and methodical analyses of those data upon completing the study. Autoethnography can have powerful implications for preparing teachers and teacher educators (Starr, 2010). When used as a methodology, it draws on Freire's (1970) *conscientization* through the interrogation of one's own identity and social positioning. When teachers have this level of awareness, they are better prepared to help students become "thoughtful, caring and reflective in a multicultural world society" (Banks, 2001, p. 5). Some scholars feel that this methodology is self-indulgent and has little place in the scholarly genre. However, autoethnography is more than telling a story. Chang (2016) speaks to the rigor of strategically planned autoethnographic work, expressing the importance of carefully designed research, critical engagement of self, and process-oriented questions.

The most important reason I choose the approach of autoethnography is that it can be used as a tool for positive social change (Chang, 2016), bridging the "tensions between personal/social, theoretical/practical, and the self/other in order to inform theory and highlight the lived experience and the struggles within it" (Starr, 2010, p. 2). Sparkes (2002) would agree, noting that its capacity for enacting social change and meaningful dialogue are incredibly valuable and understated. Sparkes (2002) goes on to say that "this kind of writing can inform, awaken, and disturb readers by illustrating their involvement in social processes about which they might not have been consciously aware" (p. 221). Autoethnography is a way to "allow readers to feel moral dilemmas, [to] think with our story instead of about it" (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 735). For qualitative work to be considered autoethnographic rather than self-study or narrative, Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2009) argue that it requires an easily identifiable cultural component and a variety of research strategies. The decision to ground this study in Critical Whiteness Studies offers this cultural component, recognizing the "I" as a racial being shaped by cultural context and complex identity formation. Thus, I will use autoethnography as a means of elicitation for changing my own practice with pre-service teachers for the future. Finally, Bhattacharya (2020) notes,

> Autoethnography, for me, is one of the hardest kind of qualitative research that I do. It takes maturity, vulnerability, perspective taking, creative writing skills, and understanding the cultural landscape within which the narratives are juxtaposed, without poking the reader in the eye announcing every damn theoretical, methodological, or aesthetic move one is making. It is no joke. (n.p.)

Data Generation and Analysis

I conceptualize antiracist pedagogy as the embodiment of four concrete practices, as theorized in my previous article: model vulnerability, shift agency to students, build community, and pose questions. Through exploring my data, I answer two questions: (1) *What is it like to*

attempt antiracist praxis as a White female teacher educator?; and (2) *What tensions arise when reflecting upon these findings?* My data sources include researcher memos collected throughout the semester (written memos ranging from 1-3 single-spaced typed pages, and audio memos ranging from 10-15 minutes in length, for a total of 17 entries), video from a classroom session (which I reviewed with a multi-racial critical friends group[6]), and anonymous midterm survey results completed by 17 of my 24 students. My memos were written reflecting on the events that transpired in a particular class period, questions that came up for me, and tensions I was grappling with regarding student comments and my own pedagogical choices. My critical friends group also reviewed my writing at varying stages to help me identify additional ways I had displayed Whiteness.

Analysis of Memos

I analyzed these memos in several steps. First, I read through the entirety of them (including typed transcriptions of my audio-recorded memos) in order to get a sense of how my thinking evolved over the semester--all while making notes in the margins about things that stuck out to me. Next, I used open coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) line-by-line to identify primary themes and patterns that emerged. I then used focused coding to get to finer-grain codes and patterns based on the preliminary open coding (see Table 2 for one example).

Table 2

Example of selective code and associated subcategory with researcher memo excerpts.

Primary Code	Example Memos Excerpts and Associated Subcategories

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[6] My critical friends group is comprised of four colleagues who are either PhD candidates or PhDs, and who are all either familiar with or personally use race-based theory in their work.

Table 2 (cont'd)

Questioning my pedagogical moves	**Subcategory: How to reconcile looking at the humanity of White supremacists with *not* making space for their views** "I think that I almost certainly have students in my classroom who identify with opinions and viewpoints that I do not, and that go against the most important lessons of this class. However, my choice to raise those opinions when others do not feel comfortable doing so is my way of validating perspectives that are not my own. I feel that it's a disservice to profession, and, more importantly, to all of my students, not to validate that those who hold vastly different opinions are still human beings that we need to attempt to understand. Note: I would NOT validate anything related to White supremacy. What I do validate in those instances, or try to get across to my students, is that those views come out of intense fear and insecurity. By trying to understand that much … I do not make space for their views to exist; I make space to understand why illogical hate comes to fruition in those ways." (Researcher memo, March 14th, 2019) **Subcategory: How to push White students the "right amount"** "This student's comments are always interesting to me. I try really hard to listen and validate everything he says, as I do with all my other students. Some days it's easier than others, especially when everything that comes out of his mouth sounds like a liberal narrative of, 'We should all just love each other and everything would be fine!'" (Researcher memo, April 6th, 2019--speaking about a White male student)

As I processed this large amount of new information, I concurrently wrote theoretical memos to focus on how the patterns I identify developed, and how those integrated with both my theoretical framework and literature about Whiteness. I take the same stance as Emerson et al. (2011) that data analysis is both inductive and deductive at the same time; as I record researcher memos, code them, and attempt to derive themes and patterns--similar to someone "who is simultaneously creating and solving a puzzle" (p. 144). To help push my thinking visually, I created several giant post-its and placed them around my home office. These detailed several

aspects of my memos, including the "feeling" words and phrases used, overarching questions that arose, the beliefs represented by my praxis alongside their tensions, and areas where I saw myself displaying Whiteness.

Analysis of Classroom Video

This data was generated over the course of two class sessions. I watched the video footage several times; first to notice and annotate things I found interesting, and then to focus on one particular incident. I analyzed this incident as it connected to the literature and theory of this article. I also reviewed the footage with my critical friends group in order to more concretely identify characteristics of my praxis, and instances of my own Whiteness that I might have missed on my own.

Analysis of Midterm Feedback

This data was generated via email invitation during a two-week period spanning from Monday, February 25 through Monday, March 11, 2019. I sent an invitation reminder for the survey three times throughout that period, with reminders in class as well. The anonymous Google survey (see Appendix A) was optional for students, and contained various questions to gauge what they felt had gone well in the course and what could go better. The questions were designed to elicit student opinions related to the core practices I attempted to embody based on the findings of my first article: if they felt their voice was valued, if they felt comfortable making themselves vulnerable in the classroom space, if I made myself vulnerable, etc. While reviewing the responses, I wrote memos about how it felt to process them, and then wrote roughly one paragraph for each survey question reflecting upon how their responses illuminated parts of my pedagogical praxis.

Findings

To answer my research questions, findings are summarized in Table 3, where I highlight the personal beliefs I hold about teaching alongside the tensions illuminated through examining my data. For the purposes of this manuscript, I am focusing on two primary tensions that are especially related to issues of Whiteness (delineated with italics in the table).

Table 3

Personal Beliefs Demonstrated in Praxis Alongside their Tensions

Personal Belief	Tension Illuminated	Overarching Question(s)
We (students and I) should unpack alternative viewpoints.	Some alternative viewpoints are harmful.	How can teacher educators raise alternative viewpoints without causing harm?
Building community is a necessary part of creating an open and courageous classroom space.	Not everyone is comfortable sharing in the same way, which is something I cannot (and should not try to) control.	What are the best ways to engage students to help them feel comfortable contributing to class?
Teacher educators should model vulnerability, for example: implicating ourselves in larger systems of oppression, sharing details about our lives, etc.	It can be hard to gauge what kinds of vulnerability are appropriate and when to share. Vulnerability is not as accessible for everyone.	What are the affordances and constraints of vulnerability for me?
We (students and I) should humanize all people.	*Oppressors and racists are humans, too.*	*What might it look like to humanize oppressors while not validating their actions--if that is, indeed, possible? Are recognizing as human and humanizing the same thing*

Table 3 (cont'd)

It is important to "call in" White students with a spirit of generosity and to be patient with their racial identity formation process.	*We cannot be too patient. We must also call attention to problematic statements and ways of thought.*	*What right do I have to judge a White student whose thinking is where mine used to be?*
		What should teacher educators do with White students who want to be teachers, but constantly default to the liberal notion of incremental gains?

The presentation of these findings will be different from a typical empirical journal article structure. I use fictionalized vignettes, which include the composite of my personal researcher memos, student work, and the events I experienced throughout the semester. Fictionalized vignettes provide a unique way to interact with and analyze data, allowing imagination to illuminate a range of tensions that reflects the range of the possible (see Sondel, Baggett, & Dunn, 2018; Cross, 2017). Caine et al. (2017) note that fictionalization "can be understood as analysis in another manner, creating another layer to deepen awareness…[it provides] a way for researchers … to understand their experiences in new ways, in different contexts" (pp. 217-218). This imaginative act, for me, reflects an intentionality in exploring a range of very real occurrences that happen in teacher education classrooms (and P-12 classrooms) every day. I chose to use fictionalization in order to provide rich, vivid detail grounded in my experiences teaching this course. These vignettes are still very much real; they are simply a composite of several events combined into one.

Below, I offer each vignette followed by my analysis of the aspects of Whiteness that are present in the incident. I then offer points of discussion that the incident prompted me to consider. These discussion points illuminate the tensions between my personal and pedagogical beliefs and the overarching questions reflected in the table above.

