

Whiteness in Social Work Education

Authentic White Allies

by

Rebecca Hornung

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2012 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Jennifer Sandlin, Chair
Cynthia Lietz
Elizabeth Swadener

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2012

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is guided by the following questions: How do People of Color define and experience White people as "authentic" allies? What does a White ally look like to People of Color? How do White allies view themselves as "authentic" White allies? What experiences lead White people to anti-racism and anti-racist praxis? How do White people translate what they know about racism into an active and courageous anti-racist praxis in their own lives? What kinds of educational experiences in the social work classroom might foster or hinder students from learning how to translate anti-racist knowledge into anti-racist praxis? Using narrative methods, I explore some of the answers to these questions. Findings from this study offer ways to design deeper and more meaningful social work/social justice pedagogy that will better prepare social workers to be active, anti-racist practitioners and allies in all aspects of their work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	Page
1 INTRODUCTION: BEGINNING A CONVERSATION.....	1
My path	1
A curious thing happened.....	3
I love this idea of “holding tension”	5
I wonder if.....	7
Autoethnography: A way to mitigate my feelings of confinement within the tension between the insider/outsider	8
The power of self and stories.....	10
Beginning to theorize the notion of White ally.....	12
Finding an entry point into transformative education.....	20
2 LITERATURE REVIEW: FRAMING THE CONVERSATION	25
How I think about theory, knowledge production, and my subjective positioning as an evolving White person/educator/researcher and anti-racist ally.....	25
Framing my theoretical lens about knowledge: I take my lead from	27
Whiteness and anti-racist allies	29
White supremacy operates in the United States.....	30
Wrapping my mind around this invisible and powerful concept of Whiteness	33

CHAPTER	Page
White allies, finding a thread to begin	37
Backing my way in to the literature in thinking about what it means to be an ally	39
Some initial ideas about White anti-racist allies	40
The threads of decentering Whiteness across educational boundaries and what it tells me about the work to be done.....	47
Higher education as a site of colonization	51
Scanning the environment around social work education and diversity curriculum and pedagogy	53
A look at the historical trajectory of social work education and cultural competence	59
3 METHODOLOGY: COMPLICATING THE CONVERSATION ...	71
Teachers and knowledge are found in unexpected places.....	71
Feminism is where I live	73
The ally with good in(tensions).....	78
Art is my teacher.....	84
My crossroads: blurring and blending my evolving selves as researcher and anti-racist ally	85
Issues of power and control.....	86
Using narrative as a methodological stance to forge new ground in discourses on Whiteness	90

CHAPTER	Page
The research design, which way into the problem.....	100
My co-constructors of knowledge related to what it means to be an authentic White ally	105
Data Collection	106
Data Analysis: Participants' life stories not needing to be fixed.....	109
4 FINDINGS: CONVERSING WITH THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS.....	114
The plot thickens: A life story on race, moving from theoretical understandings to the messiness of life and lived experiences.....	114
Part One: Scholars on the ground: People of Color.....	121
Alejandro	121
Trina	122
Lorena	123
Reuben	124
Carol.....	125
Nicola	125
Esperanza	126
Emily	127
Part Two: Recollections of People of Color	127
Talking Race	127

CHAPTER	Page
How Whiteness Lives in Higher Education.....	130
Thoughts on Racsim	132
About Allies	134
Part Three: Scholars on the Ground: White allies	144
Lila	144
Brandy.....	144
Carol.....	145
Part Four: Recollections of White allies	146
Lila's Story.....	146
Brandy's Story	152
Karen's Story	159
Part Five: My own self-narrative	164
5 ANALYSIS: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION	170
And the conversation continues	170
Noticing what I failed to notice	177
Complicating the conversation further with ideas from critical theory	179
Translating critical social work into the classroom	187
Ideologies of Whiteness in social work institutions	191
Whiteness at an identity level of social work education.....	198
Taking these ideas forward.....	199
REFERENCES	204

CHAPTER	Page
APPENDIX	215
IRB APPROVAL	215

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: BEGINNING A CONVERSATION

“Confronting one another across differences means that we must change ideas about how we learn; rather than fearing conflict we have to find ways to use it as a catalyst for new thinking, new growth” (hooks, 1994b, p.113).

My path...

Earlier in my teaching career in social work, a colleague who teaches a “diversity in social work” course shared something new she had developed for one of her classes. It is a game designed to shed light on just how little our formal education institutions teach about diverse groups of people. As she explained it to me, the main purpose of this game was to quiz students on different “facts” related to what we know about differences among people related to ethnicity and race. I found myself, as I often do, feeling like I speak a different language than my colleague when it comes to developing social work curriculum designed to uncover and highlight how Eurocentric thinking is embedded within social work curriculum. While I appreciate my colleague’s attempt to help students assess their lack of knowledge regarding marginalized groups, it seems to me that in addition to including multicultural content into curriculum, we must concurrently analyze and deconstruct the actual frames we use within which all content is taught. In so doing, along with teaching students about the subject of oppression, it is as important to teach them how to analyze the actual epistemological frames within which our educational models reside. If we fail to do this, there is a higher risk that our students will reproduce these systems of oppression in their practice.

More recently, I attended the national social work education conference where I decided to participate in a workshop entitled, “Decolonizing Social Work Pedagogy.” I anticipated that this workshop would attract the same five to ten people who always attend these kinds of “radical” topics. Much to my surprise, the room was filled to capacity with participants! I began to wonder; *Has the time finally come, that there is a critical mass of social work educators interested in deconstructing “structures of Whiteness” in social work pedagogy? Might there be an interest in engaging in dialogue about the ways we teach “cultural competence” which currently utilize an oversimplistic approach and which may be inadequate in preparing students for anti-oppressive social work practice?* In recounting this story to one of my doctoral colleagues, a Person of Color herself, she said something rather interesting to me. She wondered out loud if White educators really understand, in day to day practice, how Whiteness pervades educational systems in the U.S. She suggested that it is so deeply embedded into the dominant culture that it is very difficult to render visible.

In my years as a social work practitioner leading up to my decision to pursue a PhD, I have talked with colleagues, clients, and friends about how we move forward the project of antiracism. In these conversations, People of Color expressed an urgency about how “stuck” we are in terms of being able to “go to those hard places” where racism is covert and embedded in our consciousness. They used words like “polarized,” “defensive,” and “in denial” to describe where we are today in the way we approach issues of race and racism. In contemplating what kind of research I wanted to do in a doctoral program, this concept of

“White ally” began to evolve. An idea began to emerge: what if I asked People of Color about their experiences with White people who, in some ways, were demonstrating what it means to be an “authentic White ally”? And what if I could use these narratives to inform pedagogy in social work education?

A curious thing happened...

A curious thing happened as I began to float this research idea past friends, colleagues and clients: People of Color (without exception) showed enthusiasm and excitement for the idea. They said things like, “Becki, that is soooo needed,” “Girl, you’re brave,” and “Boy do we need that,” and “Good luck with that cause it’s not going to be easy to get other White folks on board with that.” They also offered to help in whatever way they could, without any hesitation and without having been asked. They offered to participate in the study and to recruit other People of Color to participate, indicating that they knew many other people who would “love” to be part of a study like this. In one recent experience at the Council on Social Work Education conference, I was talking to a group of social work educators about my research. As I spoke, I noticed that familiar head nodding and smiles forming on the faces of the group members of color—it’s a kind of knowing smile that if put to words might say, “I get it, but be careful.” They approached me after the meeting and wished me luck, and cautioned me to be strategic about my work due to the nature of my chosen topic on Whiteness in social work education. This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Edward Canda in his Foreword for *Challenging White Privilege: Critical Discourse for Social Work Education* (Pewewardy, 2007). He writes:

The focus on White privilege in relation to social work education addresses a pervasive feature of our profession and its implications—the numerical, political, and ideological predominance of White social workers and Euro-American perspectives...I was aware of the courage it took [by Pewewardy, his doctoral student] to write it. The topic itself is inherently controversial. Some [doctoral] students might shy away from it for fear of alienating potential employers or otherwise limiting their career opportunities. (pp. vii-viii)

I almost get the feeling that to “out” Whiteness in social work education is a subversive act that counters the meta-narrative in our profession that goes something like this: In terms of anti-oppressive education, we’re “already there,” or that “we’re already doing it right,” and don’t need to change.

In contrast, when I talked with White people about my research idea, there were three kinds of reactions. Most said things like, “Don’t you think that’s been done already?” or “I’m not really sure what you mean.” There were also some moderately positive responses from people who expressed interest in the topic but showed trepidation saying, “As a White person, maybe you shouldn’t be asking People of Color things like that because you might offend them.” Thankfully, there were a few White educators who “got” what I wanted to do—they are my allies in this dissertation process and three of them serve as my dissertation committee. All of these White educators continue to show enthusiasm and support and as my allies, they provide practical wisdom and guidance.

In these various reactions, I wondered if I hadn’t tapped into something important. On the one hand, People of Color were offering to help and validating the need for this kind of work, while most White people seemed to take a position of caution and trepidation. I began to wonder about the complicated space that

resides between these reactions—what lives in that space and how might we use this tension to move the project of anti-racism and White allies forward in social work education? Perhaps this topic is so controversial because among social work educators (and perhaps educators in other disciplines) this tension reflects the sentiments shared by my friends and colleagues of color—that is, while social work education has contributed a great deal towards the project of anti-racist and anti-oppressive education and practice, when it comes to moving it forward to the next level of transformational anti-oppressive work (particularly in the face of powerful public and private political and economic forces that shape social work education who fund and regulate social services) social work educators are in fact, “stuck.”

I love this idea of “holding tension...”

Over the course of my doctoral coursework, I have become more intrigued with the notion of situating different ideas in tension with each other as a way to move the discourse on racism forward. I am intrigued by this approach as an alternative to a binary structure where opposing ideas are positioned in such a way that one has to be “right” and the other “wrong.” An alternative approach would reject an either/or approach in favor of a both/and frame. Indeed, might this either/or approach be more reflective of a Whiteness frame? The binary (either/or) approach seems to reflect a philosophical position where there can only be one “correct” answer; that in fact, there IS an answer and that this one answer is better than all other possibilities and in a modernist sense, the Truth is fixed and static. In contrast, approaches that put ideas in tension with each other seem to draw out

deeper questions as well as complex answers. In *Reading Foucault for Social Work* (1999), Chambon and Irving use the work of Michel Foucault to point out that “Each arrival point of destination [truth] can in turn become a point of departure” (p. xix). As ideas are juxtaposed and struggled with out loud, might we learn more about each of them and how they shift and morph in relationship to each other, particularly as the context within which they are being struggled changes?

And so, these events—my conversation with my social work colleague, attending the workshop on decolonizing social work pedagogy, conversations with colleagues and friends, and this idea of dynamic tension as a pedagogical strategy—have become the inspiration for this research project. By exploring what it means to be a White ally from the experiences by People of Color and their White allies, it is a first attempt at understanding how these relationships navigate the tricky and turbulent waters of cross-racial, anti-racist relationships. Through examining their experiences and ideas about how to build trusting relationships within the space of Whiteness and counter-Whiteness, might I learn something about how to render epistemological structures of Whiteness visible in terms of developing anti-racist teaching? Are there lessons to be learned about how power works within these relationships? As Foucault (1990) posits, “power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared...Power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations...Power comes from below...power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective...Where there is power, there is resistance” (pp. 94-95). While I

fully understand that Whiteness needs to be examined and deconstructed at both the structural and interpersonal levels, I begin in this dissertation with a focus on the “power from below” that exists at the local level, between people and the ways in which White people can use their power within their spheres of influence to first understand and then refuse to reproduce ideologies and mechanisms of Whiteness that oppress People of Color. In fact, might the act of cross-racial ally building be an act of power and resistance? And if it is, what are the conditions in the formal classroom that either nurture this use of power or hinder it?

Are there pedagogical lessons to be learned from these polycontextual experiences of people who have successfully navigated and probably still are successfully navigating these tensions within their own multiracial relationships? How might these pedagogical lessons be instructive in figuring out how to use strategies that engage dynamic tensions in the classroom as tools for exploring and examining very complex and layered issues? How might this approach to teaching about anti-racist work open new pathways for students and teachers alike to regularly and consciously question, challenge, and refine their approaches to anti-racist work in both teaching and social work practice? This research project seeks to merge these theoretical and scholarly matters with the practical and the experiential. A goal of the research is to develop praxes that can effectively impact teachers and students through sharing empowering knowledge and fostering critical inquiry about structures of Whiteness in social work education and the ways in which we can examine their utility and limitations.

I wonder if...

I am guided in my research by the following questions: How do People of Color define and experience White people as “authentic” allies? What does a White ally look like to People of Color? How do White allies view themselves as “authentic” White allies? What experiences lead White people to anti-racism and anti-racist praxis? How do White people translate what they know about racism into an active and courageous anti-racist praxis in their own lives? What kinds of educational experiences in the university classroom might foster or hinder students from learning how to translate anti-racist knowledge into anti-racist praxis? Through exploring some of the answers to these questions, I hope to better understand how to design a deeper, more meaningful social justice pedagogy that will better prepare social workers to be active, anti-racist practitioners and allies in all aspects of their work. As will be discussed later in the methodology section, my standpoint for this work is deeply rooted in feminist theories and methodologies.

Autoethnography: A way to mitigate my feelings of confinement within the tension between the insider/outsider...

In endeavoring to write this dissertation, I am reminded too frequently of the fact that I am operating both inside and outside of structures of Whiteness in education. I often feel like I am in a very conflicted space, with external educational forces constantly pushing me to construct and locate knowledge within the confines of Eurocentric structures. At the same time, I want to push back and resist these forces, offering alternative processes and methods regarding

how knowledge is located, developed, and rendered visible. Throughout this dissertation I intentionally use various narrative forms as a way to identify knowledge. These personal narratives include my own autoethnography and poetry as well as the stories of the research participants themselves. I will speak more about the use of narrative and autoethnography below but there are a few things I would like to explain now in order to help readers navigate their way through this dissertation. The headings throughout this dissertation represent my own curiosity and have served as “jumping off points” for my work. I specifically chose to locate the headings within my own sense of curiosity rather than position the headings as some overly-academic category of knowledge. In doing this, I use my own life experiences to draw myself closer to the research. This is a conscious and intentional act of resistance against the more typical distanced position of academic writing.

Employing an autoethnographic method, I render my struggles and processes visible in this dissertation. According to Holman-Jones (2005), autoethnography is “Making a text present. Demanding attention and participation. Implicating all involved. Refusing closure or categorization” (p. 765). In addition to using italics for APA citation of books and essay titles, I use italics to represent my own voice, as a way to “talk back” to the Academy and to my academically-socialized self and to keep the conversation “open and spacious” (Palmer, 1998), fluid and dynamic. My use of italics is also a political act in that it renders visible my own partial lens by way of sharing my thoughts, reactions, and struggles that have occurred in the process of this project. I am intentionally

using this “messiness” to illustrate my ambivalence as both an “academic insider” and “academic outsider.” Lather (2010) talks about scholars who embrace the idea of “methodology as messiness” when she writes:

Tina Cook, for example, is interested how ‘mess, bumbling, jumble, untidy, free flowing’ can be seen as necessary and fruitful in the ‘search for meaning’ parts of the research study. Her insistence is not ‘taming the mess’ but ‘celebrating uncertainty.’ This is a disciplined messiness, a way of seeing toward deeper knowing, ‘difficult, not careless,’ positioning purposeful messiness as a condition for unlearning where a focus on scientific method too often serves as ‘an alternative to the difficulties of philosophizing.’ (pp. 9-10)

This purposeful “messy” space is meant to render visible my struggles with Whiteness within my own educative process in higher education.

The power of self and stories...

My use of autoethnography situates this research within my own quest as an aspiring authentic while ally. Again, it renders visible the researcher in the research, thus countering the notion that a research process is a disembodied, “neutral” endeavor. The autoethnographic process allows me to show how I learn—specifically, it illustrates how I move from my “academic self” to my “personal self” and back again. The use of autoethnography shows that my learning process moves fluidly back and forth between theory and practice. Everyday life and my “real world learning” produces knowledge, which is then taken into my “book learning,” which then is taken back out into my “real world learning,” which is funneled back into “book learning.” This cycle is the constant way in which I make sense of the world around me. To edit out my “real world

learning” would be to edit out half of the way that I learn. And so I begin with my story that led me to this particular educational place and project.

My own experiences as a social worker in Philadelphia, primarily working with Black and Latino clients, led me to first begin theorizing in my own mind about what it meant to be an ally in solidarity with marginalized people where we blur, resist, and trouble the socially constructed and institutionalized notions of the pathologized and the valorized, the helpless and the helper, and the poor person who needed help and the “great White hope” who swooshed in to “rescue” them. I began to observe that it was during those times when I was open to seriously and deeply questioning the paradigms and assumptions that were operating inside my frame of reference that new spaces began to open for collaborative partnership with my clients and in my own human development. I attended a workshop by Dr. Kenneth V. Hardy entitled “The Anatomy of Oppression,” and was struck by something he said which has profoundly shaped my social work praxis and continues to inspire and inform my research agenda. Dr. Hardy said that in being allies with people who are in some way marginalized, we must resist the temptation to turn away when the struggle feels too hard. In fact, he continued, it is precisely in that moment that we must “stay in the struggle” in order to transform all that separates us.

His concept of “staying in the struggle” has had tremendous meaning for me as a social worker and as a human being. I began to wonder about my own social work practice when the differences between me and my clients caused me to take on a judgmental tone with them rather than one of compassion and

understanding. I lost my ability to critically think about the social and economic conditions that they were facing. Once I became frustrated and impatient, and unwilling to “stay in the struggle”, I became dismissive of them and the ways in which our society creates structural barriers for their success. I became part of the problem, reifying a tone of harsh judgment which profoundly influenced my willingness in understanding the social and economic conditions that too often set my clients up to fail. *Why aren't you complying with your case management plan, I thought? I guess you just want the help...you don't really want to improve your life.* These were the thoughts going around in my mind about my clients until I began to observe and understand that the mandates in the case management plan contradicted the CPS reunification plan, which wasn't aligned with the Welfare to Work plan. Too frequently I observed my White clients gaining higher levels of empathy from the various social services agencies than did my clients of Color. I finally began to make the connection between racist micro levels of power and those people who consciously or unconsciously became agents of racist structures in social services. I finally began to put it all together; clients were often relegated to no-win situations. From these experiences, I became enraged and vowed to find my place in “outing” these kinds of racist, classist, and sexist social structures. Thus I began my life's work of figuring out how to teach my White self about what it means to be an anti-racist ally to People of Color.

Beginning to theorize the notion of White ally...

In theorizing the notion of a White ally, I draw from the work of Michael Eric Dyson. In an interview of Dyson by R. Chennault (Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998) Dyson says this about the definition of Whiteness:

...when we talk about race in the context of America, we have to talk about whiteness as an identity, whiteness as ideology, and whiteness as institution. These three elements are complex and impure; they bleed into one another. Still, as categories of analysis, they can help us get a handle on the intensely variegated manifestations of whiteness. (p. 300)

I would assert that it is in this idea of holding in tension the space between identity, ideology and institution that there is an in-between space for liberatory or allied work to be created—in essence it is the space between the micro and the macro. This space works in between structures and individuals, taking up a position that there is a reflexive relationship between the micro and the macro. Specifically, it is a space where individuals enact and reenact structural inequalities in both small and large ways. This space is located in between our systemic and institutionalized mechanisms of oppression and our individual agency and the ways in which each of us internalizes and enacts those very systems that exploit ourselves and each other. What if the work of being an ally is to actively, intentionally, and systematically interrupt these enactments at every point on the continuum between individuals and the larger structures and institutions where we all live our lives?

In *Whiteness and Cultural Theory: Perspectives on Research and Education*, Warren (1999) says, “A direction of research I see a need for consists of theorizing multiple ways one might go about the practice of decentering

Whiteness. In other words, what might a decentering look like in practice?” (p. 199). He further states, “I would be interested to see more microanalytic work that seeks to uncover what Whiteness looks like in everyday life...How does one go about doing Whiteness every day and how does that enactment serve White privilege?” (p. 200). This call by Warren speaks to my interest in the development of White allies and in how we may need to re-think diversity and anti-racist curriculum. Specifically, in the re-thinking of social work education, we may need to examine the ways that unwittingly we produce social work practitioners who reify and/or resist White-centered social work practice. By exploring the experiences of White people who are actively trying to become anti-racist allies, might we learn something about how Whiteness is de-centered in their everyday lives? And if so, can we use what we learn to help us shape a more “White de-centered” curriculum? These are some of the questions that informed my research.

The first level of analysis in an alternative framework that decenters a Whiteness approach is the exploration of self. As mentioned earlier, I come to this research topic with significant personal interest and investment. As a social work practitioner for twenty years, I have seen the profound effects of racism on clients, particularly the racism that is experienced and embedded in our policies and macro-systems of society. I see a need for research in anti-racist education to go beyond the “content” question to also examine the “pedagogy” aspect of anti-racist education. Stromquist (2005) refers to this as an approach that “questions cultural assumptions and stereotypes and locates them in a terrain shaped by

asymmetric power relations. This [approach]...calls for anti-racist, anti-sexist, and other anti-discriminatory perspectives in education; not surprisingly, this approach is applied much less frequently than the first [an approach that teaches acceptance and tolerance]” (p. 8). As a teacher in higher education, I have heard personal stories from students of color about the negative messages, both subtle and overt, that they have received from teachers early in their educational lives about how they shouldn’t dream too big about their career aspirations. Too often I have also heard from White students about their overwhelming feelings of paralysis and guilt for not knowing how to be change agents towards a more racially just social work practice. Over the years, these students have played a significant role in my own call to action as a White ally in higher education. Their experiences and frustrations in education motivate me to take a leadership role in dismantling White-centered social work pedagogy and discourse and in re-envisioning a more racially inclusive, relevant, and meaningful discourse. This discourse seeks to engage the tensions inherent in social justice education that supports healing and liberation from a White centered paradigm.

Specifically, in this research I seek to deconstruct the ways in which the embedded and invisible White standard is the norm in social work education. These embedded White-centered standards in educational systems can be so deep that these invisible, yet powerful biased norms often shape unconscious teaching and learning methods in curriculum design and instruction. Villaverde (2000) describes this phenomena of Whiteness in education as “a systemic ideological apparatus that is used to normalize civility, instill rationality, erase emotion, erase

difference, [and] impose middle-class values and beliefs with an assumption of a heterosexual matrix” (p. 46). She further posits that this White version of “normal” is currently the dominant operating framework within higher education and in order to re-envision a “new normal” that de-centers Whiteness, we first have to excavate and uncover the invisibility of these norms associated with Whiteness.

