WHITE TEACHERS, RACIAL TOPICS: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF SECOND WAVE WHITENESS

by

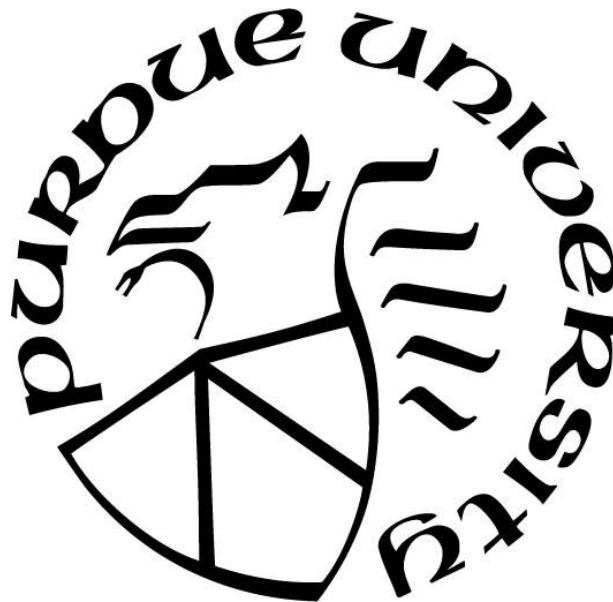**Kevin Lehan Ryan**

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Dedicated to Frank Nickerson

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ABSTRACT

The field of education in the United States is dominated by white educators, many of whom discuss race with their students. Often, white teachers do not know how to discuss race and may shy away from such discussions due to their insecurity with the topic of race. I realized my own ineptitude with racial discussion, and I wanted to find a way to scaffold racial discussions in classrooms, especially classrooms that were mostly white where teachers and students alike may tend to evade the whole discussion of race. I believe that Second Wave Whiteness (SWW) offers a robust theoretical framework to help white teachers discuss race with their white students. Other studies have investigated how white teachers talk about race, but there are few studies that investigate this in the context of a classroom with mostly white students and even fewer that have investigated the efficacy of SWW in practice in this context by directly measuring students' progress. I conducted a study in which I observed a mostly white class of high school seniors taking an African American literature course that was taught by a white teacher. The teacher and some elements of the study design were influenced by SWW. Throughout the study, I collected and measured students' responses to journal prompts, discussions, and surveys. Through a quantitative and qualitative analysis, I found that students' comfort when talking about race increased, students' change was associated with their beliefs at the beginning of the study, and that students' politics predicted their engagement. My findings add to a broader body of work that suggests that SWW has a place in practical classroom application and that it may help students and teachers to develop down the path of anti-racism. This study further implies that SWW may have a place in de-radicalization techniques for white students who are resistant to ideas of anti-racism.

INTRODUCTION

I am white, and I am going to be a teacher. I am probably going to teach *Huckleberry Finn*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Othello*. This possibility initially scared me for a number for reasons. These texts necessitate (or at least heavily suggest) that I address and discuss race, a topic with which I was uncomfortable in general until recently. Additionally, there is a decent chance that I might be teaching these texts to students who may not know how to talk about race. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would be entrusted with making sure that these students emerged from my classroom more racially conscious and aware. This is a daunting proposition to lay at the feet of any pre-service teacher, especially a white[1] teacher who feels the same way I did.

I grew up in a white suburb seeing mostly white people, not having to think about race and being socialized into not talking about race. After years of dodging the question of race, I went off to college where I began to rethink my stances on race as we read Frederick Douglas, Olaudah Equiano, Toni Morrison, and other prominent Black writers. My consciousness of social justice grew as I began to come in more contact with people of color than I had before in my life. I gradually became more racially conscious as I continued in my life as a young adult. There was no specific moment of epiphany, as unsatisfying as that reality is, especially for a paper such as this.

If I had to pinpoint anything as the turning point, it might be a series of conversations I had with a professor, Dr. Lanette Jimerson, regarding race. Jimerson is Black, and encouraged her students to come talk with her about anything we needed during our studies. I took her up on this offer and came to her office hours. I was asking her advice on how to talk about the "n word" in the classroom in which I was placed for my practicum. As I talked openly about race, face to face with a Black woman, I could feel my heart race and I had trouble looking her in the eye. I made a series of carefully calculated and awkward comments and questions, trying to get

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[1] I am not capitalizing "white" when referring to white people, but capitalizing "Black" when referring to Black people in this work. There is an abundance of scholarship surrounding the appropriate capitalization of racial identifiers, and I defer to the wisdom of other scholars in this matter (White, white, 2019). In short, "Black" merits capitalization due to the lack of knowledge about ancestry and subsequent difficulty to identify ancestry in the Black community in the US. However, "white" does not merit this capitalization as white ancestry is often known, and it is less necessary as a measure of social justice to empower white people, who are already privileged within existing systems, to identify with their race.

her advice on how to confront my own discomfort with discussing race. I'm sure Jimerson saw my discomfort, and she assuaged my fears. "Being a good ally is something that takes a lifetime of work. It's hard. But don't feel like you have to make a complete change overnight," she said. Jimerson advised that I work at it more methodically, and that I didn't need to worry about saying the wrong thing. Jimerson gave me a homework assignment, to find some aspect of the "n word" that I thought I could speak about comfortably from my own perspective, and to research it. Dig through some articles, talk to some white people about their own experiences with the "n word," and come back to her in a few weeks. So I did. The next time we met, I felt a weight off my shoulders. I was not trying to say the exact right thing; I had some confidence due to using my own perspective and expertise, and was able to carry a discussion much better. Jimerson agreed that I had been able to be more comfortable talking about race. We both agreed that I had a lot more work to do, of course. If anything, this was the starting point that gave me the confidence to continue to pursue the topic of race in education, and the experience to know to stay humble and always acknowledge my own perspective and bias because of it.

My situation as a white teacher daunted by the prospect of talking about race is a common situation for many other white teachers. Often, white teachers do not feel that they have been properly prepared to have racial discussions in the classroom. Ullucci (2012) emphasizes the particular importance of educating teachers on race. Regardless of the context of the students, Ullucci points out that white teachers need to be aware of their own racial identities and how they impact their teaching. This viewpoint is borne out as in the most recent data published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) about the racial breakdown of teachers in the United States. According to the most recent NCES data, in 2016, 80% of all public school teachers identified as white. This percentage includes elementary and secondary teachers of all subjects. By contrast, the NCES reported that only 49% of the public school student population in the United States is white (NCES, 2016). While there is an overwhelming majority of whites in the population of teachers, it is not entirely representative of the student population. This means that many students, whether they be white or people of color, will see mostly white teachers as they go through the public education system. There is a relatively good chance that most students will read Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave* and will have discussions about slavery with a white teacher, just as students may also read and discuss *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* with a white teacher.

In a recent article published in *English Education*, Tanner (2019) asserts that whiteness is a white problem. He suggests that white people often step to the sidelines of racial discussion and activism because they believe that they have no horse in the race, when they should instead be examining whiteness more closely. I want to take up Tanner's call to grapple with whiteness, as I believe it is important not only for myself as I transition into my role as a teacher but also for other white teachers to understand that they are raced and that there is framework that can help them navigate thinking about race. The problem, broadly speaking, is that race is an issue with which white teachers need help in order to address in the classroom. I expand on this problem in greater detail in the next section. I believe that Second Wave Whiteness (SWW) is a theoretical framework that many white teachers would benefit from learning and using in their own classrooms. This framework emphasizes having a more open and honest attitude to talking about race and exploring identity that is potentially less intimidating for white teachers. Through my own research I have found SWW to be useful and helpful on a personal level as well.

Identity Statement

Because this endeavor is rather personal for me and I am a supporting character in this thesis, I believe it is important to explain a bit more about who I am to make my positionality transparent. I am a firm believer in the fact that it is impossible to be objective. I know that I will bring some of my own bias into my research, regardless of how consciously I try to stay objective. I identify as white. As far as family history can tell, my ancestors are mostly of Northern European descent (Irish, German, Scottish, Norwegian, and Dutch) and came to the United States in the 1850's. My father works as a prosecutor for King County, Washington, and comes in contact with law enforcement, people convicted of crimes, and victims of crimes relatively frequently. This means that many of the people he deals with are people of color, many of whom are especially suspicious of my father due to the strained relationship that many people of color (Black people in particular) have with law enforcement. This relationship goes both ways; I have seen the subtle, casual racism of my father growing up. As we were watching TV, he might comment on commercials which feature Black families in middle-class suburban settings, usually with the sarcastic refrain, "Oh sure, the normal, middle-class, suburban Black family." As a child, I accepted these comments at face value, believing that my father was knowledgeable about the world and wouldn't say such things unless they were true. To be fair to

him, it is just as likely that he was making a statement about how often he sees Black people in his neighborhood, which wasn't often at all.

I grew up in Mukilteo, Washington, which is a suburb of Seattle, one of the whiter cities in the United States. Throughout my early life, I barely knew any people of color (those who I did know were mostly Asian) and certainly didn't think about race much beyond the few lessons we would have on race in school. If asked about my views on race, I probably would have said that I don't think about it and don't feel qualified to talk about it since I'm white. When the topic of race did come up in conversation, I felt fairly defensive about it, feeling an intense "white guilt" that I felt was both wholly deserved and completely unfair. I believed that white people had kept people of color down for so long that it didn't seem like a bad idea for me to be guilty about it. Yet, I felt that I was not personally responsible for the systemic racism in this country, nor was my family. My ancestors were not slave owners; they were European immigrants trying to make ends meet. While I paid lip service to the struggle that many people of color meet in America, I was hesitant to express my negative feelings about white guilt. I felt that the best way to be a "good white person" was to let people of color speak for themselves, express only my white guilt, and try to stay out of racial discussions for fear of being called a "racist." To me, being called a "racist" was one of the worst things that could happen, and my immediate family expressed similar sentiments and fear about being called "racist"; because of this, I did not explore or engage in issues of race that often, especially with people outside of my immediate family.

In college, I began to think more critically about race in America. Over the course of the past six years, I have started to form new thoughts on race, racial identity, and systemic racism in America. I am married to a woman who identifies as a person of color and have been working in my personal life to address my own whiteness and how race impacts our relationship and our identities. I am still navigating through my own feelings about my whiteness, discovering new dynamics that were invisible to me almost daily. While I try to be a good ally as much as I can, I also try to be careful to not overstep my boundaries and always be willing to listen and learn. There is still a lot of self-discovery I am going through, even in the process of writing this thesis. But as I continue in my studies, I am steadily developing my own anti-racist stance and realizing that a healthy white identity is not one of guilt. My hope is that this thesis will help me further

develop my abilities to examine and talk about race, especially in my capacity as an English teacher working with mostly white students.

Although I understand intellectually that white is a race, just as Black, Asian, or any other race, it is difficult for me to fully conceive of myself as raced. Years of cultural conditioning have taught me that I am without race. However, when I have tried to express my whiteness and what it means to me, I usually end up at the same main point: privilege. I will tackle privilege first. To me, it seems that white people have historically been afforded the most privilege in Western society. This privilege allows white people to access higher education, the job market, the housing market, social services, and a whole host of other benefits with much more ease than people of color. For this reason, I do not believe that whiteness is entirely measured by ancestry so much as by skin color. As an example, take someone who does not identify as white yet has a light skin color. The perceived "whiteness" of their skin works to their advantage in many social situations: they are less likely to be followed around a store when shopping, or less likely to be stopped by police. When I speak of whiteness, I am often speaking of privilege.

The Study in a Nutshell

I conducted the current study to test the effects of a SWW-influenced teacher and curriculum on students' views about race. I specifically selected a Novels class at Richardson High School (a mostly white school) in which a white teacher and mostly white students read works of African American literature. My hope was that through a SWW-influenced teacher and course of study, students would be exposed to SWW and begin to think about race differently. I believe that my findings validate the usefulness of SWW in a practical application, as well as suggest the use of SWW to de-radicalize students who may be leaning away from anti-racism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background

The aim of this study is to assess the effectiveness of Second Wave Whiteness (SWW) as a theoretical framework that teachers can use in a predominantly white school setting. As such, it is important to ground my work in the extant literature to have a clear understanding of SWW. I begin by further addressing the problem of whiteness in education and how we might look to SWW to address the problem. I then discuss SWW by tracing the history of this theoretical framework from its early influences in Critical Race Theory (CRT). I then define what SWW is by laying out my own summary of the main tenets of SWW, after which I review scholarly work that justifies these tenets. Next, I discuss studies conducted within the framework of SWW that are similar to the current study. Finally, I position my own study within the literature and explain how my study fills a gap in the research.

By and large, teacher education programs do not seem to have made it easy for white teachers to grapple with their own whiteness (Ullucci, 2012; Sleeter, 2016; Lee-Nichols, 2012). While there are typically classes on "multiculturalism" that are intended to prepare teacher candidates for talking about race, teacher candidates are seldom afforded the opportunity to talk about and explore whiteness (Sleeter, 2016). White teachers are often afraid to talk about race, and sometimes actively avoid it, although this is seldom out of ignorance about racial issues but rather fear of saying the wrong things or being labeled a racist (Lensmire, 2010; Segall & Garrett, 2013). Furthermore, when teachers do talk about race, a colorblind stance (i.e., saying "I don't see race" as a way to evade discussions of race) is common (Marx, 2006; Irvine, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Colorblind stances are problematic for a number of reasons, not least of which is that it discredits the real experience that people of color have had as a consequence of their race (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). This is not to say that all white teachers, or even most white teachers, are hateful, racist people; I believe that most white teachers are trying as best as they can to teach all of their students because they truly care about their students. However, as Lee-Nichols (2012) deftly states, "I also believe that because of limited engagement with issues of race and other areas of diversity, well-intentioned and well-meaning teachers can unintentionally reinforce white supremacy in predominantly white classrooms" (p. 7).

Whiteness is an issue that I must address as a white teacher. As previously mentioned, Tanner (2019) highlights two main issues: that of white people not seeing themselves as raced, and that of white people needing to step up to tackle the problem of whiteness. Toni Morrison (1998) emphasized white peoples' general lack of understanding that they are raced in an interview with Charlie Rose, when she responded to a question about when she will stop writing about Black issues by saying, "Tolstoy writes about race all the time. So does Zola, so does James Joyce. Now if anybody can go up to an imaginary Joyce and say 'You write about race all the time, it's central in your novels. When are you going to write about…what?' Because, you see, the person who asks that question doesn't understand that he is also, he or she is also raced" (Rose, 1998). Tanner reminds the reader that white is a race too, and that most of the time it is taken for granted that white people are the default, or neutral. This attitude that "whiteness is default" is problematic for a number of reasons, but the most salient of these reasons is that white people may not think that race is an issue that pertains to them, which means that they tend to not examine their own race.

The idea that white people do not sufficiently examine their own race is expressed in other literature as well (Lensmire, 2017; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Sleeter 2016; Ullucci, 2012). Tanner and other scholars in the field agree that the problem of white supremacy and racism cannot be fixed by people of color entirely. Tanner echoes the argument made by many social justice advocates that by doing nothing, white people perpetuate the racism that is inherent in the system. Therefore, white people need to also engage in racial discourse and action. Tanner is, in a sense, rejecting Freire's (1970) idea that the oppressors cannot be part of the change in the systems of power. Since whites wield a considerable amount of power and privilege for historical and cultural reasons, it is the responsibility of whites to be allies if they are committed to changing the inequitable power dynamic of race in the United States. Freire's model may not entirely account for the complexities of race and whiteness in the United States. Freire himself is Brazilian and wrote *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in response to specific issues he saw with politics and education in Brazil. While it is possible to apply much of his theory more generally, it is difficult to map some of the nuanced dynamics of oppressed and oppressors to the context of the United States. As oppressors, it may be true that white people cannot truly liberate the oppressed. However, white people occupy a place of privilege and can effect meaningful changes within the system of institutional racism from their relatively privileged position. White

people can play a role in Freire's model, not necessarily as liberators, but as allies to the oppressed as they liberate themselves (Freire, 1970). As Freire states, one of the most powerful modes through which this praxis can be achieved is through education, so it becomes even more important for white educators to know their role in the system of institutional racism and how they can be effective allies.

It is critical that white teachers understand their own whiteness, not only for their own purposes as educators, but also for the benefit of their students. I believe that Second Wave Whiteness (SWW) is a theoretical framework that many white teachers would benefit from learning and implementing parts of this into their own classrooms, especially in order to advance their white students on the path to anti-racism. This theory emphasizes having a more open and honest attitude to talking about race and exploring identity that is potentially less intimidating for white teachers.

In order to better understand SWW and how it can achieve these goals, I will provide an overview of Critical Race Theory, the theory upon which SWW is built.

Critical Race Theory

In the 1960's, a movement formed that was called Critical Legal Studies (CLS), which was a liberal movement that aimed to advance policy and legal doctrine while being critical of traditional means of legal scholarship (Gordon, 1990). CLS grew into a small but vocal group of scholars who advocated for viewing and using the law as an instrument of social and cultural justice instead of a dogmatic set of rules (Crenshaw, 1988). As the movement picked up steam through the 70's, however, some scholars believed that CLS did not go far enough to advocate for civil rights, especially in regards to issues of race. This is when Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged (Delgado, 1995). CRT began to become popular in the 1980's and experienced monumental growth through the 1990's (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Research and writing regarding CRT continued after the 1990's and is still used today by many scholars (Marx, 2003).