Vignette #1: "They're still human"

It feels tense and stagnant in this small, cold room with little natural sunlight. I'm seated in front of the room, gazing out at the neatly organized rows of hard, plastic desks and the students occupying them. It strikes me that this arrangement and desk style make collaborative work more difficult; physically arranging in small groups for discussion causes sharp screeches on the floor, not to mention awkwardly pointing the desks toward each other for some semblance of cohesion. I know today's topic will elicit strong feelings from students. We just finished watching clips of the documentary White Right: Meeting the Enemy, which follows journalist Deeyah Khan as she interviews members of White nationalist/supremacist organizations in an attempt to understand the roots of their hate. After doing a BBC interview where she spoke to the importance of a multicultural society in her hometown in the UK, she was met with death threats, insults, and an unspeakable range of other violent responses. She decided she wanted to understand the root of this rage, and embarked on what can only be described as a truly dangerous and vulnerable endeavor: to understand the very people who threatened her bodily harm online. Upon finishing the film clips, the tension is palpable; students shift uncomfortably in their seats and avoid looking at me or at one another. 'Not surprising--they don't want to talk about White supremacy,' I think to myself. I know they don't want to say something that might offend someone in the room, so most remain quiet when I ask, "Which perspectives are centered in this film?" I hold my breath, anxious about who might respond and where I might need to jump in to facilitate. I feel relieved when a Black woman raises her hand: "The White folks in these groups. She has to delve deep into that type of community and environment to shed light on why they think the way they do. To share how people changed through exposure to her humanity. These are still humans even though they do outrageous things that most people don't agree

with." Many students nod in agreement with her. Another student (a White male) adds, "Yeah,

once they're actually faced with a live person in front of them, they don't act so tough. They

seem embarrassed about their behavior." As Deeyah finds in her interviews, these White

supremacists are humans who are often suffering an extraordinary amount of pain. The leader

of the National Socialist Movement even brought Deeyah to their top recruiting ground: the most

abandoned and downtrodden areas of Detroit. As it becomes increasingly apparent that these

White nationalists seek connection and acceptance, the driving force behind their hatred

becomes--dare I say it?--strangely human. I start thinking about Freire and the concept of

humanizing pedagogy. Certainly it is important to understand that we are all human, and I am a

strong proponent of humanizing praxis. But are there limits to who we humanize? Is humanizing

the same as recognizing one as human? For certainly we can all acknowledge that those who

commit atrocities are, indeed, humans. But what does it mean to make space in a classroom to

explore that idea?

Whiteness Present

While any single class period in this course would be fraught with examples of Whiteness

from students, the purpose of autoethnographic study is for the researcher to understand their

place and participation within a cultural context. My analysis will therefore focus on the

Whiteness embedded in my own actions and thoughts; I focus on two instances below.

Film Choice

It is worth exploring my choice to show parts of this film in class. I, a White instructor,

chose to show clips of a film that I knew had racist, homophobic, and anti-Semitic rhetoric.

While I did this with important caveats (e.g., telling students ahead of time and letting them

know they could leave at any point--none did), power dynamics are at play. This is to say that,

ultimately, the decision of which films to show rests on my shoulders, and that students likely would not want to disappoint me or have me think less of them for leaving. In other words, even with my warning, it is likely that some students stayed even if they felt triggered or unsafe. I showed *White Right: Meeting the Enemy* as part of a Critical Media Literacy course component-- one of eight documentaries we discussed throughout the semester. The days we talked about the documentaries always followed the same process. Early on in the semester, students reviewed trailers and signed up for a total of three films for which they would serve as the reviewers. On the Critical Media days, the students assigned to that particular day's film would arrive to class having watched and answered some questions about it (e.g., Whose perspectives are centered, who they feel the intended audience is, etc.). We would start class by watching and analyzing one clip together, and then small groups would watch 3-4 clips each and comment on them in a collaborative Google document, noting how the content related to other course themes and ideas. Afterwards, the students assigned to that day's film participated in a fishbowl conversation. While listening, the rest of the class would continue to work in a collaborative Google doc, nuancing and elaborating on the film's themes.

This was my second time teaching the course, and I made Critical Media Literacy a course component as part of a collaboration with a more experienced (and also White) doctoral instructor of the course. In an effort to honor her knowledge and experience, I followed her lead on selecting these films without first considering their potential impact. Showing even one clip of the level of racism this film contains makes space for it in my classroom, and that was a mistake. It was a careless choice--one that reflects the privilege I hold as a White teacher educator--that I would not make again. It certainly reflects, as CWS scholars would note, my investment in the normality of hegemonic Whiteness, because I deflected my role and privilege

in this classroom dynamic (see Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014). I thought that by giving students the option to leave if they felt triggered and/or disturbed, I exonerated myself from the responsibility of potentially causing harm. But that is not the case. Not only did showing this film make space for those views to be spoken aloud; it also had tremendous potential to hurt my students of Color in the room. The differentiation between intention and impact is one that is discussed frequently in the field of teacher education, specifically as it pertains to White responses to conversations about race (see Matias, 2013; Flynn, 2019). Although my intentions were to provide a challenging learning space to unpack Whiteness, the impact very well could have done the opposite. In other words, the good intentions of White teacher educators are not enough--especially while teaching at a PWI where students of Color experience micro- and macro-aggressions every day. They should not be subjected to White supremacists' rhetoric at all, let alone in a film that is (a) assigned by a White teacher and (b) watched amongst their majority White classmates. Since reflecting upon this finding, I have reached out to the other doctoral instructor to begin a dialogue about how we might be more careful in the future with assigning potentially harmful materials.

Feeling of Relief

I remember very vividly a feeling of relief when a Black woman raised her hand to answer the question, *Whose perspectives are centered in the film?* This troubles me and raises a critical question: why did I feel relieved? I realize that I am responsible to "call in" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) White students (and all students) who make problematic comments in class. My ability to do this hinges on both my knowledge of Whiteness and my confidence to lead and facilitate challenging conversations as an instructor. I realize now that the most likely explanation for this question is, quite simply, that I was relieved a White student did not say

something that would cause harm; I would have been comfortable intervening, but I would rather the harm not happen. Moreover, since this was a majority White class, I was glad that the line of inquiry was directed by a student of Color. In this particular moment, I may not have been relying on a student of Color to educate my White students, but I feel certain that I have made that mistake before. This moment reminds me how important it is for we White teacher educators to be mindful of not only whose voices we center while teaching, but also of the way that so much of educating White people is a burden placed on people of Color (Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, & Galindo, 2014).

The relief I felt was also accompanied by surprise--surprise that a Black woman, who had spoken openly in class about her family's personal experience with police brutality, noted the *humanity* of White supremacists. Something made me expect that the people of Color in the room would not be empathetic to White supremacists, regardless of their lived experiences--and that something is my own Whiteness. Of course, it would be understandable for any student (especially of Color, since much of the hateful rhetoric is directed toward those communities) to be disturbed and angered by the content of the film. But why would I doubt someone's ability to acknowledge another human being as human? My surprise at this student's comment is reflective of two concrete things: my own dehumanization by having lived and grown in an oppressive societal structure; and the ways that I perpetuate the dehumanization of my students of Color by expecting a different reaction from them than I would from my White students. Even in my efforts to be antiracist and humanizing in my pedagogical choices, I fall short in myriad ways.

(De)humanization and Humanity

When initially analyzing this finding and thinking through this vignette, the resounding question on my mind was: *Is it possible to humanize oppressors without condoning their*

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behavior? Should we/I be doing that? By recalling the details of the troubled upbringing of a White supremacist in order to recognize them as human, are we teachers implicitly saying that their behavior is understandable? Or worse yet--that it's excusable?

My challenge with answering these questions is one of the key tensions I found while conducting this autoethnography. I explore here three points, calling largely on the work of Freire and Baldwin, as a means of analyzing this tension and my own complicity with Whiteness as a person and a professional: (1) we as White people have dehumanized ourselves through inherent subscription to the institution of Whiteness; (2) we have done so out of an intense fear of losing identity and a sense of belonging; (3) finally, to deal with our own dehumanization and thus stop being complicit in the institution of Whiteness and consequently White supremacy, we must engage in humanizing praxis at individual and structural levels. To my initial question (*Is it possible to humanize oppressors without condoning their behavior?*), I now see that the terms *human* (the term my student used in her response) and *humanize* are not interchangeable. To acknowledge as human is not to humanize; while the latter requires reciprocal respect and care with the intention of transforming, the former is not active. Conclusively, then, we (White teacher educators) *must* discuss the self-imposed dehumanization of White supremacists and unpack the ways that we as White people all remain complicit.

(De)humanization through (De)humanizing Others

As noted in the theoretical framing, CWS maintains that Whiteness (and thus race) is a modern invention created with the intention of keeping White people in power. This is important to understand when exploring Freire (1970), who argues first and foremost that all humans possess the drive to both affirm ourselves and be affirmed as human beings. An imperative piece to becoming more human is the ability to name the world around us, thereby creating it as we

move throughout it. Our modern world, Baldwin (2012) would say, has been created by White people: "The idea of white supremacy rests simply on the fact that white men are the creators of civilization (the present civilization, which is the only one that matters; all previous civilizations are simply contributions to our own) and are therefore civilization's guardians and defenders" (n.p.). This alludes to the behaviors displayed by the White supremacists in the film; feeling their "culture" is "under attack," they feel the need to defend it. But what they ultimately do instead is engage in a violent dehumanization process (see Lankshear & McLaren, 2002), by which they disallow people of Color from pursuing any sort of self-affirmation.

But the oppressed are not the only group that is dehumanized. The creation of a "White" race (see Roediger, 2007) was, quite literally, the first step of many that we (White people) took in dehumanizing ourselves by putting distance between "us" and "them." Baldwin famously discussed how the racial problem in the U.S. is rooted in White people's inability to see ourselves reflected in Black people. In an essay to his nephew James, Baldwin (1993) writes, "Please try to remember that what they believe, as well as what they do and cause you to endure, does not testify to your inferiority but to their inhumanity and fear" (p. 6). As my student noted, the White supremacists in the film have experienced extraordinary amounts of pain. They/we do not know what it means to be human, and that anything or act we do to separate ourselves from another human being is dehumanizing both that person and ourselves.