Actor, artist, and scholar Anna Deavere Smith presents her research through theatrical performances, literally giving voice to her participants by inhabiting them on the stage. In a recent interview discussing her performance of “Let Me Down Easy” on the PBS show *Great Performances* (2012), she was asked to explain why she uses this method. She expressed hope that her work would help to open conversations that we are not currently having. My research on authentic White allies attempts to do the same—specifically, to open up a conversation within social work education on the use of postmodern/poststructural approaches to expand our current teaching methods exploring the complicated, controversial, and messy work of teaching about racism and oppression that leads to social transformation. This dialogue would grapple with how to move forward from the current overly simplistic and mechanistic “cultural competence” which Banks (1994) refers to as the “additive” approach where:

...teachers work into the curriculum various isolated facts about heroes from diverse groups...With the additive approach...the curriculum remains unchanged, but teachers add special units on topics like the Women's Rights Movement, African Americans in the West, and Famous Americans with Disabilities...the additive approach still relegates groups

like women, African Americans, and disabled people to the periphery of the curriculum. (pp. 4-5)

In the “cultural competence” realm of social work education, the “additive” model essentially positions diversity education into distinct and separate diversity courses, while leaving all other courses unchanged. In other words, issues of diversity are taught in a “how to” frame in which the students are taught “how to” work with African-Americans, “how to” work with Native Americans, “how to” work with LGBT people etc., This approach does two things; first, it reifies the dominant norms of Whiteness and heteronormativity in that it positions everyone outside of these two dominant “norms” as “marked” as “other”. Second, it allows all other social work courses to remain unchanged because issues of diversity are seen as already “dealt with” in the diversity course. In so doing, Whiteness and systems of Whiteness are not examined, made visible, or otherwise interrogated in the context of other coursework.

In contrast to the “additive” approach, my work speaks to the need for a more “transformative” approach that:

...changes the structure, assumptions, and perspectives of the curriculum so that subject matter is viewed from the perspectives and experiences of a range of groups. The transformation approach changes instructional materials, teaching techniques, and student learning. This approach can be used to teach about our differences as well as our similarities. Teachers can help students understand that, while Americans have a variety of viewpoints, we share many cultural traditions, values, and political ideals that cement us together as a nation. The transformation approach has several advantages. It brings content about currently marginalized groups to the center of the curriculum. It helps students understand that how people construct knowledge depends on their experiences, values, and perspectives. It helps students learn to construct knowledge themselves. And it helps students grasp the complex group interactions that have produced the American culture and civilization. (Banks, 1994, p.5)

The additional focus that I wish to add to this transformative approach in social work education is pedagogy that prepares students to courageously use their socially privileged positions to interrogate and change oppressive institutions, ideologies, and practices. This conversation within the field of social work education would begin to decenter Whiteness in two ways: first by exploring various social justice approaches to education and pedagogy that explore structures of Whiteness, and second by exploring the practice of White people who seem to be making headway in their own lives in decentering their own Whiteness.

In terms of pedagogy in the classroom, if our instruction centers on systems of oppression but not on how each of us is a part of that system, we unwittingly send the message that oppression is something outside of ourselves and we position it in such a way that our students view oppressive systems as something “out there” and enacted and reproduced by some “other people.” In this way, we let ourselves and our educational institutions off the hook in terms of regularly and consciously evaluating our own assumptions, beliefs and subsequent practices for the ways in which we also may be reproducing oppressive systems. As teachers, we risk being agents of oppression in the ways that we refuse to locate our own understandings about what education is and about, what a “smart” student looks and behaves like, and in how we either foster or inhibit independent and critical thinking, particularly if students’ ideas may trigger our own unexamined biases.

bell hooks (1994b) writes about her own excitement about entering the university where she, “was enthralled with the process of becoming an insurgent black intellectual” (p. 4) only to encounter a constraining reality in graduate school, which she described as:

A place I hated, yet a place where I struggled to claim and maintain the right to be an independent thinker. The university and the classroom began to feel more like a prison, a place of punishment and confinement rather than a place of promise and possibility. (p. 4)

hooks experienced the university classroom as a place where the professors reproduced educational practices rooted in systems of control and obedience to authority, and where they demanded conformity and stifled her critical and independent thinking. In contrast, the research I am interested in pursuing is rooted in uncovering and analyzing the invisible, unmarked, and often unconscious ways in which pedagogy in higher education reproduces oppressive, patriarchal, and Eurocentric epistemologies specifically related to how we teach about issues of social justice. While my long term research agenda focuses on social justice more broadly, in my dissertation I begin this research by exploring pedagogy around Whiteness and cross cultural ally building among White people and People of Color.

My research examined the experiences of People of Color and their White allies who were able to move beyond the Whiteness hegemony. These were people who Clayton (1998) might have described as “Subordinate actors...who [were]...capable of ‘penetrating’ that system [of hegemony], understanding its exploitative dynamics, and responding to it consciously” (p. 479). By studying

these actors, might we learn something about how to teach this in schools? What can we learn about the ways in which students use their learning in transformative ways that they then implement into who they are as human beings? And finally, might it shed some light on how to identify and reconstruct mechanisms of Whiteness with education more generally? In the next section, I'll introduce examples of transformative notions of education that push back against an "additive" approach to diversity education.

Finding an entry point into transformative education...

With regard to transformative approaches to curricular design and the embeddedness of Whiteness within curriculum, Keating (2007) and Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) offer specific tools and strategies for creating social justice curriculum and pedagogical course processes. In contrast to a traditional additive approach to teaching around issues of multiculturalism, Adams, Bell, & Griffin, (2007) offer an alternative structure for teaching about diversity and social justice. In their book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, they use a hybrid approach to constructing social justice curriculum. While they do have chapters that focus on different oppressed groups and can feel like an additive concept, these chapters are first contextualized within chapters on "Racism and White Privilege Curriculum Design". They also shift the focus to the teacher as learner in a section they call, "Knowing Ourselves as Social Justice Educators" (p.381) and "Knowing Our Students" (p. 385) where they discuss the emotionally "charged" nature of social justice education and the importance not just on content but on process as well. They say, "Social justice education is not simply

new content but also often a radical change in process as well, one that requires us to expand beyond traditional models of teaching” (p. 381-382). Even though there is an element of the “additive” approach in some of their chapter discussions on how to create curriculum for different oppressed groups, they place these discussions within the context of this process of learning about social justice, racism, and White privilege and thus their work as different than the “how to” approach.

In terms of theory, Adams et al. offer specific defining theories of oppression along with a philosophical and historical framework that insists on inclusive and non-hierarchical theories of oppression. In the conceptual foundations section, they offer specific practical tools such as “responding to triggers” and a “privilege inventory.” Additionally, the authors point to the lack of social justice educator training in mainstream multicultural education programs that incorporate teacher identity, and collaborative and democratic classroom processes that connect academic learning with personal experience and identity in a dialogic way, combining academic with experience-based knowledge.

Palmer’s work (1998) goes deeper into dialogic processes in the classroom. In an alternative dialogical approach to traditional classroom discourse when dealing with controversial and “charged” topics, Palmer focuses on process and emotional learning as he makes an argument for the creation of “learning spaces” that are intended to push, pull, challenge, and support the learning process. He puts forth six tensions or paradoxes that need to be built into learning spaces. These six paradoxes describe learning spaces as: 1) both bounded

and open, 2) hospitable and charged, 3) inviting the voice of both the individual and the group, 4) honoring both the “little stories” of everyday life along with how they fit with the more general and larger stories of life, 5) including both solitude and community, and 6) welcoming both speech and silence. In these paradoxes for learning spaces, Palmer encourages educators and students to move beyond binary ways of thinking such as right and wrong and good and bad. He challenges us to “hold the tensions” with each other so that new ideas can emerge.

In keeping with the transformative aspect of social justice education put forth by Banks, Keating (2007) uses race as a tool to deconstruct binaried ways of teaching and offers a new transformative paradigm to tackling issues of social injustice. She argues that the old “oppositional politics” (p. 6) are no longer useful methods for resistance to, and liberation from, oppression. Rather, she argues that “binary forms of opposition keep us locked within the status quo” (p. 7). She encourages us to challenge what she calls the “status quo stories” that “reaffirm and in other ways reinforce the existing social system” (p. 23). When used in the context of social justice education curriculum, Keats approaches her teaching by viewing her students as co-learners while incorporating her own social justice scholarship in all of the courses that she teaches.

In extending Keats’ ideas of challenging the status-quo stories of Whiteness, educators and anti-racist White activists Johnson (2006) and Tochluk (2008) first decenter, and then recenter Whiteness by using a “witnessing” approach in deconstructing and reconstructing the nuances and power of White privilege. The work of both of these scholars is instructive to the Whiteness

studies learner in that they break down the unconscious systems of what it means to be White and then lay that out for examination. Both authors offer personal narratives of their own White racial identity process, as they discuss their own personal process and expose their mistakes and transformative moments along the way. Johnson directly links White privilege to capitalist systems and class domination while Tochluk interviews social justice activists in the field of anti-racist work. Both works call upon White people to “witness” their own Whiteness. This is to say to say, they call upon White people to honestly explore and acknowledge the ways in which White people benefit from being White. Both authors use a witnessing model to counter the more prevalent “diversity” and “tolerance” trainings that remove Whiteness from the discourse of race. In a witnessing model, the focus is on Whiteness rather than People of Color. Tochluk says, “As uncomfortable as it may become, we have to keep our eyes focused on ourselves [White people]. We have to keep Whiteness squarely in sight” (p. 9). By using this witnessing model, we relocate the source of the problem of racism where it begins, within the ideologies of Whiteness. Johnson writes, “The key is to engage members of dominant groups with issues of privilege as an ongoing permanent part of their lives. Privilege has to be as much an issue to them as it is for those who bear the brunt of the oppression it causes in everyday life” (p. 69). White people, White ideologies, and White structures become explicitly marked, racialized, and raced, thereby locating the problem of racism at its source.

In the next chapter, I will explore the various ways in which scholars are defining these evolving notions of Whiteness and anti-racist allies. Additionally,

I will review the literature across educational disciplines about Whiteness and their suggestions for further exploration on the topic. Finally, I will review the literature on the historical trajectory of social work education and the way the issue of diversity has evolved over time.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: FRAMING THE CONVERSATION

“The way we understand the world depends on where we are positioned in it.”
(Witkin, 2007, p. 2)

*How I think about theory, knowledge production, and my subjective positioning
as an evolving White person/educator/researcher and anti-racist ally...*

I want to make clear at the outset of this section that in my theorizing about Whiteness, I am deeply mindful that historically speaking, I am indebted to, and stand on the shoulders of many People of Color and their White allies who have blazed this road of anti-racist work for me to follow. And in a more contemporary way, I stand shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity with both anti-racist activists of color and with White allies on this same road. The “outing” of Whiteness has been a process largely started by People of Color both within and outside of the academy and I honor the blood, sweat and tears of their commitment and courage. I carry them with me *always*, and am in their debt as I take up the project of anti-racism and move it forward by seeking out new ways to expand and deepen the role of anti-racist White people in solidarity with our brothers and sisters of color.

Why is it so important to position myself within the historical and contemporary context of anti-racism, and in particular within the context of the work by and for People of Color? Osayande (2010) cautions White people about being vigilant in mitigating and being aware of our own White privileges even in our position as anti-racist activists:

The first of these White privileges is one I have already addressed: The ability to paraphrase and/or otherwise exploit the analysis of Black liberation struggle and have it received by others as though it were their own. In the past decade or so, there has grown a cottage industry of books written by White people talking about their Whiteness and their awareness of racism. When these White authors fail to acknowledge the debt they owe to the blood struggle of People of Color in this country as they often do, they practice a form of racism that keeps that history erased from the consciousness of this country. This enables the White establishment to bypass Black people and hold up their own as authorities on the race question. (p. 2)

Osayande's words speak to the insidiousness of Whiteness and in the ways that White anti-racist activists themselves can be manipulated by systems of Whiteness for the maintenance of Whiteness itself! This unconscious reproduction of Whiteness speaks to the depth in how White people have been socialized to "bypass" the knowledge and experiences of People of Color even when it is done unintentionally.

Being vigilant in understanding how systems of Whiteness are constantly reconfigured as a way to maintain power and control is very tricky terrain, can take many forms, and has to do with the legitimization (or de-legitimization) of knowledge. Osayande uses the example of Tim Wise, a White man, a frequently invited speaker on college campuses to speak about Whiteness. Osayande observes this about how systems of Whiteness react differently to White anti-racist activists and activist of color:

When Wise speaks passionately and fervently about racism, his expression is understood as a sign of a person standing up for what he believes. As such, it is championed even when he is derisive or sardonic in his remarks. When we, People of Color activists, speak passionately about racism, we are maligned and ridiculed as being angry, militant, even hateful and dangerous. (p. 2)

Osyande's cautionary words influence the approach to my work of anti-racism. In terms of this dissertation, I am trying to be humble which often feels like the "cardinal sin" in higher education. To position oneself as a humble learner goes against the grain of messages that I receive within the culture of higher education which constantly tells me to be authoritative and unquestionably confident in my perspectives. My humility, especially as a White person is central to being an anti-racist ally. It is a conscious and intentional act in an ever-evolving effort to "un-do" my Whiteness.

Framing my theoretical lens about knowledge: I take my lead from...

I am influenced to a great degree by bell hooks' (1994) notion that theory and theory production are not limited to elite academics. Rather, theory production is something that all people do as a way to make sense of the world around us. Another influence on my thinking about theory production comes from scholars of color like Bryan Brayboy and his work using critical race theories. In his work on Tribal Critical Race theory, Brayboy (2005) argues that, "The primary tenet of TribalCrit is the notion that colonization is endemic to society. By colonization, I mean that European American thought, knowledge, and power structures dominate present-day society in the United States" (p.430). Brayboy further explains that the idea of a practice/theory binary which separates theory from our lived experiences is based on Eurocentric thinking. He recalls a story of his own struggles within higher education where Indigenous ways of learning through narrative and stories are discounted. He recounts his experience with a colleague who told him that, "People like me told good stories and later

added that because I told good stories, I might not ever be a ‘good theorist.’ I was struck by the seeming disconnect between community stories and personal narratives and ‘theory’” (p. 426). I ground my theoretical approach, at least partially, in my educational experiences both within and outside of formal education. In addition to the influence of scholars like Brayboy and hooks, my evolving theoretical and practical notions of what it means to be a White ally have their early roots outside of formal education. This earlier education is grounded in the knowledge I gained from my childhood experiences with my family and my community.

In theory making, who counts as an “expert”: Scholars on the ground...

When I speak about “scholars on the ground,” I think about people like Miss Bea, a colleague of mine, when I worked as a nurse’s aide at a nursing home almost thirty years ago. As a teenager working alongside this amazing sixty year old woman, she told me about Whiteness through stories of her life as a Black child growing up in the south and later as an adult woman in Philadelphia. She taught me about the connections between the White surveillance of Black people in the south and contemporary versions of White surveillance today, where brown skinned people are racially profiled by police. She made sure that she never drove over the speed limit or did anything else to call attention to herself for fear of being pulled over by the police. “The police are always looking for an excuse to pull over Black people,” she said, (particularly in White neighborhoods like the one where we worked). She called this danger for Black people, “driving while black.”

Other “scholars on the ground” that have influenced me and who have informed this research come from my childhood. Their expertise is derived from their experiences on the streets of Philadelphia. While not legitimized by formal systems of education, the African-American elders of the neighborhood where I grew up are scholars to me. They are scholars of lived experience and deserve recognition and a place in this review of the literature on Whiteness and anti-racism. I grew up in Mt. Airy, a small neighborhood in Philadelphia where the resident elders assumed the role of the historians of the area. They were some of the first experiences I had with narrative forms of education and regularly told us kids that “Mt. Airy was the first intentionally racially integrated neighborhood in the country.” Through these experiences with the resident elders, it is my belief that my friends and I received as much education on the front porches and stoops of each other’s homes as we did in our classrooms. To a certain degree, these lessons on the stoops and porches helped to shape what is now my critical lens on

Whiteness and anti-racist allies...

These elder historians further asserted that it was because of the racial integration in Mt. Airy that the real estate and financial institutions began the practice of “redlining” which systematically discriminated against the African American and Jewish residents who lived there. They explained that redlining was a process of drawing red lines on a map around areas where lenders would not invest their money. This could take the form of the denial of mortgages and business loans, or a more insidious practice of making insurance rates so high as to make investment financially non-viable for that area. In the rare cases where

loans were made, these elders told me, the investors and banks attached financial terms that were much more costly and expensive to the borrower than to borrowers in other non-redlined areas. Redlining targeted areas where there were high concentrations of racial minorities, particularly African Americans along with other targeted ethnic groups. J.M. Brewer's redlined map of 1934 had a category of "conspicuous nationality" that included the Germans and the Polish. Whether or not the narratives that the elders recounted were exactly accurate in the details didn't matter because their stories provided a context that told truths about what redlining was and how it was used in the United States to maintain systems of economic and social inequality in the United States. While I couldn't name it at the time, it was one of my earliest lessons of how structural

White supremacy operates in the United States...

Other early childhood influences came from my family's activism in civil rights. I have vivid memories of my father regularly leaving our home to travel to the south in the 1960's. Even as a young child I had a sense that wherever he was going, it was connected to something that he felt passionate about. Each time he would come home, he and my mom would gather my siblings and I together after dinner to show us the slides of his trip. Each slide would show images of men and women brown and White skinned, walking together in marches that my dad explained to us, was about something called "civil rights." Through stories and images of civil rights marches, my parents explained to us with visible emotion and passionate language, what discrimination was and why, as a family, we needed to be a part of this thing called civil rights. They rendered our Whiteness

visible to us. For many years, I felt guilty about my White skin and the unearned advantages that came along with it. (To a certain degree, I still do.) My parents made civil rights a personal imperative for myself and my siblings. They also made it very clear that it was not enough to simply take part in easy and comfortable forms of activism. They challenged us to be courageous in the fight for equality especially when it required us to risk some of our own comfort and privilege. If I am truly honest with myself, this aspect of risking my own comfort has always one of the most challenging aspects of anti-racist work.

As I think about theoretical notions of what it means to be an White ally in terms of these examples of my early learning as a child, I am struck by the fact that these early teachers were doing what bell hooks (1994) refers to as transgressive educational pedagogy. She explains transgressive educational pedagogy as one that uses pedagogical tools that purposefully create dynamic tension. Educator and author Parker Palmer talks about the ideas of “holding tension” long enough for new ideas to emerge (November, 2003 interview, Wisconsin Public Radio, Here and Now). He refers to a dialectical process of conversation and exploration where two seemingly opposite concepts are held together and wrestled with. Palmer goes on to say that we must “resist the temptation to render the other as irrelevant when the distance between is becomes too great.” This begs the question: how might we theorize the concept of a White ally that inherently “holds the tension” within and outside of ourselves long enough for our own transformation to occur? In pondering this question, I reflect on my own experiences and observations as a White social worker where my

work often involved developing relationships with people who were African-American, Latino, and Native American.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I began my social work career in Philadelphia. I continue with that story here as I chart the unfolding of how my own Whiteness was made visible to my consciousness. My recollection is that the relationships with clients that have been the most transformational and multidimensional in nature for me are the ones where I acknowledged the tensions I was feeling along with my own limitations as a White person in deeply understanding the realities of my clients. In other words, I had to make visible (to myself) my own Whiteness in relationship to my social work practice. I struggled in the early part of my career because too often I allowed my frame of reference to be overly influenced by the pathologizing lens of the institutions of social services. This pathologized view blamed clients for their own circumstances. In blaming clients, structures and institutions steeped in racist and Eurocentric standpoints were left unexamined and uninterrogated for their part in creating and perpetuating the conditions of racialized poverty. It was only after I began to develop a more critical lens that I began to think more critically about the human service industry. I came to realize that my values and judgments were shaped and intertwined within the institutions of the Eurocentric human service systems that employed me. This Eurocentric value system located my clients and I in a relationship based on the view that clients were the pathologized in need of “fixing,” and I as the social worker was the valorized “professional” with the “right” knowledge to “fix” clients’ deficiencies. I later came to more fully

understand the ways in which I was reproducing the very systems of oppression and discrimination that I supposedly stood against by way of my own unconscious social work practice.

Wrapping my mind around this invisible and powerful concept of Whiteness...

I return to the interview with Michael Eric Dyson (Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998) where Dyson defines Whiteness as identity, ideology, and institution. He elaborates on how these three levels of Whiteness operate in the United States.

In speaking of Whiteness as an identity, I am referring to the self-understanding, social practices, and group beliefs that articulate Whiteness in relationship to American race, especially, in this case to blackness. I think Whiteness bears a particularly symbiotic relationship to blackness. In one sense, Whiteness is called into existence as a response to the presence of blackness...being White is contingent upon a negation of a corollary blackness and on the assertion of the blackness as the basis of a competing racial identity. (p. 300)

Whiteness at an identity level only exists, according to Dyson as a form of power over a non-White “Other”, in this case Black people. Even though the origins of Whiteness were conceived as a conscious and intentional act of power over the non-White “Other,” according to Dyson, Whiteness has evolved over time into an unconscious and invisible force of identity. This unconscious White racial identity makes it particularly challenging for White people to see themselves as racialized individuals who receive preferential benefits and treatment because of their racial status that he refers to as White supremacy. I wonder how this unconsciousness about our White identity plays out in the world around us.

In terms of education, Lawrence and Tatum (1997) describe the consequences of the unconscious White identity in very concrete ways; “It is the teacher who does

not acknowledge her or his own racial or ethnic identity...who will not recognize the need for children of color to affirm their own” (p. 163). When translated to social work education and social work practice, this raises concerns as to how social workers with an unconscious sense of their White identity will be able to recognize and validate the experiences of racism in the lives of their clients, much less to take on the role of change agents in the pursuit of racial and social justice.

In terms of Whiteness as ideology, Dyson describes Whiteness as a “myth” that makes Whiteness synonymous with being American. This mythologizing of Whiteness is unconscious and invisible yet extremely powerful. Dyson continues, “The invention of America and the invention of Whiteness are ideologically intertwined...” (Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998, p. 301). Through this, the ideology of Whiteness is quintessentially equated with what it means to be American. Because White identities have been unconsciously produced over the course of history in the United States, Dyson argues that it is terribly difficult to render Whiteness visible to White people. Again, Whiteness as an ideology is conflated with being American. Therefore, anything “not White” would be un-American. A perfect example of this is the current situation in Arizona’s Tucson Unified School District where courses on “Ethnic Studies” have been banned by the state legislature. Arizona House Bill 2281 was created and enacted in response to a course in the Tucson Unified School District that taught students about the history of the United States from a non-Eurocentric perspective (among other things). Arizona House Bill 2281 (2010), sections 15-111 and 15-112 state the following:

15-111: Declaration of policy

The legislature finds and declares that public school pupils should be taught to treat and value each other as individuals and not be taught to resent or hate other races or classes of people.

15-112: Prohibited courses and classes; enforcement

A school district or charter school in any State shall not include in any of its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following:

1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government.
2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

This legislation exemplifies what Dyson speaks of when he talks about the ideology of White dominance. The invisible White narrative is conflated with the very definition of what it means to be American and is played out in this legislation.

Ideologically speaking, when Ethnic Studies courses “out” the mythology of a Whiteness narrative of U.S. history, this becomes so threatening to the status-quo that other points of view are positioned as “promoting resentment” and “hate.” What is invisibly written between the lines in this legislation is that the resentment felt by People of Color, most notably in this case Mexican-American people, simply does not matter. Using Osayande’s (2010) idea, U.S. history, as experienced by and told from the point of view of Mexican-American people, is “bypassed.” The only resentment that matters is the resentment felt by White people. Perhaps the real threat, as recently noted in a public talk with bell hooks (2012) at Arizona State University, is that courses on Ethnic Studies are not only popular with students of color, but are also becoming very popular among White students.