A subset of CRT, referred to as Critical Whiteness Studies (CW), specifically examines whiteness. Owing to the fact that CW fits under the umbrella of CRT, I write about both CRT and CW concurrently in this section. For the most part, the core values and beliefs of CW map directly onto CRT, the only deviation being a more precise focus on whiteness (Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Within CRT, CW itself became the new frontier that many theorists

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gravitated towards, especially within the field of education (Marx, 2003). In its heyday, many seminal research studies examined whiteness in the classroom, mostly through studying white teachers and their interactions with students of color (Frankenburg, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1996; Marx, 2003; McIntosh, 1988; Mcintyre, 2002; Sleeter, 1996).

The idea behind CRT is that racism is still a problem, and that issues of racism cannot be tackled effectively with the slow, plodding pace at which society is moving (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Many devotees of CRT wanted systemic change to occur at a quicker pace and with more impactful changes to policy in order to facilitate the progress towards racial justice (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Within the field of education, CRT picked up steam and garnered many followers (Ladson-Billings, 1998). I will be mostly looking at CRT and its application through the lens of the education field; however, I do wish to acknowledge that CRT extended across many fields of study and still makes its presence known in contemporary activism.

The guiding principle of CRT was to fundamentally change the power structure of society in regards to race to have a racially equitable and just society (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Throughout the writings of many scholars in CRT, a handful of themes come up as ways to bring about this change (Delgado, 1995; Frankenburg, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1998; McIntosh, 1988; Tatum, 1997). The following is a list of CRT's most common themes:

- Acknowledging and understanding that white people are institutionally privileged due to societal norms
- Calling for radical changes to society and to individuals in order to become anti-racist
- Ceasing the use of deficit language to refer to people of color (especially students)

Of course, CRT was not without its pitfalls. Some, such as Lensmire, have criticized CRT for being too confrontational to produce change in those who CRT practitioners deem problematic (Lensmire et al., 2015). Justifying the confrontational tactics of CRT, Ladson-Billings (1998) states that "[a]dopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions. We may be pilloried figuratively or, at least, vilified for these stands" (p. 64). The tendency of CRT practitioners to use deficit language to refer to white teachers especially is posited to have had a detrimental effect on the ultimate goal of achieving a greater degree of racial justice (Marx, 2003; Lensmire, 2010). When someone is confronted with something they are doing wrong and are told that they

are wrong, the recipient of this message is likely to become defensive. When it comes to race, specifically accusing white teachers of being racist, people become sensitive. Granted, CRT generally did not call white teachers racist directly; rather, they would often use deficit language to imply that they were not racially aware enough, or not racially sensitive enough, or not racially enlightened enough to be talking about and teaching about race. CRT scholars' use of such deficit language is a thinly veiled version of simply calling their subjects "racist," and it seems hypocritical for these scholars to be positioning themselves as the judges of proper racial knowledge when they are also using an evasive tactic to talk about their own subjects. For example, Mcintyre (2002) uses section headers such as "Resistance to Whiteness as Oppressive" and "Denial of Individual Responsibility" as she discusses her findings. As she describes what she believes is the gap in the students' understanding, she writes, "The problem arises when white students…impose those same principles on people of Color" (p. 42). The language that Mcintyre is using to describe her white participants has an air of superiority. Describing the participants as "impos[ing]" and having a "problem" takes a deficit stance on the participants' responses. Sleeter (1996) provides another example of deficit language when she remarks, "[The teachers'] interpretations of what they were hearing minimized institutional racism and racially-based conflict in society's reward structure" (p. 76). Again, to use word choice like "minimized" to describe a white teacher's thoughts about institutional racism is selectively choosing to view the negative effects of the intervention which was otherwise effective in moving white teachers to learn more and use better techniques for multicultural education.

Another problem of CRT is that it essentialized white teachers and their identities. A writer may assume that they knew much more about a white teacher's background or experience simply because the teacher was white (Hollingworth, 2009; Leer, 2003; Marx, 2006; Johnson, 2013). CRT scholars were not nearly as interested in uncovering the complexities of the white teacher's identity as they were with people of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lensmire et al., 2015). Viewing whiteness as a monolith of sorts similarly did not help to advance racial justice.

CRT and CW were good starts to a legacy of research and scholarship that has proved important and useful in the years to come. Many current scholars build from the foundation laid by CRT and continue to refer to CRT scholars.

Second Wave Whiteness

In the past decade and a half, a new theoretical framework has emerged that has scholars thinking about whiteness in a different way: Second Wave Whiteness Studies (SWW).[2] At first an offshoot of CRT, and CW more specifically, SWW has become a field of its own within the education community. In their 2016 article analyzing all SWW literature from 2004 to 2014, Jupp, Berry, and Lensmire state that Marx's 2003 special issue of *Qualitative Studies in Education* "marked a consolidation of the field" and that it "can be considered a watershed moment" in the field (p. 1154). This special issue was edited by Marx and included a short introduction by her on the state of Critical White Studies and potential future directions for the field. Jupp et al. (2016) contend that SWW began in the mid 2000's, and while it is difficult to say exactly when, they began analyzing works of SWW that appeared as early as 2004. After 2004, SWW slowly began to attract more followers, with Lensmire being one of the early leading voices in the field which swelled to include Jupp, Tanner, Sleeter, and Slattery. The beginning of SWW marked a dramatic turn in scholarly interest in whiteness in education. The transition to SWW from CW started to take shape in the mid to late 2000's, with more scholars beginning to take on traits of SWW in their studies. Many of those who turned to SWW were frustrated with the way that CW and CRT used deficit language to describe white participants but would not go further to probe white participants' motivations and beliefs. There are still scholars who are firmly in the CRT camp, as SWW us new enough and small enough to have not precipitated a wholesale shift in the field yet. Although useful for understanding many different circumstances, SWW is seldom seen outside of an education context (Jupp et al., 2016).

It is difficult to identify exactly what SWW is, as SWW is continually changing and evolving. However, based on some of the identified themes in Jupp et al.'s literature review of SWW from 2004 to 2014, as well as drawing from other more recent sources, a few common themes emerge (Berchini, 2019; Grinage, 2019; Jones, 2009; Jupp et al., 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Jupp & Slattery, 2012; Lensmire, 2010; Lensmire, 2017; Lensmire & Snaza, 2010; Lensmire et al., 2015; Lowenstein, 2009; Mason, 2016; Seidl & Hancock, 2011;

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[2] This "second wave" is similar to the more popularly recognized "second wave" and "third wave" forms of feminism. While not necessarily overlapping in terms of focus, SWW and its feminist counterparts are similarly interested in evolving the discourse surrounding their respective issues to reflect more progressive research and social policy.

Sleeter, 2016; Tanner; 2017; Tanner; 2019). The list that follows is my own summarization and consolidation of SWW, which primarily focuses on:

- Identifying and investigating race-evasive and race-visible attitudes in white teachers
- Viewing whiteness as a complex identity
- Carefully examining white identity in relation to institutions of systemic racism
- Using foundational scholars' writing on race (particularly African American scholars) to inform modern positions
- Orienting towards social justice

In these themes, we see some holdovers from CW (such as the interest in institutional racism, race-evasion, and social justice). However, SWW aims to improve on some of its predecessors' ideas and expand the field in new directions.

Second Wave Whiteness wants white teachers to be able to understand their own whiteness, how their whiteness affects their teaching, and how to account for this impact with their students. Although it is a relatively small field, scholars within the field have made some important findings and developments.

Before delving into some of the salient parts of SWW in relation to my study, I would like to note that SWW has not been widely tested in practical settings. As can be expected with a relatively new theory and field of study, many scholars in the SWW space use their work to continue advancing the theory of SWW (Jones, 2009; Jupp & Slattery, 2011; Lensmire, 2010; Lensmire et al., 2015; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Ullucci, 2012). These studies are all useful to developing the field and furthering the theory. However, it is the rare study in SWW that takes a step back and tries to investigate the efficacy of the theory in practice. Part of this may be that it is difficult to measure the effects of SWW on students' progress. Many moderators lay in between SWW and students' anti-racist stances, and I believe it is important to test the framework in practice to investigate exactly how well it performs at the stated goal of developing anti-racism. It is even more beneficial if such an investigation measured student progress to most accurately assess the effects. Because of the lack of assessment and the importance of understanding SWW in applied settings, I have opted to use my study as an opportunity to assess the practical efficacy of SWW in a classroom setting. Regardless, most of the studies I will be discussing in this section are extremely valuable pieces of scholarship that have helped to develop SWW to where it is today.

I want to draw attention particularly to the work that SWW has done on positioning white identities as complex, as well as SWW scholars' work to unravel the reasons behind teachers' reluctance to talk about race and some strategies for mitigating teachers' tendency towards reluctance.

Of particular importance to my study is the second point, in which SWW attempts to view whiteness as complex. As previously stated, CW scholars had a tendency to essentialize white people, reducing them to a set of assumptions and stereotypes that were sometimes unfair and often times unhelpful (Jones, 2009; Jupp & Lensmire, 2010; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Lensmire et al., 2015; Tanner, 2017). SWW scholars are careful to not fall into the habit of essentializing white identities. Just as Black identities are complex and vary greatly among individuals, so do white identities. Scholars agree that there are some common themes that one can assume many white people have experienced,[3] but these assumptions should always be made clear and not taken for granted within SWW (Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009).

Another consideration that I find extremely necessary to point out is that race does not exist in a vacuum. Race is intersectional with gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, and many other identity signifiers (Lensmire, 2017). Whiteness affects all of these, but in different ways for different people. For example, someone's whiteness may confer privilege due to their race and class, but they may be lacking privilege due to being homosexual, an English language learner, or having a disability. Interestingly, Lensmire (2017) seems to be the only scholar in the SWW field who acknowledges this intersectionality, and only occasionally at that. While SWW scholars are certainly sure to avoid essentializing, I find it strange that intersectionality is glossed over where it might not be if these were feminist scholars. I believe that, due to the relative youth of SWW, scholars are mostly trying to figure out SWW internally before applying the framework to other areas, which may account for the lack of intersectionality. Positioning whiteness intersectionally with other identities is more conceptually difficult, as intersectionality typically is not discussed within a white context. With time, SWW may have more room for intersectionality.

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[3] Examples that I can personally related to are: engaging in "white talk" (i.e. tacitly talking about race with other white people by saying "criminal" or "thug" or "diverse" to refer to people of color), being implicitly trusted by people in positions of authority, having fear about discussing race or seeming racist.

Perhaps most practically, essentializing white identities does not win hearts and minds. Research has shown that white teachers are often further resistant to talking about race when they are being essentialized (Jones, 2009; Lensmire et al., 2015). I have seen this in action in the classroom as well. Alt-right students especially have a perception of being the victim because of their whiteness. It is simply not sufficient to tell the student that they are privileged; they will dig into their position further. Instead, if we work to acknowledge the ways in which they may not be privileged, we work towards allowing them space to explore what privilege is (Lensmire, 2010; Lensmire et al., 2015). Once a white student has explored their privilege, they may be more willing to work at understanding the nuances of privilege, who has it in what ways and in what contexts, and maybe even seeing the ways in which they have more privilege than their peers. This technique of validating an individual's feelings is classic in de-radicalization; it serves the purpose of helping white students who are not already social-justice oriented to have an easier transition towards anti-racism (Winter & Feixas, 2019).

Many scholars within SWW are interested in the reasons behind white teachers' evasiveness to talk about race and have worked to better understand why teachers can be evasive and what can be done to help these teachers become more race-visible (Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Lensmire, 2010; Lensmire & Snaza, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Sleeter, 2016). For clarity, I am defining "race-visible" as a person's ability to recognize and acknowledge someone's racial context and how their context affects their life and experiences (see Table 1 for an example). When talking about race, scholars typically place white teachers' attitudes on a spectrum, with evasiveness about racial discussion on one end (Hollingworth, 2009; Ketter & Lewis, 2001; Leer, 2003; Lewis, Ketter, & Fabos, 2001; Mcintyre, 2002; Pennington & Brock, 2012; Trainor, 2008), and openness about racial discussion on the other (Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Lee-Nichols, 2012; Tanner, 2017). Tendency towards openness is less likely, as observed in the literature. In race-evasive behavior, researchers commonly find that white teachers accomplish their evasion through professing their own colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Segall & Garrett, 2013). SWW generally views colorblindness in the same way that CW viewed it; as an evasive tactic that white people use to get out of racial discussions while saving face in a way that makes them seem not racist (Lensmire, 2010; Segall & Garrett, 2013).

In order to better understand the reasons behind white teachers' evasiveness, SWW emphasizes investigating the race-evasive and race-visible attitudes in white teachers, just as CW

did (Jupp et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1998). However, where CW would use deficit language to frame these investigations and their findings regarding race evasion, most theorists and scholars in the SWW movement attempt to use more growth-oriented language (Berchini, 2019; Lensmire et al., 2015; Mason, 2016; Seidl & Hancock, 2011; Tanner, 2016; Ullucci, 2011). Part of this is due to the fact that deficit language has been shown to discourage white teachers from further talking about race (Lensmire, 2010; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). Calling out a white person for evading a discussion of race may seem as though it is addressing a specific and intentional action that the white person has taken to evade a discussion of race, when in fact that white person may not be consciously aware that they are evading race.

A few possible explanations for evasive behavior in general and colorblindness in particular exist within the fields of CRT and SWW. The simplest theory is that white teachers are just ignorant of issues of race and racism (Lowenstein, 2009). I believe it was the ignorance theory that drove CW scholars to use deficit language, as they may have thought that by calling attention to the white teachers' ignorance, it may spur them to learn more and, therefore, solve the problem. The ignorance theory, however, has been disproved by a handful of SWW scholars, who show that often these white teachers are not ignorant about the topic of race, but instead have ulterior motives for evading the topic (Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). Often, these ulterior motives are deeply rooted in the cultural norms that these white teachers have grown up with (Segall & Garrett, 2013; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). Amongst many white people who came of age in the post-civil-rights era, race was still viewed as dangerous to discuss; because of the perceived danger, white people often evaded talking about race (Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013). The fear was primarily of being labeled a "racist," and this fear and subsequent reactions to it became a part of culture that went largely unspoken yet subconsciously understood (Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013).

Drawing attention to a socialized norm as if it were a personal choice usually is not met well on the part of the person being called out. When white teachers evade discussions of race, they are not doing so intentionally most of the time; evading discussions about race is a socialized response that is endemic to some parts of white culture in America (Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Lensmire, 2010; Segall & Garrett, 2013). Literature shows that white teachers can get defensive if directly called out for this behavior (Bonilla-Silva, 2013; Marx, 2006; Segall &

Garrett, 2013). The pushback met when employing the deficit language tactic is why SWW tries to use growth-oriented language to address race-evasion (Berchini, 2019; Lensmire et al., 2015; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). Using growth-oriented language acknowledges that everyone is on their own path towards anti-racism, and whatever that path may look like or however far they are on that path, there is room for growth and development. While maybe a bit overly optimistic, it is better to assume the intent to grow rather than stagnation.

I also view the tactic of using growth-oriented language as a further tool towards de-radicalization, an important part of which is validating a person's thoughts and subsequently exposing them to new ideas (Winter & Feixas, 2019). Referring to someone's ideas in a deficit framework does not leave them feeling validated, or even with anything actionable they can work towards. Growth-oriented language may be part of a targeted de-radicalization toolkit that allows people to feel more comfortable as they transition to new and unfamiliar views, such as anti-racism.

SWW has made significant improvements in investigating whiteness in education by viewing whiteness as a complex identity, by viewing race-evasiveness as a result of cultural conditioning, and by reframing the dialogue about race-evasion to be growth-oriented.

Existing Literature: Race in White Contexts

One of the most important novelties of the current study is that it is examining SWW within a predominantly white school (i.e., the teacher and most of the participants are white). While there are other novel factors, the whiteness of the space was perhaps the most prominent and important to my work. Therefore, I will outline some of the past work to examine race through teachers in predominantly white schools to show what research has already been done and what gaps exist in the research.

Many studies within CW and SWW tend to study white teachers in settings that are not white in order to assess how these teachers fare when talking about race with students of color (Johnson, 2013; Jones, 2008; Jupp & Slattery, 2011; Marx, 2003; Mcintyre, 2002; Pennington & Brock, 2013). However, a handful of research studies have investigated how white teachers talk about race with mostly white students. It is important to study white teachers in white spaces, as schools have slowly become re-segregated over time, and it is the case that many white students will not have many opportunities to learn from teachers who are people of color. They will learn

about race instead from white teachers, and it is important that these white teachers know how to engage in discussions about race with their students in order to promote an anti-racist stance. I will discuss the few studies that have taken on this task in chronological order, as this best maps the development of the field of whiteness studies.

One notable study in this space was conducted by Lewis, Ketter, and Fabos (2001), where the researchers looked at the effects of reading multicultural literature in a rural, white community. However, this study seems to have only measured teachers' outcomes, as the data that was collected was all done through an ethnography of the white teachers in the study. This poses a significant problem for testing the impact of multicultural reading, as teachers have their own biases and perspectives that could skew the interpretation of how their students actually responded to these texts. Additionally, Lewis et al. used Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness as their theoretical framework for their study. While certainly cutting edge at the time, Lewis et al.'s (2001) framework contains deficit language characteristic of CW that SWW identifies as having negative effects on the research subjects and also on the field in general. Lewis et al. (2001) focus on the ways in which their participants continued to use "white talk" and perpetuated the position of whiteness in education. CRT and CW scholars, as mentioned, were more comfortable with calling out white people for being racist and for using a deficit language when referring to white teachers' ability to talk and think about race. This deficit language discounts potentially significant strides that some of the white teachers participating in the study may have made. Regardless of the use of deficit language, this study was groundbreaking for investigating white teachers teaching about race in a mostly white context.