Freire (1970) notes that, "Dehumanization, which marks not only those whose humanity has been stolen, *but also (though in a different way) those who have stolen it,* is a distortion of the vocation of becoming more fully human … dehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed" (p. 28, emphasis added). This makes me

view Deeyah's questions to the White supremacists in her film in a different light. It appears as though these questions are designed to help *them* deal with *their* dehumanization through humanizing *her*. A question like, "Would you call me your enemy?" which Deeyah poses to White nationalist Jared Taylor, for example, forces a human-to-human reckoning that causes the respondent to actually think about the metaphysical space he places between himself and Deeyah. When he (and several other interviewees throughout the film) answers, "No," it is a powerful testament to the potential magnitude of a single humanizing interaction.

Identity Crises

When White supremacists took to the streets in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017, chanting, "You will not replace us!" and "Blood and soil!", they wanted to send a clear message: they believe that Whites in the U.S. are under attack. As Jared Taylor describes in the film, "What [multiculturalism is promoting] will lead to the disappearance of my people and my culture" (Khan, 2017). The "people" to whom Taylor alludes, no doubt, are those socially positioned as White. Because "people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (Baldwin, 2012, n.p.), the apparent nostalgia felt by modern-day White supremacists is rooted in a time when the distinction between "White" and "Black" was much more recently formulated. This existential fear, Baldwin (1993) maintains, is so deeply embedded because "it so profoundly attacks one's sense of one's own reality" (p. 6). In other words, White supremacists and nationalists are afraid to embrace people of Color as equals because doing so would require them to completely reframe their worldview; to acknowledge the atrocities and genocide committed at the hands of their ancestors and to accept responsibility for them. This "invites their own destruction," Baldwin (2012) contends, and "anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster" (n.p.).

Of course, White supremacists and nationalists are not the only White people who benefit from ignoring this reality. All White people (myself included), through inherent subscription to the institution of Whiteness, also dehumanize ourselves while continuing to dehumanize people of Color. It is well-documented throughout decades of research that White students engage myriad defense moves and strategies to avoid coming face-to-face with the very personal implications of Whiteness (see Mueller, 2017; Matias, 2013b; Matias, 2016; Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016). As an example of this defensiveness, recall the visceral discomfort I noticed in the interaction described in this first vignette. My White students, confronted with the hateful rhetoric spoken by White people on behalf of all White people, likely felt ashamed. Many looked down at their desks, fidgeted with their fingers, avoided eye contact, and disengaged completely. Teacher Education, as an institution founded by and for White people (and men, specifically), is the most important place to address this feeling of shame and to learn how to be truly humanizing.

Humanizing Praxis

Even as we continue to see overt displays of racism and White supremacy--which we know are on the rise since the 2016 election (SPLC, 2018)--equally problematic are the more insidious and invisible displays. These days, Anderson (2016) explains, "White rage is not about visible violence … It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly … It's not the Klan. White rage doesn't have to wear sheets, burn crosses, or take to the streets" (p. 3). White rage now looks like a White student who claims that, "...Granted, in the past, people of color were not allowed the same opportunities as whites and those previous generations were not allowed to build assets based on the color of *their* skin and *that* is a racial inequality, but I do not feel this translates into a racial inequality today" (Mueller, 2017 p. 228). It looks like asking questions such as, "Do we

have to talk about race again?" (see Picower, 2012). The Teacher Education classroom is where Freire's (1970) *praxis* becomes absolutely imperative. Without it, Whiteness will continue to operate uninterrupted.

    Praxis is the combination of both critical reflection and action in an iterative, ever-evolving process. These two things taken together lead to the critical consciousness necessary for true humanization; alone, they do not work. We teacher educators need a more nuanced approach to talking about Whiteness and White supremacy; one that goes beyond the (still important) points of the invisible knapsack (McIntosh, 1988). Conversations around Whiteness in teacher education tend to be too superficial and rushed to truly unpack the implications of what it means to be dehumanized. For White teachers (and White teacher educators), this means that we can and should acknowledge that oppressors are both human and dehumanized. To be human is to be flawed, to make mistakes, and to course correct (hopefully). This is something I did not yet understand when attempting to facilitate a dialogue about *White Right*. Rather than allowing a couple of students to direct the conversation, I should have thoughtfully guided these future teachers through discussions about humanity and how we participate in our own dehumanization through inherent subscription to Whiteness.

    White teachers (and all White people), then, must deal with our own dehumanization if we have any hope of becoming more fully human ourselves; and especially in our endeavor to counteract the dehumanization of people of Color. This is consequently an effort to *understand* the *dehumanization* we White people have forced upon ourselves through oppressing other humans. Let's return to the student response: *She has to delve deep into that type of community and environment to shed light on why they think the way they do. To share how people changed through exposure to her humanity. These are still humans even though they do outrageous things*

that most people don't agree with. To acknowledge as human is not to humanize (in the Freirean sense); while the latter requires reciprocal respect and care with the intention of transforming, the former is not active. It necessitates no intention of transformational learning or understanding, no dialogic process, and no respect. I now wonder if my students and I were effectively collapsing seeing people as human with the act of humanizing them. In retrospect, this is a distinction I should have made and will make in the future.

A humanized, liberated and liberatory society as envisioned by Freire and Baldwin does not yet exist, which is something we need to teach the future teachers of the world. We are merely imagining what it might look like to live in such a society. In a 1962 *New Yorker* essay, Baldwin says, "White people in this country will have quite enough to do in learning how to love and accept themselves and each other, and when they have achieved this--which will not be tomorrow and may well be never--the Negro problem will no longer exist, for it will no longer be needed." Nearly 60 years later, this is a lesson we still have not learned. The responsibility of White teacher educators and all White people is to become conscious enough to actually do something about this problem--something that is not, at present, being done. This raises a paradox; once we become conscious enough to understand these issues, it becomes our responsibility to fight them. This, Baldwin (2008) says, is the only way that societies change.

In my memos, I asked myself: *But are there limits to who we humanize? Is humanizing the same as recognizing one as human? For certainly we can all acknowledge that those who commit atrocities are, indeed, humans. But what does it mean to make space in a classroom to explore that idea?* There are no limits to who we acknowledge as human, which is not the same as humanizing (in the Freirean sense to which I ascribe). Making space in a classroom to explore dehumanization (both self-inflicted for White people and forced upon people of Color) is an

absolute necessity--as I discussed in my first article, teacher preparation must be rooted in humanization.

Vignette #2: "What right do I have?"

Walking into the building of my high school, visitors are met with big screen TVs that boast student and district achievements. Their website is similar, lauding such accomplishments as three students receiving a perfect score on the ACT, another winning top honors in an essay contest, and another placing second in the nation for a statistics poster competition. Trophy cases are filled with the accolades of sports--predominantly men's--and photos of athletes. It's clear that this school values achievement by traditional standards (academics and sports), and they want everyone to know--that's why it is the first thing one sees upon entering. The music wing in the west corner of the building is home to lively and longstanding band and choir programs, but it is separate from the more "academic" parts of the building. Lockers line the hallways on both floors, making the walking paths appear sterile and dull. A police officer and the occasional teacher (always White, as there were no teachers of Color) roam the halls to make sure students aren't skipping class or spending too long in the bathroom. And classrooms are filled with almost 90% White students from predominantly middle-upper to upper class, many of whom are gifted cars on their 16th birthdays. These images are vivid in my memory even after over a decade since graduating from high school.

Nearly thirteen years later, I'm now teaching a diversity course to pre-service teachers at a university. The culminating assignment is a cultural autobiography in which students are required to choose two social identity markers (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender identity, socioeconomic status) and discuss their schooling experiences through the lens of those

identities. They must explicitly mention power and privilege, and identify whether their particular chosen identities are privileged or marginalized. I sit down at my desk to grade; prepared for a long grading session, but not as long as it took me to get through their first drafts. It's a little over a month later, so students have had plenty of time to review their feedback and get help if needed. I open Jake's final draft, eager to see the progress he's made. His first draft was fraught with problematic statements, such as, "Where I'm from, everyone is treated equally" and "One of my best friends on the soccer team is black.." Coming from a White student, I knew I had to interject and help him think through this: "I'm going to push back on you here. Do you believe that everyone is treated equally? Would you guess that your very few classmates of Color feel that way? I'd like you to think about the reasons why YOU feel that everyone is treated "equally" there." I arrive to the part of the essay where he addresses being White (one of the two lenses he had chosen), and read, "The White people where I'm from have a lot of privileges. I was fortunate to be able to use my privilege to buy soccer cleats for my black friend who could not afford them." You've got to be kidding me, *I think. I want to laugh, but I also want to throw something (I don't). In this class, we have talked about the insidiousness of Whiteness and racism in school curricula, the ways that White students most often grow up seeing themselves reflected in textbooks and authority figures, and the like. How could he have evolved so little in his thinking? I pause. I feel troubled, confused, and curious.* **I** *used to think racism "wasn't that bad" and that everyone at my high school was treated equally. When I read about Jake's experiences in his high school, I can close my eyes and picture exactly what he's talking about. I walked high school hallways very similar to his. I opened textbooks and didn't think for a moment about who was represented and who was not; after all, I always saw teachers and other authority figures who looked like me. I am humbled by how far I have come in my*

thinking, how far I have yet to go, and I wonder: What right do I have to judge this student, whose thinking is where mine used to be?

Whiteness Present

When reading Jake's paper, I almost immediately felt the need to distance myself from his thinking as a fellow White person. This reactive approach to engaging with the work of my White students is reminiscent of Matias' (2013a) description of the "nice White lady." Based on MADTV's "Nice White Lady" parody, Matias describes these teachers as women trained in urban teaching yet unaware of the impact of their own Whiteness. It is important for those of us White educators who do antiracist work to humble ourselves about our journeys; to remember where we started, and that no matter how hard and long we work to subvert Whiteness (and our implicit benefit from it), we will always be a part of the problem. Yancy (2015) pleads with White U.S. Americans to be mindful of how we operate within the institution of Whiteness regardless of how much we wish it were not so. He goes on to explain that "Being neither a 'good' white person nor a liberal white person will get you off the proverbial hook" (n.p.). But beyond mere acknowledgment of this fact, we White people must abandon passivity. Yancy addresses White folks insisting that they/we "enter into battle with your white self … open yourself up; to speak to, to admit to, the racist poison that is inside of you" (n.p.). Because regardless of best intentions, White people have always and will continue to contribute to the harm of people of Color.