As White students lean into (rather than away from) the tensions inherent in “outing” Whiteness, they begin to interrogate and challenge the ideologies of Whiteness that Dyson describes this way:

From the very beginning of our nation’s existence, the discursive defense and political logic of American democracy has spawned White dominance as the foundational myth of American society—a myth whose ideological strength was made all the more powerful because it was rendered invisible...the White race—its cultural habits, political practices, religious beliefs, and intellectual affinities—was socially constructed as the foundation of American democracy. (Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998, p. 301)

In applying Dyson’s concept of Whiteness as ideology to the State of Arizona, House Bill 2281, we see that the legislation is grounded in White ideological thinking. Specifically, any course whose content challenged the mythologic and unconscious White narrative of U.S. history is seen as “promoting resentment.” Rendering visible the White myth that the United States (and in this specific case of Arizona, the mythologies of the Western frontier) was founded by the heroic European settlers who “pulled themselves up by the boot straps” in their rugged individualism to “found” and “tame” the great American frontier is very threatening to the White status quo. Conquest, genocide, colonialism, and slavery do not fit into the grand White narrative. What also does not fit into this ideological grand White narrative are the sites of resistance by brown skinned people who were already living in the mythological “new world.” The fact that the Ethnic Studies course triggered such a strong response and galvanized the White dominated Arizona state legislature to create and pass this bill, gives us

some insight into the entrenched strength of the ideology of Whiteness in American education.

The third aspect of Whiteness, according to Dyson, is how Whiteness is made manifest at the institutional level. He defines institution at the both the micro and macro levels. “The institutions I have in mind—from the home to the school, from the government to the church—compose the intellectual and ideological tablet upon which have been inscribed the meanings of American destiny” (Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, & Chennault, 1998, p. 302). This is where I find my work on allies so interesting. Dyson’s notion of “tablet” makes the connection between individuals and ideology. He does not position institution as something separate from individuals. By including family and church in his notion of institutional Whiteness he shows how people enact and resist Whiteness within the institutions where they have influence. In other words, institutions of Whiteness are not something “out there” that some “bad Other White people” are in charge of. This is not to say that there are not domains of power associated with different levels of institution (ie: family vs. corporation), but Dyson’s version of institution implicates us all in terms of our relationship to reifying and resisting structures of White dominated thinking and behaving and has implications for each of us as we think about our institutional spheres of influence as White allies. In my work on the development of White allies, I am particularly interested in looking at the relationship between the various levels of institutions as it relates to understanding how White people become allies to People of Color.

White allies, finding a thread to begin...

I am interested in theorizing ally development among White people in ways that seek to explore the complex, rather than the binary. Parker Palmer talks about six tensions or paradoxes that need to be built into learning spaces that are: “Bounded and open, hospitable and charged, that invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group, honor the ‘little’ stories of those involved and the ‘big’ stories of the disciplines and tradition, support solitude and surround it with the resources of community, welcome both silence and speech” (1998, pp. 73-77). How might allied forms of pedagogy create spaces for White people to process issues of identity and ideology about their own Whiteness in terms of these six paradoxes? What kinds of pedagogical strategies foster the holding of tension within and between ourselves psychologically and structurally, long enough to gain new insight that will lead us to new and transformational places of liberation? Some of the dialectical questions to hold in tension in the nurturing and development of White allies might be: how do we raise to consciousness the subterranean thoughts of what it means to be White and in deconstructing institutional Whiteness? How do White people decolonize our minds (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999) and our institutions to destabilize them but without shaming ourselves into paralysis? How do we illuminate these complex issues without oversimplifying and essentializing them? What kind of community spaces are needed to give voice to our secret thoughts about what it means to be White and how might we foster the creation of these spaces for working through our pathologies without the overreliance on People of Color to make us feel better about our condition? Can these questions and others, serve as a jumping off point

in the development of an internal and external process for the development of White antiracist allies? In theorizing this notion of a White ally, I hope to zoom in and out as a method for analysis. I seek to hold the tension as I move back and forth in the spaces between the large and the small, the structure and the individual, and the “big” and “little” stories.

Backing my way in to the literature in thinking about what it means to be an ally...

In searching the literature about what it might mean to be an ally, I often found myself having to take an approach that “backed in” to this notion of ally. I wanted to build on the discussion about anti-racist work by constructing an affirmative response in terms of offering ideas on the development of critical anti-racist White allies. In other words, there were few scholars taking an affirmative approach about White allies and so I “backed in” to the topic by looking at the discussions about what NOT to do (that which is rooted in Whiteness and Eurocentricity) and turn those conversations into what TO do. I think this speaks to some of my early conversations (mentioned in Chapter One) with friends of color and White friends who used the word “stuck” when referring to our collective ability to move the project of anti-racist work forward. And in many ways, this validated my own struggles around how to teach about anti-racist work in a way that both engaged students in complex and difficult conversations around problem identification but also offered possible landmarks for students to draw upon as a way to develop their own anti-racist allied identities and practice(s). I also intentionally do not “land” on any particular definition of White ally as that

would undermine the very reason for conducting this research and would “bypass” what the research participants of color have to say on the subject. Rather, I decided to take a look at two books specifically written for a White audience and that take an affirmative stance (what an ally IS) on the topic of White anti-racist allies.

Some initial ideas about White anti-racist allies...

One of the books that I was able to find on the development of allies is a book by Paul Kivel (2002) entitled *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. Kivel’s approach to talking about allies begins with a chapter entitled, “What Color is White?” In this chapter, he places the responsibility for racism squarely in the laps of White people. In the very first few sentences he says:

I am talking to you as one White person to another. I am Jewish, and I will talk to you more about that later. You also may have an ethnic identity you are proud of, and you have a religious background, a culture, a country of origin, and a history. Whatever other identities, you probably are not used to being addressed as White. (p. 6)

In the above quote, Kivel (2002) opens the book by anticipating and closing off those places where White people tend to retreat from our Whiteness. He anticipates some of the more common ways that we Whites tend to deflect away from being “marked” as White. These deflections can frequently sound something like this; “But I am oppressed too because of my religion,” and “But I don’t see myself as White, I see myself as Irish,” or “I’m not White, I’m American.” As a White ally Kivel renders himself visible as a White Jewish man while simultaneously making sure that his White readers locate themselves as

White at the very outset of the book. In this way, Kivel demands the White reader to see her/his own race in the discussion about racism.

Throughout the book, Kivel moves between micro identity performances of Whiteness by White people, to the macro manifestations of Whiteness within systems and institutions. He interrogates the history of Whiteness in the United States. At times, he offers examples of how to be an anti-racist ally by way of vignettes that show allied versus non-allied responses to racist behavior. Kivel also unpacks and deconstructs the covert ways in which racism operates in our institutions through public policy on immigration, voting, anti-affirmative action measures, health care, education and the criminal justice system. In this way, Kivel begins to show how ideologies of Whiteness live on, both overtly and covertly, within institutions.

What Kivel does not do is to discuss the internal processes about what it feels like for White people to interrogate their own White privileged status in society. He does however, talk about what an ally “does.” He avoids an oversimplistic view of the ally saying, “There is no one correct way of being an ally” (p. 94). He says that being an ally has a lot to do with one’s spheres of influence and is a strategic process. He seems to say that being an ally is something that is done in a very intentional way by White people. In other words, White allies don’t just wait for the opportunity to be an ally, they create them. He discusses the importance of listening to and validating the experiences of racism expressed and experienced by People of Color. He also highlights some of the ways in which White people try to “opt out” of owning their White privileged status.

In the first part of the book in a chapter named “Who is White?” Kivel includes an interesting section entitled, “Who is a Victim?” where he recontextualizes common claims of “victimization” by White people. He recontextualizes these claims by offering a more specific definition of what a victim is and the experiences of being victimized:

Being a victim means you are not powerful enough to protect yourself from someone else’s abuse. It means your life, livelihood, or family was threatened and possibly taken away. Those of us who have been raped, robbed, battered, harassed, and or discriminated against know how painful and long-lasting the effects can be. Nor is it necessarily safe to step forward and describe one’s victimization. Survivors of abuse are routinely blamed, not believed, and revictimized. Claiming to be victimized and being victimized are not the same. Who is the victim and who is the perpetrator of abuse in any particular situation depends on what actually happened and who has the power. In order to understand clearly who was victimized, we must ask the questions, ‘Who has the power’ and ‘Who did what to whom?’ (2002, p. 61)

He goes on to use this working definition of victim and victimization to address claims by White people about such things as “reverse discrimination” (p. 61) where he provides statistics on the rare occurrence of reverse discrimination. But after he does this, he resituates these reverse discrimination claims by Whites.

In the rare cases where reverse discrimination exists, Kivel asks the White reader to critically re-think who perpetrates these cases. Rather than being angry at People of Color as the perpetrators of these cases of discrimination, Kivel urges White people to engage in a more critical and political conversation:

What is going on when White people claim reverse racism or claim to be victimized by People of Color? Often we are being victimized, but not by People of Color. We are economically exploited by White-owned corporations that move jobs overseas, leaving our communities stranded and some us unemployed. Then we are deceived about the true cause of

our exploitation and are incited to blame People of Color, Jews, and recent immigrants. (2002, p. 61)

As we can see from this quote, the thrust of Kivel's book (as a White ally himself) is for transformative thinking as it relates to race relations in the United States. He takes on an educative role in helping White people to re-think, re-locate, and re-direct their anger. Kivel urges White people to move from an identity level understanding of Whiteness to an ideological and institutional one. This serves two functions. First, it validates rather than dismisses White people's realities where they see and experience differential treatment based on race (even if it is based on being White). Second, it helps White people shift the responsibility of this differential treatment to the ideological forces of capitalism where systems of Whiteness embody a model of exploitation of the non-wealthy (of all races albeit at disproportionate levels), for the accumulation of financial gain for the wealthy few. Kivel shifts the struggle as that of White against People of Color, to one of corporate wealth against the rest of us. If successful, this potentially serves to create allies among White people and People of Color. In the next book I reviewed on allies there are some interesting differences from Kivel's work.

In *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression in People*, Bishop (2002) offers an approach to being an ally that focuses on both the external processes of anti-racist/anti-oppressive action and the internal processes for nurturing our interior selves in the process. Like Kivel (2002) she describes her own personal experiences as a White woman but also includes her thoughts on the intersectionality of being a lesbian and how these two dominant/oppressed

identities have shaped her understanding of oppression. Bishop recounts the process of her evolving understanding of the concept of ally and the reasons for writing her book: “I found written work that helped me understand my own oppressions and the process of liberation from each one...What I have not found is the critical analysis...of the journey from fighting one’s own oppression to forming an alliance with others” (2002, p. 20-21). Subsequently, her book focuses not just on the social, political, economic and historical context for oppression, it moves beyond an intellectual conversation about oppression to include the affective, *feeling*, and psychological process of anti-oppressive allied work.

Like Kivel (2002), Bishop moves back and forth between the macro manifestations of oppression and the micro personal identity level. But I want to focus on one chapter in particular where Bishop makes the connection between childhood abuse, power and oppression. She centers her narrative around the issue of child abuse and the subsequent long term psychological effects of this abuse on adult behavior. Bishop (2002) makes this connection by referring to the work of Alice Miller who “uses a Freudian theory [of] ‘splitting and projection,’ to explain the mechanism [of how childhood pain becomes adult abuse of power]” (p.69). In Miller’s theory, children who are abused “split off” the parts of themselves that they hate and that make them feel powerless. As adults they project those hated parts of themselves onto other powerless people and then punish them for embodying these hated attributes. Bishop also includes other theories about the relationship between childhood abuse and adult behavior. She

uses five theoretical stances that help to potentially understand the difficulties in cross-cultural ally building, particularly among oppressed groups:

The five psychological mechanisms [of how adult childhood pain can become adult abuse of power] described here—adult use of childhood survival skills, splitting and projection, distrust of good treatment, dissociation, and extreme fear of loss of control—help me understand why members of groups who seem to have everything in common and have operated cooperatively for some time can be triggered by something that brings controlling behavior into play and destroy the group. The unhealed pain from past experiences of powerlessness, buried in individuals, builds the intensity of these battles. (2002, p. 70)

Bishop's observations speak to the importance in anti-oppression ally building for the inclusion of the messy and difficult work of healing from various mechanisms and manifestations of discrimination. In terms of anti-racism, Bishop's ideas speak directly to the frequent chant among White people that the time has come for People of Color to simply "move on" and "get over it." In a fascinating shift, Bishop then moves from the micro individual level of pain to the larger societal level of collective pain.

Bishop notes that the "Phenomenon I have just observed of an oppressed individual becoming an oppressor may also work on the collective level" (p. 71). She discusses ideological and institutional discrimination as forms of abuse, citing an educational example of the Indian residential schools where Native American children were removed (often times forcibly) from their families and sent to boarding schools to be completely assimilated into White Christian cultural values systems. Bishop's point is well taken in that the work of allies must involve an understanding of discrimination as abusive with long lasting psychological consequences. I would also add the need for allies to have an understanding and

appreciation for the level of fortitude, strength and resilience needed by victimized and oppressed people to survive such abuse. Bishop's point, though, is an important one, which is that there can be long term psychological costs associated with this survival.

Finally, Bishop's model of ally development includes the issue of humility. She describes an event where a group of women who were coming together in a public space to memorialize and remember fourteen women who had been killed in Montreal in 1989, were confronted by a man who "yelled at them that he hated feminists" (2002, p. 123). The public memorial was planned by and for feminist women and their male allies to inspire their continued work of reducing gender-based discrimination against women in society. She recounts how a man in the audience "took over" the microphone to give his own uninvited speech. Her response to him came in the form of an open letter entitled, "How not to be an ally" (p. 123). In a portion of that letter she said this about being an ally:

Perhaps you really do want to be an ally. I'm glad, but you have some learning to do. First, you must sort out your own business—your pain at facing yourself as a member of an oppressor group, your confusion between individual and collective responsibility, your inability to distinguish between support and patronizing and, above all, your need to set aside your ego and LISTEN. (p. 124)

Bishop's words give me pause as I think about how the pain of oppression swirls in and around us, affecting some of us much more severely than others. *As I translate the spirit of her words to the work of anti-racist White allies, I wonder about the times that I have made the same mistakes as this man at the rally. When*

should I have just shut-up and listened? Have I really faced the pain that comes along with being a member of the White oppressor group in a way that inspires me towards racial justice rather than burying me deeper into my own paralyzing guilt? In so many ways, this dissertation is an ongoing endeavor to for me to “sort out my own business” of being White.

The threads of decentering Whiteness across educational boundaries and what it tells me about the work to be done...

In researching relevant literature, I was interested in scholarship by educators related to critical Whiteness, anti-racist pedagogy, and transformational teaching and learning. These various bodies of literature cross disciplinary boundaries. Rather than focus on one specific field, my literature review focused on various efforts across traditional educational silos and boundaries where scholars are struggling with embedded and invisible structures of Whiteness in pedagogy. I draw from scholars in the fields of critical pedagogy, English, comparative education, critical theory, and psychology among others. As I have found, critical approaches to uncovering and challenging embedded White structures within education do not have any one particular academic “home.” I intend for my work to be as interdisciplinary as possible, and seek out literature that informs a critical understanding of Whiteness, rather than limiting the work to any specific academic discipline. In a sense, by driving the literature review process according to the subject of critical Whiteness rather than a particular academic field or discipline, I am resisting one aspect of Whiteness in education

that so often forces us to limit scholarly parameters by only focusing on arbitrary disciplinary boundaries.

Critical Whiteness scholarship that critiques and examines pedagogy does not come out of a single academic space. What draws these authors together with a common thread is their critical pedagogical approach to understanding how structures of Whiteness weave in and out of epistemological assumptions within education. Critical Whiteness scholars (Barnett, 2000; Marshall & Ryden, 2000; Toyosaki, Pensoneau-Conway, Wendt & Leathers, 2008; Schick & St. Denis 2005; and Trainor, 2002) critique the academy for the lack of critical analysis in the invisible, yet powerful White positionality of curriculum and pedagogy. Trainor (2002) for example, examines how teachers of critical pedagogy fall into overly simplistic binary representations in how they view the work of their White students. Teachers of critical pedagogy position their students into two general overarching categories: the White conservative who is the unenlightened privileged and the progressive White student whose angst and guilt are evidence of their enlightened status. The problem with this binaried way of viewing White students, is that the unenlightened students are dismissed as those who can't be taught and the enlightened students are treated as if they've done all the work on Whiteness that needs to be done. This essentially hinders either group from exploring deeper issues of Whiteness.

Barnett (2000) analyzes how the Humanities refuses to interrogate the "White ground" upon which all curriculum stands even in the face of scholarly work that illustrates differences in reading and writing related to human

difference (p. 10). By “White ground” the authors refer to ways in which curriculum is embedded with Eurocentric ideology about schooling and learning. Toyosaki, Penoneau-Conway, Wendt, and Leathers (2008) offer an examination of Whiteness in education through the autoethnographic process. “Examining Whiteness [in] education is a journey of identity and materiality...we adopt an approach that highlights the role of performance in constituting identity” (p. 2). In this article the authors use an autoethnographic process to ground their own experiences with Whiteness and “whiteness education.” They alternately narrate their own experiential understandings of what it means to be White, what it means to not be White, and what it means to be teachers and students of critical pedagogy in the material world. Through these personal stories they illustrate the difficulties of moving beyond a theorizing of Whiteness to that of “doing” anti-Whiteness education. In these stories they ground their struggles in the realities of life, troubling the good intentions of educators who seek to un-do Whiteness and showing just how complicated anti-racist work can be. Using autoethnography, they take us through some of the moments in their life that illustrate the messiness of anti-Whiteness education. I turn to a more thorough discussion of storytelling in chapter three of this dissertation.

In keeping with an autoethnographic and storied approach to discussing issues of Whiteness in education, Marshall and Ryden (2000) present a written transcript of a conversation they are having with each other on the “silence of Whiteness in composition pedagogy” (p. 240). They discuss the ways in which White educators have conversations with White students about Whiteness. They

describe these White educators as well-meaning people who are still not talking about Whiteness. Instead, they focus their work on “helping” People of Color. In this way, the problem of Whiteness is still focused on people “other” than White. This approach to anti-racist education is the antithesis of the witnessing model described in Chapter One (Palmer, 1998; Tochluk, 2008) and can lead to the potential reproduction of those systems of dominance and power inherent in White privilege by the well-meaning White person who is not conscious of her own Whiteness. Marshall and Ryden discuss the classroom consequences of the teacher who is unprepared to lead their class into the difficult terrain of a discussion on racism and Whiteness:

This occurs most obviously when a non-White student brings up issues of racism in the classroom and is often met with silence or avoidance from the teacher and others. This pedagogical strategy, although it may be unintentional, does two things: first, it suppresses an interrogation of the teacher who often has power and authority invested in their Whiteness, and second, it shuts down dialogue, thereby affirming racism as good. (p. 241)

Marshall and Ryden contend that simply assigning literature by authors of color does not necessarily bring up issues of Whiteness. They argue that this practice, without substantive classroom discourse on racism and Whiteness, gives teachers the illusion that they have done their duty by being inclusive in their coursework. This kind of classroom practice where discourses on race and Whiteness are absent is the backbone of the additive model of education, which stands in contrast to a social justice model which engages rather than avoids these tensions.

Schick and St. Denis (2005) further the argument for engaging the tensions inherent in a social justice approach to multicultural discourse. They

critique the Canadian national discourse on race because it does not include any discussion of the racial discrimination and the national systems of power inherent in the production of race. They argue that “the celebration of ‘cultural difference’ and the narrative of the nation as race-less, benevolent and innocent has implications for the reproduction of racial privilege” (p. 296). Diversity curriculum that employs this “race-less” celebration of difference also tends to have an “other” centered focus. Again, this is the opposite of the witness approach discussed above. That is, those who are diverse are considered in this discourse as someone other than Whites—the White race is invisible in diversity discourse.

These scholars highlight how Whiteness lingers on in curriculum and pedagogy within and across various subject areas. Perhaps this is because there are still structural aspects to Whiteness with higher education that need to be “outed” before (or maybe simultaneously) we can really undertake an overhaul of the way curriculum and pedagogy are constructed. Curriculum, pedagogy and the structures of education are intricately linked and perhaps should be analyzed alongside one another to get a sense of the bigger picture of the invisible and powerful presence of Whiteness in education.

Higher education as a site of colonization...

While the United States is no longer a European colony, it could be argued that the legacy of colonization still lingers in our minds and in educational institutions despite our best intentions. The question becomes: how do we construct and enact curriculum and pedagogy that recognizes and resists what Marie Battiste calls, “cognitive imperialism” and the “White washing of the

mind” (January 22, 2011, Narrative, Arts-based, and Post Approaches to Social Research Conference, Arizona State University) within higher education?

Towards this end, Tikly (2001) discusses the potential use of a post-colonial frame for the analysis of curriculum. He discusses post-colonialism as the “contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism” (2001, p. 247). With this in mind, how might we consider White centered curriculum and pedagogy as colonial legacies that continue to pervade our formal systems of education?

I recall an experience that I had with a teaching colleague at a University where I used to work. We were discussing different courses that our social work students were required to take and he expressed concern about one of our colleagues whose teaching style was rooted in feminist and Indigenous approaches to ways of knowing. My colleague expressed concern that her teaching was not “rigorous” enough. When I asked him to explain what he meant by that, he said that she paid too much attention to her students’ experiences and not enough to the work of “real” scholarship. Tikly might respond to my colleague by engaging him in an exercise to “[challenge] the underlying norms and values embedded within [my colleague’s assumptions about ‘rigorous’]” (p. 256). A deeper post-colonial analysis of my colleague’s comments would be to first deconstruct his ideas that might locate them within a White centered ontology. We might pose the following questions: What are accepted ideas of scholarship? Where do you find these ideas? What are the dominant public discourses on the topic of scholarship that shape the discourse? What are the

dominant regimes of truth regarding “valid” forms of learning? How do these “truths” support the status quo?

These questions are rooted in spaces of power and serve as a framework for the examination of Whiteness and the various and ever-shifting ways in which Whiteness infiltrates education. I argue in this dissertation that these questions are also powerfully relevant when examining philosophical approaches to teaching about diversity and cultural competence in formal educational systems. More specifically, I ask how this framework, rooted in spaces of power, can be used when exploring the specific case of social work education’s approach to teaching about racial difference. But before we analyze today’s curricular and pedagogical approaches to teaching about diversity in social work education, it is important to chart how we got here.

Scanning the environment around social work education and diversity curriculum and pedagogy...

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) began as a membership association for social workers in 1952 and “is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as the sole accrediting agency for social work education in this country” (Feb 27, 2011, <http://www.cswe.org/About.aspx>). As part of CSWE’s accreditation requirements for social work programs, they developed the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which “support academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence...EPAS describes four features of an integrated curriculum design: (1) program mission and goals; (2) explicit curriculum; (3) implicit curriculum;

and (4) assessment” (February 7, 2011,

www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Handbook/Overview). Further, the 2008 EPAS

state:

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons. (Feb 27, 2011, www.cswe.org)

It is within the context of social work’s “quest for social and economic justice”

that I analyze the historical and current social work methods for constructing,

framing, and teaching about concepts of diversity.