An additional study that focused on white teachers with predominantly white students was Leer's (2003) study that was the subject of her dissertation at the University of Minnesota. The aim of this study was to investigate white teachers' thoughts and attitudes about race by way of multicultural literature. As with other studies of this era, Leer's was solidly grounded in CW, which resulted in the use of deficit language as she referred to some of the teachers in her case studies. She consistently essentialized her participants and denigrated their abilities to teach and talk about race with their students. Because she framed her participants from a deficit perspective, Leer may have focused more on the ways in which these teachers were not measuring up to her ideals rather than searching for their strengths, which could confound Leer's

conclusion that there needs to be a great overhaul of teacher preparation courses that focus on multicultural literature.

Leer (2003) also used a relatively small sample of four participants from the same school, although she remarks that the sample she has accurately represents the demographics of the English department at the school. These participants, while they serve the purpose of Leer's case study, may not be the most representative of the population of white English teachers in the United States.

While Leer's (2003) study mostly focused on interviews with these teachers, she also conducted classroom observations to watch the teachers' interactions with their students while discussing multicultural literature. This approaches the idea of measuring student outcomes, although most of the data analysis seems to continue to focus on the teachers and their levels of comfort and deftness with which they discuss issues of race. The level of focus on the teachers in this study limits Leer's understanding of the impact of the teaching, as she is not directly measuring the students. It could be that students are actually progressing towards an anti-racist stance, despite Leer's observations about the teachers' relative ineptitude with classroom conversations about race. As will be discussed later, many moderators lie between a white teacher and the outcomes of their students, of which the teacher's specific language in the classroom is only one.

Trainor (2008) also conducted a yearlong ethnographic study in a predominantly white suburban school. While this study does a commendable job of looking directly at the students and their beliefs and attitudes, it also uses deficit language to describe students' discussions about race. Strangely, Trainor noted that most students had messages of racism reinforced at school due to the positive attitude and constant validation of students' ideas that seemed to pervade the school and interactions at school. She juxtaposed these deeply rooted messages that told students that there were no issues of race at school with the students' critiques of Black writers' legitimate issues as merely complaints. Trainor does not essentialize her white subjects as much as other CW scholars might, which leads her to interesting insights about the potential causes for this sort of language and thought. However, by continuing to use deficit language, she limits her ability to view these students as complex people who may be on the preliminary steps down the path of anti-racism.

Another study done in a primarily white space was conducted by Hollingworth (2009). This study was carried out in a mostly white elementary school in the Midwest, in which the white teacher tried to include multicultural texts in the curriculum in an attempt to teach her students about racism and inequality. Despite being a relatively recent study, Hollingworth still relies on sources and theoretical backgrounds that stem from CRT. Because of this grounding, Hollingworth is incredibly critical of the white teacher in her study. For example, Hollingworth writes, describing the teacher's methods, "Her pedagogical choices can be situated in the broader model of literature in the service of social justice, although Patrice defines social justice through the use of terms like *tolerance*" (p. 31). The tone of Hollingworth's writing about the teacher sounds dismissive, as if the teacher should know better than to conflate the term "tolerance" with social justice. Hollingworth also conducted this study with elementary school students, which complicated the discussions of race. Patrice, the teacher in the study, felt that her students were not able to handle direct and explicit discussions of race, so everything was couched in historical literature and kept more or less at arm's length. Although the teacher's attitudes and beliefs about race might not have been different with an older age group, it would have at least opened up the opportunity for students to have more open and honest discussions about race.

One of the largest differences between this and the current study is the age group of the subjects. The age group (4th and 5th graders) is drastically different from most other studies that examine whiteness in this way. The age gap makes it difficult to map on to other studies, as some of the themes that could be seen in this study may not be as developed as themes that emerge in older students who have had more life experience and time to encounter racial issues. Finally, Hollingworth's study once again focuses on the teacher specifically, essentially making this a case study of the teacher's perceptions. While useful in some ways, this study did not effectively measure the outcomes of the students in a direct or representative way.

While all of these studies did in fact investigate how white teachers talked about race with white students, they were mostly using CRT as their theoretical background. I wanted to see if any scholars in the area of SWW had studied white teachers talking about race with white students, as the addition of a SWW theoretical background would map more closely onto my own study.

In 2012, Lee-Nichols, a PhD student at the University of Minnesota,[4] published her dissertation, which investigated how white middle school English teachers felt about talking about race in a mostly white school setting. Lee-Nichols used all white teachers as her participants in this study, interviewing them about their experiences. Lee-Nichols's study has a few notable elements, the first of which is the setting. Lee-Nichols specifically chose rural schools in which the population was overwhelmingly white. The choice to use predominantly white spaces in a rural setting allowed Lee-Nichols to investigate a critical area of whiteness which sometimes goes unaddressed, that being rural white people. Fortunately, more attention has been paid on the subject of rural white people recently (Lensmire, 2010; Lensmire, 2017). Understanding rural white people is important, as rural whites often have fewer opportunities to interact with people of color on a regular basis, which creates some racial stagnation (Lensmire, 2017). Lee-Nichols also was able to interview 10 participants from different schools and communities, which lends her a larger degree of representation than some other studies due to her larger sample size. Her sample was also more diverse, containing male and female teachers of varying ages who were from a few different communities, albeit all of these communities were rural.

Lee-Nichols focused primarily on the teachers' perceptions (Lee-Nichols, 2012); ideas about student progress are secondary. Lee-Nichols ultimately calls for an overhaul of teacher preparation programs so that they may address race in a more practical way for teachers to be able to apply in the classroom. While this conclusion points at the presence of SWW tenets in action, it remains at the teacher-level. It may be that Lee-Nichols believes it is important for the teacher-level to be solid before looking at the student-level. I believe that even if the changes must be made on a teacher-level, it is still important for scholars to understand what is happening at a student-level to be able to tailor their approach to best fit the growth and outcomes that we would like to see from students.

Berchini (2019) also conducted a study which followed a white teacher as he taught his mostly white class about whiteness and institutional racism. Like others, Berchini focused on the teacher's growth and outcomes as opposed to measuring the students'. Berchini finds that while Mr. Kurt, the teacher in her study, had great intentions and some moments of inspiration in

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[4] Lee-Nichols was one of Timothy Lensmire's (a seminal scholar in SWW) students and worked closely with him as her advisor.

teaching his students about white privilege, there were institutional factors within the school and the district that stymied his efforts. She notes that others in the CRT space may see Mr. Kurt's attempts and actions as a failure, but such an interpretation does not fully account for context. Through her examination of the context and nuance of Mr. Kurt's situation, Berchini expands the idea that SWW must also account for context and avoid using deficit language when analyzing white teachers' attempts at teaching anti-racism. While these advancements in the field are welcome, Berchini still focuses on data gathered from the teacher primarily. Berchini also used a smaller sample size, relying on one teacher in a mostly-white context rather than many. It is possible that Mr. Kurt was not fully representative of white teachers attempting to teach their white students. Berchini acknowledges this fact in her methods section as she describes her recruitment process, yet it bears repeating for the sake of comparison. Overall, Berchini's study contributes to the body of literature on white teachers in white contexts who are following SWW tenets and expands the scope of SWW in practice.

Another recent example of the study of white teachers and white students talking about race is Tanner's (2017) study of whiteness through dramatization in a mostly white high school. Tanner's (2017) study sets the stage for SWW to be addressed in practice within a mostly white context. This study looks at student progress through analyzing anecdotal evidence from a handful of selected students within the sample. The sample itself was larger, with Tanner recruiting around 20 students. Tanner does an admirable job of examining his own positionality with his students, as well as discussing reactions to the project from administrators and others involved in the process. There is also particularly careful consideration given to not essentializing his participants' identities due to their whiteness, as well as an acknowledgement that the voices and views of both researcher and participants in such an ethnographic study should not be taken as representative. Of all the previous research in the area, Tanner has done the most to further the investigation of SWW in practical use in the classroom with a population of white students. I consider that Tanner's attention to detail and precision makes this a nearly gold standard for further research done in this field.

Tanner's (2017) study was conducted with students who self-selected into the sample, and, furthermore, the study was conducted by a teacher-researcher. Although a teacher-researcher is not necessarily a problem, Tanner wisely encourages readers to take his own positionality into account, as his positionality inexorably touches his work due to his closeness

with many of his participants. Tanner mentions that many of his participants are students whom he had previously worked with in the theater program at his school, and that much of the recruitment happened as a result of Tanner's pre-existing relationships with these students whom he had already known and taught. These students opted into this study, further showing that they may already be pre-disposed to think and believe similar things to Tanner himself. Again, Tanner is transparent about these issues and puts his own positionality in plain view for the reader. Yet even with these caveats, Tanner's sample has the potential to be less representative of the population due to the recruitment process and the role that Tanner had already played in these students' development.

All of these previous studies show that while there is some interest in white teachers in white school settings, there is not a sufficient current research done in examining SWW as a framework through which white teachers can talk about race with white students. Nor is there substantial work that focuses on student-progress instead of teacher reaction. Even with the studies that do use a larger sample size, the field is lacking in a substantial amount of data that is representative of the population of white students. In light of these identified gaps, I have proposed and conducted my own study. This study is novel due to a combination of four key elements, namely: 1) a focus on the practical application of SWW, 2) a focus on student progress, 3) sampling from a mostly white population, and 4) recruiting a larger sample of participants.

Based on my understanding of the literature and the gaps that I have identified, I approached my study with the following research question:

How are white students' beliefs and attitudes about race changed during discussions of race with a white teacher who is influenced by Second Wave Whiteness?

METHODS

As there were few other studies that followed the same structure as mine within the field of SWW, I needed to create my own structure for the methodology. I decided I wanted both qualitative and quantitative data, with a much larger emphasis on the qualitative data. This is not meant to be a true mixed methods study, but rather a mainly qualitative study that incorporates some facets of quantitative data to initially inform the direction of the qualitative analysis. To be a true mixed methods study, I would need to rely much more on the weight of the quantitative data with a validated measure. As it stands, the quantitative data was also helpful to show a numerical aspect to my findings (even in the absence of a large enough sample to provide statistical significance).

I decided to use a mix of observation and textual analysis to collect my qualitative data. The use of both of these methods allowed me to see two different levels of student behavior: their outward expressions (observation) and their more personal reflections (text). I drew from ethnographic methods, which was especially appropriate as I immersed myself into the classroom as a participant just as much as I was an observer (Silverman, 2005). My intention was to understand as best I could how taking the Novels class changed these students' viewpoints on race, and I felt that this goal was best accomplished by embedding myself in the classroom and using a few different methods of collecting data to target multiple levels of behavior and attitude (Silverman, 2005).

I discuss the specifics of my data analysis later in this section, but first I briefly outline my analysis strategy and the justification for this strategy. I attempted to code inductively to begin; then I condensed and cross referenced the themes that I found inductively with the main tenets of SWW. I then went back and used these themes to deductively code the data. Going from inductive coding to deductive coding is a research method used when studying populations or subjects that have not been widely studied before (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Silverman, 2005). While there have been studies of white students grappling with race before, none of them have attempted to use methods and measures in this particular way. Therefore, my data analysis needed to be flexible and open at the beginning so that I wouldn't box anything in unduly, and then more rigid and condensed as it progressed to be able to make sense of it and trace general themes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Silverman, 2005).

I will now go over the methods I used in my investigation, starting with the context of the investigation, then detailing the procedures I used, the measures that constituted my data, and the analytic strategy that I applied to the data.

Context of the Investigation

School

All student-participants in this study were recruited from a senior-level English class in an Indiana high school (hereafter named Richardson). This high school is located in a rural area just outside of a university town.[5] As such, many students have parents who work for the university in some capacity. The racial makeup of the school is mostly white at about 75% of the population. The Latino population accounts for about another 10%, the Black population about 5%, the Asian population about 5%, and the remaining 5% is multiracial (Indiana Department of Education Compass [IDOEC], 2019). The breakdown of demographics for Indiana schools in general puts their white population around 67%, with the Latino population at 12%, the Black population at 12%, the Asian population at 2%, and the multiracial population at 5%. Richardson High School has a larger white and Asian population and much lower Black population than is representative for the state. As a proxy for socio-economic status and to further understand the context of the school, I also researched the percent of students whose families pay full, reduced, and free lunch. Richardson High School has about 75% of their students paying full price for lunch, with about 5% receiving reduced price lunch and the remaining almost 20% receiving free lunch (IDOEC, 2019). Comparatively, Richardson is quite affluent, since the state-level percentages show that only 52% of students pay full price, 8% of students pay reduced price, and 40% of students receive free lunch.

I came to Richardson in the fall of 2018, when I was assigned to complete practicum hours for some of my coursework. Before I was even embedded in Richardson, my advisor and I were talking about potential directions for my thesis. My vague notion was to research something involving diverse literature. Dr. Johnson suggested that I read *The Underground*

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[5] Although the school district designates Richardson as a rural school, it has more of a suburban vibe. Many students are more connected with the local town than the rural community, and the school does not face the same resource issues that many rural schools face.

Railroad (UR) by Colson Whitehead (2016)[6], which was Purdue's Big Read during the 2018-19 school year. Johnson knew a couple of high school teachers who would be introducing *UR* into their curriculum. She connected me with Smith,[7] who was teaching *UR* in one of her senior elective courses at Richardson. The connection allowed me to complete my practicum hours for a methods course the semester, as well as do some preliminary research on the book, Smith's teaching style, the students, and the discussions they had. I came to Smith's classroom for two hours twice per week that semester. I liked Smith immediately; she was not afraid to talk about difficult topics such as racism or sex in the classroom. Her attitude and openness made her a favorite with the students as well. A handful of students from the fall semester told me that Smith was one of their favorite teachers, and that they had enjoyed their senior elective course with her more than other English courses they had taken before.

I started to formulate thoughts about how reading *UR* and talking about race might come together into a study, and was able to bounce ideas around with Smith during the fall semester. Partway through the fall semester, I asked Smith if I could come back in the spring to conduct research in her classroom. I would be taking a similar role in the spring as I did in the fall, observing about half of the time and teaching or leading the class the other half. Smith agreed, and I set to work getting her up to speed on SWW. To be frank, Smith did not need much coaching on SWW, as she was already practicing many of the tenets of SWW (even though she didn't quite know it). Smith was enthusiastic about my conducting the study in her classroom. We collaborated to make sure that the curriculum and study lined up, and Smith was always accommodating and thoughtful. Near the end of the fall semester, after obtaining approval from Purdue's IRB and Richardson's administration, I started preparing to recruit participants. Smith's senior elective class only lasted one semester, so the students in her spring semester class were different from those that I had gotten to know during the fall semester.

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[6] A brief synopsis: Cora, a Black teenage girl, is a slave on a Georgia planation at some unspecified time in the 1800's. Following in the footsteps of her mother, she escapes the plantation and travels North via the underground railroad (which is a literal train in this book). Cora stops in different states along the way, with each state representing a different part of the Black experience in the United States during the 1800's. While thoroughly researched and mostly historically accurate, there is also an element of magical realism as Cora travels through different periods in history in each state.

[7] All names (teacher and participants) are pseudonyms

Participants

The spring batch of students turned out to be larger than the fall batch. While there were only 22 in Smith's fall semester, 30 had signed up for her spring semester. I recruited a total of 12 participants for the study. Of these, 10 identified as white, 1 as Black, and 1 as multi-racial (white and Latino). There were 5 males and 7 females in the sample. All participants were age 17 or 18. No further demographic information was taken from the students; however, I did assign one additional demographic variable (i.e, "politics") to students partway through the study that measured their political leaning. As I interacted with the students and began to run through the first few pieces of data, I noticed two participants (Kris and Joseph) who exhibited traits of alt-right political ideology (Lyons, 2017). These participants were both white males. While never having self-identified as alt-right, I assigned this label to them during data collection, as I could already see that the data I would collect from them would be quite different from the data their peers provided. I felt that it was acceptable to identify these two participants as alt-right after careful research and deliberation. I did not attempt to guess at the politics of other participants, however. There were initially 13 participants recruited; however, one participant dropped out of school halfway through the semester.

Procedure

I collected data for this study over the course of the spring semester in 2019, from approximately January to May of that year. I designed the study to be as unobtrusive as possible, with almost all activities required for the study overlapping with routine classroom activities. As mentioned, the class in which I was embedded was senior elective English course that ran for one semester. Typically, students at Richardson take standard English classes their freshman through junior years, each course running the entirety of the year. However, in their senior year, students have more freedom to choose their English courses. They are required to take one semester of composition course and one semester of literature. This academic year, Smith only taught teaching senior-level elective literature courses. She had a variety of these courses, from British Literature to World Literature. The course in which I was embedded was simply titled "Novels." The English department had a list of approved novels that could be taught in the course but largely left it up to Smith and other teachers who were teaching the course to figure

out which novels they wanted to teach in any given semester. Smith chose a theme of African American literature. The subject matter of the class was complementary to the aims of the study; students were already required to read *Native Son* by Richard Wright (1940), *Sonny's Blues* by James Baldwin (1957), *Battle Royale* by Ralph Ellison (1952), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston (1937), and *The Underground Railroad* (*UR)* by Colson Whitehead (2016). Part of the goal with this study was to make the student-participants' experience as close to that of a normal student in an English classroom. Smith reported that the students who took Novels were typically middle to high achieving students. Richardson has three "tracks": basic, academic, and advanced. These map onto most subjects, with each subject offering a variety of courses within each track. By Smith's estimation, most of the students in Novels were academic track, with a handful of advanced track and one or two basic track students. This meant that, in general, they were interested in the course and diligent about doing their work.