Entering into battle with my White self means that I cannot let myself off of that proverbial hook even for a moment. Imagining myself as a "nice White lady" does little more to subvert Whiteness than simply declaring, "I have privilege!" In fact, it does the opposite; by attempting to distance myself from another White person at a different place in their racial

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identity formation process (Helms, 1990), I am subsequently closing my eyes to the ways that I am still contributing to the problem. There are ways that I tried to engage Jake and some of his White classmates about problematic statements or thoughts. One White student, for example, noted in her rough draft of the cultural autobiography that she "looked like a good and smart student" while in school, and how that expectation was stressful. I pushed back by asking, "What does a good and smart student look like?" This recalls the way my mom said we were in the "best school district" when I was younger. These words--good, smart, best, and the like--function as euphemisms for "White." The student added in her final draft that looking like a "good and smart student" meant that she "wore nice clothes, had nice friends, was on good terms with the teachers, and never publicly got into trouble."

Similarly, another student wrote about the expectations placed on her for "success" due to her White identity. "As a white student in the classroom, success was the expectation," she wrote. She goes on to describe the anxiety she struggled with throughout high school while taking AP classes, meeting deadlines, and trying to maintain her overall GPA. In my comment to her, after honoring the pressure she clearly experienced, I pushed her to think farther: "I would like you to dig a bit deeper on the intersections of power and privilege you experienced being White. Did you see students of Color treated differently than you? Did you go to a predominantly White school, and what are the implications of that?" In her final draft, she noted that teachers would give her extended deadlines without a question, and would not do the same for her classmates of Color. She noted that the expectations and "rules" were very clearly different for her and her White classmates than for her counterparts of Color, showing a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the implications of her own Whiteness in her schooling experience.

Examples such as these show that I did engage with my White students in a way that attempted to honor their experiences while very intentionally pushing back in critical ways, and some of their final drafts suggest that I succeeded at least partially. They show my attempts to actively resist distancing myself from the schooling experiences of my White students-- experiences that were very similar to mine. Yet I am still left wondering: should I have done more?

How Much Is Enough?

Did I do enough to push Jake's thinking? Did I do enough to push *all* of my White students' thinking? There are undoubtedly limitations to what all of us can do as teacher educators. We cannot *make* learning take place; we facilitate experiences and hope students choose to lean into knowledge and grow in meaningful ways. Moreover, working with White students in their racial identity development (Helms, 1990) is notoriously difficult (see Gorski, 2009; Picower, 2012; Matias, 2013a; Matias, 2013b; Milner, 2015). When I challenged Jake's lack of acknowledgement of his racial privilege, his response was not unique; in fact, it aligns exactly with the reactions of countless other White students who embody an epistemological ignorance about race and Whiteness (Mueller, 2017). This kind of ignorance, Mueller explains, often happens through color-evasive discourse as a way for White people to distance themselves from privilege by claiming they have made good use of that privilege; that they treat everyone equally regardless of the color of someone's skin. Jake's initial claim that everyone is treated equally at his high school--and subsequent modification that he used his privilege to help his Black friend buy soccer cleats--is a manifestation of epistemological ignorance.

Based on the midterm survey responses, I know that the majority of my students feel their thinking was challenged and pushed; these comments include things such as: "You have opened

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my eyes to a lot of things that I never noticed before," "I have become much more openminded," and "The readings and discussions have made me more aware of things like the pervasiveness of institutional racism and my privilege in many areas, but beyond that I think you've shifted my perspective on what it looks like to run a classroom…" But was it enough to only comment on Jake's paper to push his thinking? Should I have asked to speak with him (and any other White student who said or wrote problematic things reflecting Whiteness) outside of class to dialogue more in-depth? Should I have told Jake--or further yet, the director of his preparation program-- that he is not fit to be a teacher? If we as antiracist teacher educators truly want education to be a place of transformation to a more just and equitable society, what can we (not) allow to go unchecked? I believe this is a perennial question for all teacher educators, and my experience with autoethnographic case study makes me all the more aware of this reality. Although I do not have the answers to the questions posed above, I argue that all teachers and teacher educators should be asking ourselves these questions because it indicates that we realize we always have more to learn. No teacher is beyond the ability to improve in their teaching of issues around race and Whiteness--especially White teachers.

Implications and Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to answer two questions: *(1) What is it like to attempt antiracist praxis as a White female teacher educator?*; and *(2) What tensions arise when reflecting upon these findings?* The vignettes highlight key experiences with how I felt attempting to be an antiracist educator, illuminating that it is both challenging and troubling at times (and, of course, meaningful at others). The questions raised by the vignettes highlight tensions related to navigating discussions of White supremacy and humanization, and how far, exactly, I can push the thinking of my White students. I simultaneously feel an enormous weight

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of responsibility to present and facilitate the discussion of these topics in ways that do not cause harm; and at the same time, I question if there are limitations to humanizing praxis. Matias (2018) notes that, "For educators, our job is to teach even the most detestable racist [because] we believe humanizing education can transform a mind" (n.p.). This leads me to conclude that it is not only my job, but my responsibility to find ways to engage *all* students in humanizing education, and to particularly engage White students who hold problematic beliefs in ways that help them through their identity formation process.

This is vulnerable work. For White teacher educators, implicating oneself in systems of oppression transparently to students means that we White teachers must regularly humble ourselves and recognize that our work is never complete—recalling Helms' (1990) point that even advanced levels of White racial identity are a work in progress. What I learned from reviewing my data and these vignettes is that I will continuously make mistakes. White educators need to expect to make mistakes, and put systems in place that allow us to engage critically with our racial formation process. We must ask ourselves: how can we more intentionally abandon Whiteness?

I argue that autoethnographic case study is one such way. For White teacher educators such as myself who do research about the impact of Whiteness, we need to engage in examining our *own* praxis in addition to examining systemic impact. Although there are teacher educator autoethnographies using race-based theory, this is the first where a White teacher educator examines their own praxis with the intention of calling out their Whiteness. I believe I have achieved this to some extent, as I found myriad ways that my intentions of being antiracist were still met with the impact of my Whiteness. I still have work to do, and always will, and I hope that this study was a good start.

A further implication is the necessity for White teacher educators to dig into our own dehumanization--first acknowledging that we have, indeed, dehumanized ourselves through our collective dehumanization of communities of Color. This is a centuries-long legacy that we have inherited and it is our responsibility to work toward dismantling it. It is only with this fundamental understanding can we hope to address the dehumanization and model what it looks like to future educators. We must likewise make space in our classrooms to explore that dehumanization (both self-inflicted for White people and forced upon people of Color) in order to make teacher preparation a more intentional project in humanization.

This leads to implications for teacher preparation programs and future research. I invite my White colleagues to engage in autoethnographic work through the lens of CWS, embracing the vulnerability and humility it will take to truly abandon the institution of Whiteness in our praxis. This also holds significance for teacher preparation programs, who employ majority White doctoral students to teach majority White pre-service teachers. There must be structural opportunities for White teacher educators (including doctoral students) to both examine their own Whiteness critically, and to engage with intentional work to deconstruct their intentions vs. impact in the classroom. These opportunities, for example, could take place through required autoethnographic work in doctoral courses, professional development opportunities, and intentional engagement with multi-racial critical friends groups. Only when White teacher educators learn to do this work can we hope to encourage our White pre-service teachers to do the same; after all, we must model what we hope the future teachers of the United States can do.

Scholars (particularly of Color) have been researching Whiteness for generations. It is time for we White teacher educators to research and call ourselves to task with our commitment

to abandoning Whiteness. I leave this call to action with a quote from Matias and Aldern (2019),

who plead with our field to dig deeper into our participation in Whiteness:

> Applied to teacher education, Whiteness, with all its gruesomeness, narcissism, and emotionalities, needs to take a hard stare in the mirror. It needs to see a metaphysical death whereby it realizes its wrongful interpelation to a false reality, a reality from which White teachers then build their White racial identities. More precisely for teacher education, the Whiteness in teacher education needs to realize its wrongful overlooking, dismissing, and/or refusing to see a raced reality leading to the manufacturing of White curriculum, White normative pedagogies, intervention practices, preservice teacher selection protocols, and White privileging found in standardized exams and educational policies. It must see its narcissistic and emotionally manipulative tendencies that continue to deny its own reflection as some perverse way of justifying its unearned elevated position. (pp. 43-44)

APPENDIX

Your responses are anonymous. Please respond freely.

1. Which aspects of this course are working for you? You may consider readings, class time, assignments, and/or instruction.

2. Do you feel that your opinion and voice are valued in the classroom space? Please explain briefly.

3. Do you feel comfortable being vulnerable in the classroom space? Please explain briefly.

4. Do you feel that I make myself vulnerable to the class? Please explain briefly.

5. Lastly, what about my practice as a teacher has shifted the way you think about things (if your thinking has, indeed, shifted)? This can be related to prejudice and discrimination, racism, privilege, ableism, or any other topics we have discussed thus far.

6. Is there anything else you'd like to share?

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ARTICLE THREE -- DISAGREEABLE MIRROR: WHEN VULNERABILITY IS WHITENESS

Our feelings are our most genuine paths to knowledge. - Audre Lorde

Pain is important: how we evade it, how we succumb to it, how we deal with it, how we transcend it. - Audre Lorde

Prologue

It was 7:15 a.m. on September 26th, 2018 when I found out that my dad passed away. I remember what I was wearing, where I was sitting, and the look on my mom's face when the medical investigator broke the news over the phone. I remember changing out of my work clothes into something more comfortable, and settling in for what I knew would be a very long few days. I thought ahead to my students. *Will I tell them why I missed class today? Will I tell them if I'm hit by a visceral wave of grief in the middle of a class? What will it mean if I tell them, and what will it mean if I don't?* The thought of leaving my grief at the door seemed impossible; and the more I thought about it, the less I wanted to hide it. So I didn't.