The 2008 EPAS serve as a framework for social work education programs to develop curriculum. One of its ten core competencies, number 2.1.4, is entitled “Engage diversity and difference in practice” and is defined in the following way:

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim.

The 2008 EPAS further outlines the measurements of skills within this competency to include:

[The ability to] recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power, gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups, recognize and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in

shaping life experiences, and [to] view themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.

The next core competency, number 2.1.5, is listed as “Advanc[ing] human rights and social and economic justice” and calls for the following:

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

Again, the 2008 EPAS provides the measurements of skills within this competency to include: “[The ability to] understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination, advocate for human rights and social and economic justice, and [to] engage in practices that advance social and economic justice.” Upon reading these core competencies, it is clear that CSWE and the profession of social work, is situating itself, at least theoretically, within a social justice framework for education and practice.

I am purposely orienting and locating this discussion within the structural framework of CSWE to illustrate its influence in terms of how cultural competence curriculum and pedagogy is supposed to be theorized and constructed by social work educators. It is important to look at the specific choice of words embedded in the core competencies related to diversity and what that potentially reveals about the intention of CSWE by way of the EPAS. These competencies are framed at the micro level by using concepts like: identity, intersectionality of multiple personal characteristics that shape identity and human experience,

personal biases and values, and the individual right to human rights. But there are also macro concepts that are embedded into these competencies like social and economic justice, civil rights, global interconnections of oppression, and marginalization. These concepts speak to the theoretical mandate by CSWE for social work education to address the macro structures of privilege and power and their impact on the rights of the individual as well addressing the micro impacts of oppression. While broad and open to interpretation, they also are clear in providing a mandate for social work educators.

Additionally, CSWE's publishing division describes itself as a, "Niche publisher that addresses the needs of social work educators. Areas of expertise include the philosophy, theory, and practice of teaching; the process and evaluation of learning; and the organization and structure of social work education" (February 27, 2011, www.cswe.org/Publications.aspx). The peer-reviewed *Journal of Social Work Education* is published by CSWE and is the main publication that was reviewed for articles on pedagogy related to teaching about issues of diversity for this paper. The point that I make here is that CSWE is influential at a variety of structural levels on social work education, curriculum, and pedagogy.

Another important structural institution that influences social work education is the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). According to its website:

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with 145,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and

development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies. (February 27, 2011, www.naswdc.org/nasw/default.asp)

While the NASW is an organization of voluntary membership among individual social workers, educational institutions, and social work agencies, the EPAS standards for ethical social practice in section 2.1.2 states that social workers should, “Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice [and to]...make ethical decisions by applying standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics” (February 27, 2011, www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=13780). In other words CSWE has fully endorsed and adopted the NASW’s code of social work practice ethics thereby standardizing the set of ethical obligations for all social work professionals.

The NASW preamble section of the Code of Ethics lists as social work’s core values: “service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence” (March 6, 2011, <http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>). Again, we see at a very basic core value level that social justice is put forth as one of the most basic guiding principles of the social work profession. The Code further states that, “This constellation of core values reflects what is *unique to the social work profession* [my italics]. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.” What NASW suggests here is that while the profession of social work may be influenced by the multiplicity of professional environments where social workers practice, these core values are what set us apart from other professions and should

always be a guiding force in our practice decisions, no matter the particular environment in which one works. This message is an anti-assimilationist approach to social work practice. One of the core questions for social work educators is this: To what degree have we carried the mandate forward in curriculum and pedagogy that takes up and/or fails to take up this anti-assimilationist position?

Again, in examining social work education's approach to cultural competence it is important to contextualize the discussion within a structural frame. Like the EPAS, the NASW Code of Ethics provides specific language to explicate its core value of social justice. The Code calls for an "Ethical Principle" that mandates "social workers [to] challenge social injustice" and further explains the process by which social workers should ethically practice this principle:

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.
(<http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>)

The Code of Ethics goes on to outline the specific ethical responsibilities of social workers to clients under the heading of "Cultural Competency and Social Diversity" and calls for "social workers to understand culture and its function...social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures...[and] understand the nature of social diversity and oppression." What is interesting about the language here is that it positions oppression in terms of a

“social” nature of injustice. Does this mean that social workers do not need to understand the political or economic nature of structural injustice? And if so, how might that limit the examination of social work competence related to issues of diversity, discrimination, and culture? In the following section, I seek to explore these questions in the social work literature.

A Look at the Historical Trajectory of Social Work Education and Cultural Competence

I reviewed the abstracts of every issue (since the first issue in 1980) of the Journal of Social Work Education (JSWE) which as mentioned previously is published by CSWE. I chose to do this because I wanted to track the themes of the discussion and research on curriculum and pedagogy related to cultural competence and diversity over the past thirty years. While this is not an exhaustive literature search on the topic, JSWE is in the top tier of social work journals and is dedicated to topics on education and pedagogy and the choices by CSWE for inclusion have a material and powerful reach over the broader social work discourse on diversity. Additionally, given CSWE’s leadership role within social work education, the articles in JSWE provide an important indicator for the kind of “conversations” about social work pedagogy that are deemed important enough to be published. Through conducting this analysis I hoped to get a sense of where social work has been in this conversation, as a way to gain historical context for our current pedagogical and curricular understandings of cultural competence. Additionally, an analysis of the ongoing conversation will allow me to identify potential gaps and missing elements that need to be interjected in the

continuing discussion and debate on these very important pedagogical and curricular issues.

The 1980s:

The 1980s began with an article that suggested that social work education and social work practice had been unresponsive to issues of disadvantage faced by ethnic minorities (Jackson, 1981). Jackson focused on ethnocentric bias, and suggested a curriculum that uncovers one's biases through both affective and cognitive learning. Jackson asserted that, "There is little information in the literature about the content or structuring of courses on social work with ethnic minorities" (p. 103). Rather than a focus "about culture" Jackson suggested that the focus should be on racism, identity, and ethnicity by giving students "intellectual skills which would enable [the student] to adapt to working in ethnic communities" (p. 103). Jackson additionally recommended studying the "political dimensions" to increase students' "political consciousness" in how they practice social work in "ethnic communities". In this approach cultural competence includes an understanding of both historical and political contexts for understanding issues of racism.

Continuing in this time period Smith and Stewart (1982) suggested that social work education should integrate ethnic and minority group history into social welfare policy courses. In particular they argued that social welfare policy history is often taught without acknowledging the contributions of minority groups, specifically in terms of their contributions to the development of social welfare services. Highlighting their service and impact would more accurately

describe the historical development of social welfare policy. The authors suggested that curriculum during this time period only presented a Eurocentric view of social welfare history, leaving out the experiences and contributions of minority groups.

At this time we also see the emergence of gay and lesbian issues within the conversation of diversity. One article was published on the lack of curricular content in social work education related to working with lesbians and gay men (Humphreys, 1983). This marks the first entry in this journal of the topic of culture to include sexual minorities. Written by a practitioner rather than a university professor, Humphreys called on the profession to be inclusive of gay and lesbian issues by surveying attitudes among university professors towards the inclusion of curriculum on gay men and lesbians. The study surveyed California Master of Social Work (MSW) programs and found that faculty viewed curriculum as inadequate regarding the inclusion of content on lesbians and gay men. The study also revealed an attitude “that the ‘tolerance for homosexuality’ was viewed as far more important for learning than ‘advocacy for gay groups.’” This idea of “teaching tolerance” rather than social change is somewhat consistent in the approach to cultural competence by social work educators of this time period.

Fox (1983), also a practitioner, advocated for the shift from a cognitive learning approach in knowledge acquisition about racism to one that uses experientially based learning that focuses on emotional or affective learning strategies. Fox advocated for a field learning component within the course itself

to increase students' insights about how they feel in the presence of people who are culturally different (although his approach only focuses on a White/Black definition of difference). He suggested that experientially based learning builds empathy which will then translate into a more culturally sensitive approach to social work practice. The premise is that once students confront their own biases, they would "overcome their racism" (Fox, 1983, p. 73) and will therefore engage in a liberation struggle in solidarity with blacks against White racism.

Fox offered ten principles for constructing a course on racism; the racism course should 1) be required and be co-taught by White and Black instructors, 2) have a diverse student enrollment and should be offered concurrently with practice courses, 3) focus on a depth versus breadth approach, favoring curriculum that goes into depth rather than trying to superficially cover too much material, 4) have content that is empirically drawn from the perspective and experiences of oppressed people, 5) privilege experiential learning over literary learning, 6) present all perspectives on racism including views from overtly racist organizations, 7) recognize that each student is at a different place in her own development regarding understandings of racism, 8) be a balance of clear academic expectations along with creating an informal setting to encourage the development of trusting relationships between students and instructors, 9) include student involvement in what is discussed in class with particular attention to bringing in pertinent media articles for the class to discuss, and 10) emphasize the complexities of racism and avoid over-simplistic solutions. It is noteworthy that Fox explicitly called for a course entitled racism that is arranged as an anti-racist

approach to education. In this way, Fox departed from an “othered” approach that focuses teaching students about some “other” people who are “different,” which is rarely ever overtly defined. But Fox’s approach began to move away from the implicit notion that difference means someone who is not a member of the dominant White racial group.

Later in the 1980s the conversation about cultural competence took on shades of complexities and a somewhat less binary Black/White approach to curriculum. Granger and Portner (1985) addressed issues of intersectionality by introducing gender across racial lines as an area of concern for social work curriculum. Lister (1987) introduced the idea of “ethnocultural content” in social work curriculum and explored the question of whether or not there is a difference between “ethnocultural and minority content” (p. 31). Lister’s definition of ethnocultural is similar to general definitions of culture where certain groups have:

Common heritage where one or more of the characteristics of language, religion, phenotypical features (racial origin) region or country of origin...by contrast the minority perspective in social work education would be more concerned with content on racism, powerlessness, prejudice, discrimination, oppression and other such social problems encountered by some ethnocultures. (p. 31-32)

He further argued that ethnocultural content is more applicable to human behavior and social environment (HBSE) courses while minority content focuses on “identifying forces which oppress” (p. 32) and correlates to policy related coursework. This dichotomy of studying ethnocultural content in classes which focus on micro aspects of human behavior and minority content in macro social

policy reifies a “tolerance” approach in the micro practice classes while splitting out social change and social justice approaches and relegating them to the macro realm of coursework. This mirrors today’s contemporary social work dichotomy, which splits “advanced direct practice (ADP)” and “planning, administration, and community (PAC)” into two separate concentrations in graduate programs. If we rejected this split, we could advocate for an integrated space of liberatory social work pedagogy. This ADP/PAC dichotomy would be intentionally blurred by focusing on how macro forces affect our individual lives and on how structures of oppression are enacted and reproduced by individuals. In this liberatory space we make the circular connections between the people, policy, and structures. Otherwise, we continue to position oppression as some unknown “evil oppressor group” who makes these structures and since *none of us* are “those” evil people, we can all claim innocence in our complicity with the problem and therefore in the solution as well.

In the late eighties, the international aspect of social work was introduced into the cultural competence conversation. Garland and Escobar (1988) discussed “cross-cultural” social work but differentiated it from American ethnic and minority social work practice and focused expanded notions of diversity to include an international level of social work. In their definition of cross cultural social work, the authors suggested that American social workers would most likely be working with clients in the clients’ “host” country and American social workers would be required to adapt to their clients’ language and value systems rather than the other way around. They discussed cross cultural work as having a

more global perspective where the social worker transcends national identities in favor of a more global community identity which, they argued, more closely resembles an anthropological viewpoint of cultures and the families within those cultures.

The 1990s

The decade of the nineties is characterized by a growing number of articles that discussed curricula and pedagogy and focused on social work practice with individual cultural groups. The language of this time period seemed to move away from “ethnic” to “diversity”. In this decade using the word “diversity” seemed to indicate a more expansive view of culture and cultural competence. The literature in social work education during this time period began to discuss pedagogy and curriculum issues related to the recognition and exploration of personal biases related to various “ism’s” (Latting, 1990; Carillo et al., 1993; van Soest, 1996; Garcia et. al., 1997; Walters et. al., 1998). The language of “tolerance” is replaced with the term “cultural sensitivity” but is more broadly inclusive in defining culture and cultural groups (Chau, 1990; Nakanishi et. al., 1992; Rodwell et. al., 1992) to include gender (Tice, 1990; Knight, 1991; Morris, 1993; Carter et. al., 1994; de Lange, 1995) and sexuality (van Soest, 1996; Cain, 1996; Cramer, 1997). During this time there was also a proliferation of articles that focused on various issues related to religion (focused exclusively on Judeo-Christian religions) as a cultural issue in social work education. (Edward, 1989; Denton, 1990; Netting et.al., 1990; Soiffer, 1991; Sheridan et.al., 1994; Hemert, 1994; Gold, 1996).

Towards the latter part of the 1990s we begin to see articles that focus on pedagogical strategies and teaching methods that seek to help students become more culturally competent social workers using a social change framework which seeks to identify the impact of institutional oppression on clients and in intervening both with, and on behalf of, them (van Voorhis, 1998). Pedagogy focused on understanding psychosocial reactions to oppression, where oppression is defined in terms of political, economic, and social institutions. In the van Voorhis article we begin to see an acknowledgment of the centrality of Eurocentric White theoretical underpinnings of theory in social work; this Eurocentricity is also positioned as a result of a color-blind approach to cultural competence. van Voorhis encouraged critical thinking about the connections between social inequalities, institutions, and the impact on the individual, yet this article lacks the reciprocal connections between the individual and institutions. Again, institutional and structural inequalities are positioned as forces external to individuals, as if policies, for example, are not made, enforced, and enacted by individual people.

During the latter part of the 1990s, Nagda et al. (1999) advanced the “awareness of bias” approach one step further by using Intergroup Dialogue to build cross-cultural alliances as a result of raising one’s consciousness. Language in this article focused on transformational pedagogy and justice oriented practice, which translates the classroom experience directly to practice in the field. This form of pedagogy aims to do two things in social work education: 1) to engage the tensions of difference and oppression as a mechanism for personal

transformation and 2) to encourage classroom discourse that incorporates polyvocal perspectives on the same issue in the classroom. This article and the pedagogies it advocated move away from the binary oppressed/oppressor paradigm in favor of one that does not rank the importance of one form of oppression over another, but rather makes the connections between the structures of oppression in society and individual agency.

Additionally in this time period, Hillary Weaver (1999) published an article based on her research conducted with Native American social workers. Weaver asked the participants to identify important aspects of knowledge, values and skills that “professional helpers” should have when working with Native people. Weaver described four main areas of knowledge that the participants identified as important: diversity, history, culture and contemporary realities. These particular Native American social workers found it important for professional helpers to have an understanding of the diversity among Native people. They also identified the importance of having knowledge about indigenous people’s sovereignty and the treaties that impact Native people in the United States, with particular attention to the history of social services in Native communities that often perpetrated abuse and violence by White people. The third area of knowledge that was identified was classified as “culture.” By culture, they meant that helping professionals should understand how one’s own value systems might be different than those of various tribes. They expressed the need for professional helpers to avoid being judgmental when there was a difference in values between the helper and those receiving the help. And finally

the research participant identified “contemporary realities” as important. The participants discussed the need for helpers to have knowledge of the various structural issues within and among tribes including tribal politics, the various ways in which different tribes configured their decision making processes, and issues of sovereignty in terms of treaties with the federal systems of government. Interestingly, these four areas seem to encompass Dyson’s call for understanding Whiteness as an identity (culture), and ideology (values) and an institution (contemporary realities).

The 2000s

In this decade cultural competence is expanded in terms of what constitutes culture and how social work views cultural groups. There is a marked increase in the number of articles that focus on social work competence with sexual minorities, which frame the issue with a particular emphasis on social justice (Voorhis & Wagner, 2001; Newman et. al., 2002; Van den Berg & Crisp, 2004; Hylton, 2004). This decade continued to delve into more complex spaces related to cultural competence and explored the idea that all human beings have multiple identities, which are now referred to as “intersectionality” and “multiculturalism” (Akerlund et al, 2000; Fellin, 2000; Green et. al., 2005; Kane & Houston, Schiele, 2007; Vega, 2004; Walker & Staton, 2000; Webster, 2002). An additional level of complexity that is added to the discussion during this time period relates to the inclusion of multicultural content along with the use of interactive online forums as a pedagogical tool for difficult conversations about oppression (van Soest, 2000). Other cultural groups included in the focus of

culture in this decade are Latinos (Gutierrez et al., 2000) and American Indian people (Limb & Organista, 2003).

In the latter part of this decade there were attempts to call for a change in social work curriculum from being rooted in Eurocentrism to using an Indigenous knowledge systems framework. This call for change also challenged the social work EPAS of that time to be more aligned with an approach to social work that affirmed the experiences and approaches to social work practice by Indigenous practitioners (Gair et. al., 2005; Voss et. al., 2005). It is not until 2007 that we begin to see articles that attempt to “mark” and make visible the privilege of dominant groups. Abrams and Gibson (2007) discuss White privilege while Walls et al. (2009) focus on heterosexual privilege in terms of social work curriculum. During this time period the multicultural approach to cultural competence is challenged as one that promotes a color blind approach to cultural competence (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Schiele, 2007). While the multicultural approach advocated for the inclusion of multicultural content, it left issues of Eurocentric epistemology unchallenged. Essentially it focused only on *what* was taught but not on *how* content was taught. And finally, two articles in the second half of this decade introduced critical frameworks for addressing cultural competence pedagogy in social work education. (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Ortiz & Jayshree, 2010), Specifically, Ortiz and Jayshree suggest the in teaching about diversity, social work “...is I need of an approach that addresses diversity issues within the broader social context, one that recognizes social location as a function of institutional [and] arrangements” (pp. 175-176). And what this review of the

literature has shown in terms of the the trajectory of the development of approaches in social work to dealing with issues of diversity and difference, we seem to have an overly concentrated focus on the “identity” aspect of difference to the neglect of the ideological and institutional aspects of diversity and difference. It the use of this critical lens that I use as a “jumping off point” to develop an idea of a more balanced, complex and “messy” space which expands the conversation on cultural competence in social work education to include identity, ideology and institution in the discourse.

By having a “messy” discourse about social work’s pedagogy around race and Whiteness we can begin to question what we think we know. It embodies the ideas mentioned earlier in the chapter one about a discourse that resist easy and over-simplistic thinking that fails to connect Dyson’s notions of Whiteness as ideology, identity and institution. By having a “messy” discourse we juxtapose different ideas in tension with each other to see what new possibilities might emerge. Rather than avoiding ambiguity and tension, we embrace it as a methodological act that resists overly simplistic Black/White and right/wrong thinking.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY: COMPLICATING THE CONVERSATION

“One change in direction that would be real cool would be the production of a discourse on race that interrogates whiteness. It would just be so interesting for all those white folks who are giving blacks their take on blackness to let them know what’s going on with whiteness” (hooks, 1990, p. 54).

In keeping with this idea of “messy” spaces that I have been threading throughout this dissertation, I chose to approach this chapter that focused on methodology in a way that may seem unconventional for an academic dissertation. Along with the inclusion of scholarly literature, I also incorporate observations from my life as a way to continue to render visible my struggles between my academic and experiential selves in terms of methodology. As in the last two chapters, the reader will continue to “hear” this conversation between my two selves. I will also discuss various theoretical frameworks that have shaped my research process and the methodological positions taken in this research process. Some of these influences are rooted in feminist ideas, artistic spaces of inquiry, and decolonizing notions of research and knowledge production especially as it relates to power and control. And finally, I discuss my reasons for using a narrative approach to research.

Teachers and knowledge are found in unexpected places...

In a postmodern lens, it is recognized that knowledge is all around us, all of the time. Empirical data on the manifestations of racism can be found in our daily lives and People of Color who experience racism are, in many ways, the experts—the scholars, if you will—about what it means to live in a world where

racism still exists. Knowledge about racism and the data that illustrate its manifestations are not the sole property of educational institutions and of those who publish scholarly work on the topic. In her essay entitled *Postmodern Call and Response, Social Work Education in the Modernist University*, Roche (2007) writes:

By postmodernism, I am referring to a critique of all universal theories and of discourses that marginalize and disqualify some people's realities by privileging the beliefs of others...Postmodernism changes the tradition of expert, repositioning teachers as facilitators, social workers as consulting partners, and everyone as co-learners and co-constructors. (p. 299)

In other words, knowledge is produced everywhere. When entering a university classroom, we bring knowledge from our lived experiences and our intellectual and curious minds. We then we go back out into the classroom of our lived experience where we apply, process, and gather more information to bring back to our university classroom, and the cycle of knowledge production continues. Postmodern approaches to inquiry, knowledge and research tell us that our teachers are everywhere and that we shift and morph in our interchangeable teacher/learner selves depending on the context of our position at any given time. Postmodernism also tells us that who we are in society is related to structures of power and to how dominant systems ascribe power to some, and not to others.

I'm on the bus behind two people whose skin tones resemble the color of caramel and who are speaking mostly English with a Spanish word interjected here and there. They are discussing their observations of our bus driver and his differential behavior towards riders with paler skin tones similar to his own and

those riders with varying shades of brown skin tones. I begin to watch too, but I am mindful that their radar picked this up before mine, even though I sit only a foot behind them. The driver welcomes riders with paler colored skin by turning his head to face them, flashing them his beautiful smile and saying "hello" while patiently anticipating their need to be assisted in using the machine to pay for the ride. When riders with darker skin tones get on the bus, he looks straight ahead, not acknowledging their presence. They have to elicit the bus driver's attention when they need help. "Excuse me, I have a transfer. How do I use it?" He hesitates, sometimes letting out a deep exhale of annoyance where it feels like the unspoken words captured in this rush of his exhaled breath is, "What an idiot." I imagine that every one of these riders who is subjected to his behavior understands exactly what's going on. I also wonder how many of my fellow & sister pale riders are tuning in to this, and if so, if they are as disturbed as I am. What to do...how can I be a White ally here...how do I use my power and privilege as a White person responsibly in this moment...do I have the right to speak for riders of color...must do something. I go up to the front of the bus a little early before my stop to stand next to the driver. I lean down and say, "You have such a beautiful smile. You should share it with all of your riders, not just with those of us who are White." He continues to look at the road ahead as he slowly and barely nods his head. The bus stops and as I disembark, I hear him say to me, "You have a great day." "You too," I respond as I turn and smile at him.

Feminism is where I live...

Feminism, along with other approaches to qualitative research, calls for reflexivity as a methodological tool. For the researcher as ally, this calls upon the researcher to engage in an exploration of the self as it relates to her research process. My locating myself and my interests in the research topic of White allies is a brief example of this self-exploration. Further, reflexivity raises questions about representation and the researcher's ability to know or represent another's story or information. Specifically the researcher notes that qualitative research is increasingly concerned with more than results of research and is focused on the research process itself and the process for gathering data. Therefore, the reflexive researcher is as concerned not just with outcome but with process in the research endeavor.