It is important to note that my role in the classroom was not solely that of an observer. I was a researcher-teacher, involved in planning and co-teaching lessons with Smith on some of the days that I was able to come into the classroom. I reached the decision to teach and research in counsel with Smith, who believed that this approach would be particularly fruitful for my research and my development as an educator. Part of the rationale behind this approach is that I knew the tenets of Second Wave Whiteness and wanted to put them into practice on my own in the classroom. Additionally, one of the main ideas of Second Wave Whiteness is that everyone has their own unique perspective that is worth exploring; in essence, the students benefitted from hearing varying perspectives from two teachers on the subject of race.

Within the first week of classes, I introduced myself and the study to all of the students in Smith's classroom. Because most of the students were not old enough to consent to participate themselves, I provided students with a consent form for their parents or guardians to read and return, as well as a letter more succinctly explaining the study. I also provided students with assent forms, so they would be able to read and understand more about the study before agreeing to participate in it. After receiving consent and assent forms back from students and parents, I administered a brief opinionnaire (the date of which I will refer to as Time 1 for data analysis purposes).

As part of the curriculum throughout the semester, students received writing prompts where they were free to respond to questions regarding race and their instruction on race in class.

After Smith graded copies, I collected five key writing prompts that explored topics of race and racial identity. Although there were many more writing prompts during the semester, I wanted to focus on five that directly related to race. These functioned as "Journal entries" for students. I also recorded two classroom discussions that dealt with the topic of race. The timing of these discussions was at the discretion of Smith and the pace of her curriculum for the course. I coded these class discussions for themes of race and racial identity, being careful to only include responses from students who had given consent to participate in the study. At the end of the semester (the date of which I will refer to as Time 2), I administered another opinionnaire, identical to the first one, to track any changes in attitude over the semester.

Measures

Opinionnaire

Due to the novelty of this study, there were no measures that exactly fit the research question I was attempting to answer. Therefore, I found it most suitable to build my own measure for the opinionnaire administered to student-participants at the beginning and end of the semester (see Appendix A). The opinionnaire asks first for demographic information such as age, gender, and student identification number (issued by the school itself). The opinionnaire includes 7 questions scored on a Likert scale of 1 to 6. I used this particular range on the Likert scale in part so that students would not be able to answer with a completely neutral option; I wanted students to take a stand, even if their position was relatively moderate. The opinionnaire also contained four open ended questions about race that were coded qualitatively. One novel factor is that the first open ended question asks students "how do you identify racially?" Most opinionnaires or surveys ask for demographics in a much more succinct way (often with checkboxes for a handful of racial identities), but this allows students to answer in their own words and in whatever way that they are comfortable. Although this question was used to glean necessary demographic information about student-participants, the question was also useful to begin coding themes of race and racial identity as they pertain to students' own identity. It is essential to note that this question about the participants' racial identity was the first question participants encountered on the opinionnaire, before moving onto the Likert scale questions and more open ended questions; this ensures that the students were not influenced by their responses

to the Likert scale questions before they identify themselves racially. This step was important as I wanted students' honest and initial reactions to the question about their race to be unhindered by any negative thoughts they may have had as a result of being confronted with potentially difficult questions about their comfort in talking about race. I also collected age as a demographic, but all student-participants were seniors in high school, they were either 17 or 18. Therefore, I disregarded age as a variable due to their same grade level and relatively similar age.

As mentioned, I included five questions scored on a Likert scale that assessed participants' comfort when talking about race in various situations (at school, with family, with friends, with strangers, in general), where 1 was "not comfortable at all" and 6 was "extremely comfortable". The scores of these questions were added to come to a cumulative comfort score for each participant. I included two more questions with a Likert scale about relevance and informedness. The relevance score measured participants' agreement with the statement "Racism is a big issue in America today" on a scale of 1 to 6 where 6 was strongly agree. The informedness score measured participants' agreement with the statement "I am well informed on racial issues" on a scale of 1 to 6 where 6 was strongly agree.

Journal Prompts

Participants responded to five journal prompts about race throughout the semester. These prompts were similar in format and content to writing prompts that Smith gave out regularly during most of her courses. Students submitted their journal responses to be graded, after which Smith forwarded the journal responses to me. Responses did not have any marks or feedback from Smith when I received them so that I could remain unbiased from her feedback.

Classroom discussions

Class periods ran for 50 minutes, although it was split into two 25 minute periods with a 25 minute lunch period in between. As such, I recorded audio from two classroom discussions, each in two 25-minute parts, later transcribing them into documents and redacting responses given by students who were not participants in the study. The transcriptions were each approximately 8 pages. The first classroom discussion was on the topic of privilege. Smith noted that some students needed to examine the privilege that they themselves had, as well as

that of their classmates. To do this, she passed out a privilege worksheet that asked students to respond to questions that would reveal their level of privilege (see Appendix B). The discussion scaffolded this activity in the first part of class, and in the second part, after students had completed the activity, the discussion centered around students' reactions and insights as a result of the activity. The second discussion was a Socratic discussion as the class was finishing *UR* (Whitehead, 2016). The discussion centered around a debate over what the escaped slaves on the Indiana planation should do regarding accepting more escaped slaves or not. As this was a Socratic discussion, students were positioned in a circle and were given free rein to talk with each other with no interference from Smith or me. I remained an observer during these discussions so as not to influence the direction of the discussion.

Analytic Strategy

Quantitative aspect

I entered the quantitative data collected from the seven Likert scale questions on the opinionnaires into SPSS (an advanced statistical analysis software that allowed me to conduct many different types of data analysis), breaking them down into three different categories: comfort, relevance, and informedness.

First, in order to see whether there were mean differences in participants' comfort, relevance, and informedness scores over the course of the study, I ran a series of paired samples T-tests within SPSS. Further, I ran more focused paired samples T-tests (comparing average scores between two groups) to determine which sub-domains of comfort (e.g., comfort talking about race in school) had increased significantly from Time 1 to Time 2.

In order to account for gender, race, and politics being potentially related to participants' feelings of comfort, relevance, and informedness (henceforth referred to as "outcomes"), I also ran regressions (an analysis that accounts for linear associations between two variables) to see whether Time 1 outcomes were associated with Time 2 outcomes while controlling for gender, race, and politics. I then ran regressions to look at change from Time 1 and Time 2 as an independent variable for the outcomes. In conjunction, I also ran regressions to see whether Time 1 predicted change from Time 1 to Time 2 for the outcomes.

Finally, I was interested in seeing the effect of the alt-right-ness identified in two participants on time 2 outcomes after controlling for gender, race, and time 1. Therefore, I ran regressions with the controls first and added politics as a second step to see its associations with the outcomes.

Qualitative aspect

I collected and coded student responses to journal prompts qualitatively. I began by reading through all of the data once and taking general notes, using an inductive technique to read without any pre-conceived themes and note possible themes as I read. After reading through the data once, I looked over my general notes from each participant and went back to the tenets of SWW to see how well any of the themes I noted mapped onto SWW concepts. At this point, I condensed and streamlined the themes to fit more cohesively together and within the framework of SWW. I then read through the data again, this time using my list of themes to look more deductively at the data to see if there were any instances of these themes that I had missed the first time through. Finally, I calculated students' change in their quantitative measure scores from time 1 to time 2 and went back through the qualitative data with this change in mind, attempting to pick out moments of change that would support their quantitative change. After going through these multiple rounds of coding, condensing, and verifying, I arrived at a list of 10 themes that are: evasiveness, visibility, contextualization, victimization, comfort, positionality, acknowledgement of complex identities, acknowledgement of institutional racism, colorblindness, and relevance (see Table 1 for a detailed table that shows definitions and examples of themes). I used the class discussions to supplement the qualitative findings from the journal prompts and coded them using the same themes.

Table 1. Definitions and examples of each of the main themes that were used to code the data.

Theme	Definition	Example
Evasiveness	Moments when students avoid specifically discussing a topic. I will often use the term "race-evasive" to describe this evasiveness in regards to racial discussion.	"I think in general, a teacher of a *certain* race should be unbiased." Added emphasis on *certain* Jeff, T1

Table 1 continued

Visibility	Moments when students are able to recognize and acknowledge someone's context and how their context affects their life and experiences. I will often use the term "race-visible" to describe this visibility in regards to racial discussion.	"I can see where I might have answered some of these questions differently if I wasn't white." Beth, D1
Contextualization	Moments when students acknowledge the context of an event as a complicating factor for understanding it. Using knowledge about a time period or attitude to inform inferences made about an event.	"During that time period, the lighter a black person's skin was, the more favorable they were in the eyes of white and black people alike." Jacqueline, J3
Victimization	Moments when students claim to be victims of a form of discrimination, usually racism of sexism.	"As a white male, I feel as though my voice doesn't matter and I don't get an opinion." Joseph, T2
Comfort	Moments when students display comfort discussing race. Not to be confused with visibility, comfort is more about a student's ease with which they talk about race (although often comfort and visibility are seen together).	"I believe that Janie does not see herself as a white person, but as a black person because these are the people who she associates with during this time of segregation." Beth, J3
Positionality	Moments when students acknowledge their own position or the position of others (racial, gender, age, etc.) in society and how this affects their ability to perspective-take. Not to be confused with contextualization, which deals with the context of events, not people.	"Being that she is white, it may be harder for people to take her seriously" Emma, T1
Acknowledgement of complex identities	Moments when students acknowledge the complexity of peoples' identities beyond their basic demographic information, either their own of others.	"Black people think that just because I'm white I think I get everything and I own everything. And that I think everything is mine. No the real reason I have what I have is because I work my butt off and so do my white parents." Joseph, J4

Table 1 continued

Acknowledgement of institutional racism	Moments when students acknowledge the existence of institutional racism and the effects that it may have on those who are oppressed by it.	"Racism I feel like is sugar coated and if it is talked about in school it doesn't tell you the whole truth about slavery." Teresa, T2
Colorblindness	Moments when students profess a colorblind stance, proclaiming that they "do not see race" or something to this effect. Usually seen with evasiveness.	"All races are different with their own view. But in America we all come together to form one race and that's called American." Joseph, T1
Relevance	Moments when students express that class material and discussion has relevance to the wider world, specifically in regards to racial discussion.	"I do think our society could produce a Bigger Thomas [main character from *Native Son*]. A Bigger Thomas is a person produced by rage, unfair rights, and survival." Teresa, J1

RESULTS

In this section, I start by explaining my quantitative data and findings from these data. I then outline how my quantitative data helped to direct my qualitative analysis and overview the main parts of my analysis. I will then draw implications from my findings.

Quantitative Analysis

I will begin with the results of the pre- and post-intervention opinionnaires, specifically the results of the series of questions that were scored quantitatively. At Time 1, the average level of comfort that students had when talking about race had a mean of 5.08 with a standard deviation of .79. This score shifted to a mean of 5.25 with a standard deviation of .75 at Time 2. While the change was slight, a paired samples test indicated that this result was significant. The minor changes in the means of students' beliefs of relevance and informedness were not significant. This indicates that students grew most in terms of their comfort in discussing racial issues, while their belief that race was a pressing issue and their belief that they were informed about racial issues did not significantly change.

Within the grouped variable of average comfort, there were 5 sub-scores of comfort for talking about race with different audiences (at school, with family, with friends, with strangers, and in general). I conducted paired samples tests with each variable to test the significance of average change from Time 1 to Time 2. Of these, comfort with strangers was found to be the only score that significantly changed from Time 1 to Time 2. This indicates that students grew most in terms of their comfort in discussing racial issues with strangers, while there was not significant growth in other comfort areas.

The most consistent result from regression models was that the change in comfort, relevance, and informedness was significantly associated with scores for each of these components at Time 1. In other words, the participants' beliefs and views about race at the beginning of the study impacted how much their views changed over the course of the study. As I was running the regressions, I also found that politics (specifically alt-right-ness) significantly influenced how much participants' relevance scores changed over time. The participants identified as alt-right had no significant change in their relevance scores, while other participants

did show change. Participants' politics did not have an effect on other covariates, such as informedness or comfort. While these findings were not unexpected, they are interesting to note.

I used these quantitative analyses to provide direction for my qualitative analysis, allowing me to use the qualitative data to explore possible reasons for the patterns I observed in the qualitative data. The quantitative data was helpful in order to begin to make sense of the data, but the majority of my argument will rest on the data uncovered in the qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

Before delving into the qualitative analysis, I will briefly outline the three main areas in which I analyzed the data. First, due to the quantitative findings, I focused on the change that I saw in the participants' levels of comfort when writing about race, which manifested in evasiveness, visibility, and a propensity for calling out evasive behavior, partially as an effect of Smith's own comfort. Secondly, I looked at the cases in which viewpoints seemed to change and under what circumstances those changes were made, where I identified that students generally fit into either "becoming" or "strengthening" roles as an effect of their initial viewpoints as well as their increased comfort. Finally, I looked at the alt-right participants. I was curious how their comfort had increased while their relevance stayed the same. I wanted to know what exactly had changed and under what circumstances. I focused on minimization, victimization, and "move-on rhetoric" as the three themes that explained the reason why alt-rightness could predict participants' relevance scores. After analyzing these three main areas, I also briefly outlined the ways in which participants' responses mapped onto the five main tenets of SWW to see which tenets seemed to be most common and impactful in order to inform the implications of the study, which I will explain later.

Increasing comfort by moving from evasiveness to visibility.

I believe that an effective way to track students' progress towards anti-racism is by looking at their levels of evasiveness or visibility. As participants became more comfortable discussing race over the course of the semester, they became less evasive when writing about race in their journaling prompts or in class discussions.

Jeff was a student who started out a bit evasive when talking about race. His response to one question on the opinionnaire regarding participants' thoughts on race in the US demonstrates this:

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Race is in "crisis" mode in this day in age. They [one race vs another] just can't seem to get along (as a majority, not all races)

Jeff makes a series of caveats about who he is talking about, and never directly mentions a specific race, rather saying "one race vs another" in brackets. Jeff also uses quotation marks to write the word crisis, which can indicate that one is using another person's words to describe something (the more technical interpretation) or that one simply doesn't believe or agree with what they are quoting. In either case, the quotations serve as a way for Jeff to distance himself from such strong language and potentially make a subtle statement of disagreement. While certainly not denying the existence of racism, Jeff seems to be cautious about his word choice and tries to keep his distance. This was at Time 1, the beginning of the semester. During the first writing prompt, which asked how "current" the issues and characters of *Native Son* seemed, Jeff makes another careful observation after noting his interest in working in law enforcement:

My personal belief, is that situations need to be evaluated and approached from both sides, in order to shed some better light on the issues. One side claims that police are too brutal, racist, and are not upholding the law to a fair standard. The other side has their hands tied.

Jeff is once again not calling anybody out on either side, opting instead to write about "one side" or "the other side." He takes a cautiously neutral stance. Again, I see him distancing himself from the argument. This harkens back to earlier research on the careful positioning that white people often do so as to not implicate themselves as being racist (Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013). Jeff was being evasive, but likely as a subconscious response rather than a carefully calculated and intentional one.

One day in Smith's classroom, Smith had determined that an exercise in recognizing privilege was called for. She handed out a survey which asked students to answer yes/no questions about various situations in which they may or may not have privilege (copy of the handout provided in Appendix B). The survey seemed to have caused many students to rethink their privilege, or at least being to question what it means to have privilege. After taking the survey, Smith opened up the class for discussion so that students could discuss their responses and how their perceptions of privilege before the survey were similar to or different from the results of their survey. This discussion allowed students to begin to think more about what it meant to be privileged in different ways, with students often bringing up areas of privilege that

were not often discussed in class, such as age, body type, and disability. At the tail of end my recording from this class period as students were exiting, Jeff approached Smith and told her, "I really liked that privilege thing. I'd never thought about, you know, some of those situations, and it was kind of cool to see how I compared to others. I never woulda thought about that before." Previous to this exercise, Jeff had been relatively quiet during discussions about race. Smith had reported that he was a good student and always had deep and interesting thoughts on the readings. Although he never said anything in discussions, he seemed to be friends with some of the students whom I had identified as alt-right in the class. While this doesn't necessarily mean he shared their alt-right views, it seems that his perceptions about his own privilege were changed during this exercise. I credit a large amount of the success of this exercise to Smith's openness in discussing her own privilege and her willingness to talk through responses with her students. The exercise wasn't only about acknowledging moments of privilege, but also moments of a lack of privilege.

It seems that the privilege exercise and subsequent discussion struck a chord with Jeff and may have made it more personal for him. After this discussion on privilege, Jeff's journal responses started to reflect more of a personal connection and a willingness to engage in discussions of inequality. In a journaling prompt which asked the students to explain factors of a character's identity (e.g. race, age, gender) that may have been limiting for her and then talk about their own experience with limiting identity factors, Jeff wrote:

> While I have not experienced racial or gender limitations myself, I have seen that at my fire department…I have heard the women say before that they feel as if they should be doing extra work…in order to "fit in with the rest of the guys". I think because there is a stigma that only men can be firefighters, maybe women feel as if they need to try harder to represent themselves.

While this discussion was about gender and not race, I believe the principle still holds; Jeff stated not only the specific identity factor that he was talking about (gender) but made a personal connection.

A subsequent journal entry asking students to do a language analysis of the n-word in modern usage further shows Jeff continuing to be visible with his subject matter. Throughout his short response, he named the race he was talking about (Black). He even presented his own vulnerability, making yet another personal connection:

I have however witnessed the negative use of this word against one another in verbal arguments or attacks. It makes me feel nervous or almost anxious when I hear it in a negative connotation.

Although Jeff did not elaborate on exactly why it made him nervous or anxious, this is valuable information. Jeff is not practicing his subconscious defense mechanism of distancing himself from the situation; instead, he is expanding on his own personal feelings. By the end of the study, Jeff had taken an active interest in discussing race, as evidenced in his final journal entry responding to an interview with Colson Whitehead:

As stated previously, it is very important to discuss the topic of slavery. While it may be uncomfortable, brutal, almost inappropriate to talk about, it needs to be brought up so that history does not repeat itself. Slavery was real, it did happen, and it eventually came to an end but at what cost? These are things that myself, my kids and grandkids, should know.