Introduction

Vulnerability is not something we talk about very much as P-12 teachers or teacher educators. This is no accident; historically, teachers have been taught to leave their personal lives at the door and to keep emotion out of the classroom (Goldstein, 2014; Dunn, Moore, & Neville, in press). These rules of emotion, whether spoken or unspoken, are both raced and gendered, with Black women in particular being substantially policed and monitored in their emoting (Lorde, 1983; Diaz-Strong, Luna-Duarte, Gómez, & Meiners, 2014). This is especially contradictory given that the narrative of a "good teacher" has long been linked with subservient, kind, and caretaking women (Beecher, 1845; Griffiths, 2006; Goldstein, 2014). When I conducted research for the first article of my dissertation, I was exploring antiracist praxis from

the perspective of student-nominated teacher education faculty. When "model vulnerability" emerged as a core theme of their praxis, I was intrigued. What did modeling vulnerability actually look like? For my second article, I decided to explore this a bit more by embodying all of the practices theorized in the first article: model vulnerability, pose questions, shift agency, and build community. Through an autoethnographic study of my own teaching during a one-semester course on diversity, I wanted to understand what modeling those pedagogical moves might actually look like in practice, and what tensions arise when considering how to employ them.

To move this work forward, I now want to look into what might be a disagreeable mirror (Baldwin, 1965) in hopes that the reflection I see will further illuminate the ways I contribute to and combat Whiteness in the classroom. I want to note that, when Baldwin uses this term, he refers to the color of his skin as a *disagreeable mirror* for White folks--that "a great deal of one's own energy is expended in reassuring white Americans that they do not see what they see" (p. 47). Thus, to build upon this idea as a White person in the service of antiracism, I look at myself through a disagreeable mirror. I do this in order to question what I believe to be true about my intention and practice with the goal of identifying my own performances of Whiteness and how I can continue to work against White supremacy through my praxis.

For the purposes of this exploration, I ground my conceptual understanding in Brown's (2018) work, in which she describes vulnerability as "the emotion we experience during times of uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" (p. 19). Derived from the Latin word *vulnerare*, meaning *to wound*, the word *vulnerable* elicits a feeling of being open to attack or wounding. People often avoid this particular emotion because it can evoke feelings of shame, discomfort, and fear of rejection. But showing vulnerability, Brown (2006) argues, is both an antidote to

shame and the single most accurate measurement of courage. But courage notwithstanding, I am struck by the ways that my expression of vulnerability as a White woman--given that the freedom to show it is both raced and gendered--might be problematic. When considering my employment of vulnerability with pre-service teachers (PSTs), I often have the intention of "calling in" to difficult conversations on race (and Whiteness, specifically). I also use vulnerability to encourage reciprocal humanization (Freire, 1970); I share parts of myself and my life with students in the hopes that they will subsequently feel more comfortable doing the same.

This conceptualization of the term *vulnerability*, while seemingly logical and widespread, implies a certain normativity. In other words, it seems like something we should all strive to do. But given the raced and gendered rules of emotion mentioned previously (see also Rodriguez, 2009 and Ohito, 2019), I explore how my (and other White teacher educators') embodiment of vulnerability might actually be a performance of Whiteness. This research, thus, is designed to explore, problematize, and grapple with the idea of vulnerability. I attempt to answer one primary research question: *Considering my social positioning as a White female teacher educator, how might my employment of vulnerability reify Whiteness?*

What the Literature Says About Vulnerability

There is little to no empirical research about vulnerability in any field, and teacher education is no exception. For this brief literature review, I first ground my understanding of vulnerability in Brené Brown's work. With this foundational piece in place, I then explore where and how vulnerability appears as a topic of interest in the field of teacher education. Finally, I offer how my exploration of vulnerability is thus a departure from the empirical work on vulnerability that currently exists.

Vulnerability As Strength

It is important to further understand vulnerability as a feeling worthy of exploring before diving into how it is discussed in the field of teacher education. Thus, I choose to begin with Brené Brown's work; since she is the only scholar whose entire professional career is dedicated to empirically exploring vulnerability (over the span of multiple decades of research), it is appropriate to begin there.

Brown (2013) asserts that "vulnerability isn't good or bad: it's not what we call a dark emotion, nor is it always a light, positive experience. Vulnerability is the core of all emotions and feelings. To feel is to be vulnerable" (n.p.). I understand the mobilizing of this version of vulnerability as it is described and cited in Dunn, Moore, and Neville's (in press) work (see Figure 1). This shows vulnerability at the center of other emotions such as joy, anger, fear, and grief.

Figure 3. Graphic representation of vulnerability in relation to other emotions, as theorized in Dunn, Moore, and Neville (in press).

In other words, vulnerability is an emotion that, quite simply, "is." It is implicit, inherent, and

necessarily present in all the things we do and create as human beings and therefore as

professionals. It is vulnerable to feel anger, to feel joy, and to feel grief. It is vulnerable,

especially, to actually talk about what we are feeling. As Brown's (2013) work concludes, to be

vulnerable is courageous because it requires that we allow ourselves to be seen for the fullness of

who we are. Conclusively, then, Brown's work rests on the argument that vulnerability is

something to be both embraced and celebrated. With this understanding, we can move to

examine the ways that vulnerability has appeared thus far in the field of teacher education

research.

Teaching as Structurally and Inherently Vulnerable

Kelchtermans (1996, 2009) talks about vulnerability as a structural component of the

teaching profession. That is, teaching is inherently a vulnerable profession because of the lack of

control and agency many teachers have over the conditions of their work and the decisions they

are (un)able to make in their classrooms. Moreover, teachers' professional identities and moral

integrity have been systematically and continuously questioned for centuries (see Goldstein,

2014), leaving them to feel constantly vulnerable to such neoliberal metrics as standardized

testing and merit-based pay (Dunn, 2018). Lasky (2005) adds to this sentiment, noting that

teachers often struggle to remain vulnerable with their students as a direct result of those same

accountability measures. Lasky goes on to describe the double-edged sword of vulnerability for

teachers:

> Vulnerability can be an experience of openness and trust, which is necessary for love,
> experiencing compassion, learning, and relationship building. In these situations, people
> willingly open themselves to the possibility of embarrassment, loss, or emotional pain
> because they believe that they, another individual, or a situation will benefit from this
> openness … it can also develop due to feelings of powerlessness, betrayal, or

defenselessness in situations of high anxiety or fear. (p. 901)

Similarly to Dunn, Moore, and Neville (in press), the above quotation suggests that vulnerability has the potential to open and sustain meaningful connections and relationships both personally and professionally. However, when it is not reciprocated or--worse--is rejected or seen as weakness (again, as if often the case with women of Color), vulnerability can lead to feelings of betrayal and shame (Rodriguez, 2009). Teaching, however, is inherently vulnerable. Palmer (2017) notes that, "teaching is a daily act in vulnerability," (p. 17), suggesting that the choice to exercise this emotion leads to "deeper awareness of self, other, and experience" (MacKenzie, 2011, p. 8).

Emotion Deserves More Attention

Vulnerability is thus understood in this work as a central emotion to which all other emotions are connected. Emotions, Boler (1999) says, "are inseparable from actions and relations, from lived experience" (p. 2). This suggests that emotions (whether those are exercised in a classroom or not) have salient and real implications for pedagogical choices, and thus also have the potential (and probability) to impact student experience in the classroom. Zembylas (2005) states that "emotions is the least investigated aspect of research on teaching, yet it is probably the aspect most mentioned as being important and deserving more attention" (p. 465). My work therefore adds something unique to the field through both exploring and problematizing the emotion of vulnerability.

A few scholars in the field of teacher education have investigated both emotionality and critical emotional literacy (see Matias & DiAngelo, 2013; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; and Matias, Montoya, & Nishi, 2016 for some examples I find particularly illuminating); however, those analyses speak specifically to the emotionalities and manifestations of Whiteness rather than

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broadly to emotions such as vulnerability. They also speak to the emotional manifestations of students rather than of teacher educators. For this reason, my work is a departure from the literature that presently exists in teacher education. I want to note, however, that the idea for this work would not have been possible without first situating my understanding of vulnerability within the work of the authors above.

My Approach as Departure

As I noted above, Brown's empirically-based work around vulnerability ascribes to a rather normative frame; in other words, it is described as something inherently positive. The findings of my first dissertation article align with this outlook, suggesting that modeling vulnerability as a teacher educator is an important component of antiracist praxis. As I attempted to embody this practice through my autoethnographic study in Article 2, I was struck by how my attempted embodiment of vulnerability may be more problematic than I originally anticipated. This article, then, is an attempt to explore that tension in particular.

As a White person, I inevitably perform Whiteness. Because I cannot avoid that, I want to explore if vulnerability moves me closer to or farther away from being a truly antiracist educator. For this reason, I am drawn to Patel's (2015) *pedagogy of pause*. She argues that, "We must pause and reconsider social justice precisely because it has a hold on educational research, appearing so ubiquitously as to carry sizable assumptions of goals and approaches" (p. 89). This article is my mobilization of Patel's pause, allowing me to take a step back and think through the ways that I continue to perform Whiteness in my attempt to be vulnerable as a teacher educator committed to social justice.