Such [reflexive] thinking, influenced by poststructural theory, has yielded further questions about a researcher's ability to represent, to know another, and questions the construction of our ethnographic and qualitative texts. Can we truly represent another? Should this even be a goal of research? Whose story is it – the researcher or the researched? How do I do representation knowing that I can never quite get it right? (Pillow, 2003, p. 176)

These issues of reflexivity raised questions for me as I prepared for my doctoral research on what it means to be an ally. I asked myself some important questions: How do I locate myself as researcher in questions about Whiteness and anti-racism? Could I really “research” the topic of allied behavior without giving some thought to my own behavior as an ally in the research process? Is it even possible for the researcher to position herself as an ally with those who are providing information to the research project? And if so, what were the potential possibilities and pitfalls of such a stance? How did this stance change or alter the

researcher responsibilities with those who consented to offer their knowledge to the research project? By using various principles of poststructural feminist and womanist¹ principles (Hill-Collins, 1991; Lorde, 1984; Walker, 1983), I explored these questions related to the researcher as ally.

Feminist ideas about research are not static or without debate among various feminist standpoints. For example, over twenty years ago, poststructural feminist scholar and researcher Patti Lather (1991) spoke to the issue of women's invisibility in social science research. More currently, Lather (2010) says this about the research process: "In efforts 'to do our knowing from our doing,' there is only room for a complicated truth, and a different logic is called for, a logic grounded in not knowing as a way of moving into a nonauthoritarian authority, trying to think not only with but in our actions" (p. 74). Earlier liberal feminists were focused on equality for women and pointed out that research was too frequently focused only on men, while women were absent from the research process. Subsequently, poststructural ideas in feminism posit that there is not one single universal "truth" for all women. Rather, there are many different women's experiences that are connected to socio/historical/political factors which are linked to power, domination and oppression. Additionally, a poststructural view might also be concerned with how women (or men for that matter) become objectified research "objects" rather than human partners engaged in the research

¹ In using the terms "feminism" and "womanist" I want to be clear that I draw not just from White versions of feminist thought but also feminist thought by women of color like Alice Walker, Audre Lorde and Patricia Hill Collins who contend that feminism itself has in some ways, reified and reproduced some of the exclusionary principles it seeks to address.

process. Gorelick (1991) explains this evolution of concerns among feminist researchers: “Feminist methodology grows out of an important qualitative leap in the feminist critique of the social sciences: the leap from a critique of the invisibility of women, both as objects of study and as social scientists, to the critique of the method and purpose of social science itself” (p. 459). Perhaps the researcher as ally must forge a space between invisibility and objectification of research participants/partners.

This possible in-between research space raises important questions for the researcher as ally: How might the researcher as ally mitigate this invisibility and objectivity throughout the entire research process? Even as I wrote this and envisioned the research design, there was a struggle for language to render visible in an embodied way the people who are more traditionally referred to as informants, research participants, and sample. These traditional terms, to varying degrees, seem to render living, breathing, and feeling people as disembodied “sources” of information (Deavere-Smith, 2012; hooks, 2000; Kaomea, 2001; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999), thus further entrenching an objectifying approach to research.

The language that we currently use when we refer to “our” “informants” in research seems to further alienate, colonize, and objectify the human beings whose experiences are the lifeblood of our inquiry. Right from the very beginning of the research process the researcher as ally must make conscious decisions about the use and selection of language that gives life to or objectifies the relationship that the researcher has with all of the people who are members of

the research project. The language selection operates in subtle yet powerful ways, and either creates the structure by which the researcher imbues herself with the authoritative position in which she and only she knows what “data” are significant and worthy of further analysis, or endeavors to create a research project that incorporates many voices and points of view. Too often the research process is designed as a one way relationship that mirrors the scientist who extracts information from disembodied cells for analysis. Conversely, poststructural feminist standpoints view knowledge as never fixed, always evolving in relation to context, and always partial and incomplete (Lather 2010; Madison 2005; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Rather than taking a research position that renders the “informant” as an object from which information is extracted, the feminist researcher strives to take a position that negates the supposed divide between researcher and researched. It is an approach that seeks to deconstruct the “Othering” of any of the members involved in the research project. Gorelick (1991) speaks to the issue of objectifying research participants: “Objectification rests on positing a radical difference between the roles of scientist and subject in which, in the most extreme positivist approaches, studying human beings is, in principle, no different from studying things” (p. 460). To counter this objectification, the researcher as ally can extend the feminist critique of invisibility to our choice of language. The researcher as ally must be fully conscious of the power of language in the development, implementation, analysis, and dissemination of the research project as it relates to her research stance and to

understanding how language is used to objectify or humanize all members of the research team.

The ally with good in(tensions)...

This idea of rendering audible those voices who have been silenced within social science research is not an easy or simple task. A danger for the researcher as ally is to approach the issues of invisibility, visibility, and agency in an oversimplified way. There is a danger for the researcher as ally to unconsciously take up an ahistorical position of the research relationship. An example would be when a White researcher relies on her “good intentions” to bolster her position that she is acting as an ally in the research endeavor with People of Color (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). In so doing, she lacks insight into the various histories and continued instances of White people “doing research” on People of Color in ways that damage and dehumanize them in the name of research. hooks (2000) cautions American feminists of all colors against oversimplifying racism into a micro person-to-person event based on “race hatred”. She says, “The American woman’s understanding of racism as a political tool of colonialism and imperialism is severely limited. To experience the pain of race hatred or to witness that pain is not to understand its origin, evolution, or impact on world history” (p. 373). Researchers as allies must locate themselves within this history and prepare themselves for the complexity of the legacy that endures in contemporary research today, including in the psyche of the most well-intentioned feminist researcher. She must design her project in a way that consults and

engages all of the members of the research project while simultaneously and throughout the research process questioning and raising to consciousness her own embedded assumptions and values.

By taking up an ahistorical position, the danger is that the “well-intentioned” researcher as ally may in fact actually reproduce the colonizer/colonized dynamic. In womanist, feminist, indigenous, and decolonizing approaches to research, the researcher’s location and position is of crucial importance to the research process. Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) suggests that a decolonized approach to research is actually an anti-research approach to research. She points out that “from the vantage point of the colonized...the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism...the word itself ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (p. 1). Colonizing research used against Indigenous groups used imperialist tools of exploitation and White, Eurocentric values to judge Native people as “savages” in need of “civilizing.” Colonizing research fails to examine imperialist assumptions about values and perceptions operating within the research process such as the need to “fix” oppressed people. Conversely, a decolonizing approach² to research would reject practices of exploitation and scientific experimentation in the dehumanization of research participants. In this way, the research rejects the idea of finding an all-encompassing truth that can be generalized to all other people. The decolonizing research process is messy and

² While Tuhiwai-Smith uses the term “decolonized” in the past tense, I intentionally use the term “decolonizing” in the progressive tense. I do this because I think that the act of decolonizing, particularly for White people is an ongoing process rather than an end point.

resists the myth that the researcher can “control” for absolute certainties. The decolonizing research stance positions researchers as one that authentically balances both the knowledge of the researcher and the knowledge of the human partners who are the experts of their own lives and experiences. Decolonizing research processes also include offers of reciprocity that will in some way benefit both researcher and researched. In other words, decolonizing approaches to research attempt to humanize the research process in as many stages and in as many ways as is possible.

Returning to this idea of language, we can humanize (or not) the research process in the language we use. Again, for the feminist researcher, language is not just a simplistic and semantic exercise in the research endeavor. Language is the tool that we use to question our paradigm(s) and is chosen throughout the entire research process. This paradigm approach is about deeply felt and enacted ethics towards the human beings that have agreed to be members of the research project. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) speaks about the history of non-Indigenous researchers conducting unethical research with harmful effects on the indigenous people being studied. In the case of Indigenous people, Tuhiwai Smith instructs researchers to fully understand that, “Imperialism frames the indigenous experience” (p. 19). Researchers cannot rest on “good intentions” as the sole foundation for their work as an ally. In fact, in many ways, the naïve and well-intentioned person is just as dangerous (maybe more) to colonized people.

In her article, *Tiffany, Friend of People of Color* (2003) Audrey Thompson, herself a White academic, explicates the dangers of the “well

intentioned White person” even further. Her article discusses the dynamics of progressive White academics who take on a “good White person” position.

Thompson indicts this position as one where progressive White people find places of “retreat” as a way to separate ourselves from White racism:

The desire to be known as a good White person stems from the recognition that our Whiteness is problematic...that we try to escape by being demonstrably different from other, racist Whites. Among students who are new to Whiteness theory or related theories about racism, exceptionalism tends to take the form of statements about how different they are from other Whites...Not only do such discursive moves shift the focus for racism to more obviously blameworthy Whites, but they shift the focus on the antiracist project to Whites who *really* have a problem. (p. 9)

One of the pitfalls for the White researcher as ally is the notion of “exceptionalism” where progressive White people retreat to the space of “good White person” thereby exempting ourselves from engaging in a reflexive process of locating and situating ourselves and our research interests and activities within our Whiteness. This kind of move by progressive Whites is actually a reenactment of our White privilege by arbitrarily exempting ourselves from “the bad White people”. In so doing, we locate the problem of Whiteness existing somewhere outside of ourselves.

Thompson further contends that when White people “retreat” from our Whiteness, our own internalized racism goes unexamined. The implication for White progressive faculty is that they become impatient with White students who are just beginning to explore White racism themselves. In an article discussing the White anti-racist speaker Tim Wise, Osayande (2010) says,

There is a sense among some of us [Black people] that because he speaks against racism, he must be all right. And as such, he has garnered the

coveted ‘ghetto pass’, a symbolic gesture given to those Whites considered ‘down’ with Black people. But we have seen what happens when Whites feel they are ‘in like Flynn’ with our people; they get right racist and condescending...In effect, *they become Whiter* [my italics]. (p. 1)

The researcher as ally has to be mindful of this tricky position of someone who simultaneously seeks to navigate the ever fluid spaces of being invited to bear witness to the effects of racism on communities of color while never forgetting that she is still an outsider in terms of her ability to fully understand the experiences and trauma of racism. The decolonizing of our minds and our imaginations is an ongoing process done in solidarity with People of Color and White allies.

Thompson also cautions White people to examine our need to be “congratulated” by People of Color on our antiracist identities, which “diverts Black women’s energy from addressing social issues facing African-American communities” (p. 10). Again, this kind of ignorance is a manifestation of our deeply engrained privilege and is an example of one of the places that progressive White people “retreat” to as a way to avoid confronting our lives that embody the tensions of simultaneously being part of the solution and part of the problem of racism. Finally, Thompson challenges the idea that White people who are committed to antiracist work will feel good about the process of raising our consciousness about White privilege. She proposes that the process of unlearning White privilege will produce a mix of feelings including growth, loss, and grief. This proposition has profound implications for the White researcher as ally.

A reflexive process for the White researcher as ally would be to engage directly, honestly, and with courage those areas of our Whiteness that implicate us in the reproduction of imperialist nature of White supremacy in the research process. Pillow (2003) refers to this as “reflexivities of discomfort” that “...seek to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous (p. 188). This research project does not seek to end up with a nice tidy ending. Rather, I seek to lean into the tensions that so frequently are avoided in the classroom. As the researcher, I begin to lean into the tension by always talking back to myself throughout the entire dissertation. My speaking back to and throughout this text is an example of what Pillow (2003) refers to as, “...avoiding simplistic storylines” or as being an “innocent author” (p. 190). Pillow contends that this is “messy” business in qualitative work. I situate myself within, rather than outside of, this messiness.

The researcher as ally must commit to engaging in a life long struggle in community with others (especially other White people) in uncovering and raising our consciousness about the very nature of our membership within a White supremacist society, which should “incite us to live the present ‘historically’” (Wright, 2003, p. 198). Reflecting back to Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) concept of “anti-research research,” I found myself searching for ways to understand myself as a White researcher committed to social justice methods of research and practice that seek out liberatory pathways. I asked myself, what methods and practices would inform an “anti-research” research process? As a White researcher exploring the aspects of what an authentic White ally is, I must simultaneously

behave to the best of my ability as a White ally. I cannot (and should not)
separate out the position of the researcher from what is being researched.

Art is my teacher...

To live in the Borderlands means you

By Gloria Anzaldúa (1987)

are neither hispana india negra espanola
ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata, half-breed
caught in the crossfire between camps
while carrying all five races on your back
not knowing which side to turn to, run from;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing
that the india in you, betrayed for 500 years,
is no longer speaking to you,
that mexicanas call you rajetas,
that denying the Anglo inside you
is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;

Cuando vives en la frontera
people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,
you're a burra, buey, scapegoat,
forerunner of a new race, half and half-both woman and man, neither—
a new gender;

To live in the Borderlands means to
put chile in the borscht,
eat whole wheat tortillas,
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by la migra at the border checkpoints;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to
resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,
the pull of the gun barrel,
the rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

In the Borderlands
you are the battleground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger,
the border disputes have been settled
the volley of shots have shattered the truce
you are wounded, lost in action

dead, fighting back;

To live in the Borderlands means
the mill with the razor White teeth wants to shred off
your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your heart
pound you pinch you roll you
out smelling like White bread but dead;

To survive the Borderlands
you must live sin fronteras be a crossroads.

gabacha--a Chicano term for a White woman
rajetas--literally, "split," that is, having betrayed your word
burra-donkey
buey-oxen
sin fronteras-without borders

*My crossroads: blurring and blending my evolving selves as researcher
and anti-racist ally...*

*The first time, as with every time I read this poem, I weep, followed by a
sense of anger at the violence—physical, emotional, and spiritual—waged on
communities of color by researchers, educational systems, and knowledge systems
rooted in White supremacist philosophies. I am offended to my very soul that the
colonizing systems of Whiteness endure, even to this day with all that we know
about the painful and destructive effects on humanity. This entrenchment in
contemporary forms of colonization speaks to the material interests of those (them
AND us?) who benefit from these systems of power to maintain them. I feel a
sense of complicity that as a White person, I have been deeply socialized to value
and reproduce systems of Whiteness and in the ways that I have benefitted and to
continue to benefit from structures of Whiteness. I was so nervous about my
ability to speak for others as I embarked on this dissertation.*

These emotions, like the storm whose winds and water batter the land's coastline, rumble and tumble inside me. Like the survivor who is overcome with guilt that she has been exempt from persecution while witnessing others who have been, and continue to be the targets of that same persecution, this research project sought out voices and experiences of others who, like me, were/are struggling to forge spaces that might lead us on the tenuous path of anti-racist living. Ironically for White people, living an anti-racist life means that in undoing racism, we must develop a deeper understanding of our role in the creation and maintenance of it in order to deconstruct it. It's an insider/outsider role. We both benefit from racism and push to undo it. This is my location within this research agenda on developing authentic White allies. When I began I wasn't sure what I even knew what "authentic ally" meant. But I had to forge ahead, called to action to find my place at the crossroads. With a healthy dose of trepidation and humility, I embarked on the exploration of this idea of what it means to be an authentic White ally.

Issues of power and control...

A principle of poststructural feminist research calls our attention to the imbalance of power in the researcher/researched relationship:

For most feminists, the greatest dilemma in the research process is the imbalance of power. At least three types of power imbalances are identifiable. One involves the different positionalities or identities of the researcher and the researched. A second type of power imbalance is discernible during the designing and carrying out of the research. A third form stems from the researcher's paradigm and perspectives. (Young, 2000, p. 637)

The researcher as ally must be vigilant in resisting the reproduction of the colonial/colonized relationship where she positions herself as “all knowing” and the informant as an objectified provider of data for knowing researcher to interpret. This is central to issues of power and control in the research process. Additionally, the researcher as ally acknowledges her non-neutrality in the research endeavor and takes care to attend to the contextuality and partiality of her lens. Witkin (2000) describes the nature of social science research as one where both the researcher and the researched are engaged in a conversation where knowledge is constructed by building upon the thoughts and words of each other:

Once the social and dialectical nature of research is realized, its veil of neutrality parts to reveal researchers actively involved in constructing the social reality that they discover. Like practitioners and policy analysts, researchers reflect and shape the social landscape. (p. 209)

What Witkin so eloquently points out here is that the positivistic notion of researcher as a distanced and neutral subject in the research process is a myth. However, the researcher has a tremendous amount of control in the research process by way of each decision she makes: what questions to ask, what information to highlight in the analysis, what information gets left out, and how they tell the story that research participants have shared with them. In attempting to mitigate some of the issues of power and control that are inevitable in all research projects, I designed my research project with these issues in mind.

One of the ways that my design attempted to mitigate power is in the way I approached issues of authority and expertise. Instead of asking White people to identify themselves as White anti-racist allies, I asked eight People of Color to

first define the characteristics of what it means to be a White anti-racist ally and then, based on their definition, to identify a White person that they define as an “authentic White ally.” In doing this, I resist the temptation to impose my own definition of White ally on People of Color. Additionally, asking each of them to define what it means to be an authentic White ally allowed for multiple and partial views to emerge from them, thereby avoiding an overly essentializing process where People of Color all speak in one voice and from a singular experience. In terms of the interview guide, I wanted to allow room for exploration and spontaneity in our conversations. Rather than the interview guide being used as a rigid set of questions, the questions served as topical areas of interest related to the exploration of what it means to be an “authentic White ally”. This format allowed for some measure for more dispersed power in that the participants could choose the direction of the conversation in how they related their own experiences to the topic of racism, anti-racism, and White allies.

This form of narrative conversation that allowed participants to tell their own stories about Whiteness and anti-racism was an attempt to mitigate aspects of power and control by using generalized questions as “jumping off points” where the researcher and those people being interviewed engaged in a collaborative venture as co-creators of the knowledge being produced. I departed from the more formal “interview guide” except in creating these “jumping off points” to get the conversation going. Some of these question were as general as, “When you think of Whiteness, what comes to mind?” and “When you think of anti-racism what comes to mind?” After that, the researcher used the stories and

experiences expressed by the participants as a way to follow their lead into a reflective conversation around the topic of what it means to be an ally. In this way the researcher as ally views all members of the research team “as constructors and agents of knowledge” (Fine, 1994, p. 75). Personal narratives “Can be used ...to unveil specific and little researched aspects of women’s daily experiences, their feelings, attitudes, hopes, and dreams” (Madriz, 2003, p. 365). While my research was not exclusively geared towards women’s stories, Madriz’s point is relevant to the lack of research on how People of Color and their White allies have forged their way through and across lines of racial difference. This lack of research on the ways in which People of Color and White people have forged allies anti-racist spaces with each other is often a missing or underrepresented element in the discourse on race, racism, and race relations in the United States.

In a way, the forging of trusting and transformational relationships is a revolutionary notion rooted in acts of resistance to the larger grand narratives that tell us that inequality is a foregone conclusion and is inevitable among all human beings. Perhaps the researcher as ally chooses to focus her learning on narratives of resistance that defy the larger grand narratives. While “feminist researchers hold several and conflicting views [and] do not take one unified approach [to research]” (Madriz, 2003, p. 369), one view of postmodern feminism “focuses on stories and narratives and on the construction and reproduction of knowledge” (Madriz, 2003, p. 369). In this way, I am wondering if narrative forms of research can expand the essentializing and overly simplistic binary lens in which much of

our racial discourse is grounded. In so doing, can we “trouble” the issue of race and make a conscious move to initiate a new space where cross-racial conversation is spacious and open, intends to reveal rather than conceal, and is both charged and nurturing. Can White people re-experience our stories with an expanded consciousness of the skin we’re in? My hope is that this larger conversation creates an opening for a transformational and liberating space in which White people and People of Color can deeply interrogate the concept of what “Othered” means to each of us. Further, if a space like this were opened up, might it lead to a multi-racial counter-narrative conversation about what it means to be *raced* and perhaps lead us one step closer to the creation of alternative realities of racial equality and freedom?

Using narrative as a methodological stance to forge new ground in discourses on Whiteness...

Up until now, I have focused much of my attention on the White researcher as ally who works with members of the research project who are People of Color. How might the idea of the White researcher as ally take on different elements when working with other White members of the project? How does the White researcher push and support her White colleagues at the same time? It seems to me that although Whiteness and White dominated structures have been at the very center of power in our society, when the issue of race is discussed, Whiteness becomes invisible. I have participated in numerous courses on cultural competence and diversity trainings where Whiteness is never mentioned. White is not racialized in these discussions.

I am reminded of a recent conversation with a White teacher who taught a course on “diversity in social work.” She was angry that one of her students asked the question, “If this is a diversity class where we’ve been talking about race, why haven’t we studied what it means to be White in this course?” I asked my colleague why it upset her so much, and she looked at me with an expression of confusion. I then told her a little bit about my own story and struggles related to anti-racist work as a White person. I confessed that for me, the process has always been a “mixed bag” and that it has been simultaneously liberating, isolating, painful, and a deeply gratifying endeavor. I included specific stories and experiences that have helped me to link the personal with the political and the micro with the macro, and shared how this approach helps me to critically analyze myself by being both open and accountable, while it also reduces my feelings of defensiveness.

I could have responded to my colleague from a place of theoretical critique. But for me, as a White person whose primary focus is to work with other White people on what it means to be an anti-racist activist and ally, it is my belief that we must find creative ways to get beyond our places of “retreat” or defense where we forge spaces of tension that are characterized by both accountability and support. In this particular case with my colleague, if I had reproduced an academic model permeated by Eurocentric, individualistic, and paternalistic methods, I might have been overt in taking the side of the student in which I would have launched into a lecture about how conversations about race focus only on people who are not White. I would have continued to talk *at* my White

colleague (thereby objectifying and dehumanizing her) and pointed out that by not including an analysis of Whiteness she located the problem of racism exclusively in terms of People of Color, thereby reproducing a White supremacist world view. I would have explained that in this reproduction, the dominant White structure goes unmarked, uninterrogated, and unchanged, thereby eliminating (potentially?) liberatory elements of transformational anti-racist work. I might have referred to feminist family therapist and anti-racist activist Rhea Almeida (2005), who speaks about the need for all members of a family [in this case the human family] to build systems of healing by "...embrace[ing] critical consciousness, empowerment, and accountability as guiding principles" (p. 107). Almeida also points out that "...accountability and empowerment must operate simultaneously" (p. 107). In terms of anti-racist knowledge production, all those involved in teaching and learning must be willing to change, grow, and heal.

Instead, I used my own storied narrative based on my experiences with the difficulties of anti-racist work to keep the conversation open and charged. Had I launched into a classic academic and theoretical discussion on the issues, I believe I would have closed down the conversation. I wanted to plant the seeds for my colleague to question her "cover stories" (Olson & Craig, 2005) and the sacred stories of Whiteness. These cover stories, as described by Olson and Craig, are "...constructed when incommensurable gaps or conflicts between individually and socially constructed narratives emerge" (p. 162). In some ways, narrative methods of inquiry offer White people the opportunity to chronicle and expose the various and unconscious cover stories of White privilege that circulate in our

lives. Narrative methods allow us to reveal the various places where we've hidden as a way of avoiding the critical conversations about how to move through and beyond a hyper-raced society. Narrative inquiry offers researchers the opportunity to be transparent about their partiality. In the presentation of our ideas as partial understandings of the world around us, we reject the authoritative and all-knowing position of researcher. This kind of openness invites the reader into the research in an engaged way and urges readers to think more critically about the subject, creating more questions to ponder. This is the kind of research that I believe has incredible potential in developing authentic anti-racist White allies.