Jeff still has an idea that maybe slavery is not a subject that should be discussed, as evidenced by his calling slavery "almost inappropriate to talk about." However, Jeff powers through. Not only does he invoke the need to make slavery visible on a broad scale, but he makes it personally important by mentioning that it is something he, as well as his "kids and grandkids, should know." Granted, Jeff is still discussing slavery as a historical event rather than a widespread policy that still has its tendrils firmly hooked into American culture today. He may not see the long-term effects of slavery yet, but he seems to be at least making progress towards this viewpoint. At Time 2, Jeff is much more race-visible than he was at Time 1. I believe part of this was his ability to make personal connections to racial issues. Of all of the participants, Jeff was the most open and vulnerable in his responses about his feelings and thoughts on racism. Even in Time 2 opinionnaire, he writes, "I believe that racism should be combatted, however I don't even know how to begin…"

Jeff reported an overall increase in his comfort score by 2 points. On a 30 points scale, this is only about a 7% increase, which is surprisingly low considering how far he seems to have come. Self-reported measures such as this tend to have lower reliability, however, so it makes sense that Jeff may underestimate his comfort at Time 2, even after having made such progress, or even overestimate his comfort at Time 1, sensing that a higher score may have been a more "right" answer. Race is also an extremely large topic to tackle, and he was only in this class for a

few months, which may also explain his relatively low increase, as he may be looking at the larger picture.

Other students had similar trajectories in their increase in comfort. One instance of this is Sarah, who was one of the more passionate students in class. Sarah's passion should not be mistaken for outrage, however, as she was always respectful and measured while advocating for others. Sarah noted in the fifth journal entry that Whitehead's "abrupt and honest approach to writing was very refreshing," suggesting that she prefers the gritty truth rather than the sugar-coated half-truths that are often told during discussions of slavery. Sarah continues in this journal entry to talk about how there is a need for widespread visibility when it comes to teaching about race, then taking aim at her alt-right classmates:

> Our history as a nation is not as pretty and civilized as the education system would have us believe. I believe it is important to teach history as accurately as possible…The number of arrogant and ignorant white men that are a part of my generation sickens me. They believe things because they have never been taught the horrors other people went through. They do not witness it and therefore don't believe it to be true.

Sarah's calling out of her alt-right classmates indicates her comfort with discussing race and her own views on race. Although this move has been labeled "scapegoating" by some, I do not believe that Sarah was trying to distract from her own deficiencies here (Lensmire, 2017). From the other writing and interactions that both Smith and I had with Sarah, she did not seem to be trying to deflect anything. There is sometimes a sense of community and camaraderie among white people where they let each other off the hook for potentially racist remarks or comments (Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013). Sarah certainly is not interested in protecting her alt-right classmates, instead choosing to call them out for their beliefs. This demonstrates a comfortable knowledge of racial issues as well as a conviction to stand against those who one perceives to be on the wrong side of the issue.

There are other examples of comfort coming about through visibility. Mandy writes in her final journal entry that we as a nation must come to terms with the past: "If this problem is not addressed and confronted, America will never truly face the charges of the crimes and the African Americans that were murdered will never get their justice." Although this visibility is focused on the past, there is still an eye towards the present in Mandy's invocation of reconciliation by mentioning "justice" for the victims of racism. This also represents a lot of

growth for Mandy, who began the study with a relatively colorblind stance, using vague pronouns to refer to white people or Black people. In this passage, Mandy is able to name "African Americans" as the subject. It is of note that Mandy identifies as multi-racial and specified that those races are white and Latino. Despite her minority status, Mandy had a colorblind stance at the beginning of the study and grew to a more visible and comfortable stance by the end. I had mostly intended this study to move white students along the path to anti-racism; I had not predicted that this study would help students of color. It was potentially naïve of me to assume that all students of color would already be perfectly racially aware, but it was a surprising and welcome outcome to see that the effects of the study were present in all parts of the population.

Another student of color who showed unexpected growth was Jacqueline, whose views about evasiveness changed over time, regardless of the fact that her comfort scores were high at both Time 1 and Time 2. Jacqueline is the one Black participant in the study. At Time 1, Jacqueline expressed her belief that racism is still an issue in the United States and her subsequent belief that "discrimination based on race is ignorant." It is important that Jacqueline chose "ignorant" as a word to describe the reasons for racism. "Ignorant" is the same word that CRT scholars have used to characterize white teachers' reasons for being evasive (Lowenstein, 2009; Lensmire et al., 2015). Jacqueline herself is race-visible when she talks about race and racial issues. At the end of her response to the third writing prompt, Jacqueline states, "Sometimes being black has its advantages, but most of the time it does not." Jacqueline displays a candor and bluntness about her own racial experience. Although she does not get into specifics, it is still a strong indication that she is comfortable discussing race and being race-visible.

It is interesting, then, to compare Jacqueline's later writing during the study with that at the beginning. In her fifth journal entry, Jacqueline is responding to Colson Whitehead's NPR interview in which he mentions his issue with the way in which slavery is treated in American schools (Gross, 2016). She writes:

> When Colson describes how "mulled" on writing the book out of his fear to
> confront the realities of slavery, it made me think of how America is in a way also
> afraid of doing so as well, this also ties into his previous quote on how sugar
> coated African American history is when taught in schools. The American school
> system is still reluctant when it comes to confronting this obvious black streak in

our history. Personally, I feel that knowing about the reality of slavery is important, especially as an African, it is something that I must know about. America should come around to confronting this reality, the best way not to repeat the same mistakes is through education and other prevention methods.

By this point, Jacqueline was identifying institutional evasiveness in "the American school system" and was calling for "confronting this reality." She has recognized race-evasiveness as an issue that would impede our progress towards an anti-racist future, and is calling for an institutional move towards visibility. Although she herself is not changing in the level of her own visibility, she is expanding her view to encompass others. I cannot be sure how aware she was of the race-evasiveness or race-visibility of her classmates before this study, but I believe that this moment shows a realization of the fact that others are race-evasive and how detrimental this is. This interpretation is supported by Jacqueline's closing remarks in her Time 2 opinionnaire response:

> [Racism] is still a problem and America still needs to get accustomed to accepting other cultures. America seems to want to sweep its past under a rug and forget about it, but the only way for America to become more comfortable dealing with issues about racial identity, is to accept its past.

Jacqueline is now directly identifying race-evasiveness as the problem. She believes that trying to "forget about it" is the reason that racism is still a problem. Her appeal "to become more comfortable dealing with issues about racial identity" is the crux of this theme, at least to me. This comfort is born from race-visibility, and is a step in the direction of anti-racism.

Although Jacqueline was already race-visible, she became more conscious of the effects of race-evasiveness. She went from believing racism was caused by "ignorance" to believing its cause instead to be evasiveness, especially on an institutional level. Jacqueline's call for institutional visibility was shared by 9 other participants, most of whom wrote to similar effect in the fifth journal prompt. The responses to institutional racism were varied, with some students simply citing the failure of the education system to fully educate them on the topic of slavery to others stating that they would personally like to become more race-visible (although students did not use the specific term "race-visible," this code described their responses).

It is worth noting that of the 10 total participants who identified institutional evasiveness and called for visibility, only three mentioned their own personal race visibility: Jeff, Jacqueline, and Tristan. Tristan sat in the back row of class, but he is the antithesis of what one might

imagine to be a "back row student"; he is extremely intelligent, often writing three pages of well crafted argument for a one page assignment. Tristan is also very empathetic, more frequently asking classmates about their lives and listening to them than talking about his own. Throughout the study, Tristan also demonstrated this empathy with his ability to take others' perspectives and consider situations from points of view quite different from his own. It was no surprise to me as I was reading his journal entries that Tristan was being race-visible with regards to his own race. The rest of the students kept the call for visibility on an institutional level. While this is still promising, it is not entirely the level of progress that I had hoped to see. I would have liked a majority of the participants to have expressed their own desire to be more race-visible in some way or another. The fact that this did not happen does not undermine the growth that these participants have made in terms of identifying evasiveness and calling it out. However, even teachers who are as conscious and intentional as Smith is about displaying her visibility may still strive towards making the issue of visibility more personal, using more activities like the privilege exercise that would increase students' understanding and personal connection with the material, like Jeff, Jacqueline, and Tristan.

I believe that Smith's own comfort with discussing race helped students increase their comfort. Smith has been teaching for almost 20 years and has taught books that deal with issues of race almost every year. She is extremely knowledgeable about issues regarding race in the United States. Perhaps the most compelling trait about Smith is that she allows students to express their own views and opinions freely. Smith mostly validates and expands on the students' ideas during classroom discussion. She occasionally makes a comment of her own. Students can tell that Smith has her own views and opinions (Smith herself noted that she does not make it difficult to guess), but they do not feel as though these are the *only* opinions that are allowed in class. Rather, they feel emboldened to talk about difficult issues because Smith cultivates a genuinely open and comfortable environment in her classroom.

The Opinionnaires asked two questions regarding students' perception of Smith as a teacher, specifically asking whether participants think that Smith is informed about racial issues and whether her race affects her ability to talk about race in the classroom. These questions elicited many different responses as students interpreted the questions differently. Many students mentioned that classroom discussions centered around race; although quantity of discussion on a topic does not necessarily correlate with comfort discussing that topic, it would

be strange for a teacher to spend a lot of time discussing something with which they were not comfortable. Jacqueline answered, "my instructor has done a very good job on directing the conversations in class so that we cover as many points of view as possible." Jeff responded that "she is very well informed in the topic of racism. Her interactive teaching style is very helpful." These responses show that not only is Smith knowledgeable about issues of race in her students' eyes, but that she is also comfortable discussing race. She is "interactive" and explores "as many points of view as possible" when talking about race with her class. Her comfort with race allows her to engage students in interactive discussion in which she opens the floor for comments. She can direct conversation to an extent, but gives the students a fair amount of power and control to say what they want. She is even-handed and goes over many viewpoints.

Evidence from field notes also suggests a large degree of comfort that Smith has when discussing race. During an activity that Smith set up for *Native Son*, she drew up a chart with "Bigger" (the Black main character of *Native Son*) on one side and "Mary" (Bigger's white employer's daughter who he is charged with driving around Chicago) on the other, then asking students where they would assign blame of a long list of outcomes on a spectrum of Bigger to Mary. Throughout the activity, Smith would probe students with questions about why they thought a particular outcome was Bigger's fault or Mary's fault, and one of the probing questions that she used frequently was regarding the race of the characters. Smith could have used evasive language to hint at this by saying "the social standing of these characters" or "the class background of these characters," but she deliberately chose to name the characters' races and ask "is Mary more powerful in this situation because she is white and Bigger is Black?" Her comfort goes beyond directly addressing characters' race, and extends to talking about contemporary issues of race. Teachers who might not be as comfortable would be relieved to keep racial discussion within the context of books set in the past. Smith had no problem comparing issues of housing for Black families in Chicago in the 1940's to modern issues of red-lining and gentrification. She even engaged students in thinking about how current *Native Son* feels due to the complex racial issues that exist both in *Native Son* and in modern day with movements such as Black Lives Matter and the Charlottesville protest in a writing prompt assignment (the first journal entry used as data in this study).

Increased comfort is the most consistent and significant finding of the study. It appears that a great deal of this comfort comes from an increased race-visibility over the course of the

study. This increased comfort seemed to be an effect across the board, with many participants from different demographics becoming more comfortable with race. Interestingly, even the alt-right students' comfort increased over the course of the study, a finding that will be explored later in the analysis. While this finding is certainly welcome, it is surprising given that I did not expect a uniform increase in comfort. I would have liked for participants to feel more informed on issues of race, and for them to feel that issues of race were more relevant, but I will settle for an increased comfort when talking about race. After all, there is only so much that can be accomplished in one semester. At least in the context of this study, it seems that SWW showed promising results for increasing students' comfort when talking about issues of race in the classroom.

Initial beliefs guiding change

I will briefly explore themes related to my second finding, that initial beliefs about race were the strongest predictors of the change in these beliefs. Due to comfort being the only outcome that significantly changed, I will be referencing comfort specifically when discussing the amount of change participants experienced. However, participants' relevance and informedness scores may also influence their change in comfort.

There are a few directions that change occurred. For the most part, students changed in positive growth on their comfort scores; however, a small handful of students stagnated or even decreased their comfort scores. Of those whose comfort did not change, one was a Black participant who scored 30 (the highest possible score) on comfort at both Time 1 and Time 2. The other student who did not change was a student who had taken the same class the previous semester and had already been exposed to the material and ideas that were present in the class again.

There were two participants whose comfort decreased: Beth and Jennifer. Beth surprised me, as she struck me throughout the study as quite knowledgeable and sensitive about racial issues. My notes on her journal entries reflect this and simply point out that she is already well on the path towards anti-racism and only grew a little. Of all the participants, Beth's negative change was the highest, with a four point drop in comfort. The other participant whose comfort decreased was Jennifer, who had a two point drop in comfort. This was particularly vexing to me, as I had noted that Jennifer showed great change in going from colorblind to race-visible.

Before looking at her numbers, I believed she was my strongest case study to prove the efficacy of the study. I believe that I can make sense of both of their trajectories by saying that their awakening to the complexity of racial issues made them feel overwhelmed.[8]

Beth began her Time 1 opinionnaire by identifying her own race as follows: "To me there is no difference between any race. I was raised to treat everyone with the same respect." Underneath her response, I simply wrote "white" to indicate her actual racial identity. Despite this blatant display of colorblindness, I believe that Beth had the best of intentions. She expressed in her first journal entry, "I do believe that the situation of racism has been getting better over the decades, but this problem is far from gone." Beth seems to know that issues of racism are still present, and that there is still progress to be made. As the semester continued, Beth started to notice her own privilege and positionality more. During a previously mentioned classroom discussion about privilege, Beth raised her hand and offered her thoughts:

> I had always thought of people as equal. I mean, I knew there were issues, but I thought they were just little things. But this thing shows that there's more to it. I can see where I might have answered some of these questions differently if I wasn't white.

She seemed to further acknowledge her privilege in her fourth journal entry as she discusses the modern use of the n-word:

> I do not use this word and I will not use this word because I have sympathy for the black community and what our race has put them through. I believe an African American has every right to become angry or upset with someone of any other race who uses this word because of its negative connotation.

I recognize this verbiage. It reminds me a lot of what I would think and say when I was in high school and first starting to realize and acknowledge the issue of modern racism. While on the right track in terms of moving towards anti-racism, I became less comfortable talking about race because I was hyper-aware of my own privilege in regards to race. I even see the same guilt I had as Beth defends the right of Black people to be angry at others using the n-word, manifesting in an also self-directed admonition. I believe Beth was going through a similar realization, and

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[8] There is also the possibility that the pressure of taking an opinionnaire that looked and felt very similar to a test or quiz may have skewed results and created a situation in which Beth and Jennifer answered in the way that they did. While certainly valid as a point of issue with the instrument itself, I find it valuable to still consider the qualitative implications of these participants' discrepancy in scores.

that she was trying to make sense of her hyper-awareness and guilt regarding her white privilege both through her journal entries and through her continued vocal participation in class discussions regarding race, in which she would almost always point out white privilege and seemed to champion social justice in regards to racial issues.

Jennifer also started the study with a relatively colorblind stance, as evidenced by her response to a question about participants' views on race and racial identity in America:

> At the very beginning of time everyone was the same color. Only reason we are different colors now is because of where our ancestors lived. I strongly believe everyone should be treated the same no matter how they identify.

While factually sound, Jennifer uses evasive and colorblind language here, emphasizing the sameness despite cosmetic differences. She does not put much stock in race and makes a blanket statement about equality for all. This sentiment is great, but does not address the realities of the complex and nuanced state of racial relations in the United States today. Perhaps Jennifer interpreted the question to mean something more along the lines of "how do you believe everyone should be treated based on their race?" If this is the case, her answer was generally appropriate and not as evasive.

Jennifer's initial stance is problematized in the first journal entry, where she responds to the question of how current the events of *Native Son* seem and whether society could produce another Bigger Thomas (Wright, 1940):

> [Our town] is typically a nice city without much crime. In comparison, there are places like Chicago and Detroit that produce many criminals and dropouts. Living in one of these places makes it a lot harder to grow not a responsible, law abiding citizen. There are environmental factors that play a part in everyone's upbringing. In a place like Chicago, African Americans are mainly targeted and stuck in a place they can't get out of. Because of their poverty, they have to be stuck in houses that are barely functionable and send their kids to a school that has broken windows and students who don't care to be there.

Although she is remarking on crime as a stand-in for race, she is also providing context for her comments. Jennifer is quick to point out the "environmental factors" that become barriers for the Black community in Chicago. We can see that Jennifer is able to be race-visible, and that she is able to take the perspective of others. There is still work to be done here, potentially facilitated by Smith or another teacher, as Jennifer later remarks in this journal entry that, "Whites and

Blacks come from different cultures" as a way to partially explain differences. Through this journal entry, I at least have a clearer picture of Jennifer's open-mindedness and ability to take others' perspectives.

Jennifer continues her trend of growing in her perspective taking, and in her fourth journal entry speaks about the context that surrounds the use of the n-word:

> Whether you are offended or not all depends on how you are raised and what you know to be true. If a black person's grandma was a slave and they know the history of what happened to her, that certain person would take great offense to the hard use of the word nigger. On the other hand if someone has grown up in a home that uses the word often as an unmeaningful phrase, they wouldn't take offense to someone using it. It is all about perception and experiences…I believe everyone needs to be treated with respect…I think the "N" word is neither right or wrong but needs to be used respectfully.