My approach to this work is unique in several ways. Though various scholars in teacher education write in profoundly vulnerable ways about their experiences in the teacher education

classroom (see Dunn, 2010 and Matias, 2013b for two that I particularly admire), I look to pieces like Cochran-Smith's (2000) deeply personal narrative as a mentor text. In it, she describes how she, who "fancied herself pretty liberal and enlightened" (p. 161), was confronted with the ways that she perpetuated Whiteness through her practice. Through deep personal reflection and confronting the stark difference between her intentions and impact--a vulnerable move to make anywhere, especially in the academy--she weaves a powerful story about the importance of interrogating our "assumptions that are deeply embedded in the curriculum" while examining complicity as White teacher educators (p. 186). It is also worth noting that, most likely, she was able to write in this way because she is White. It is not lost on me that my Whiteness also grants me the same.

Theoretical Framework

This work follows the theoretical threading of the first two articles of my dissertation, and thus will also use Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) as a framework. CWS, similarly to Critical Race Theory (CRT), allows scholars to examine phenomena through the lens and functionality of race. Specifically, it enables us to focus more directly on the role of Whiteness in examining matters of racial inequality. It is underpinned by several beliefs, such as the fact that Whiteness has been constructed and changed throughout history depending on sociopolitical context, and that it is linked to myriad privileges of serious material consequence (Harris, 1993; Nayak, 2007).

CWS is aligned with CRT in its fundamental belief that race is a social construction rather than a biological imperative. In other words, race was invented by certain people (who deemed themselves as White) in order to separate themselves from other people (primarily Native and Black). Decades of research point to how Whiteness has been constructed differently

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across time and social classes (see Fields, 1982; Roediger, 2007; 2018); but regardless, Whiteness has always been positioned as the status quo. Whiteness has been the operating standard in every aspect of the educational system (Leonardo, 2009; Matias, 2013a; Matias, 2013b; Picower, 2009; Sleeter, 2001).

For these reasons, I heed the call of Stovall and Watkins (2005), who argue that educational researchers must dedicate their work to developing praxis that actively counters Whiteness in education. I approach this call with the foundational understanding that, as a White woman, I have undoubtedly been *raced* by a history and society that normalizes White supremacy. Specific to the research question at hand, I also acknowledge that the social positioning I hold as a White woman makes it "normal" for me to both (a) be a teacher, and (b) to talk about my feelings and to be vulnerable.

The fact that Whiteness continues to operate as the status quo means that my lived experiences and my physical body within a particular space impact both the way I teach and the way my students experience me. Using CWS as a lens to examine the ways I have attempted to employ vulnerability allows me to critically examine intention, potential impact, and potential problems with my praxis. This theoretical framework ultimately helps me see that my vulnerability can operate as a performance of Whiteness, and as something easily accessible to me that is not as accessible to my colleagues of Color. In analyzing my own experiences with vulnerability in the teacher education classroom, I draw primarily from Barnes' (2017) assertion that "whiteness employs various techniques to maintain power" (p. 288). While I consider myself to be a relatively enlightened antiracist teacher educator, deeply dedicated to racial justice and educating future educators, by virtue of being White, I also participate (both implicitly and explicitly) in racial inequity.

Methodology

As I considered how to write about vulnerability given that there is so little research about it, I realized that this gap grants me the freedom to explore a different methodological approach. Rather than a traditional academic manuscript, this work employs arts-based inquiry. I will first discuss the history of arts-based research in the field, and then more concretely my decision to use a particular arts-based method, poetic inquiry, as a means to answer my research question.

Arts-based Approach

Arts-based research first emerged in the field of teacher education in 1993, when Elliot Eisner facilitated a workshop through American Educational Research Association (AERA) funding to invite university scholars and educational practitioners to explore the arts and education. The following decades saw a burgeoning of scholarship employing and expanding arts-based methodologies to explore complex phenomena and questions in many fields. This kind of research, Barone and Eisner (2011) argue, "is an effort to utilize the forms of thinking and forms of representation that the arts provide as means through which the world can be better understood and through such understanding comes the enlargement of the mind" (p. xi). Furthermore, it "represents an effort to explore the potentialities of an approach to representation that is rooted in aesthetic considerations and that, when it is at its best, culminates in the creation of something close to a work of art" (p. 1).

There has been pushback in the field of teacher education related to the empirical nature of "rigorous" qualitative work; the standardization of qualitative inquiry (and therefore expectations for publication and tenure) has no doubt left many scholars feeling pressured to emulate formulaic writing styles. Arts-based research seeks to expand what we think of as

rigorous research in order to advance thinking in innovative ways--ways that are more culturally and sociopolitically relevant. It is well-documented that Western (specifically, North American and European) approaches to the creation of knowledge (and whose knowledge matters) differ greatly from other parts of the world (Haggis & Schech, 2000; Sholock, 2012). Barone and Eisner (2011) would agree, noting that "matters of meaning are shaped--that is, enhanced and constrained--by the tools we use. When those tools limit what is expresible or representational, a certain price is paid for the neglect of what has been omitted" (pp. 1-2).

I, therefore, employ an arts-based approach to this particular work in an effort to expand the range of what is possible to express; I am not seeking to declare anything with certainty or wide generalizability. Because, as Cahnmann (2003) astutely argues,

> Once we realize that all claims to 'scientific truth' are suspect, influenced by the culturally bound nature of the researcher's text, we can free ourselves to write in ways that name and claim feeling, story, and relationship. In so doing we will be better equipped to communicate findings in multidimensional, penetrating, and more accessible ways. (p. 33)

I select my arts-based approach with this in mind.

Poetic Inquiry

Poetic inquiry is an arts-based approach to research whereby the researcher crafts data into poetry; the poetry itself operates as both a method of inquiry and subsequent data to analyze. Specifically, Grimmett (2016) notes, it is "used as a tool for thinking creatively with data, to create holistic interpretations and empathetic connections between researcher … and readers" (p. 43). In other words, the goal of poetic inquiry is to use and analyze data through poetry, creating new ways to view and think about the data in order to foster connection and creativity. Poetry, in and of itself, is "the art of using words, lines, and stanzas charged with their utmost meaning"

that also "differs according to social, cultural, and historical forces" (Certo, Apol, Wibben, & Hawkins, 2012). I choose this methodology to explore my research question for a few reasons.

First, research shows that poetic inquiry is particularly useful for exploring controversial human phenomena (Baker et al., 2018; Leigh, 2015; Furman, Langer, David, Gallrado, & Kulkarni, 2007). Because of its "openness and flexibility to rules of grammar and style" (Leigh, 2015, p. 2), researchers can play with things like punctuation, white space, and other myriad poetic devices to pursue questions and ideas in ways that typical academic writing does not allow. Poetic inquiry is also an ideal medium through which to explore something as deeply personal as vulnerability. I cannot (and do not wish to) separate my lived personal experiences from my academic experiences as a doctoral student and teacher educator. I cannot write this article, nor a single poem for it, without acknowledging that I faced an immeasurable amount of grief and pain while collecting and analyzing the data I will use here. My exploration of vulnerability is, in and of itself, a profoundly vulnerable endeavor. I want to harness that feeling--my story--to better understand myself as a human and as a teacher educator, though those two things are not mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, I choose to use poetry to change the way I see things, understanding that I will learn as I write (Faulkner, 2009). Because the first two articles of this dissertation are written in a more traditional academic manuscript format--both through the lens of CWS--poetry will offer "new spiritual and emotional and ethical understandings, new ways of seeing" (Hirshfield, 1997, p. 79). This variety of writing styles throughout the dissertation, as Rose and McClafferty (2001) suggest, helps to both enhance the ideas I present and assist in conceptualizing those ideas. Moreover, taking up poetic inquiry operates as an iterative feedback loop that allows researchers to learn through, with, and after writing poetry.

Also important is that I believe that employing poetic inquiry will allow me to reach broader audiences. Cahnmann (2003) notes that "there is increasing recognition that researchers who develop a poetic voice are better prepared to write ethnographic prose in ways that are lyrical, engaging, and accessible to a wider audience" (p. 34). Although we have decades of qualitative research on Whiteness (and sparse educational research about vulnerability), poetic inquiry has thus far not been used to explore the implications of vulnerability through the lens of Whiteness. Through developing my poetic voice, I hope to "discover and communicate findings in multidimensional, penetrating, and more accessible ways" (Cahnmann, 2003, p. 29), adding depth and nuance to the trajectory started in my first two articles. Ultimately, it is my desire to encourage other White teacher educators to take on the endeavor of questioning our praxis, calling ourselves and each other "in" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) to pursue more truly antiracist identities. Finally, I heed Galvin and Predergast's (2015) conclusion about the power of poetic inquiry in research:

> Poetic inquiry is contributing to the quest of engagement with concrete experiences and in ways that point to 'more than words can say', and in ways that open up participation. Poetry reveals, poetry has the power to open up the unexpected, to contribute to aesthetic depth, to bring us close to ambiguities with metaphor and image, and it allows access to vulnerability, courage, and truth telling and playfully or poignantly forges new critical insight. (p. xv)

Data Generation

My data sources include research memos collected throughout the Spring 2019 semester (written memos ranging from one to three single-spaced typed pages, and audio memos ranging from 10-15 minutes in length, for a total of 17 entries), and the poems I wrote. As noted previously, poetic inquiry allows researchers to both use poetry as a process of inquiry and to create further data--the poems--to include in their analyses. My memos were written reflecting on the events that transpired in a particular class period and questions I subsequently raised.

My poems take the form of Prendergast's (2009) *Vox Autobiographia/Autoethnographia*, meaning that they are written in my own personal voice. Specifically, because of the nature of the question these poems and their analyses hope to answer, they fit into the subcategories of *Vox Justitia* (poems on equity and social justice) and *Vox Identitatis* (poems on exploring oneself). Portions of my researcher memos were used to spark the initial ideas for the poems, which I subsequently wrote and analyzed as further sources of data. Each poem went through several rounds of revision as I workshopped them with my advisor and colleagues who have experience with poetic inquiry.