When I speak about narrative methods of inquiry, I draw from multiple works, some of whom have already been mentioned: Madriz's (2003) ideas about personal narratives as a way to uncover ideas and experiences in the lives of people not usually researched, Olsen and Craig's (2005) notion of "cover stories," Deavere-Smith's (2012) performance narratives, and Kaomea's (2001) auto-ethnographic narrative that speaks to her dual role as insider (culturally) and outsider (academic). (Later in this chapter I will discuss the specific narrative methodology I use having been significantly influenced by my teacher Tom Barone (2001) and his work on life stories.) Chase describes the elusive and ever evolving landscape of narrative inquiry:

Contemporary narrative inquiry can be characterized as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods—all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them. (2005, p. 651)

My approach to narrative attempts to show how participants make sense and meaning of this evolving notion of “authentic White ally.” I am looking for both patterns and distinctions in the narratives of both People of Color and their White allies. Juxtaposing their stories against and with each other and looking at both areas of synergy and difference allows me to begin to understand how participants construct the concept of White ally through time and experience. I also see myself as narrator of my own storied process as a White person striving to be an “authentic White ally” and so I draw from the work of Julie Kaomea (2001) as both insider/outsider in researching what it means to be an “authentic White ally.” Kaomea’s dilemma is situated within the history of Western (White) educated academics conducting research on Native Hawaiians in a way that was often times harmful to them and I do not in any way mean to suggest that my insider/outsider position as a White person is equivalent to the complexity of Kaomea’s story. However, I draw upon her work because there are some ways in which my process is profoundly informed by her autoethnographic research process. In particular, what informs my work is her candor and transparency in documenting her own struggles between these competing expectations. She does this by including her own methodological choices in her research process. I attempt to do the same by revealing and documenting my interior thoughts and emotions, using autoethnographic narrative, by weaving these thoughts, biases, and choices throughout the dissertation.

In *Dilemmas of an Indigenous Academic: A Native Hawaiian Story*, Julie Kaomea (2001) describes how her approach to research is one that navigates the difficult terrain of being both a Native Hawaiian community member and an academic researcher. She describes her dilemma in terms of the historical role of Western (White) educated academics and the harm caused to Indigenous people as a result of their research. She also describes the contradictory and competing expectations set forth by her Native Hawaiian participants and the academy. She describes these competing expectations:

...while the academy expects that its members will speak from theory, Native Hawaiian communities expect that their members will speak from experience. While the academy expects that research relationships will be detached and objective, Native Hawaiian communities expect that these relationships will be intimate and enduring. While the academy expects that its members will contribute to the scholarly community through rigorous intellectualism, Native Hawaiian communities expect that their members will contribute through vigorous activism. (p. 68)

Both Kaomea and I have used an autoethnographic approach where “...researchers turn the analytic lens on themselves and their interactions with others” (Chase, 2005, p. 660). In doing this, the researcher attempts to create an environment of mutual exploration around a particular topic of study, which is what I have attempted to do in this research project.

My evolving idea for this research was to begin to create White anti-racist narratives that would include stories of the ways in which those White people who are engaged in anti-racist work have countered, destabilized, and raised questions about the mythological narratives of race and Whiteness. These narratives would provide storied examples of how White allies have engaged in

their own personal struggles with the meta-narratives of Whiteness, which include such myths as: we all start at equal places in life, that it's just a question of how hard you work, that everyone has the same opportunities in life and that we are in a post-racial time period in which racism is now "history," and that the real solution is for People of Color to simply "get over it" and "move on." My hope is that the stories that come out of this research project will serve as helpful counter-narratives, primarily for other White people who are looking for a way into their own anti-racist work.

I am wondering if stories by White people who are in some way attempting to be anti-racist allies can provide a dialogic space that can foster an environment which is both respectful and "charged" in its exploration of such emotionally "loaded" terrain, where the traumatic experiences, particularly of racism, can be explored from a lens that offers some hope for liberation and transformation. Can narrative forms of interrogation begin to build our "emotional muscle" in order to go *through*, rather than *around*, the complex and traumatic history of race relations in the United States? When White allies share through their experiences the ways in which they have knocked on the doors of their own White unconscious to reveal the truths of how White privilege operates in their lives, might this sharing open up (even momentarily) a new, non-defensive space for other White people who are empathetic outsiders? When we examine through narrative processes our experiences as White people in community with each other, this analysis must include both the personal and the social:

Both the personal and the social are always present. People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. [We] are always in relation, always in a social context...Furthermore...one criterion of experience in *continuity*; namely, the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences. (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 2)

It is, yet again, this idea that knowledge production is a reciprocal and evolutionary process where knowledge builds upon itself through multiple views on the same topic. Much like womanist views that there is no grand “truth” for all women, but rather multiple truths and realities that are ever changing, Clandinin and Connelly suggest that narrative methods of inquiry and the idea of continuity are a way to chart and document these partial and ever changing temporal views of reality. Might this process of continuity allow potential White allies to transcend feelings of guilt and defensiveness and become inspired to locate sites of intervention from which they can be active contributors in taking down a system from which they themselves benefit? To what extent will White allies be moved to act in our everyday lives in using our privilege in the service of racial justice? Can White anti-racist narratives serve as “Literary language [that] allows [the] re-creation of the material atmosphere, thoughts, feelings, and motivations of the characters in a story...[and] through it, readers [in this case White people who are empathetic outsiders] are brought to vicariously experience events from a different perspective” (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p. 77). Narrative methods might be one way for White people to relate to the experiences of White allies in all their various and contradictory feelings about anti-racist work: courage, doubt, fear, shame, and pride. In doing this White people are also humanized.

In bell hooks' article on *Narratives of Struggle*, she talks about being "paralyzed by fear that [she] will not be able to name or speak words that fully articulate [her] experience or the collective reality of struggling black people, [she] is tempted to be silent" (1994a, p. 53). As I read this, I wondered about the nature of White people's fear and paralysis in moving towards liberatory, anti-racist spaces. What would narratives of Whiteness look like that resisted sites of "color-blindness" and did not get stuck in the over-simplistic and the essentializing binary that "all that is White is bad." What keeps so many of us silent? Does narrative offer a space for what hooks calls the "decolonization of the imagination" (p. 55) where in our minds we imagine and envision a resistance to the oppressive status quo and in the act of resistance in our thoughts, we can first envision and then take steps to enact potential new realities for justice and equality? Perhaps through these White allied stories, we can tell, explore, and re-imagine how structures of Whiteness permeate our society and our globe. It is in this space that stories about anti-racist White allies and their experiences may provide a dialogic space that can foster an environment that is both respectful and "charged" in its exploration of such emotionally "loaded" terrain and where traumatic experiences, particularly of racism, can be explored from a lens that offers some hope for transformation.

However, even as the stories of these White allies are presented as a way to look into their experiences, Goodson (1995) cautions us not to be naïve in the ways in which we approach storytelling as a research endeavor. He says, "The opportunity cost of story-telling is that personal minutiae and anecdotes replace

cultural analysis. Above all, the ‘story’ is the other side of a closure on broad analysis, a failure for the imagination” (p. 91). Goodson’s speaks to the need for White anti-racist allies to develop a critical consciousness. In combining the concepts of Freire’s (1982) “critical consciousness” and hooks’ (1994a) “narratives of struggle,” the analysis about being a White ally must include more than the personal experience. Freire describes a critical consciousness as one that incorporates a critical awareness of how personal dynamics unfold within social and political contexts. Critical consciousness (conscientização) involves one’s ability and willingness to identify, understand, and then make connections between social, political, and economic oppression and to take actions against those oppressive forces. There is a connection between thought and action that Freire describes as “praxis,” where thought and action meet. hooks (1994b) describes her experiences with critical consciousness as, “...a way to place the politics of racism in the United States in a global context wherein I could see my fate linked with that of colonized black people everywhere struggling to decolonize, to transform society” (p. 53). Goodson’s call for an approach to narrative that balances the “minutiae” of the micro with cultural analysis of the macro can be done by way of the development of a critical consciousness.

hooks’ uses her critical consciousness in her construction of “narratives of struggle” as a way to share testimonies or stories that attempt to speak to an issue, like healing from racism, where one’s subjectivity is balanced with the reality that others’ experiences of racism may be different. Narratives of struggle outline a process rather than an outcome of healing that involves one’s subjective social,

political and economic realities and positions. Transformational White narratives need to deeply explore the intersections between personal experiences and the larger social, political, and economic systems. In this critically conscious way, it can sometimes feel pretty shameful to be White and can conjure up feelings of guilt, frustration, and a sense of defeatism. This experience may be a different form of, “narratives of struggle” in which we face the shame and guilt that is the legacy of White supremacy which is why the narratives of White anti-racist allies should stand within the historical, socio-political context in which they are lived. I think in many ways, one element of being an authentic White anti-racist ally includes one’s willingness to confront the ways in which we all, to varying degrees, embody the history of White supremacy and the specific ways in which it lives inside of each of us. I suppose that unless and until we do this, that which goes unacknowledged remains unchanged. The authentic ally does not view anti-racist activism as their “work” but rather, an intrinsically felt identity and is similar to one’s first and primary language; it’s the skin we’re in.

The research design, which way into the problem...

As I have mentioned before, for most of my career I have been a social work practitioner and more recently, I have been a teacher of social work education. I want to say more here about the additive approach previously mentioned in Chapter One as it relates to my way into the research on White allies. To restate the issue as I see it in social work education, we seem to have an approach that oversimplifies and offers a “recipe-like” approach to working with diverse groups; “how to” work with African Americans, “how to” work with

Native Americans, “how to” work with Asians and so on. Unfortunately, in using this additive perspective, social work education fails to interrogate Whiteness and positions diversity and race as something (and someone) Other than White. This “how to” approach is commonly referred to in social work as “cultural competence.” In an online Canadian journal entitled *Critical Social Work*, social work professor and scholar Amy Rossiter (2001) sums up her frustrations with social work’s cultural competence approach to diversity:

As a [social work] profession we spout nonsense about “competencies” in the classroom; we test whether students have indeed “got it”; and personally we feel vulnerable to criticism that we are “not teaching social workers who know how to practice”...I want my White students, for example, to be able to tolerate the knowledge that they will be dangerous to people of colour all their lives - to live with this place in history without jumping to innocence in the form of these absurd cultural competence models that tells them who they can or can't look in the eye. I do not want them to jump to moral panic that can be fixed by a crash course in anti-racist social work. The work of understanding the trespasses of one's participation in creating culture in order to practice freedom is much harder than that, and it is surely life-long. (paragraph 18)

Rossiter’s comments speak to the need in social work to develop pedagogies that help White social work students develop a life-long learning approach to anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice. This is why my entry into this vexing and complicated dilemma of anti-racist work for White people begins at the micro, person to person level. This is not to say that the micro is the only (or best) starting point, as I believe we must interrogate White-centered oppression and subordination at all levels of our society. It is though, one of the many possible entry ways into the research in that it can reveal characteristics

about human behavior and relationships that may be useful in developing credible and trusting cross-racial relationships.

In postmodernism and particularly within a Foucauldian perspective, knowledge is never fixed and is always partial. Foucault also believed that knowledge was (and is) related to power relations (Foucault, 1994). He spent much of his time studying systems of mental health and prisons and in doing that, he observed that there seemed to be a connection between expansions of knowledge and power. In describing this relationship, Chambon, Irving, and Epstein (1999) say this about Foucault's ideas on knowledge: "Every development in knowledge fosters an increase in specific forms of power, and conversely, any expansion of specific power require[s] an increase in specific forms of knowledge" (p. 275). In terms of research, power relations are ever present. Too often systems of Whiteness in research methods purport to provide fixed notions of truth that can be generalized across time and context. According to Foucault this claim is not possible because all things are constantly forming and reforming, particularly in response to contextual changes.

Additionally, Foucault challenges us to uncover the taken for granted notions of who we are and what we think we know. As Chambon points out, Foucault, "...did not treat the advances made in our field [social work] as simple progress. He problematized them. He reflected on how they create and constrain human possibilities" (p. 52). By problematizing "cultural competence" in social work education in a Foucauldian sense, it is important to ask ourselves in social

work about how our notions of culture, race, and competence in relation to working across difference both create and constrain cross-cultural relationships.

In terms of uncovering what we think we know about cultural competence in social work education, perhaps research on White allies might help us to highlight some of the constraints that have been created by the evolution of this concept of cultural competence in social work. I do not make the claim that my research will reveal some “Truth” that can be used to create a new recipe better than the old recipes on cultural competence. Rather, my research seeks to push social work educators to revisit what we think we know about how we teach about difference. Chambon (1999) says this about using Foucauldian ideas of “work that unsettles” within social work:

Foucault took the stance that transformational knowledge is disturbing by nature. It disturbs the person implementing it. It ruffles the smoothness of our habits, rattles our certainties, disorganizes and reorganizes our understanding, shakes our complacency, unhinges us from secure moorings. It is serious and “dangerous” work, to take up a term that Foucault like to use. (p. 53)

In using Foucault’s ideas of rattling our certainties, one goal of this research is to “unsettle” and “disturb” the issue of “cultural competence” in social work education. More specifically, this inquiry and research project are responses to the current types of social work curricula and pedagogy that discuss and analyze racial oppression but are still White centered. This research design is a response to social work “diversity” curriculum that seeks to have “safe” discussions, which is coded language for not upsetting the White students or challenging White centered pedagogy that maintains the status quo. It is also a response to the issue

of teacher education in the area of facilitating charged discussions where tensions are engaged rather than avoided, to allow for deeper and transformational spaces for learning. In order to do this, Foucault challenges us to walk on “dangerous” terrain that “unhinge us from secure moorings” (Chambon, 1999, p. 53). That is to say, to unsettle ourselves in those things we currently take for granted.

Another person who seeks to unsettle what we think we know is bell hooks. In her most recent book, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practice Wisdom* (2010) includes an essay on integrity. In this chapter, the dangerous territory that she speaks of has to do with asking teachers to act from places of integrity by rethinking our practice from the lens of social change agents. She frames integrity in terms of how we as teachers either perpetuate or resist “imperialist capitalist White-supremacist patriarchal politics” (p. 29) in our pedagogy. She asks us to interrogate the basis of our belief systems that inform our pedagogic choices as either being in allegiance to the status quo or as being committed to a more liberatory practice. If we are teaching the status quo, then according to hooks, this implicates us as carrying on the legacy of a practice that is rooted in colonization and is an issue of integrity. She describes education as the practice of freedom and as one that must transform what goes on both inside and outside of the classroom. “Classrooms cannot change if professors are unwilling to admit that to teach without biases requires that most of us learn anew, that we become students again” (2010, p. 31). hooks proposes that in order to engage in pedagogy that is liberatory, it will require the recognition by teachers that we too have been misinformed in our own educational training and that along with our students, we

too need to uncover and expose our biases and the ways in which colonialism and Whiteness lives on in each of us, and the ways in which this legacy pervades our teaching styles and choices. In a Foucauldian sense, we are to “shake our complacency” about teaching using an imperialist frame.

My co-constructors of knowledge related to what it means to be an authentic White ally...

I asked two groups of people to help me with my research by sharing their knowledge and experiences related to racism and anti-racist allies. As a way to de-center Whiteness in the development of my research methods, I first identified eight People of Color through a network of friends and colleagues familiar with my work and with whom I had already established a credible and trusting relationship. I then interviewed these eight people using a loosely guided set of “jumping off points” for conversation related to the specific characteristics for their criteria and definition for what it means to be a White ally. This method was a conscious and intentional choice in positioning People of Color as having expertise on the topic of racism related to their own experiences and as experts in being able to recognize and identify White allied behavior. I intentionally used this method because People of Color often know much more about Whiteness and White privilege than White people do. I then asked them to identify specific White people who were in their opinions, anti-racist allies.

These participants of color were purposefully selected from colleagues and friends who are already known to me. They are people with whom a level of trust had already been established and who had expressed an interest in my

research and in my study. As a White researcher interviewing People of Color on a topic about Whiteness, a purposive sample where trust and credibility had already been established with research participants was important to me. Through including people who knew me, who had direct experience with me as a White person, and who understood my research interests and my commitment to anti-racist work, I was able to deeply explore their experiences with White people specifically around this notion of what it means to be an authentic White ally. The methods will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

The second group of participants were those White allies who were identified by the participants of color. I interviewed three White allies. They were given a similar set of questions related to their thoughts on Whiteness, authentic White allies, and anti-racism. Additionally, I asked them reflect on how they felt about being identified by a Person of Color as an authentic White ally. Interviews lasted from an hour and a half to two and one-half hours. In what follows, I will describe the data collection process.

Data Collection

Interviews: As mentioned previously, I used an interview guide as a “jumping off point” rather than as a set of rigid questions. Prior to the interview I emailed the interview guide to participants and gave a brief written description of narrative approaches to the interview. I wrote a short paragraph about my intention to use narrative methods for the interview and asked them to ponder the questions ahead of time. When we met for the interview, I explained in more detail about the difference in narrative interviewing versus more traditional interviewing styles,

saying that, “I hope the interview will wander around and take us to spontaneous places depending on the stories and experiences that you’d like to share.” The interviews lasted anywhere from two to four hours. I formally met only once with each participant. There was also follow up to the interviews through email communications and through participants editing their transcripts. The “jumping off points” were designed to be broad enough to allow each participant to choose their own direction in how they made meaning of key concepts like Whiteness, authentic White allies, and anti-racism. In none of the interviews did I end up asking all eight questions. Rather, participants had prepared and thought about these questions ahead of time and simply began to express their ideas related to the questions. In the course of conversation, the participants addressed all of the questions in an organic way where one thought progressed to the next. At times, I offered follow up questions and/or prompts that encouraged the participants to offer further detail on something they were already talking about. The initial questions were as follows and were e-mailed to the participants at least one week prior to the interview:

Questions for participants of color:

1. What made you want to take part in this study?
2. When you think of the concept of “ally” what comes to mind?
3. When you think of the concept of “Whiteness” what comes to mind?
4. What are some of the characteristics of an authentic White ally?
5. When you think of the concept of “antiracism” what comes to mind?
6. Can you describe an experience you have had where a White person really demonstrated by their actions, what it means to be an authentic White ally?
7. What are the differences between the authentic White ally you have just described and other White people who may perceive themselves as authentic White allies but in your estimation are not?
8. Have there been certain experiences or relationships with White people

that have been important in shaping your definition of an authentic White ally?

Questions for White allies:

1. What are your thoughts about (name of Person of Color) having identified you as a white ally?
2. When you think of the concept of “whiteness” what comes to mind?
3. When you think of the concept of “antiracism” what comes to mind?
4. What are some of the characteristics of an authentic white ally?
5. Can you reflect on how you learned about what it means to be a white ally?
6. Have there been certain experiences or relationships that have been important in shaping your work as an ally?
7. How have you translated your ideas, knowledge and intentions about anti-racist work into action or practice?
8. If you were giving advice to a teacher who wanted to teach a course on racial justice to an all-white class, what advice would you give the teacher, to the students?
9. As a white person, how do you see your role in addressing racism?

True to form in narrative work, participants used the interview guide to explore their experiences using stories and examples from their lives. Interviews were transcribed and shared back with the participants. They were asked to read the transcripts and to add other comments, thoughts, clarifications, to highlight areas of particular sensitivity with regard to confidentiality, and to take out any areas that they did not want me to include in the analysis. Participants were also asked to create their own pseudonym.

After interviews with participants of color, they agreed to contact their White allies and told them about my study. They indicated to their White allies that they had identified them as “authentic White allies” and asked if they were interested in being interviewed by me. If the White allies agreed, participants of color either forwarded me their contact information or the White ally contacted me directly.

Data Analysis: Participants' life stories not needing to be fixed...

In the first three chapters of this dissertation, I have attempted to balance academic and “lived” ideas and experiences related to anti-racist White allies. In doing this, I wanted to resist privileging any one voice over the other. I also wanted to include the voices of “scholars on the ground,” who are too frequently missing in academic theorizing. But as I look back on this dissertation thus far, the truth is—the first three sections really do privilege the voices of the academy much more than I had hoped. In the findings chapter I am intentionally doing something different. I am privileging the voice of my research partners/participants by foregrounding their voices and ideas. I purposefully silence the academic and researcher’s voices in this next section.

Why did I make this choice to present my participants’ thoughts in their own section without the researcher’s analysis? This decision is consistent with my evolving understanding of what it means to be a “researcher as ally.” In the analysis chapter, I chose not to “Other” my participants by “talking over them.” In talking about Western colonialist researchers Tuhiwai-Smith says, “They came, they saw, they named, they claimed” (p. 80). In my own attempt at a counter-colonialist research approach, I intentionally dedicate one chapter in this dissertation to creating a sense of intimacy and closeness between the research participants and the reader. I just want one chapter that offers the reader an opportunity to get to know the research participants with as little mediated interference from me as possible. By not carving out one space in the dissertation for this counter-Whiteness presentation of the participants’ knowledge, I would

have betrayed everything I have been saying thus far about trying to be a White ally in the research process. To my mind, doing this would enact and reproduce the very Whiteness approach I seek to deconstruct. Rather, for one chapter, the ideas presented by my participants can stand on their own in terms of teaching us about racism, Whiteness, and authentic White allies. They do not need an “authority” in the form of an academic to “translate” and understand their ideas presented in this particular chapter. In the words of Lorena, one of my participants, she recounts an experience with her White ally (Brandy) that validated Lorena’s ability to trust her:

We were in graduate school together and met our first year. We just happened, just luck of the draw, we were in the same classes, found ourselves in the same classes together. One of the things I noticed about Brandy was that she didn’t feel the need to correct me. She didn’t feel the need to correct me. In my mind I was complete. I didn’t need to be fixed. I was okay just the way I was. She didn’t feel like she had to get in there and scramble my brain and get me to think right, you know, poor little Mexican, let’s help her, that kind of stuff.

I do not make the claim that I had *no* hand in presenting their ideas. As the author of this dissertation, I had control over what to include and exclude in this narrative construction. I made choices about the themes, differences, and salient issues raised by the participants and I structured these selections in an attempt to put them in conversation with each other. But as a way to mitigate some degree of this control, and as the researcher as ally, I chose to portray participants’ ideas on race as complete and not needing to be “corrected” or “fixed” by some distanced authoritative entity from the academy in the form of analysis. Rather,

in chapter four I present the research in a way that threads participants' experiences into a broader life story of race in the United States.