Jennifer notes that context matters in how someone thinks about the n-word, specifically noting race on one occasion. This is progress from her colorblind stance at the beginning of the semester, and she seemed to be taking perspective into account more and more as the study moved forward. She does not come down with moral certainty that the n-word is absolutely evil and should never be used; rather, she develops a stance in which context and perspective is taken into account, where she advocates for a respectful approach that seems to stem from the context of the speaker and listener.

I found it surprising that in the wake of all her perspective taking, Jennifer wrote in her Time 2 opinionnaire, "I never look differently on someone if they are a different race because the only reason we are the color we are is because of where our ancestors lived." This goes right back to the colorblindness that was present in her Time 1 response. With the context of all of her data, however, it becomes clearer that this colorblindness is more of a defense mechanism. Jennifer demonstrates through her journal entries time and time again that she is aware of the contexts and nuances of racial issues. Her colorblindness is not ignorance. Rather, it seems to be an instinctual response that looks towards the ideological hope for the future. It seems that Jennifer may also feel overwhelmed by the issue of race and resorts to stating what she hopes for the future.

Beth and Jennifer were the only students whose comfort decreased, and I believe this was due to a racial awakening and subsequent overwhelming of sorts. Of the rest of the students who

had positive change in comfort, I categorized their change into two groups. The first group consisted of students who were relatively ambivalent, did not know much about race, and scored low on comfort at Time 1. I called these my "becoming" students. The other group consisted of students who seemed to already have strong ideas, beliefs, and views about race and who simply became more comfortable talking about race during the study as they continued to develop their own beliefs further. I called these my "strengthening" students. It is important to note that my criteria for the strengthening students does not indicate the strengthening of their views in any particular way; rather, these students simply strengthened whatever views they already had. In order to uncover their growth and how their Time 1 attitudes influenced their change, I will be tracing themes of race-visibility and race-evasion, as well as students' belief in the relevance of racial issues, and also their acknowledgement of institutional racism.

I will first look at a becoming student, Emma. In her response to a question about her views on race in the Time 1 Opinionnaire, Emma stated, "I personally don't think that race is or should be a big deal. I think that culture should be more prominent than race." Emma identifies as white, but also mentions that she is Middle Eastern. She reveals in a later journal that she is Lebanese and that her family emigrated from Lebanon to the United States before she was born. Due to her background, it makes sense that she sees culture as a larger factor than race, as she sees herself as culturally different from her classmates while being racially similar, as evidenced by her response to how she identifies racially. Emma seemed to be less comfortable with talking about race. Her Time 1 comfort score was 20 out of 30, one of the lowest in the study. Emma's interest was also low, as she mentioned that she didn't "think that race is or should be a big deal." Her relevance score reflects this, at just 3 out of 6.

Emma began the first journal entry with an insightful comparison between modern times and *Native Son* (Wright, 1940):

> As a society, we have moved far beyond the hostility and hatred that Wright depicts in his novel. While the news and social media may attempt to showcase a bigger sense of racism and hatred between different races, this is, in fact, a huge overstatement of the way people really feel…Although there are differing opinions about whether or not racism will always be a part of society, it is clear that since the time that *Native Son* was written, racism in the United States has changed dramatically.

There is a clear minimization of modern racism in Emma's writing. She acknowledges the racism in America's past, but believes that we are not in a state of racial strife in the United States, and to suggest such is "a huge overstatement of the way people really feel." This minimization seems to be an expression of how she personally feels about race, as well as maybe the feelings of those close to her. I believe that Emma is not looking particularly hard at modern racial issues. She says that in *Native Son,* "there is a designated place in which black people are allowed to live, which is no longer legal." While this is technically true, the practice of redlining in many cities continues, and there are many issues of housing that have to do with race still (Glantz & Martinez, 2018). It is possible that Emma simply does not know about these issues, in which case it would be incorrect for me to assume that she did not write about redlining by choice but rather by ignorance.

In a later journal entry, Emma recounts her experience being limited due to her race. She says:

> My own race has not affected me very much in my life. I grew up in a town and went to elementary and middle school that had two people of color that were students…However, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, my siblings remember being made fun of for being Lebanese, and I, too, have experienced people joking around about me being Lebanese.

It is interesting that she makes this distinction between her whiteness and her Lebanese-ness. She could argue that she has faced adversity due to her race, then citing "being made fun of for being Lebanese," but instead she claims that "my own race has not affected me very much." Here, Emma is demonstrating the main trait of most of the becoming students: limited interest or awareness of their own race.

Emma's becoming is best exemplified in her Time 2 Opinionnaire response. When asked about her views on race, she writes, "Race should not be something that is ignored, but also something that is not important." Like many of the becoming students, Emma acknowledges race as an issue, albeit one that she believes to be less important than others make it out to be. Her comfort score at Time 2 has increased by 5 points, one of the greatest increases of all of the participants in the study. However, her relevance score did not change at all. This further indicates her increased comfort in talking about race, but it does not indicate a change in her

viewpoint about whether race is an issue or not. She has started to become racially aware, but is not yet changing her views as result of her changed comfort.

For the most part, the becoming students were white students who felt that their race had not affected their lives. They did mention racism and injustice that had been done to others (mostly Black people), but almost always within the context of the books. These becoming students did not connect their experience with the books, it seems. In fact, one becoming student, Ethan, wrote in a later journal entry that he did not connect with books at all because "I tend to not feel much after a book because I interpret it as a story, and not really real." The becoming students were not ignorant to the fact that racism existed in America, or even that it still exists; rather, they simply viewed modern racism as minimal when compared to the books they were reading. The becoming students did gain confidence in talking about race, but it seems that their initial viewpoints that racism isn't as bad as it used to be carried on throughout the study.

The strengthening students showed a similar propensity to stick by their initial views about the severity of racism. Sarah is one strengthening student who was already aware of racial issues at Time 1. Sarah scored high on relevance (5 out of 6) and mid-level on comfort (23 out of 30). In the Time 1 Opinionnaire, Sarah determines that Smith is indeed qualified to teach about racial issues because "she seems liberal in her opinions." Sarah continues, saying, "I personally tend to associate those people with being more informed and understanding of the world and people's situations." Sarah demonstrates her already developed sense of social justice by associating liberal-ness with "being more informed and understanding." Her writing also shows that Sarah is aware of her own bias, as well as Smith's positionality as a liberal teacher. Sarah also states in the same Opinionnaire that "although we are improving, we have room to grow in the area of representation and diversity." Where many other participants would write about "equality," Sarah writes about "representation and diversity," two terms that are more closely associated with modern social justice movements. Sarah's viewpoint is already well-developed by Time 1. Having a relatively strong viewpoint at the beginning of the study was something shared by all strengthening students, regardless of whether that viewpoint was liberal or conservative.

Sarah solidified her viewpoint throughout the semester. She wrote in her third journal entry:

Because of my race, I will openly admit that life will most likely go smoother for me compared to the life of a woman, or even man, of color. People of color have to fight harder to get out of poverty, they have to fight to go to college, and be respected in their expertise. People of color have to fight every day to not look suspicious in front of policemen. My fear of authority is miniscule compared to the mortifying thought of being shot if you're pulled over for speeding.

Sarah perceives race to be a limiting factor for people of color and provides concrete examples of struggles that may be exacerbated by race. This sentiment is still very much in line with what Sarah was initially writing about in her Time 1 Opinionnaire, yet it is now going further than just "we have room to grow." Sarah is digging deeper into the issues of racial injustice and finding more ways in which her initial view can be expanded.

Sarah further demonstrated the strengthening of her position during a Socratic classroom discussion about *The Underground Railroad*. In a portion of the discussion that revolved around whether Cora, the main character, had successfully escaped slavery, a classmate asserted that Cora had obviously escaped slavery because she had made it to the North. Sarah responded:

Just because she's in the North doesn't mean she's escaped. One, Ridgeway [a slave catcher and the main antagonist] could still find her and capture her, and two, she was a slave for, like, 16 years right? She can't just move on from that. She was property, she worked the fields, she was beat, raped, and tortured. You don't just move on from that, even if you leave the place where it happened. None of the people on the Indiana farm have escaped slavery; they carry it with them, you know? I feel like slavery is still carried today by a lot of people whose ancestors were slaves. I don't know for sure, but it seems like that would be a hard thing to shake.

Again, Sarah not only vocalized her own views on the effects of slavery on Black people today, but she also carefully positioned and contextualized herself as someone who cannot "know for sure" what that feels like due to her own whiteness. Sarah's views stayed generally consistent (i.e. social justice oriented), although she began using stronger rhetoric to express them and seems to have developed them in nuanced ways.

By Time 2, her views strengthened. She now writes, "I believe that people in the minority are harassed and given less opportunity. I believe there are still judgements and prejudices that limit them." Compare this with her initial statement that race relations are generally better than they were but that there is room for improvement. While the general sentiment is still more or less the same, Sarah is not expressing her views in terms of how much

progress we have already made; instead she is highlighting how much of an issue there still is regarding race. She has dropped her reticent statement of room for growth and is now being bolder about the "judgements and prejudices that limit [people of color]."

Sarah is just one example of the strengthening archetype. The strengthening students have varying views on race, but they always appear well-developed at the Time 1 and have developed even further by Time 2. I believe this to be an effect of their growth in comfort. Sarah's own comfort score improved, as did all other strengthening students. The increased level of comfort that the study afforded them allowed these students to explore their views more and, by doing so, strengthen them.

Overall, it is difficult to justify the finding that Time 1 attitudes predict change. Not all students fit into this model. However, of the students who did show change as an effect of their Time 1 beliefs, comfort retained its large role in bolstering their change and development. I have not addressed any strengthening students whom I had identified as alt-right in this section; however, I will focus solely on these alt-right students in the next section, which attempts to unpack their relevance scores as a result of their alt-rightness. The following section will also touch on the strengthening of their positions in context of their alt-rightness.

Alt-right-ness predicting engagement

One of the more interesting findings was that alt-right students' alt-rightness predicted their relevance scores; practically, this means that the alt-right students tended to have lower scores on relevance at Time 1 as well as no change whatsoever in relevance scores from Time 1 to Time 2 while non-alt-right students tended to have some change in their relevance scores. As I investigated further, I found that alt-right students showed particular resistance to acknowledging racism as a relevant issue in the United States except when they perceived themselves to be the victims of racism. It is for these reasons that I traced themes of minimization and victimization in relation to the low and unchanging relevance scores, as well as a motif I have named "move-on rhetoric" which was common between the two alt-right participants. Due to a number of factors which I discuss later in this section, I will be primarily focusing on Kris's and Joseph's writing, as I believe that their writing better reflects their stances. I will begin by explaining how I identified these students as alt-right, and then provide brief examples of their contributions to discussions before delving more deeply into their writing.

Kris and Joseph were the two students whom I identified as alt-right. They both identified as white men. During the course of the study, I noticed Kris much earlier than Joseph. In the second week of the study, Kris walked into class wearing a T-shirt that had a large American flag on the front. The text surrounding the graphic of the flag read "If this flag offends you, I'll help you pack." I interpreted this to be a political statement, and recognized this kind of rhetoric as something along the lines of "go back to [suspected country of origin]!" I fully admit that I am a left-leaning liberal, and that my gut reaction was to dislike this participant because of one assumption I made based on his sartorial choices. I tried as best as I could to reserve judgment, but I noted the shirt in my field notes and kept a closer eye on him to see if my suspicions would be confirmed or denied.

A few weeks later, Smith was asking students to come to the front of the classroom and read poems that they had found which correlated with themes they traced in *Native Son* (Wright, 1940). As a classmate got up to recite his poem, Kris looked him in the eyes and raised his right arm at a slightly upward angle with his arm extended and his hand outstretched and facing downward. Kris held this position for only a split second before returning his arm to his side. To me, this looked identical to the salute used by Nazi soldiers and citizens in WWII. I will admit that I was deeply offended; not only were the ideologies of the Nazi party extremely hateful, but I feel a personal connection to the issue because my wife is Jewish and had relatives who perished during Shoah. I wanted to call him out, but it was not my classroom, and I felt that I would be overstepping my role if I were to press the issue. Besides, by that point in time, the student was already partway through his poem and the time to call out the action had passed as I mulled over my reaction.

When I asked Smith about Kris and whether he exhibited any alt-rightness in other ways, Smith initially did not have much to say. She said that she had never noticed anything disrespectful from Kris in class, although she had noted that he was probably conservative. Smith confirmed that throughout classroom discussions, he was always respectful of others and raised his points without being abrasive about them. During the class sessions that I led I noticed similar patterns from Kris; he was perfectly respectful and brought up valid textual points during discussions, although he did not contribute to discussion that often.

Joseph flew much more under the radar. Neither Smith nor I saw anything during the semester that suggested his alt-right-ness. On communicating with Smith after the study had

finished, she said that she had Joseph in her class during his sophomore year as well and was not surprised about his "conservative leaning," although she noted that "he is not outwardly antagonistic or vocal about his political thoughts." It was only once I began coding data that I discovered similar alt-right aspects and decided to classify Joseph as alt-right.

It seemed that Kris and Joseph were maintaining a respectful and unassuming public persona, while showing their true views in writing. I cannot in good conscience attribute this duality to their alt-right-ness, as many students are shy in classroom settings but are more willing to express themselves fully in writing, when they believe nobody but the teacher will see it. However, it had crossed my mind that this was symptomatic of the evasiveness that is ingrained in some parts of white culture, where people do not engage in discussions of race in public settings (Lensmire, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009; Segall & Garrett, 2013; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). In one of our email exchanges, Smith herself remarked:

> What is surprising to me is that [Joseph] and [Kris] were the two students who seemed to feel the most "put upon" by society in their writing, but they also spoke out strongly about desiring equality and fairness for all. I think the disconnect is that they both seem to feel the current state of affairs is basically a fair one and they see suggestions to the contrary as unpatriotic and therefore offensive to themselves.

This tendency to call for equality for all in person was displayed by Kris during a Socratic discussion about the events happening in the Indiana chapter of *UR*. As the class was debating what "freedom" is and what degree of freedom the escaped slave should accept, Kris entered the discussion and said:

> I feel like there's not really 80% freedom, or, like part freedom. There's either free or not. If there's even a little bit of something that, you know, keeps you down, then you're not free. I wouldn't be okay with that. If I were in [the escaped slaves'] place, I wouldn't settle for less than free. I would fight and do anything it takes for me to be free.

While this expression can be seen as Smith's "equality for all," it may also be read as an individualistic expression of Kris's views on his own state of freedom. Regardless of the reading of his classroom contributions, they are markedly different from what Kris is writing in his journal entries and his opinionnaire; he expresses his fears and unfiltered thoughts about race in his writing, whereas his public classroom participation is more positively framed.

Joseph has a similar tendency to express himself more freely in his journal entries and opinionnaires. In an email exchange I had with Smith after the study was finished, Smith wrote:

> [Joseph] comes across as kind and respectful to everyone. He is very sensitive to women's rights and defensive of women, but almost in an old fashioned chivalrous way (I'm a man and I need to protect my woman and nobody better mess with her - kind of attitude). The sexual assault and abuse that Cora suffered in Underground really bothered him and he spoke up against male dominance in a discussion we had about gender disparity in contemporary times.

This is a slightly different dynamic, but still shows him putting on a public persona that is more outwardly focused, whereas his journal entries and opinionnaire responses are more personal and negatively expressive.

Kris's and Joseph's relevance scores remained the same from Time 1 to Time 2. Interestingly, their comfort scores increased, with Kris increasing by five points and Joseph increasing by three (out of a possible 30). On initially looking at this trend, it confirms the first finding that comfort was the only trait that significantly increased from Time 1 to Time 2. This also confirms the second finding, where participants' initial views influenced their change. Kris and Joseph were both in the strengthening category from the previous section on change, although their strengthening was not in an anti-racist view; rather their alt-right views on race seem to have strengthened. I want to be careful here, because there is a temptation to say that they have become "entrenched" or "stagnant" in their views, while other students have "grown" or "progressed." This would be extremely biased towards my own view and preference for a leftist, anti-racist perspective on the world. I certainly do not want to insinuate that Kris and Joseph's views are wrong. I set out with the goal of creating an environment in which students could explore their own views on race and their racial identity, with the hope that anti-racist stances would be the ultimate outcome of this. However, it seems that Kris and Joseph used this space to explore their own feelings and reached a different outcome than I expected (and frankly the opposite of the outcome I had intended).

The most prominent factor that may explain why Kris and Joseph did not change their relevance scores is their tendency to minimize racism as a problem. Kris begins his first journal response by writing, "although racism is still an issue today, it is not as big deal as it once was." Joseph echoes a similar, if not stronger, sentiment in his own response, by saying that "as a society, we have moved on from that racial discrimination and become more one with everyone."

Both of these statements minimize the issues of race and racism. Kris pivots from an acknowledgement of a persistent issue to end with language that quells his earlier claim. Joseph does not believe that race is an issue, instead saying that we have "moved on." They both come to the conclusion that *Native Son* is not current in its depiction of racism because racism is not a major issue any more.

Kris and Joseph seem to continue to hold this viewpoint throughout the study. Kris later remarks in a journal entry on the modern use of the n-word that, "African Americans are combating a false racism that is not prevalent or even shown for the most part." Joseph makes similar claims in the same journal response:

> I just don't see how Black people are oppressed these days. I don't believe they are because now an days a Black man can sue a white male police officer and get away with lying about it. I'm not saying that's every case, but there are some.