Findings and Discussion

I originally asked, *Considering my social positioning as a White female teacher educator, how might my employment of vulnerability reify Whiteness?* Through writing and studying my experiences through poetry, it is clear that my identity as a White female teacher educator strongly influences my employment of vulnerability with students; moreover, my social positioning makes it much easier for me to do so. Additionally, my ability to be openly vulnerable with students appears easily accepted because my Whiteness (a) humanizes me in the eyes of society, and (b) grants me an assumed professional status that is not automatically granted to my colleagues of Color. The first two poems below are explorations of two different scenarios: one case where I was vulnerable by disclosing my sexual orientation, and another where I was vulnerable in a situation involving grief and loss of a loved one. I use the third poem as a sort of mirror, or a lens through which I examine the choices and moves I made in the first two poems (and the events that inspired them). A brief analysis after each poem will elaborate on the themes, as well as discuss connections to the literature and theoretical framework.

Personal Identity as Vulnerable

The poem below is inspired by a class session (February 25, 2019) in which we discussed homophobia and heteronormativity. It is important to note that I self-disclose that I am queer at the beginning of each semester, showing students pictures of my partner and me in an effort to let them know more about my family and life outside of the classroom context. When we discuss issues such as homophobia in my classes, then, students know that it is personal for me. I often share my own coming out story and the trauma I endured being bullied in school and in my own home. During class this day, I circulated the room as small groups met to discuss questions such as, *To what extent do you feel it is your responsibility as a future teacher to learn about and understand LGBTQ issues?* This poem illustrates how I processed my feelings of vulnerability and panic when I heard one of my students say, "If someone is gay, they will probably get AIDS."

When I Heard My Student Say,
"If Someone Is Gay, They Will Probably Get AIDS"

The words flew past me like a big damn
bug grazing my ear--metallic and cold,
a beetle perhaps, a thorax, rusted like an old
penny. Uneasy eyes looked to me, *What*
will she say? Oh my goodness, what
will she do? I gazed through myself

to him, my heart
pumping   pulsating   pounding   priming
My ears were red, carminic acid,
how do I respond to this?

I gazed through him to myself, my mind
racing   reeling   recalling   reliving
ramping up to Defend; I'm thirty
but I'm sixteen--all over again.

Flashback,
                    flash   back:
"Gays are fucking looney."
"Don't tell your brother and sister--they're too young."
"This is an adult theme that could psychologically
damage your siblings." "I will kick you out of the house."
"You're a disgusting dyke."
But that's not what my student is saying...
                                                            right?

I'm a teacher now, but
I feel like a child
I am the "knower" in the room, but all I know
is that child/teacher are not/never reconciled.
So when my male student says it, my breath catches
            in   in   in my throat

and I hear my voice tremble:
"*Am I understanding you correctly*?"
when I really want to smack
on the desk, "*It's 2019, are you fucking serious?*"

I register nothing, except feeling
dirty and   out   of   place.
But this place, this teaching, this guiding
is my work, and that sixteen-year-old must
wait.   And wait, because

my job is to teach him,
he who wants to teach children.
Maybe my children. Maybe gay children.

His words hang in the air,
drifting   dangling   damning   dividing
daring me to catch them,
like wooly spiders
lowering
themselves
onto
my pillow.
He's homophobic, but the damn
thing is, I'm arachnophobic,
so they've followed me to my bedroom and now
I dream of the ways I can catch them without
touching them.

Several themes emerge in this poem that align with the literature. For example, it is clear that I struggle to wear the appropriate "hat" when one of my marginalized social identity markers feels attacked. Navigating the glaring macro-aggression of a blatantly homophobic comment while also being the instructor of the classroom--with students watching me to see how I will respond--was terribly difficult. I was no doubt influenced by the emotional rules I have learned and internalized (as described in Dunn, Moore, & Neville, in press). These instances of aggression, whether micro or macro, also recall Laskey's (2005) work. He notes a complicated paradox wherein vulnerability is necessary to learn and to build compassion and relationships in a classroom; but on the other hand, it can lead to feelings of defenselessness and fear in high-stress situations--situations such as the one I describe here.

Another tension raised here is the question of when, if ever, we as teacher educators can tell a pre-service teacher that they should not be a teacher. Is it ever appropriate for someone who harbors explicitly homophobic (or racist, or sexist or ableist, etc.) views to teach children who also hold those identities? Or any children at all? This dilemma leads me to another point: it is important to grant opportunities to students so they may learn and grow in their knowledge and understanding of oppression. But who is in charge of teaching them? I believe that I, as a White teacher educator, am responsible to engage White (and all) pre-service teachers in ways that challenge their preconceived notions of race and Whiteness. Was it also my responsibility to further engage this student and try to convince him that homosexuality does not equate to getting AIDS? After I invited him via email to have a conversation, he did not respond, and I never brought it up with him again.

Finally, as a White woman, I did not worry about how my reaction would be read by students. This is reflective of the privilege afforded to me as a White woman teaching in an

institution predicated on Whiteness. Reflecting now on that scenario, I realize that the other White students who overheard this comment looked at me (all with equally surprised and nervous facial expressions) because they understood how deeply personal and aggressive their classmate's comment was--and that it would directly impact me as a person with that identity. When I pushed back on the student who said it (albeit briefly), my authority was not called into question, nor was I criticized for being overly emotional (as the literature shows is often the case with women of Color--see Matias, 2013b; Rodriguez, 1999). I received no subsequent push-back from the student in question or his classmates, and I did not receive any course evaluations at the end of the semester questioning my authority and ability to respond to that incident. In this space of a PWI, I can relatively easily speak up when I am aggressed because I am White.

The Vulnerability of Grief

The day I learned that my dad had passed away is forever ingrained in my memory. I vividly recall debating how I could possibly teach (especially that semester, but also the following one--particularly on his birthday) without telling my students what had happened. When I returned to class a few days afterward, I decided to tell them. The intention was twofold: (1) so they would understand if I needed to excuse myself during a class session, or even cancel class at any point during the semester; and (2) so they would think about how they will handle their jobs when tragedy or trauma inevitably befalls them as teachers. The following semester with a different class, when the grief was less immediate but still fresh, I decided, again, to tell my class that my dad had passed away. This poem illustrates how I processed the concepts of professionalism and my own humanity while experiencing grief, and ultimately, how I decided that those two things are not mutually exclusive.

Teacher Professionalism, Or When I Shared that My Dad Died
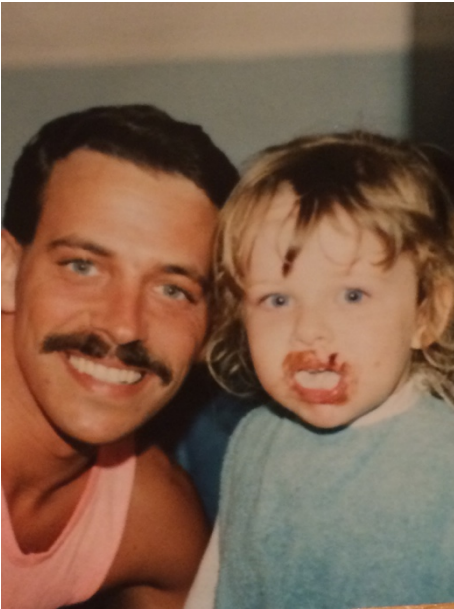
Doors are the places you leave your feelings.

What does it mean
to favor so-called Professionalism in lieu of
a teacher's humanity?

I felt that Weight so heavily, it followed me through the door, that door
where I (should have?) left it.
And I tried to free space for
Responsibilities:
Teach, Guide, Facilitate, Hold space (for others, not for me).

But Weight is a heavy door
And Grief sticks, it gets stuck
on your clothing. It's a piece
of bubble gum you try to hide
under a desk, but it won't stick
to anything but you. That's why
it follows you through the damn door
into your classroom.

Doors are the places you try to leave your feelings.

But it would have felt dishonest
Not to tell them that I might
unhinge at any moment, because the Weight
of each moment was heavier

than it seemed;
because that day, he would have
turned 53.

I tried to wait. Too much Weight.

So I showed them a photograph of us--
four blue-green eyes, and my four
-year-old mouth covered with chocolate.
Before I ever knew he could die;
when he was still Superman, #1 Fan, Mr. Fix-It-All,
and not an addict, those
blue-green eyes ...faded like the Atlantic tide.

Back when my hair was a sweaty mat
on my forehead, and I'd never chewed
bubble gum, which means grief had never
stuck to me. I see his mustache and hair
perfectly kept, his teeth straight and white,
but tired of chewing so much
grief.

Doors are places I can't leave my feelings.

I looked at that door,
and it strikes me that the little girl
in the photo looks like most of my students:
fair skin. And I wonder if I've made them
uncomfortable by chewing bubble gum
in front of the class. Bodies shift, most
of their eyes not meeting mine.

Was it wrong
to invite my dad's Death
into my classroom--through that door?

The teacher in (is) me,
and I'm still a human being.
So now I think that a door
is not transitional; is not
where we leave grief; is not
gatekeeper of Professionalism.

Doors are the place I lower my eyes
and I scrape, scrape, scrape off all the bubble gum.

Doors in this poem directly reference the emotional rules of teaching, as described earlier in this piece and in the first poem. They also reference who can enter a classroom and who cannot; who belongs, and who does not; *what* can enter a classroom, and what cannot. In a course where the daily topics of discussion are injustice and human oppression, it is hard to know what is appropriate to discuss and what is not. After all, we talk about death all the time: deaths of millions of Native Americans at the hands of White colonial settlers, deaths of Black and Brown bodies at the hands of White police (with no repercussions), and the spirit murder (Love, 2019) that takes place in P-12 institutions all over the United States for folks with marginalized identities (including women, people of differing abilities, and the like). However, that day, I brought a different kind of death into the classroom: my father's.