My use of life stories is inspired by one of my own teachers, Dr. Tom Barone. Barone uses a form of narrative called "life stories" which he attributes to a style of narrative that Polkinghorne calls "narrative analysis" (Barone, 1995, p. 12). Barone further refines life story narrative as "narrative construction" where "Researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories" (p. 12). In Tom's book, *Touching Eternity, The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching* (2001), he uses life storied narratives to show how the teachings of Don Forrister, (a teacher in a school in Appalachia), endure in the lives of his students long after they have left high school. The life stories of Tom's participants are separated out into their own chapter without any researcher analysis (a form of narrative analysis/construction). But the researcher hand is used in the creation of a "dramatized" version of the participants' stories. Later in another chapter of his book, Tom transforms those life stories into life histories, (a form of analysis of narrative) in which he offer's his own analysis of these same stories by situating his participants' ideas within a larger social context. Tom says this about that methodological choice:

In crafting the Swain Report, I attempted to play two games at once. On the one hand, I assuaged a felt need to speak in an analytical voice about motifs confronted within my conversations with former students. On the other hand, I wanted to honor the life stories of participants before transforming them into life histories. So I experimented with a format in which life stories were presented extensively and physically distanced from the commentary of the researcher. (p. 171)

I attempt to do the same in chapters four and five. In chapter four I experiment with my own version of a life story of race in the United States by using “recollected narratives” of the research participants’ experiences with race. In allowing this “raw” data to stand on their own, I allow the reader to make sense of the various plots emerging in the stories about race, Whiteness and allies. The reader is invited to bring her or his own perspective to the ideas expressed. In this way, chapter four does not give anyone the authority to have the “last word” and the writer releases control over what the reader gets out of the work. Again, returning to Lather’s idea of the “messiness” of research, by inviting the reader to make their own meaning of the work, the reader becomes the researcher who is invited to offer their own analysis. This encourages the reader to enter into the complexity of the life stories rather than reducing it down to some oversimplified singular “truth” as decided by only one researcher’s point of view.

As I said, I experimented with a version of what Tom did in his book. In the chapter five, I too transformed my participants’ “recollections of race” into a more traditional analysis of narrative by situating their ideas within the context of informing social work pedagogy. I returned to the purpose of this research as outlined in chapter one, by discussing participants’ ideas on White allies in terms of how it might help social work educators in expanding our conversation on teaching about diversity in social work education. The final chapter attempted to put us all, researcher, academic, and participants in conversation with each other on how to move this project of anti-racist social work pedagogy forward.

To summarize, in this third chapter I have attempted to do several things. First, I grounded my research in poststructural frames of feminism and decolonization. Second, I have applied this poststructural research frame within the context of the “researcher as ally” and more specifically as a White researcher conducting research with People of Color on issues of race, racism and White allies. Third, throughout the chapter, I attempt, through my own autoethnographic narratives, to render visible some of my experiences that shape my positionality on this work about White allies. And finally, I introduce the methodological choices and rationale for the way in which I present the data. What follows in the next chapter is a narrative construction of research participant ideas to the creation of a life story of race in the the United States.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS: CONVERSING WITH THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

“Postmodernism changes the tradition of expert, repositioning teachers as facilitators, social workers as consulting partners and everyone as colearners and coconstructors.”

(Roche in Witkin & Saleebey, 2007, p. 299)

The plot thickens: A life story on race: moving from theoretical understandings to the messiness of life and lived experiences...

In the last chapter I introduced Tom Barone’s concept of narrative construction (1995) by citing an example of a life story narrative he published in *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching* (Barone, 2001). This work (like all narratives) is open to many interpretations. How this work is interpreted is central to how one conceptualizes the concept of life story and subsequently mimics and/or adapts this style. My interpretation of the book may be different than other readers of this work. For some, the overarching life story is that of Don Forrister. In this interpretation, his former students’ recollections of him serve as the threads that, once woven together, create the fabric of Forrister’s overarching life story. Interpreted this way, the plot of the story is about Forrister and his teaching. However, that is not my interpretation; the way I interpret the book changes the very plot of the story and serves to illustrate the approach life story narrative I use in this chapter.

I focus my interpretation of *Touching Eternity* on an overarching life story about teaching rather than a life story about a particular person. The plot is therefore located in the tensions between conceptual ideas about subjective

definitions of teacher, teaching, student, learning, what “good” teaching looks like, and who has the authority to actually define these conceptual ideas. In this interpretation, the plot is really about *critical education*, with Forrister and his students’ stories serving as characters in the larger setting of socio/political/economic discourses about teaching. I would describe these characters’ stories as “narrative recollections” of experiences, or “life moments” that inform the larger life story of teaching in the United States. I created this term “narrative recollections” as a way to show how these characters collect their experiences with and/or related to Forrister, which are then re-collected in a storied version contextualized within the themes of teaching and learning. The backstory of this plot is the history of education in the United States. I use this same kind of interpretive style of “narrative recollections” in the presentation of my data in this chapter.

My work in this dissertation is an attempt to show one version of a life story about race in the United States. The plot in this life story on race is the struggle to push against a Whiteness approach to education. The main protagonists in this story are anti-Whiteness and anti-racism. The characters (research participants) give breath through their experiences to this particular life story of race. The research participants’ “narrative recollections” provide the subplots related to racism, Whiteness, and authentic White allies. In Barone’s (2001) version of the life story of critical education, he created dramatized versions of participants’ “raw” data as his setting. In non-academic language this simply means that the voices of the participants were mediated using the writer’s tool of

dramatization. Unlike Barone, I have chosen not to create a dramatized or fictionalized setting for the participants' stories. Why this choice? There are several reasons. First, I believe that in the case of race in the United States, to use an old adage, "fact is stranger than fiction." The reality of race relations in this country provides all the setting one needs in understanding how terribly stuck we are in our collective ability to understand the pain and trauma of racism and Whiteness in our society. The stories as presented and authored by the participants themselves (in academic language, the "raw" data), are dramatic in and of themselves.

Second, I have spent the first one-hundred pages of this dissertation exploring anti-Whiteness understandings and approaches to education and research. Rather than taking a more traditional (White) approach to educational research that creates distance between the researcher and their research I have used my own self-narratives as a way to create intimacy with my topic and with the reader. I used a purposive sampling method to recruit participants where there was some measure of trust and credibility established prior to the interviews. I have used language and interview methods that attempted to reduce the distance between myself and the research participants. It seems logical and consistent then, to present the participants' "narrative recollections" in a way that also attempts to reduce distance and to create as much intimacy between the researcher, the reader and the research participants as possible. For me, this meant using their own words as the authors of their own storied life moments in the larger plots about how racism and Whiteness operate in their lives.

However, it would be a gross misrepresentation for me to say that I am using completely “raw” data that has been unmediated in its presentation. Out of four hundred pages of interview transcripts, I selected these “narrative recollections” based on the dramatic power of first-hand accounts as told by the participants. I looked for segments in the transcripts that could be threaded together to create the fabric of some sort of cohesive narrative. I looked for life moments that helped me understand not just *what* a participant learned but also showed some insight as to the process for *how* they learned it. As I have said in previous chapters in this dissertation, I am not only interested in being able to identify *what* Whiteness is but also *how we come to know what it is*, which speaks directly back to the pedagogical need of focusing both on content in anti-racist education and on process as well. As a result of my methodological choice to use first person accounts and to silence the researcher voice in the presentation of the selected narratives, the structure of the participants’ stories may feel more like a documentary rather than a traditional academic interpretation of data. Think of the documentary where you never see or hear the filmmaker’s voice but only the voices and stories of those being interviewed on a particular topic. I try to thread these “narrative recollections” together that speak to a larger life story of race in the U.S.

I understand that dedicating the majority of a scholarly textual space with large amounts of significantly (although not completely) unmediated “raw” data, is not typically done and may for some readers, may not be considered “real” research. This is a perfect example of one of those invisible, yet powerful

manifestations of Whiteness in education that remains unchallenged. In keeping with an anti-Whiteness approach to education, I want to resist this assumption. I challenge critical educators in re-thinking this assumption by asking ourselves why it is considered unacceptable practice to (as much as possible) let our participants' voices and stories stand on their own without the intrusive voice of the researcher. What is it about our unwillingness to fully step into the "raw" terrain of the experiences of our research participants that makes us so uncomfortable? Why do we automatically assume the need to transform their "raw" experiences into a "cooked" and digestible version for academic consumption? I am purposefully complicating and troubling these notions of "real" research with my experimentation.

In this chapter I experiment with storytelling about race. This experimentation uses first person accounts as told by the research participants to illustrate the ways in which racism, Whiteness and allies operate in their worlds. Again, informed by the work of Barone (2000), "...[storytelling] is not developed best...in the acquisition of standardized moves or proper research methods...Writers learn their craft by experimenting, reflecting on their own experiments, studying the stories of others and criticisms of their own and finally by confronting portraits of storytellers at work" (p. 193). In this chapter, I position myself as a researcher who encounters the stories of my participants *as told by them*. As I have already stated, I do not make the claim that the data are completely unmediated. It is mediated in the way that the stories have been selected and arranged. Additionally, at the end of this chapter I will offer,

through my self-narrative voice, my observations about these “narrative recollections.” And in the final chapter, I will pick up on these observations and further analyze/mediate the data in a more traditional scholarly format.

In the last section of this chapter, I “talk back” to the research participants’ stories in my italicized voice. While I am offering my thoughts and observations on their ideas in this “talk back,” I am mindful that my reactions are one of many possible interpretations. Here, I am attempting to engage myself with the data rather than standing above it, or outside of it, as the distanced researcher. Again, this is done using self-narrative to speak back to participants’ stories (represented in my italicized voice), from the perspective of a researcher/student/practitioner who is also an aspiring and evolving anti-White ally.

By structuring the last two chapters in this way, I am moving away from a linear and “neat” academic theorizing approach to the data. I am purposefully trying to push back against the White grain of academia here to move the theoretical conversation into the realm of practice and lived experience. My experiences with anti-racist practice have consistently taught me that this work is messy and emotional and hard and confusing. In using a non-linear and messy approach (more like what happens in real life) I position us all as characters in the unfolding plots of racism, Whiteness and White allies.

And so, I invite the reader to suspend what we think we know about the conventions of research analysis. In keeping with postmodern ideas of what constitutes “valid” forms of research, I hope the reader will become a research partner in agreeing to travel down the paths as laid out by the participants. Walk

with them to experience their world as they experience it. Follow their processes for making meaning of those experiences even when they seem to wander. How often do we wander in what seems like aimless directions when reading scholarly texts? I ask the reader to offer these “scholars on the ground” that same level of patience and interest. Then, allow yourself to think about the questions and queries that come up for you. Perhaps you will find resonance in some of the observations that I make and/or maybe you’ll see things in a completely different way. Having spent some time with participants in this chapter, I hope you’ll get a sense of the life moments they have shared and will have your own insights about their ideas that may be different from mine. This is one of the major goals of narrative forms of research and I relish the notion that there will be many varied interpretations of this work and these stories. This is the heart of an anti-Whiteness approach to the educative process.

There are five parts in this chapter. In part one and part three the research participants are introduced to the reader. I include these introductions as a way to give human dimension to the research participants for both the reader’s sake as well as for my own. There was no standard categorical or demographic information presented in these brief introductions. Rather, I focused on the different ways in which I was able to relate to them. However, I will share that the participants of color identified themselves as Cuban-American, African American, Native American (Navajo), Indian (recently immigrated to the U.S. from India), South Asian-American, and Mexican-American. In being an ally to my participants, I am committed to taking every opportunity to humanize them—

trying to lift them off of the two-dimensional page. For me, providing standard demographic information would have been too neat and over-simplistic in this messy process. I simply did not want to frame them (to myself or to the reader) that simplistically. (The reader may want to think about how the absence or inclusion of certain demographic or descriptive information may have changed your interpretations of their ideas.)

In parts three and four, I present participants' "narrative recollections." With the participants of color, these recollections are thematically arranged to give the reader a sense of synergy and/or contrasts within various themes. In part four of this chapter, I share portraits of the three White allies related to their thoughts and experiences of being identified as authentic White allies and their processes for understanding race and Whiteness. And finally in part five I "talk back" to the participants' ideas. I'll use some of these "talking back" thoughts in chapter five for further analysis.

Part One

Scholars on the Ground: Introduction to the participants of color

Alejandro

Alejandro and I grab some coffee and tea at the local Starbucks just before our interview. He is the youngest of participant of color in this study and as we walk, he tells me a bit about the work that he does with undergraduate students. We walk back to his office where you can't help but notice the strategically and visibly placed "safezone" stickers indicating to passersby and those who enter Alejandro's office that he offers a safe and supportive space for lesbian, gay,

bisexual, and transgendered people. Alejandro has some last minute things to do for work before we can begin the interview and he invites me to relax while he attends to those tasks in another room. As I wait in his office, I sip my coffee and notice that I am surrounded by pictures of young people with smiling faces, which reminds me of living rooms where family photos and portraits are arranged on walls to provide guests with snapshots that reveal various moments in the life stories of the family members who live there. No doubt these pictures hold many memories for Alejandro and I wonder about the stories of the faces that are smiling back at me. Alejandro comes back and we begin our conversation.

Trina

It is from a desire to learn more about Trina's ideas about Whiteness in education that I ask if she'd be willing to participate in my study. We've known each other for about two years when I approached her about participating. Over the course of these two years we have had some fascinating conversations about our observations and experiences of being graduate students. These conversations have mostly occurred after our classes and were born out of our desire to unpack and deconstruct the ways that Whiteness operates invisibly in classroom discourse.

After I arrive at Trina's place, she reveals that she's a bit nervous about the interview, adding that she is a person of "few words" and hopes that her ideas will be helpful to my work. I take in this message that she's given me and think about how to alter the rhythm of the conversation to ease her nervousness. I don't start recording right away, instead choosing to "chat" a bit before we start. The

tone of this chat feels familiar, like our after-class discussions. When she indicates that she's ready, I begin to record our "formal" interview. In the act of moving from the informal "chat" to the formal "interview," I am mindful of the change in tone that occurs. I wonder to myself, *Is this a manifestation of Whiteness in education?* Specifically, when we transform our experiential knowledge about Whiteness into a more formal documented process that is located within the structures of the academy, does this translation become intimidating to both of us because our knowledge is put under the scrutiny of the academic gaze? And although we are both a bit intimidated by the formality of the formal interview at first, we slowly move into a more familiar conversational rhythm that draws upon our previous chats about racism and Whiteness. Silently, I wonder (and worry) about the legacy of White people "doing" research "on" Native American people and the ways in which this legacy is in the room with us.

Lorena

"I know exactly who I would identify as a White ally, so if you want, I'll participate in your study." These validating and supportive words were uttered by my friend and colleague Lorena a few years ago when I was still formulating my research, before I began recruiting participants. Rather, I wanted to hear her thoughts about the research topic. Her validation was important to me because of her own experiences with marginalization. A couple of years ago, Lorena and I struck up a conversation (the content of which I can't remember) that launched us into a wonderful and supportive friendship. We have frequently talked about the ways in which Whiteness, Eurocentricity, heteronormativity, and patriarchy

operate in the academy. If one were to observe these conversations, they'd most likely see two women, about the same age, one who is Mexican-American and one who is Irish/German-American, supporting each other through these oppressive conditions with a lot of laughter. They would also hear real life stories about how structures of Whiteness affect us both as non-faculty staff members in the university. One of the ways we cope through these experiences is to make fun of them, to point out the absurdity of these hierarchies. As we sit down for the interview, we launch right into the discussion of Whiteness; my sense is that we are able to do so because of the trust that we've developed over the past few years, and because of Lorena's enthusiasm about the research topic.

Reuben

Reuben and I have never met before. A mutual friend has put us in contact with each other and Reuben expressed an interest in my study. I knew only a little bit about him prior to meeting him and as I wait for him outside the University library, I am worried that he'll get lost on the campus. When we emailed back and forth about our meeting, I tried to explain that the library is actually located in the middle of campus, is underground, and that I'd meet him at the top of the steps to the entrance. As I wait outside, I am relieved to see a smiling young man approach me. We introduce ourselves and make our way to a private room in the library. It's a bit awkward at first and so I make the decision to talk about logistical things first: did you get lost on campus, were the directions ok, what are your time limits for our discussion, can I get you some water, do you have any questions before we start? How long ago have you been

here in the United States? Is your family still in India? How is it that you decided to come to the U.S. to work? It's weird for me because this is one of only two people I'm interviewing who I haven't met prior to the interview. We chat about Reuben coming to the United States for a job in the technology field and about how he met our mutual friend. At some point, I think I realize that I'm more nervous than Reuben. He wants to get started!

Carol

Carol and I don't really know each other very well. In fact, she doesn't remember me from previous encounters we've had in the social work community. She's been a social worker for many years with a varied and interesting mix of community based experiences. I know a bit about her background from my previous professional encounters with her and from a colleague of mine who knows Carol quite well. Carol and I meet at a local restaurant. It's the busy rush of the breakfast/brunch crowd and I'm nervous that the public atmosphere will in some way be a barrier to our ability to converse about difficult topics like race, Whiteness, and racism. It clearly is my own issue because Carol launches right into our discussion without any hesitation! I wonder about my own unease—was it only about my concern for Carol's privacy or did it also reflect my own discomfort about talking about issues of race, racism, and Whiteness in a place that was unfamiliar to me? Carol on the other hand seems completely unfazed by our surroundings.

Nicola

At the time of the interview, I had known Nicola for only a few weeks but in my very first encounter with her, something about her just seemed inexplicably familiar. She, like so many other People of Color, enthusiastically responded to my research topic and offered to be a participant in my study. Our interview lasted the longest. As I reviewed the transcripts of our two-plus hour interview, I did a word count on the word “laughter” where the transcriptionist had noted our laughing throughout the course of the interview—it appeared in the transcript forty-nine times! Her realism, generosity, and humor made this interview uniquely revealing about the messiness and absurdity of racism and Whiteness. Through our shared laughter, we were able to explore the sometimes “taboo” nature of these topics. Each time I read the transcripts, I am humbled by her generosity and openness about these difficult topics.

Esperanza

A few years ago, Esperanza and I had a class together that dealt with Whiteness. Since that time, we’ve had other classes together and have developed a friendship. Because she finished her coursework a year before I did, I hadn’t seen her in a while prior to our interview. She invited me to her home where we conducted the interview. One of the things I most respect about Esperanza is her commitment to researching and understanding the legacy of racism in educational policy, particularly as it relates to students whose first language is not English. These are vitriolic times in Arizona, with particular venom aimed at students whose first language is Spanish and Esperanza endures and presses on, undeterred by Arizona’s legislative bullies. She is a hero in my book and a model for me in

what it means to be courageous in one's commitment to social change and in standing up to those forces who would like nothing more than to see us silenced.

Emily

One of the first things you notice about Emily is her infectious laugh and her upbeat and positive outlook on life. She is a respected colleague of mine who works with the most vulnerable of our society's children. I have said to her that some social workers have the mechanics of social work mastered but it's a rare quality to also practice the "art of social work." She is an artist/social worker. She makes it look easy even in the face of having one of the most difficult and least appreciated jobs in social work—child protection. In many ways it's a no-win proposition. Clients frequently hate you, the Arizona legislators treat you like you're a para-professional at best, and the public wants to vilify you when a child dies—never mind that the vast majority of your cases are handled with grace and determination and closed with children being successfully protected. With that amazing smile of hers, Emily volunteered for this study and I am eternally grateful to her.

Part Two

Recollections threaded together in the evolving life story about race: perspectives by People of Color

A note to the reader: I use italicized font to denote my voice. Text that uses normal font is the voice of the participant where I am quoting their words from the transcripts.

Talking Race: differential reactions of White people and People of Color to my research: I open discussions with the participants of color by revealing my

tentativeness in being a White person, interviewing People of Color on the topic of Whiteness and authentic White allies. I express my concern about this to them, noting the differential reactions I get when talking about this research topic with White people and People of Color (I spoke about this phenomena in chapter one of this dissertation). I ask them to comment on why they think so many of my White colleagues take a position of caution, even telling me I should not do this research at all, while the People of Color I have consulted with on the research topic have uniformly expressed enthusiastic support. The participants respond to this:

Alejandro: “Race is race. It’s including everyone.”

Your interest in talking about race Becki as a White person, resembles People of Color’s excitement that White people are interested, and wanting to have conversations regarding race, ethnicity, diversity, and general social justice. I guess, I can speak for myself—that was the case. It’s something that I’m excited about. I think, typically, when topics on diversity, social justice, race, and racism come up, you typically have the students of color—and staff of color, as well—and faculty, being the ones to not only be interested in the topic, but also the ones facilitating the dialogues, and spear-heading the programming. It’s probably the case, because they’ve been the ones that have maybe had to think more about their race or their experiences. When you have to reflect on it, and when you grew up thinking about those things, then you’re more likely to want to engage in it, or have conversations or make a change. And regarding your question about whether it makes me feel uncomfortable about talking to a White person about race—no, on the contrary, it makes me feel more comfortable. Yeah. It’s no longer like “the other” talking about the other, but rather everyone, the majority talking about everyone, because what I’ve noticed is that, typically, when we talk about race, at least in our country, my peers begin to think about minority. Conversations on race equals conversations about minorities—and it’s not the case. Race is race. It’s including everyone. It almost perpetuates the idea that the majority is race-less or is the standard, and everyone other than White, right, is some exotic or foreign concept that needs to be dissected.

Lorena: “I think it’s self-protection more than anything else.”

That's interesting, those reactions—maybe it's some of that privilege and that conscious or unconscious guilt [*she's referring to White people here*]. You know, the first thing that comes to my mind is, well, of course, because we're [*now she's referring to People of Color*] comfortable with who we are. We don't carry the baggage of White privilege or some of the other stuff that somebody else, a White supporter or White ally or White individual would probably have their knee-jerk is for self-protection. I think on some level you have to be comfortable with who you are. If we're comfortable in our own skin and we know we come from that place of acceptance, then it's, yeah, okay, well, let's do this, but if you have even the slightest doubt about your authenticity and what your relationships are really like—and how you're coming at this and why, what you going to do with the findings, and is it gonna cast a bad light on me? I think it's self-protection more than anything else. It plays into the nervousness about, oh, should I even be asking these questions of a Person of Color.

Carol: “I’m not surprised at all.”

I'm not surprised about your experience Becki primarily because when I think about my own experience teaching. What I find is that, for me, the relationship is what validates the process. When there's a relationship there, people are willing to talk or if there's an absence of one, not talk because of distrust. What I see with my students is that whenever we discuss the place that Whites have had throughout history in causing a lot of harm to different groups, that the first thing students do is jump to well, that wasn't me. I'm like no, but it's your ancestors and the history of America, and helping them sort through seeing information without taking personal ownership, so I'm not surprised. I'm not surprised at all.

Esperanza: “What, are we gonna shoot you?!”

What, we're gonna shoot you, or what? [*Laughter*] [*She's joking about White people's trepidation about my interviewing People of Color on the topic of Whiteness.*] I know you, based on that course that we took together, and because my own research is intricately connected with race and the issue of racism, so I find your work particularly interesting. I think it's fantastic that you take on this approach. You see very little of this type of work, so when someone does this I think it's a great opportunity to educate everybody. I think this different reaction by People of Color and White people is expected, to be honest, just because if we talk about this idea of White privilege—and again, I'm not White, so I can't speak as a White woman, but based on my experiences with friends who are White, and acquaintances, they don't necessarily see the issue of Whiteness. I don't know how to explain it, but I'm not surprised; I'm not

surprised one bit that the People of Color said, “Oh, I think this is great,” and Whites said “You have to be careful.”

Emily: “I jumped at the chance because I just feel like we don’t get to talk about race very much.”