Kris and Joseph continue to believe that racism isn't a problem anymore for the Black community. This was initially puzzling to me, as Smith had been using supplementary materials that made direct comparisons between the books they were reading and current events. However, Kris and Joseph have most likely been absorbing messages about modern racism or the lack thereof for longer than they had been consuming Smith's supplementary materials in class. It is difficult to change someone's viewpoint with a few articles in one semester, so I concede that this is likely not a failing on Smith's part, but rather that the messaging they were receiving in class was not enough to counteract what they had already been hearing, likely from sources more personal to them such as family members.

Regardless, I believe that part of Kris and Joseph's belief about racism not being an issue is due to their perspective: they are both white men, and do not have a Black perspective on racism. Granted, this is the case for many white students in class, but many of these students acknowledge their positionality. Kris and Joseph, however, do not acknowledge their privilege. It seems that they are confident in their beliefs about the racism that Black people are experiencing. I am unsure if they have sought Black perspectives on racism outside of the confines of the classroom, but by all indications from their writing in their journal entries and opinionnaires, they seem to be unaware of their privilege. I am certainly not faulting them for this; it is often difficult for white men to be aware of this, as white men can go through so much of their lives never having to think about the effect that their race has on their experience.

Kris and Joseph do, however, believe that they are victims of racism because of their whiteness. This theme of victimization seems to run parallel to their minimization of racism against Black people. In most cases, statements of their own victimization follow closely on the heels of their minimization. In his journal entry about the use of the n-word, Joseph states:

> White people have lost their talking rights. Even white people will accuse its' own people of being horrible and racist even though they are white which is completely hypocritical. Black people think that just because I'm white I think I get everything and I own everything. And I think that everything is mine. No the real reason I have what I have is because I work my butt off and so do my white parents to supply the needs and wants of my life and theirs…I feel as though this so called "Free" country is slowly turning into the very thing it was trying to get away from. You can't say anything anymore without someone getting offended by it. Bottom line is, it doesn't matter what I think about the word Nigger, it's how I choose what to do with that word and how I want to use it or not.

Joseph has a similar thought in another journal entry:

> My race has affected my life in many different ways. Since I'm white I feel as though I am judged now for that and whatever I say is wrong because I am white. Plus because I am white I have no say in any racial issues and if I do say something I instantly get yelled at. So you could say the tables have turned on the white race but that's not how it should be.

Joseph obviously does see himself as raced, and furthermore that he is a victim because of his whiteness. He believes that his whiteness means that people judge him and do not allow him to be part of the race conversation. While my initial reaction was to reject what Joseph was saying and discount him, in a strange way I feel sympathetic for him. Joseph does not feel like he is being heard, and regardless of whether that is actually because he is white or not, it is an awful feeling to perceive your own situation to be one in which you are silenced. Joseph's victimization has gone to an extent that he believes he is a victim of racism, but that he has very few allies. He even says that he feels betrayed by his own race. It seems like an extremely isolating mind-space that he occupies, and I believe his fear of being "yelled at" or called out is what is keeping him from engaging in the issue of race in the classroom. It is not that he doesn't think race is an issue, just that he feels that it is hopeless.

Kris also espouses his own victimization. Kris' statements of victimization are always close to his statements of minimization, like Joseph. Just before he writes about how Black

people are "combating a false racism that is not prevalent or even shown for the most part," he writes:

> Like stated before, in America we are equal, but is it so equal to combat racism with racism? Back in the mid 1900's white Americans treated colored people like the scum of the earth, they would do horrible things to them because if the way they acted, spoke, because of their beliefs, and just by what they look like. This seems awful doesn't it, this would never happen in modern day America right? Wrong! In modern day America white people are being punished for what their distant ancestors did, white people are being made fun of for the way they act, they way they speak, what they believe in, and what they look like. Sound familiar?

Kris' belief in his victimization seems to stem from his perception of peoples' expectations that he should feel guilty for being white, as he discusses in a journal entry on *Native Son*:

> The problem with hate and race is that we are tolled that we should feel guilty about how we are because of something our ancestors did. By trying to make a group of people feel guilty about something we didn't even do only pushes our differences and makes us seem like we don't have anything in common.

It is important to note here that Kris seems to champion equality, and he does not see the current state of affairs as equal. He believes that he is being "punished for what [his] distant ancestors did." It seems that Kris has gotten the message from a number of different sources that his whiteness should make him guilty, and he resents being told that he should feel guilty due to an unchangeable feature of his identity. Again, I admit that I sympathize with Kris. I never liked being told what to do or how to act, especially at the age of 18. Kris's feelings are valid.

Interestingly, however, Kris does not seem to feel the same loneliness and hopelessness that Joseph feels in the fact of his victimization. Kris is process-oriented. He continually brings up how people are more similar than they are different, and how, "there needs to be more books about bringing people together instead of pointing out the differences and pushing people apart." Kris takes a more optimistic, hopeful tone. He mentions in another journal entry that "we need not to judge people upon their words, but we should judge them upon their actions." In most of his journal entries, he includes (and often ends with) a version of, "we need to get over it so that we can grow together instead of grow apart." Joseph also engages in move-on rhetoric; however, his move-on rhetoric is only in one journal entry, in which he asserts that Black people

need to "get over it" because "that happened years ago and move on" before continuing to write on the theme of victimization.

Perhaps the most interesting instance of move-on rhetoric comes from Jacqueline, the only Black participant in the study. She writes in her first journal entry that "we society have not moved on from the hatred, and guilt is the root of the racism/violence in the book. We have just been able to throw the blame on each other yet we don't seek to get better." This move-on rhetoric is surprising to find in her responses, but it may be tempered by reading that her next statement is, "Finding the root cause is only half the battle." Jacqueline acknowledges that we must make progress instead of casting blame on people, but that taking blame and guilt out of the equation is only part of the process. Jacqueline's statement implies there is more work to be done towards reconciliation. However, Kris's assertion that "we need to get over it" seems to end the conversation. He does not write about further ideas about reconciliation, and it seems that he thinks this will solve the problem.

I was not expecting to have participants like Kris and Joseph in my study. Initially I was worried their presence would undermine my findings. However, I have relished the opportunity to understand more about their perspectives. I believe that SWW has much to offer, especially when it comes to exploring one's own white identity. This exploration seems to be what Kris and Joseph were able to do through the course of the study, albeit to ends that I had not anticipated. After all, their white identities are just as complex as others', and their feelings are surely valid, however much they do not reflect the goal of anti-racism.

Prevalence of SWW themes in responses

As I coded responses, one final area that I looked at was how often students themselves displayed traits that could be associated with SWW. As a reminder, SWW generally has five main tenets. They are: identifying and investigating race-evasive and race-visible attitudes, viewing whiteness as a complex identity, viewing whiteness in relation to institutional racism, using foundational scholars' writing on race, and orienting towards social justice.

Of these five traits, I did not see participants using foundational scholars' writing on race outside of referencing the books that they were reading for class. I also saw little complexifying of white identities. Kris and Joseph made small references to how their families had to work for what they had, and how this was not what people would typically think of white families.

However, these references seemed to be in service of furthering their points of victimization. Other students came close to complexifying white identities as they positioned themselves as raced. Beth, for example, wrote the following in response to the language analysis prompt which asked students to analyze the use of the n-word in modern contexts:

> I believe as a white person that we have not been oppressed and we can never fully understand what it is like to be a black person in slavery or just a black person in our society today. To me, not using the 'n' word is an oppression to white people and can give us a taste of what the black community has gone through.

I think Beth's statement here serves to show that she is thinking about herself in a raced way. She is comfortable with naming her own race as "white" and the implications that her race has on her interactions with others. Although she is not acknowledging her identity as a complex one, she is making it clear that due to her identity, she has a different experience going through the world than Black people in America.

Other students also mention their positionality as white people in this journal entry, like Tristan. His mention of positionality, however, is more with an eye towards the authenticity and authority of a writer who might use the n-word, and comes within a larger discussion of the context in which the n-word is being used. Tristan states:

> It is important, though, to consider contexts in which the word may be carefully applied. In my opinion, these contexts are largely restricted to the sphere of academic writing and historically accurate literary works. Some academic work may reproduce the word for use in scholarly investigations of race relations or African-American history…Similarly, some works of historical fiction may include the N-word in order to enhance the story's authenticity or realism. In this case, I believe that this usage is generally only acceptable if the author of the work is African-American. I reason that blacks have achieved prudence with respect to the astute uses of discriminatory language during the course of their lives in a prejudiced and unequal America. Therefore, they are better qualified to judiciously use the word in these select literary contexts.

Tristan implicitly points at his own whiteness, which disqualifies him from using the n-word by his own standards, even in an academic context. Tristan does an exceptional job of perspective-taking and positioning himself throughout the study. He writes in the Time 2 Opinionnaire:

> Race in America is an exceedingly complex question. As a member of the majority, I am not sure I'm qualified to define identity as it pertains to race. Perhaps unlike those who belong to minority groups, I do not strongly identify with my race. I suspect that my detachment from the issues is a product of privelege. I don't think my classmates of color would feel that race is irrelevant in their lives, as I do, because their race likely has held them back.

Tristan again demonstrates amazing capacity for perspective-taking as he posits that his own "detachment…is a product of privelege (sic)," where his other classmates might identify more with their racial identity. There is another implicit mention of his race as he says he is "a member of the majority." As excellent as Tristan's insights are, he only mentions his own complex identity as a contrast to others'.

Interestingly, almost all mentions of positionality were done within written data; during classroom discussions, students typically did not preface their statements with their racial positionality or add it as a caveat later. On the few instances that there were positional statements, they were usually vague and did not mention specific races. This could be read as white students' fear of bringing up race in front of others, but I would reject this reading. Rather, I believe that Smith created a comfortable and open environment in which the students could talk about race without feeling to need to preface their thoughts with their positionality. Smith occasionally shared her own positionality, but more often than not spoke freely. In informal interviews, Smith explained to me that she did not feel that she needed to address her positionality as it was pretty clear for students to see that she was a white teacher. She also expressed an interest in remaining neutral when talking about race with her students, so as to not influence them too much in one way or another. I believe this was part of her consideration for not talking about her positionality that much. This seemed to rub off on her students.

As discussed in a previous section, there are many examples of students demonstrating race-visible attitudes and identifying race-evasive attitudes in others (mostly on an institutional basis). This trait was the most well-represented in the participants, and was closely associated with instances of participants viewing institutional racism. Many participants used their race-visibility to call out race-evasion and the continuing racist effects of that evasion in institutional contexts. Most of this outpouring of admonition came about in the fifth journal entry, as participants responded to Colson Whitehead's NPR interview in which he talked about not learning much about slavery in school himself. Tristan writes in this journal:

> I feel that *The Underground Railroad* is a valuable work when viewed not just from a literary perspective, but also through a historical lens. Critically, the novel neither censors nor downplays the cruelty of slavery. I feel that our standard common core history education glosses over the far-reaching societal impact of slavery, either painting it as too difficult to discuss or as an anachronistic topic of diminishing importance.

Like many other participants, Tristan directly points to the system of education as a major institution that is participating in evasiveness, leading to the continuation of racism. Generally, participants report similar appreciation for Whitehead's blunt and honest approach to the topic of slavery and racism, especially as they compare his approach to the evasive and minimizing approach that most students have seen in school.

Sarah also acknowledges institutional racism in her third journal entry:

> I believe that in some cases I have been given a better situation above others…I believe that because I am white I have automatically been given a position in society above others. In no way is it right or just. I believe that all people are created equal and that we should all be held up to the same scrutiny and given the same opportunities. Today, however, this is still not true due to the way that our country has been set up and built.

While not directly addressing a specific institution, Sarah's writing still indicates a level of awareness about institutional racism and how her whiteness gives her a leg up because of it. She also acknowledges that this state of affairs is not "right or just." This implies a desire to change the institutional racism that she is identifying, or at least to see things changed. These instances were some of the only ones to directly call out institutional racism and the effect that it has. There was not as much of a focus on the way in which whiteness played into institutional racism, instead favoring a call-out approach to combat institutional evasiveness.

The final trait of SWW is orienting towards social justice. I did not find many instances of participants writing or talking about social justice. There were a handful of participants who said things that approached social justice, and may have developed more towards that point had there been more time. As I have discussed in a previous section, Sarah used some phrases and words that sounded like social justice terminology to me ("representation and diversity" instead of "equality"). Tristan similarly came across as social justice oriented, as he expressed a desire to engage directly in what he could do to be a good ally. Beth mentions in her fourth journal entry something that sounds like

social justice as she states, "To me, not using the 'n' word is an oppression to white people and can give us a taste of what the black community has gone through…I have sympathy for the black community and what our race has put them through." Again, this is not directly addressing or invoking social justice. However, Beth's statement has an eye towards reparations, and towards what white people can do to be better allies (i.e. not using the n-word).

Strangely, the only time social justice was directly addressed was not in any of the journal entries, but in Kris's Time 1 opinionnaire. He states that, "there are far left winged SJWs [Social Justice Warriors[9]] who believe that the system that we are founded on is corrupt and systematically oppressing everyone who isn't a white straight male." Ironically, he is hitting on two tenets of SWW by mentioning institutional racism, albeit his statement is minimizing both social justice and institutional racism. Kris clearly has disdain for the concept of social justice and those who practice it. During a classroom activity in which Smith asked students to write adjectives on the board that described slave-owning characters in *The Underground Railroad*, Kris wrote "SJW". This was likely in jest, as a slave owner is obviously the antithesis of social justice ideals. However, Kris's appellation of SJW to a brutal slave owner may be akin to other stark juxtapositions between two contrasting ideas meant to imply ill intent (i,e, a picture of Obama next to a confederate flag). Regardless, it is curious that the only instances of social justice directly coming up are both from an alt-right student who seems to dislike social justice.

Overall, it seems that students most often engaged in identifying and investigating race-evasiveness and race-visibility. In fact, visibility was one of the most important factors that contributed to participants' increased comfort. The visibility was paired with some instances of addressing institutional racism, although these instances often stopped at calling out institutional evasiveness. There was virtually no evidence of students relying on foundational scholars of color to guide their views. The few moments of students viewing whiteness as complex seemed to mostly come from alt-right students, as

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[9] Social Justice Warrior is a term that is often used on the internet to refer to liberal people who advocate for social justice. The term is typically used in a derogatory way by conservative and alt-right individuals and communities, although some liberals may also employ this term to denigrate other liberals who are more left-leaning for being divisive.

were the direct mentions of social justice. A small handful of students seemed to orient towards social justice, but lacking sufficient evidence it is difficult to say this with confidence.

Summary of Findings

Throughout this section, I have shown evidence to support three main findings:

1. Participants' comfort in talking about race increased as an effect of their increased visibility and Smith's own comfort and visibility

2. Participants' views at Time 1 predicted how much they changed, in that some participants' views were relatively ambivalent and they started to recognize race as an issue (becoming students), while others had strong views that strengthened (strengthening students). I attribute these effects to the increased comfort that students felt.

3. Alt-rightness predicted participants' change in relevance scores. More specifically, alt-right students did not believe that racism was a relevant issue at Time 1 and did not change their viewpoint by Time 2. I attribute this to their minimization of racial issues and their sense of victimization.

Some of these findings were surprising, especially that comfort was the only score that significantly changed. I was also not expecting to have alt-right students in the study, and their presence added an interesting element to the study.

I was extremely encouraged by many of the responses that I received from these participants. Not only did they provide good data, but oftentimes they provided insightful comments and unique perspectives that I was grateful to be able to work with.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

I begin my discussion with an overview of the implications drawn from my study, specifically looking at each of the points of novelty of my study and how these points added to the body of literature. I also briefly discuss implications of SWW's usefulness as a framework to use in conjunction with de-radicalization, as well as the need for teachers to draw relevant contemporary connections with older texts dealing with race. Next, I overview a few key limitations of this study. Finally, I conclude with my thoughts on this study and its potential impact, as well as my own hope for my personal future as a teacher and how I might incorporate elements from this study.

Impact and Implications

This study set out to answer how effective SWW is at helping students become more anti-racist when used in a mostly white classroom setting. The novelty of the study hangs on four main points: 1) testing the theoretical framework in practice, 2) focusing on student progress, 3) using a white teacher and mostly white student sample, and 4) measuring a larger sample. I address the implications that this study has on answering the research question; additionally, I discuss the impact of how well the points of novelty contributed to answering the research question. I then discuss the unforeseen alt-right element in my study and how SWW might be used as a tool for de-radicalization as a potential future direction for further research. Finally, I discuss the responsibility that teachers have to make content relevant in order to strengthen students' connections to their own lives.

My findings seem to indicate that SWW does indeed have a place in white classrooms where white teachers intend on talking about race. At the very least, a teacher who understands SWW should be able to create an open and genuine environment in which white students can explore their own racial identities, and maybe even explore their thoughts on race as a larger concept. This study points to SWW's particular ability to produce results in students' race visibility (their ability to recognize and acknowledge someone's context and how their context affects their life and experiences) as well, as this trait is closely linked with comfort. While it may not be the whole package, visibility is a stepping stone on the path to anti-racism. It may

very well lead to participants gaining a greater interest in issues of race and doing some of their own research.   They may find their way through some of the tenets of SWW on their own with the visibility piece already in place. As mentioned in the previous section, the onus should also be placed on teachers to scaffold this learning by providing more instructional support in the form of activities, supplemental readings, or even self-directed research projects. I would argue that it is more important to start participants down the path of anti-racism rather than insisting on a certain benchmark that qualifies or certifies them as "anti-racist."