I remember waking up that day--the day he would have turned 53--and feeling like I could barely get out of bed. My decision to share with the class that it was his birthday was as much for me as it was for them. The photograph (as seen beneath the title of the poem)--an exploration of a nostalgic and bittersweet memory--represents something problematic because I did not pause when writing the poem to consider the historical implications. The thing I most possess of my father's--my eyes--are the thing I have always liked most about myself, and I wrote about this in the first draft of this poem. Blue eyes have a longstanding history of superiority in media and literature. Toni Morrison's (1970) novel *The Bluest Eye*, for example, traces a young African American woman who internalizes an inferiority complex due to her dark skin--she feels ugly and wishes for blue eyes to escape the oppression she faces as a dark-skinned woman. Society's perception of the beauty of blue eyes is linked with centuries of genocide and murder. My ability to share this photograph and write about this particular

experience without considering those historical implications is representative of my Whiteness operating as a "universal norm" (see Nayak, 2007).

As I reflect upon the implications of showing a photograph of myself as a child to my students, I know that most of the students likely see themselves reflected in some way; after all, the teacher workforce is 80% White. This fact has concrete implications upon my analysis of professionalism. Because I am White, I am not only humanized regularly by society; my status as a professional is also conferred rather than earned (see Matias 2013b). This is to say that I am less likely to be seen as weak or angry when I express emotion as a White woman (Lorde, 1983; Diaz-Strong, Luna-Duarte, Gómez, & Meiners, 2014). Moreover, my ability to thoughtlessly share this vulnerability with my students is reflective of Nayak's (2007) description of Whiteness as a social norm that has "an index of unspoken privileges" (p. 738). One such privilege is the ability to share grief with my students without the fear of being perceived as weak. My comfort in outwardly feeling sadness--while simultaneously being in front of a classroom--is one I do not have to think about or analyze beforehand.

Coming to Terms with My Antiracist Identity

As I examined my researcher memos, read, reviewed and revised my first two poems, and processed the following poem, I was struck that I often see what I want to see. This is to say that my approach to critical reflection on my praxis as a White teacher educator has long been limited by my refusal to acknowledge the ways that I consistently contribute to Whiteness and White supremacy, even as I attempt (and purport) to be an antiracist educator. There is vulnerability in this introspection, particularly when what is revealed through it is something

unflattering. In the poem below, I use James Baldwin's (1965) idea of a *disagreeable mirror* to explore this cognitive dissonance.

I have often wondered, and it is not a pleasant wonder, just what white Americans talk about with one another. I wonder this because they do not, after all, seem to find very much to say to me, and I concluded long ago that they found the color of my skin inhibitory. This color seems to operate as a most disagreeable mirror, and a great deal of one's energy is expended in reassuring white Americans that they do not see what they see. -- James Baldwin (1965)

Mirror: (a) a polished or smooth surface (as of glass) that forms images by reflection; (b) something that gives a true representation - Merriam-Webster

What is a Mirror?

Maybe it's polished,
smooth glass
like an ice rink freshly passed
over with a zamboni.
Yes, maybe it's that.

Or perhaps it's
something different entirely,
like
the smudged window
birds fly into unexpectedly.
(Their poor beaks.)

Can I trust what I see
when I hold it up to my face?
It shows me blemishes
and flaws, but
it also shows me blue
eyes and an unassuming smile.

The eyes, smile, and skin
of someone easily trusted, but then--
it's because I'm White.
The automatic trust and benefit(s)
of the doubt--from other Whites
in stores
schools
airports.

I claim antiracist identity
as I keep
building a career out of
the existence of White
supremacy.
The hypocrisy
is astounding, when you really think
about it.

Mirrors show images by reflection:

the image of my mouth says aloud that
I don't like my privilege, but if that
were true,
would I participate the way I do?

Mirrors show images by reflection:

my reflection, meanwhile, shows that
I exist in   White   spaces
I teach in   White   places
I watch   White   shows with,
                    White   faces
that look like mine.
So my mirror--when held up to my actions--
tells quite a different story.
(I'm starting to feel for those bruised beaks.)

It reflects that my
best intentions can never
equal Impact; that
I cannot expect them to.

It reflects that my
"nice White lady" act
keeps me from growing
where I need to grow.

So I hold it up to myself and my work--
my disagreeable mirror--
and I see how far I have come,
and how far I have yet to go.

Sometimes a mirror is polished,
smooth glass
because the zamboni passed

over, wiping surfaces clean and
removing the blemishes
and misdeeds.
(This is, of course, what we prefer to see.)

Other times it's a smudged window
slamming us into reality
unexpectedly
like the bird that bruises its beak.
It shakes our perceptions of
how we see
ourselves and the difference between
intention and impact.

Disagreeable mirrors, then,
require us to look
longer.
One moment shows us a snap
shot of reality, while
a longer look helps us see
a truer reflection
of our actions.

What, exactly, is a mirror?
It depends on who is holding it, I think.
But it also depends on where it's pointed,
and how long you look.

The idea of mirrors in this poem plays with the concept of critical reflection, which is

something commonly cited as good practice in teacher education (Beauchamp, 2015; Zeichner &

Liu, 2010). As a meta examination of the first two poems, this one is an exercise in questioning

reflection and the extent to which it can affirm or challenge the ideas we have about ourselves as

teacher educators. For example, it is common for me to self-identify as an antiracist teacher

educator. By this, I mean that I dedicate my life--both personally and professionally--to

combating Whiteness and White supremacy.

However, when I hold the mirror up and look more closely at the choices I make, I still

very much perpetuate Whiteness. As Nayak (2007) notes, Whiteness is chained to innumerable

privileges—such as my ability to be openly vulnerable, how I see myself reflected in most of the media I consume, my ability to push back on students without fear of reprisal, and countless other examples. Likewise, I would be remiss not to acknowledge that this work--which I get paid to do--is dependent upon the existence of racism (Dunn, Sondel, & Bagett, 2019). Another limitation of reflection is demonstrated by my need to ask for the help of multiracial critical friends in reviewing my writing (something I did throughout my second article, as well as this one). If my voice is the only one centered when reflecting upon my praxis (or upon my reflections, as was the case for analyzing my researcher memos), I am sure to fall short in many ways. For example, the fact that I note how much I like the physical traits I share with my dad-- our blue-green eyes--suggests the ways that my ideas of beauty have been shaped by White-normative ideals. Moreover, mentioning this without considering historical context was not something I noticed myself; it was my advisor who pointed it out to me.

So while I often use reflection (i.e., the mirror) and see the things I'm doing right, I, too, seldom fail to pause and look more critically at the ways that I'm still contributing to the problem. Moving forward, this means that I will have to more regularly pause and implement a system in which I am discussing and seeking feedback about my work.

Implications and Conclusion

It is undeniable that vulnerability can be positive, as Brown's (2006, 2013, 2018) work argues. Likewise, I agree with Laskey's (2005) assertion that vulnerability is essential for relational learning and building community. This is also an important finding in my first article, in which student-nominated faculty describe modeling vulnerability and community building as essential components of their praxis. However, within the context of teacher education at a PWI, we must acknowledge that vulnerability is not as accessible to educators of Color (without fear

of reprisal) as it is to White educators; and therefore, it cannot be described so normatively. To do so oversimplifies the impact of expressing emotion for people of Color and fails to take into account the ever-present sociopolitical context in which we live. It is a reality that emotion is more accessible to White teacher educators than it is to teacher educators of Color (Matias, 2013b; Rodriguez, 2009; Ohito, 2019).

To the research question: *Considering my social positioning as a White female teacher educator, how might my employment of vulnerability reify Whiteness?* Findings clearly suggest that my employment of vulnerability, when not examined with intention and through the lens of a disagreeable mirror (Baldwin, 1965), reifies harmful raced constructs of vulnerability and emotion. There is also clear Whiteness present in my poems. For example, my choice in using the zamboni reference is particularly interesting since hockey is such a White sport (the National Hockey League is 93% self-identified as White). Even the cultural references I use while writing poetry to reflect on my Whiteness are White.

Future research should dig deeper into critical analyses of the ways that self-identified antiracist White researchers perpetuate Whiteness. I agree with Zembylas' (2005) assertion that emotion deserves more attention than it presently receives. White teacher educators should foreground research by scholars of Color, such as Matias, Montoya, and Nishi (2016), as a foundational understanding of how White emotionality works, and elaborate upon it to examine the ways that we (other White teacher educators) also manifest emotionality in our praxis. By doing this, we can more mindfully teach future teachers to understand the ways that emotion functions to both bring people closer together and simultaneously control people of Color.

I do not argue that White teacher educators--particularly women--should police our emotions or refrain from being vulnerable with students. It is imperative, however, that we

acknowledge and routinely examine how vulnerability is disproportionately more available to us than it is to our colleagues of Color. And beyond acknowledgement and examination must also be conversations with our pre-service teachers about how emotional rules historically and contemporarily police people of Color, including children, P-12 teachers, and teacher educators alike. Ultimately, this work pushes forward Matias and Liou's (2015) call for White teacher educators to begin antiracist work with a critical look in the mirror--disagreeable though it may be.

Though I am left with more questions than answers as to how to move my praxis forward, I know that this disagreeable mirror has helped me think about normative frameworks-- such as vulnerability--that I have taken for granted up to this point. It is clear to me that issues of power and race are deeply entangled in the employment of vulnerability (and, as noted at various points earlier, other emotions such as anger), and I must be mindful of those issues as I navigate my praxis. While very few White teacher educators actually wish to do harm, we will invariably do harm by virtue of our social positioning; Baldwin (1955) notes that "people are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (n.p.). What we do with the history within us will require vulnerable explorations of our best intentions with the goal of finding the ways we perpetuate harm. It is uncomfortable, and even painful, but it is necessary.

People who shut their eyes to reality simply invite their own destruction, and anyone who insists on remaining in a state of innocence long after that innocence is dead turns himself into a monster. - James Baldwin (1955)

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