I believe that Smith's modeling of SWW was instrumental in bringing about these students' comfort. It is clear that Smith's race-visibility and attention to institutional racism allowed students the space to investigate visibility and evasiveness in class. While other tenets of SWW were not as prominently displayed, I maintain that Smith's grounding in these tenets helped to inform both her lesson planning and her discussion facilitating. It may help to make SWW a more visible framework to students. If Smith were to more explicitly discuss the tenets of SWW, I wonder if it would have made a greater impression on the students. I had designed the study for Smith to strongly demonstrate the tenets of SWW while never explicitly mentioning SWW to them in class so as to assess the effects of the concepts on their own. But hiding SWW may have actually hindered students' development. SWW has at least proven somewhat effective within the specific context of this study, and I am optimistic that SWW may prove more effective if scaffolded more explicitly when studied again in a similar setting.

Testing the theoretical framework in practice

SWW seems to hold up as a theoretical framework that can be used in practice. Practitioners may find that SWW is a bit esoteric and difficult to pick up quickly for use in classrooms, however. I would propose a field guide for SWW much like the handout that I provided to Smith (see Appendix C). This field guide would give a very brief overview of SWW as a theoretical framework, as well as provide some ways for teachers to implement this into their instruction. Perhaps it could include a few activities that target one or two of the tenets of SWW. It could even provide case studies or real-life scenarios and ask teachers what they might do or say in this situation if framing their class within SWW.

Focusing on student progress

No other studies done within the field of SWW have paid attention to student progress. All others have been focused on teacher progress or have simply used interviews with teachers to gauge the progress of their students (Borsheim-Black, 2018; Johnson, 2013; Jupp & Slattery, 2011; Lee-Nichols, 2012; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). This study is focused primarily on student progress. As explained earlier, a focus on student progress is the most tangible end point of the journey to implement anti-racist pedagogy into our schools. I believe that the findings from this study, while exploratory, validate the need for more studies that look at student progress. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that it is possible to directly measure students' progress towards anti-racism through both quantitative and qualitative data. If future researchers aim to test the efficacy of SWW as a practical tool for white teachers with white students, it is important to measure outcomes as directly as possible. This need should be paired with an effort to devise validated measures with which we can assess students' progress.

Using a white teacher and mostly white student sample

Although previous studies have used a mostly white sample (Berchini, 2019; Tanner, 2017; Lee-Nichols, 2012; Hollingworth, 2009; Leer, 2003; Lewis & Ketter, 2001), these studies have been few. The addition of this study further validates both the importance and need for continued studies on the impact that SWW has on white teachers and white students. SWW is clearly helpful for both teachers and students, but we must continue to probe at this to figure out what exactly it is about SWW that works and doesn't work. My study shows that SWW helps with increasing comfort, but what about orienting students towards social justice? With more time, how will other studies continue to develop SWW as it is put into practice in the classroom? These questions are especially important to ask, especially within the context of white teachers talking about race with white students. This population desperately needs help figuring out how to have more open, honest, and productive conversations about race, and I believe that further investing and investigating SWW will drive the field to continue developing. Of particular importance is continuing to investigate SWW in a practical, classroom-oriented manner.

Measuring a larger sample

When testing the efficacy of a theoretical framework in practice, it is generally advisable to have a large sample, as this better represents the diversity of responses of the population. While not a gigantic sample by any means, I believe that my respectable sample size of 12 helped to see the effects of SWW in practice, as this sample size provided a more representative view of how the general population of mostly white students would react to a SWW framework. As I have earlier pointed out, there was a greater variety of viewpoints among the participants than I had anticipated, and I suspect that I may have found even more unique viewpoints if I had been able to recruit an even larger sample. The 12 participants that I had represented a number of views that may be commonly found in other mostly white high schools. SWW was relatively effective with most of the students in increasing their comfort when talking about race, although it had non-significant results in changing anything else on a global scale. Perhaps with larger samples, researchers would be able to more precisely hone in on which parts of a SWW framework seem to be more effective at developing students' anti-racism.

Using SWW to de-radicalize alt-right students

I did not anticipate having any alt-right participants in my study. Of course, in a rural, mostly white school I probably should have foreseen the possibility of having at least right-leaning elements in my study, if not alt-right students specifically. Initially, as I was creating the study, I pondered the idea of what it would be like to have someone completely change their views on race as a result of this study. It would be exhilarating to report that SWW had effectively turned a "racist" into an "anti-racist." I was naïve to think that changing someone's mind would be possible with such a short amount of time; however, I still fantasized about it. Alas, both of the alt-right students in this study resisted anti-racism. They did indeed grow more comfortable talking about race; however, they seemed to strengthen the views they already had rather than challenge those views.

I now see that there is a more focused way to change minds, and that is through de-radicalization. One popular and simple method of de-radicalization is through validation and exposure (Winter & Feixas, 2019). I had not designed my study to encompass these points so specifically, but I cannot help but wonder how the alt-right students would have responded if I

had aimed my study more at de-radicalizing. I think it would be a novel idea to see SWW used in a de-radicalization context. Because SWW implicitly validates by acknowledging the complexity of white identities, I believe SWW has potential to be used as part of a de-radicalization toolkit of sorts. The race-visibility component also parallels nicely with the technique of exposure. I believe that introducing these two main points first, then gradually introducing participants to examining whiteness in institutional racism, followed by reading foundational scholars' writing on race would produce interesting results with alt-right participants. This would probably take quite a while and require a large degree of flexibility, but I think it would be worthwhile to try.

I believe that de-radicalization is an extremely promising future direction that SWW could take, especially given the political context of when I am writing this thesis. As stated, I do not believe that we have suddenly seen a rise in racism and conservative views; rather, it seems that these views have been given voice and validation by those in political power, thus empowering more people to openly espouse these views. Teenage years are a time when many people are beginning to ponder their political and social views. It is for this reason that I believe targeting teenage alt-right-leaning students for de-radicalization is important. If future researchers want to see specific ways to implement SWW in a classroom setting, I would highly suggest studying how SWW functions as a tool for de-radicalization.

Teachers' duty to make texts relevant to students' contexts

A curious outcome of this study is that participants' comfort scores changed while their relevance scores did not. In essence, while students became more comfortable talking about race, their view of whether race was a relevant concern remained largely unchanged. While some of this may be attributed to the distance that students perceive between the events in the texts they read and their own lives, I believe that students require some degree of scaffolding in order to make these connections. Smith did an admirable job pulling in secondary sources and activities into the class, so this is in no way an admonition of her efforts. Rather, I believe that teachers must make an intentional and concerted effort to scaffold students' connection-drawing between the texts they are reading and their own lives.

Teachers may find it easier to accomplish this by selecting more current texts, such as *The Hate U Give* (Thomas, 2017). Even with older texts, like *Native Son*, it is still important for

teachers to ensure that they are drawing connections between the events of the text and modern day issues that students may be experiencing (Wright, 1940). I believe that with this added emphasis on scaffolding students' connections would produce students who believe in the relevance of race as an issue to learn about. I would caution teachers, however, to have a deft hand with this scaffolding, like Smith, so as not to push students too hard towards one viewpoint or away from another. Making these connections is best done once students are already relatively race-visible and comfortable talking about race.

Limitations

I would like to point out a handful of limitations to this study. While I am sure I could write pages on this, I will simply focus on three limitations that may affect interpretation of the data and that are glaring enough to be worth mentioning outright. I will discuss the lack of a control group, the lack of a validated pre- and post-assessment measure, and my limited ability to observe Smith's adherence to SWW as the major limitations of my study.

The first main limitation is the lack of a control group. This study was difficult to conduct because of the intensity and all of the moving pieces involved in the observation and data collection, not to mention the number of hours I spent in the classroom. In an ideal world, I would have had more time and resources to conduct a parallel control. This would have consisted of a similar group of mostly white senior students in a class that focused on African American literature. The key difference would be that the teacher would know nothing about SWW and would not actively work within its framework. In practice, this would have been difficult. To my knowledge, there was only one other senior Novels class during the spring semester of 2019, and the teacher who was in charge of that section was not focusing on African American literature. The closest I could have come would be to find a group of students in any class who were reading about and discussing racial issues in class. However, this opportunity was not available. Due to this lack of control, it is difficult to say to what extent the SWW actually influenced these students' growth in their comfort and change in their views. Maybe students in any other class would have had a similar amount of development, regardless of the presence of SWW.

Another limitation is the lack of validity in my measures. As discussed at length in the literature review, there have been very few studies conducted in this field, and none of these

studies seem to have employed a pre- and post-test design. Therefore, I felt it necessary to create my own measures. However, because these measures were created specifically for this study, they have not been externally validated. The lack of validation makes it difficult to ascribe accuracy to the quantitative findings. With a validated measure, I could have seen the normative scores and the trends that emerged, allowing me to better control for any number of unforeseen variables. Additionally, the lack of validated quantitative measures means that some students misinterpreted the qualitative questions. Granted, the interpretation of the question itself was valuable information, but with a validated measure I may have been able to better direct students' attention with a more precisely worded question. The lack of validity makes it difficult to ascribe significant credibility to my findings from the Opinionnaires.

Finally, I would like to address the fallibility of the implementation of SWW into the study. At the end of the Fall 2018 semester, I discussed my plans to conduct this study with Smith. She was enthusiastic, but admitted she did not know what SWW was. I condensed some of the literature surrounding SWW and created a short handout that I gave to Smith (Appendix C). She told me she had read it, but I never inquired about any follow-up reading that she might want, nor did she mention anything about follow-up reading. I saw her implementing many elements of SWW in class, but I was only present in class two days per week. To add to this, I was often teaching on one of the two days in which I was present in class in any given week. This made it difficult to gauge the consistency with which Smith was truly implementing and adhering to the tenets of SWW. While on a personal level I trust Smith immensely and am sure that she did an excellent job, it would be remiss of me to leave out the fact that I had a fairly limited view of her teaching practices.

While I have pointed out these limitations, I am relatively confident that I have controlled and accounted for them in my data analysis and in my discussion of the implications of this study.

Conclusion

[T]he role of education is to teach individuals to think for themselves. An education is incomplete if the actual state of society is sugarcoated. True progress can only be made in an environment conducive to honest discussion.

This quote comes from Tristan, in his fifth journal entry, and is emblematic of what I have been attempting to illustrate with this study. I believe, like Tristan, that we can only grow as a society when we are able to have open and honest conversations. This study shows that SWW can help people become more comfortable discussing race openly, but SWW is just one stepping stone on the path to a less racist classroom context. We must continue to study SWW in practice to hone in on how we can use this framework to positively affect students, especially with an eye towards de-radicalization.

Although a large focus of this study was to track the progress of students, it would be foolish to overlook the part that teachers play in this equation. Smith is an exemplary teacher who has nearly 20 years of experience, a passion for tackling large societal issues, and a great deal of perspective and patience. However, we cannot expect all teachers to be like Smith, especially if they do not have scaffolding in place to get them to this point. In order to produce more quality teachers like Smith, pre-service teachers must have spaces where they can comfortably explore and engage in issues of race. Others in SWW have suggested a similar overhaul of teacher education before (Lee-Nichols, 2012; Mason, 2016; Sleeter, 2016). I would echo their sentiment and simply add that it is ultimately in the best interests of our students that we must change teacher education.

I have spent many pages, quite a lot of ink, and much of the readers' time investigating issues of whiteness in order to arrive at an anti-racist classroom context. Whiteness is extremely important to investigate and explore, especially for white teachers and students who are rarely afforded a space to explore their racial identities. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention that whiteness is only one part of the larger picture. It will take more than just an understanding of whiteness to arrive at an anti-racist outcome, including, but not limited to, increased representation of people of color in education and in literature, increased sensitivity and engagement in the perspectives of our students and teachers of color, and greater institutional changes that dismantle the white supremacist structure that silently snakes its way through many institutions of education.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to mention that the process of designing this study, carrying it out, and writing my thesis has been extremely rewarding. I have personally grown a great deal in how I see my own whiteness and have a better picture of my role as a white teacher. I cannot just let racial discussion happen unchecked in my classroom; instead, I intend

to scaffold it carefully within the framework of SWW, keeping my own white positionality in mind at all time. I am not a white savior disseminating my great wisdom to my pupils. I am not a neutral party with no horse in the race. I am a white teacher, and my duty is to make sure that my students have a better understanding of themselves and others so that they can carry forward the work of anti-racism. Dr. Jimerson told me that becoming an anti-racist is a lifelong process and that it is hard work. I do not think I understood what she meant until I finished this study. While I cannot claim to be perfect or really even know what I am doing most of the time, I will proudly carry the torch of anti-racism in my own way as I fulfill my role as a white teacher educating white students.

APPENDIX A. OPINIONNAIRE

Name _____ Student ID _____ Age ___ Gender _____
Instructions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you are not able to answer a question or a question makes you uncomfortable, you do not have to answer it. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the following questions. Your responses to these questions will be kept completely confidential. Your responses to these questions will not affect your grade in class.
How do you identify racially?

On a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is "not comfortable at all" and 6 is "extremely comfortable," how comfortable are you with talking about racial issues:
In general?
1 2 3 4 5 6
With strangers?
1 2 3 4 5 6
With friends?
1 2 3 4 5 6
With family?
1 2 3 4 5 6
In school?
1 2 3 4 5 6

On a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is "strongly disagree" and 6 is "strongly agree", respond to the following statements:
Racism is a big issue in America today
1 2 3 4 5 6
I am well informed on racial issues
1 2 3 4 5 6
Briefly describe your views on race and racial identity in America:

Do you think that your instructor knows or has thought at all about racial issues in America? Why/why not?

How do you think your instructor's racial identity helps or hurts them when they talk about race in the classroom?

APPENDIX B. PRIVILEGE WORKSHEET

PRIVILEGE APTITUDE TEST
Adapted From the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel
https://civilrightsmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03
/YouthPrivilegeAptitudeTest.pdf

Directions: Answer each of the following questions with YES or NO. If your answer is YES, give yourself 1 point. If your answer is NO, give yourself 0 points. After you have answered each of the questions, add up all of your points. Please complete this activity without any assistance from your teacher or friends. Also, because everyone is different, your friends will likely have different answers that don't apply to you. Very importantly, there are no right or wrong answers.

Notes for teachers: To accommodate the reading levels of some your students, you might consider reading each of the items aloud to the entire class. If students ask questions about the items, do your best to explain them without providing too many details. Encourage students to answer the items in the best way possible and that makes sense to them. If necessary, remind students that there are no right or wrong answers.

Item Number	Item	Yes	No	Points (0 or 1)
1	When I go to the store, people believe that I am trustworthy and I will not steal something. People in the store do not follow me around.	X		1
2	As a boy I can play with dolls or as a girl I can play with trucks without anyone questioning my choice.		X	0
3	I can walk after dark in public places without fear. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in most public spaces.		X	0
4	When I am taught about American history or about contributions made, I am sure that I will see and hear stories about people who look like me.	X		1
5	The majority of the staff at my school look like me.	X		1
6	My school has plenty of books in the library, computers for students, and additional resources for students and teachers.	X		1
7	I will not be teased because of my last name.	X		1
8	I am encouraged to excel in every subject in school.	X		1
9	When a question about my race is asked, I am not the only one singled out to answer or speak my opinion.	X		1
10	When I watch television, there are a lot of people in positive roles that look like me.	X		1
11	My intelligence is not questioned because of the way I speak.	X		1
12	Using public bathrooms and going up and down the stairs in public spaces are easy for me.	X		1
Total Points				10

APPENDIX C. SWW CHEATSHEET

General overview of main points of Second Wave Whiteness Studies:

- Identifying and investigating race-evasive and race-visible attitudes in White teachers

- Viewing whiteness as a complex identity (not a monolith)

- Carefully examining white identity in relation to institutions of systemic racism

- Using foundational scholars' writing on race (particularly African American scholars) to inform modern positions

- Orienting towards social justice

Contextualization:

Second Wave Whiteness Studies (SWWS) is a relatively new field of critical race theory that started in the early 2000's. SWWS is a direct descendant of Whiteness Studies, a product of critical race theory in the 90's. Whiteness Studies attempted to situate white teachers within their white identities and critique the ways in which they either evaded questions of race or weren't informed enough on questions of race. The main drawback of Whiteness Studies in its first iteration was the deficit-language which framed teachers as "lacking" instead of "working towards a goal." SWWS builds upon this to situate white identities as complex, acknowledging that white teachers have diverse backgrounds and have their own personal context with race and the systems of racism in America. SWWS promotes continuing to look at foundational scholars' works on race to inform modern perspectives, with the purpose of having solid foundations that allow for a flexible future within the field. There is a strong leaning towards social justice within SWWS. The ultimate goal of SWWS is to advance White teachers' understanding of race and their own positioning of race in the classroom.

What it means to teach using SWWS as a framework:

Using this framework, teachers who would engage in SWWS would emphasize social justice and race when appropriate and invite students to examine issues of social justice and race in the

classroom. Class discussions and activities should not steer away from the topic of race. A SWWS teacher would ground their curriculum and pedagogy on a strong foundation of Critical Race Theory; for example, a teacher leading a class discussion on racism may familiarize themselves and their class with the work for W. E. B. du Bois, Frederick Douglas, Martin Luther King, or Malcom X, to name a few. When discussions of race do take place in the classroom, a SWWS teacher will make certain to not treat whiteness as a monolith; instead, the teacher will help their class examine and discuss the complexities of white identity, as well as paying attention to the relation of certain white identity issues to systemic racial power structures. Furthermore, the teacher will situate themselves as someone with a complex identity who may have competing ideas about race that stem from different aspects of their identity. When and if appropriate, the teacher may discuss their white identity and how they think about race with their class. This will both situate the class to understand the teachers' specific views that may color the way the teacher understands race, as well as modelling good self-examination of white identity for the students.

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