The reason why I jumped at this [*to be a research participant*] is because it seems like a lot of people just don’t wanna talk about it. You know? It’s not even just school. It’s media. It seems like nobody really wants to talk about it cause either some people believe that racism doesn’t exist, or you know I wanna be color blind to everything, and we’re past that. That I think that’s why maybe some White people, the White people that you talked to maybe feel like, “Aw, you know we don’t wanna go there.” I jumped at the chance because I just feel like we don’t get to talk about race very much.

How Whiteness Lives in Higher Education: I ask participants if they think

Whiteness exists in education and if so, I ask them to share some stories about what Whiteness looks like in higher education.

Alejandro: “The Good Old Boys”

Yeah, absolutely I see how Whiteness works in higher education. Beginning with school spirit at the University of Florida. It was all over the different symbols or rituals that we would do. Thinking in my undergrad, we had a song, a cheer that was called “We Are the Boys of Old Florida,” and it talks about how the boys are the squarest; the girls are the fairest—you know? A great example of showing that to be a good old boy of old Florida is to have fair skin, to be square, be nice and preppy, and so that begins to, I guess, exclude or even eliminate or wipe out other groups of people. I think football has traditionally been an all-American sport—mainly White American, which is the irony, because the majority of the players are Black. With the quarterbacks—which is the most important position—yea, the leadership position and the coaches are usually being White.

Trina: “It’s hard to pinpoint exactly what it is, but you see it all around.”

I think Whiteness works on different levels. I mean you see a structural level you have to talk about it in terms of hegemony. It goes back to that term, where there is an invisible hierarchy of sorts in society that Whiteness has a certain privilege and the system’s set up that way. Education fits in that larger framework as structural. You can see how

much easier it is for certain people to get ahead, and it's always those who are White to get ahead. For me the struggle is always there, whether it's in having limited vocabulary, whether it's in color of skin, so it comes in different ways. You start recognizing it. As a result of that I think have to work harder. It's a lifelong process, things are not handed to you. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what it is, but you see it all around. It's always something you have to fight against because you don't automatically have that privilege. In some ways you're constantly having to navigate, more so than a person who is White, the different worlds and different systems and world views, compared to somebody who's White. I think racism in some ways sometimes is very overt and that exists all around us. It's very pervasive. I think the system is set up and it's hard to pinpoint exactly how people have a certain privilege and it's hard to pinpoint how that works in a system of Whiteness.

In terms of Whiteness in the academy, I can only speak on behalf of my experience, but also Native Americans in some way. The value is placed on verbal expression in the dominant society. When you come from a background that doesn't have that, it's difficult because you're always behind. You always feel inadequate in some ways. I think it's like that with many things. Like when you come from a community where the value is on community itself, the group, to one that's very individualistic. I think some of those things are difficult being in this system where, an educational system, where you have to start adopting this way of thinking. Otherwise you're not going to do as well. You have to learn the right word choices. Right in terms of the correct words that are used for certain situations, or just the word choices in general, and the use of the words. I know it's, in some ways, when I talk about verbal expression it's talking also about word choices in terms of using adjectives and adverbs and all of these other things. There's a different way of operating. There really is.

Lorena: "Oh, you mean..."

The older faculty are real authoritarian, maternal, paternal. They're gonna teach us because we just don't know, and we just don't get it. Whereas, I think, as we move toward the younger faculty, they check in a little more. Or at least with me, they'll check in and say, "Lorena, I'm viewing it this, do you think that's okay?" They see me as someone with knowledge and more of a peer. Whereas the older faculty, it seems like they don't miss an opportunity to check me or correct me or question the positions that I take. But the younger faculty tell us [non-faculty staff] that they see us as knowledgeable in subtle ways and show us in subtle ways.

And there's this checking and reminding me of my place by "Oh, you mean..." I hate that. I hate that, "Oh, you mean..." No, I mean what I

say and I say what I mean. “Oh, you mean,” it’s like, oh, poor thing can’t even think. My old boss here at the University, a White woman used to do that to me. “Oh, you mean.” Because that’s the ultimate disrespect is to have the audacity to believe that we know more about what the person’s thoughts are than they do themselves. I mean, how demeaning is that? That’s what I mean by silencing your voice.

Carol: “No Black professors.”

I can tell you I have students who share with me that in their entire experience at this school, that prior to me they had never ran into a Black professor.

Esperanza: “No, I will not tone it down; this is me. This is me.”

I feel like—and to a certain degree this is kinda sad, I feel like I’ve had to play the White card to—and I’m not saying that I have let go of my culture, of my heritage, of my language. I refuse to do that; I value it very strongly, but I mean if we think of the way I write now, it has to be a certain way, and I wanna say things a certain way, but I’ll give you an example, a perfect example. I was writing my proposal, and in my introduction I’m very blunt about how I feel. I think I used the word racism in there, xenophobia, and my advisor, who is no longer my advisor said, “It’s too political. You need to change it. You need to tone it down. It’s not appropriate.” I said, “No, I will not tone it down; this is me. This is me,” and to me that’s an example of how you kind of have to play the game. He wanted me to be very academic, and you have to set up the proposal in more the traditional way that you have to set up a proposal. It’s like, this is what I bring; this is what I feel is driving my study, and I’m gonna set it up right at the very beginning. That was very problematic for him, very uncomfortable, I think. I got rid of him before I got rid of my stuff.

Thoughts on racism: I asked participants to talk about their thoughts and experiences with racism.

Trina: “You see it happening around but you don’t recognize it.”

Racism is all around us. It has to do a lot with the attitudes and it manifests itself obviously through actions where it’s very much covert, as opposed to overt. Not as obvious but it’s still happening out there. Whether it’s through jokes, TV shows, laws that are enacted, so it’s happening all around us but it’s not as obvious as it was. It’s more

insidious. That's where micro-aggression comes in. You see it happening around but you don't recognize it.

Lorena: "It's as though everything is theirs, and we have to ask permission."

I mean, there's just, it's chemistry almost. It's the way [*racist people*] carry themselves. I can think of a few people who before they even said hello or before I even said hello, I already knew that this person was not somebody to be trusted. It's a certain posturing. It's a way they carry themselves. It's as though everything is theirs, and we have to ask permission. Like, well, this is my country or this is my office or this is my place of business, whatever that is—there's a physical posturing that says ownership. I own this, whatever this is. I own this, you're in my land, this is America and you're an immigrant, what are you doing here? Not realizing that, well, I was born in the United States. I'm just American as anybody else.

Reuben: "We're just trying to work."

In the office, if they're talking about something, and it's like—yeah, sometimes when it got to jobs being outsourced—that's when it got a little tense. I really don't know what to say, in that case, because I am an Indian and I've come over here to work. That's all I'm doing. Now, there was a decision made by the corporations to actually go to the cheapest talent pool, and that's why I'm here. Now, is that the right thing to do, or not? I don't know. It wasn't my decision to do that. We're just trying to work, earn some money for our family, or whatever, and trying to survive. Once you try to put down the other person and refer to them as something derogatory, that's when the problem begins.

The idea of that whenever you go to racism, casteism [*he's referring to the caste system in India*—any discrimination, the first step that anyone does is dehumanize the other person. Because what happens is, once you dehumanize them, call them rotten, or dogs, or something like that, what they're trying to do is trying to cut off emotion related to them. If you call them normal, human people, you won't be able to do despicable things to them. If you dehumanize that person or treat them as something separate or different from you, then you will be able to maybe hurt them or do anything wrong to them.

Esperanza: "This is about acknowledging me as a human being."

We went to this conference. I presented and everything was great, so afterwards, my chair, my old chair, he's a statistics guy, and he was gonna host a statistics thing for all the statisticians, so he's like, "You guys come over," and it's at a pizza place. We go, and it's Mary, Liz and I. We get

there early, and we're waiting at the pizza place, and I notice this [White] guy trying to come into the pizza parlor, and he's on crutches, so I go over and I open the door for him. He comes in, and I expected a thank you. Nothing; I thought, "What an ass, fine, he's just an ass." We're waiting, and he comes in, and I realize that he's also with the statisticians' party. He comes over to us, Mary, Liz and I, and he says Hi, I'm so-and-so to Liz [who is White], Hi, I'm so-and-so to Mary [also White], and turns around. I looked at him and I'm thinking, "You asshole. I was the one who opened the door for you." I mean I was not there. I'm just like shocked, so Mary says, "Oh, and this is Esperanza," and he turns over and shakes my hand, finally. I was just livid; I mean, he just blatantly, blatantly pretended I was not there. Apparently he was some professor and I'm literally shaking because I'm about to cry; I'm in tears, because it was really blatant. Liz, the other grad student, her motto is "Equity, schmequity," okay? What does she do? She goes over to the guy later and says, "Hey, you really hurt my friend's feelings," and she comes over and tells me. I looked at her, I said, "Feelings? You think this is about hurting my feelings?" I said, "Liz, you're White," I said, "This is about acknowledging me as a human being. This isn't about feelings," and I walked away, and I was angry. Mind you, I was the only Latina in a group of maybe 100, okay? I went to the restroom upstairs; the party was downstairs. I'm walking down and people are leaving, and they're saying, "Oh, thank you so much for the—." They thought I was a waitress; they just assumed I was the waitress because I was Latina. This is the same night. I'm just like, "I need to get out of here; I need to just get the hell out of here." Then on my way down again I meet the same professor, and he apologizes. He says, "I'm so sorry; I was just distracted," and he shook my hand, I looked at him and walked away. I did not want to have anything to do with him.

About allies: I ask participants to reflect on what they think an anti-racist

work entails and their experiences with White allies.

Trina: "It's a lifelong process."

An ally is a person who's supportive. They're accepting of differences. They don't make assumptions about certain groups. They educate themselves. They don't assume they know something because they heard it from another person but in fact they actually go to sources that would be reliable. They seek an atmosphere of acceptance of everyone. They don't tolerate the injustices that exist out there. I think when people are making jokes or are making comments that are stereotypical, I think it's just as simple as educating somebody else on that. There is action taken on that. I think a person who wants to be an ally is constantly being educated about

these things, and it's not anything where you acquire information and expect overnight you're an ally. It's a lifelong process. Because I think as the world evolves or as society evolves, I think there are different types of oppression. I also am careful to say, and I also have learned this, it's about interrupting the acts of oppression. I think sometimes people make the mistake and say it's about ending the acts of oppression. I don't know if there's ever an end to it. That implies that you've stopped or something has stopped. I don't think that ever occurs, especially in our society that's constantly evolving and there are new people constantly being born, you know, just the world as it is. I think that's where you have to use the term interrupt.

Lorena: “We were friends and we had each other’s back.”

Well, for the people that I've known, that I've encountered, that I consider a White, authentic White ally for me, difference was never a part of that. It didn't show up. I was telling my [White] friend a little bit about your study, and when we were growing up as teenagers, we never thought about her being White and me being a Latina. The only thing we thought about was we were friends and we had each other's back. In terms of my ally Toni, we were in graduate school together and met our foundation year. We just happened, just luck of the draw, we were in the same classes, found ourselves in the same classes together. One of the things that I noticed about Toni was she didn't feel the need to correct me, back to checking, right. She didn't feel the need to correct me. In my mind, I was complete. I didn't need to be fixed. I was okay just the way I was. She didn't feel like she had to get in there and scramble my brain and get me to think right, you know, poor little Mexican, let's help her, that kind of stuff.

Nicola: “She really practiced what she preached.”

I think with allies it's funny. I think there's this point that happens when people kind of go through that journey, but they really have to make the decision is it worth it. Is it worth the sort of discomfort and pain and socially awkward situations? Is it worth losing the friends that I've had all my life? I respect how hard that choice is, and I've seen people who've made the choice and say no, it's not worth it. I'm going to bury my head in the sand and just not deal with this as much as possible. I can be aware of it and have the consciousness of it, but I'm not going to really pull out the teeth or say anything when I see any kind of bullshit go wrong unless it's really in my face.

This one person, I really just was taken with her approach to doing these difficult dialogues, with her approach to really being very able to self-disclose—I looked up to her very, very much. I think she really modeled

this very open sort of practice—this mutual self-disclosure. She really practiced what she preached. It wasn't so like she said, "Oh, well, we need to practice mutual self-disclosure, but it's really just the students disclosing, and me as an instructor I'm still going to keep this sort of hierarchical relationship where I'm not going to actually tell you about the struggles that I myself have faced because I've never actually done the work." Because I think it's BS to sit there and say like, okay, well, we have to talk about these difficult issues and you [*the students*] have to be the one that's taken out of your comfort zone as if it's some kind of punishment, but you yourself [*the professor*] are not going to subject yourself to that sort of practice. That's bullshit. I just think that that's really cruel to ask of a student and not be able to model how to do it because the thing is I think people assume that it's just really easy to share that sort of stuff.

Almost every single one of the allies that I became very close with who identified as LGBT used those experiences as a bridge to understanding the connections to racism. I think they definitely used that experience to sort of scaffold and use it as a bridge to really connect with other people. By no means did I ever feel that they tried to sit there and say, "Oh, well, I'm gay, so I understand exactly what you're going through." They never did that to me ever because I never would go back and be like, "Oh, well, I'm a Person of Color. I totally understand what it's like to be gay." No. The thing that was really powerful about some of their conversations was they were so open with talking with me about it. I appreciated that even during the times that I knew it was difficult.

Esperanza: "You have to be comfortable being a White person."

You have to be comfortable being a White person and understanding what comes with being White, because if you're not comfortable as a White person, like if you're trying to be Black but you're not really Black. You have to understand "I'm White, but I can still be a White ally." Don't come in to my space and say, "I understand what you're going through." No, you don't, so be an ally—have a strong sense of who you are as a White person. Say, "I'm not here to tell you I fully understand what you're going through; however, I'm here to try to make something change." Perhaps even a White ally is somebody who wants to cause change. If you're in a situation where it's pretty evident that there's something going on, that's pretty obvious, then you need to say something, otherwise your credibility's gonna go down the drain. It takes courage, commitment, because again this is a long term thing, it's commitment and dedication and understanding and compassion: being compassionate towards people's differences and valuing those differences rather than saying, "Let's fix 'em."

Carol: “...more than lip service?”

The first bell that rings for me is not doing things because it's politically correct but because it's the right thing to do. I think a lot of our antiracism comes because of political directives versus the intent and the spirit. For me, that's what I see. I think anti-racism is moving beyond the physicalness, like what can be seen, observed and more so doing things because of the humanness. I think we've moved in society, we're trying to be politically correct, how we use our language, how we define things, how we categorize things, and it becomes more robotic kind of experience versus a real this is what humanness means.

I look at is the person doing more than lip service? Cause a lot of people could sound good, sound politically correct, but have no oomph in them to support it. Or they can make exceptions because well, my best friend's Black but I can still use racial slurs. Well that's not a true ally. For me, that would be more compartmentalized. For me, an ally is one that's able to see and even respond to without a sense of needing to be glorified for what they did. It's about their ability to respond to a need because it's the right thing to do. It's about being willing to question the status quo and not be afraid of backlash because they are White. It's about their ability to use their voice knowing their circle of influence, but also politically and to back that up with resources, money. Money, time, energy, efforts, talents. For me, an ally is someone that has taken dings from other people because wait a minute, you're White. What are you doing this for? Or why are you shaking the bushes kind of thing. They've got their own battle scars as a result of it and are even still willing to move forward. That's what rings for me. It's who they are. All the time, and that includes shutting somebody down that's making a racist comment. Being willing to confront people's attempts at what they believe are authentic which really aren't authentic and doing it in a way that's loving, supporting, and yet educational as well.

Alejandro: “We have to de-victimize or un-victimize People of Color.”

I think anti-racist work begins with a conversation about racism is, and then an unraveling or an undoing of racism. I think that part of understanding what racism is, is hearing from multiple groups how racism affects them. Gathering some information. Going back, then—maybe in a separate space for White people—to then have the discussion. Say, like, “This is the information we're hearing. This is how we're being perceived. This is what people think we're doing. How does that fit into us? Like, how can we change that perception, or change those situations—if they are true?” And then, how we go about it. I think

what's key is to not make it seem, again, like White people are the heroes, or have to come trailing across to these poor, victim minorities.

I think in anti-racist work, we have to de-victimize or un-victimize People of Color. Cause then it begins to be like, "Alright, us White people, we gotta undo this." Like, we're the heroes. Let's go to these poor people. No, no, no. I think that White people are victims, too, of racism. It has to be a collaborative effort of how do we stop victimizing people, and making people as predators. Start being just like, "This is just a cycle that we need to kill or undo." I come from mind-frame that whether People of Color like it or not, they have to collaborate or contribute in the education. Not necessarily it being the sole responsibility, but definitely being a partner in the conversations, because since Whiteness, or White culture, if there's such a thing—the prevalence of White is around us so much, we don't understand that something is White unless it's pointed out. We just think it's standard. You can't just go around expecting people to reach out to People of Color when they're in the privilege or they're in the majority. They just don't see that. I think that White allies and then People of Color would have to get together and then discuss how do we go about educating everyone. Not just White people. Not just People of Color. But in terms of White people taking responsibility for educating other White people, I think that it's almost more effective, when a White ally spearheads conversations about Whiteness and what it means to be White.

Emily: "...on the front line."

It's somebody who is open to getting to know who I am as a person. You spend time together, and do things with one another, and that somebody that you know is gonna be there as a support for you and you're willing to do the same for them. Somebody who can be there with you on the front line, that's how I would describe my White ally. When you have somebody that's willing to advocate, and they're willing to show that they're also gonna be there with you. Because I think that any of us, whether White, Black, whatever, if we see something that's an injustice we should speak up. If you don't speak up about it then it's really like you're just one of those types of people that let life just go be like that for someone else.

Alejandro: "...understanding about how other identities impact people."

There's someone who is a university administrator. With her, off the bat, it's someone who's visible, who has a presence on campus, who has influence. She is someone who has demonstrated a commitment to diversity education on campus and has done that through the initiatives and programs that the university has launched.

The other component I think was key was that she was educated on Whiteness, on racism. Because you can announce and profess that you are committed, but then through the comments you say or through the actions you take, not really be. She had extensive knowledge. I could feel that she understood Hispanic-Latino students. She understood the experience. First of all, she understood geography. She knew about countries. I could state, you know, my family is Cuban and she could articulate some of the political happenings in the country, she could articulate some of the experience of Cuban-Americans. Being a White ally, I saw her as also being an ally to religious diversity, to talking about classism, to talking about homophobia. I think when we think about White allies, at least for me, I think that because identities are interconnected or intersected, a White ally would have to be understanding about how other identities impact people. Understanding that class can impact what it means to be White or what it means to be a minority. Sexuality—how a woman could have a vastly different experience as men. That was something that we built trust on. She seemed like someone that was competent in more than just race and ethnicity. She didn't discriminate.

Trina: "It's not about this savior mentality."

I have worked closely with this White professor. I think what I see is her always advocating in the decisions that she makes, and she's always supportive. She doesn't just advocate once, where it's a one-time project to get recognition for it. It's an ongoing thing, supporting the people in the project through whatever, meeting their needs. I see it in that way she informs herself about the people she is working with. She gets educated. When she's at the project site, she's very careful in how she interacts. It's not about this savior mentality of coming in to rescue the people, but having them fit in in their environment and meeting their needs.

It's rare to find people who are White allies. I think people want to be, but I don't know—when you see somebody that genuinely is, there's a difference in somebody who has a savior mentality of coming in to rescue the people. Normally that's more what you see. There's a certain sense of superiority. It's the way they approach it, to believe that my way is better, and if I can take this person out of this situation and place them in my world, then they'll have a better life. They'll have a better existence. It is very subtle, because it comes across with a genuineness to try to help people.

In going back to that professor I was telling you about, she is unlike others who are in academia. She takes that extra step to support people. The thing about her is that she sees a person's potential and works with that

potential and she values the work that they do. She meets the person where they are and the interests that they have. As opposed to coming up with her own and saying no, this will work better for you, which is sometimes what you find with committee members who say no, that's not going to work, and they have their own agenda of what would work. I think that's where an ally fits in. She is a good example of that. Where a lot of times in academia you see people where it's very much about themselves. There's a certain ego investment, building themselves up and they do it through the work they publish. They do it through their students. I think this professor in that sense is different. She has a certain enthusiastic personality about these things, and her supportiveness comes across very much in everything that you do with her. When she says she will follow through with certain things she does it. Those are kind of small things but for somebody like me that's a big thing too. When someone is that supportive, you get past the racial differences. You always know that you come from a different background but when somebody is very accepting and willing to support you, you don't recognize that as much.

Carol: "...in the trenches."

Rachael is a kind of rags-to-riches story. She has, because of her quest for social justice, that many years in the attorney general's office decided on a leap of faith this isn't where my politics are right now because of the change in the environment here in Arizona, was willing to be unemployed, because of faith got hired on at a university. Being very intentional about it what I call where she hangs her hat, of whether it's a social cause, her circle of influence, being a person that's willing to be there in the trenches to help bring other people up. Her story is one that she went from being a survivor of domestic violence to okay, this is where I'm at and what I'm doing and not forgetting where she came from but being willing to reach back and say let me help you come out of these trenches. This is how I did it, living by example

Esperanza: "That person talks about what's uncomfortable to White people."

Well, I have one White colleague who's doing anti-racist work. What she's doing is research on this four-hour block in SEI, for example, and what she did is she published this study in conjunction with other graduate students, where she talked about and she used words like racism, segregation, subjugation, and to me that's an ally, a White ally: someone who points out what people don't necessarily want to see. She's saying they're doing this, this and that, and it's very blatant. That person talks about what's uncomfortable to White people. In so doing you have to—

cause I've also read pieces from White people who say there's this, this, and this inequity, but they don't acknowledge their own White privilege, so it's kind of like there's two pieces to it. I think you'll have more credibility if you say, "I'm a White, and I know that I'm White, and I know that with being White comes this, this, and that. However, this is what I'm seeing and we need to address it, whether you like it or not." That to me is more powerful than simply somebody saying, "These are the inequities, and we have to deal with them."

There is this White professor, Jim who is an ally. He was also a co-PI for our grant. He brought up uncomfortable issues, so when we were looking at data the main PI, Bob who used to be my old advisor, the statistician, so he comes on from a very White statistical perspective. Jim comes from a White qualitative perspective: he wants to understand why. Bob doesn't give a shit; he wants to understand numbers. Jim would push Bob to think about uncomfortable issues, like we have to deal with these issues. Jim would talk about we have to look at the teacher's race: how is Whiteness affecting their teaching? Or we have to look at what access kids are getting: are teachers giving them access? Do teachers believe these kids can learn? Bob was very uncomfortable with that. Bob would talk to me on the side, and he would say, "Jim's so full of himself," or "He's so full of shit; we can't do this, we can't do that," and I know that it was because he was very uncomfortable as a White man.

White people who think they're allies but need some more work: I asked participants to reflect on their experiences with White people who thought they were White allies but in some way were still missing the main ideas of anti-racist work.

Nicola: "It was like we were supposed to speak ethnic-ese for everybody in some ways."

I think I was like twenty or twenty-one and I'm a new employee in this organization that deals with housing discrimination. The head [White] guy is actually a really admirable guy. I really respect him. He is kind of a big name in the fair housing stuff. It's such an interesting story. He used to be in the ministry and in 1968 Martin Luther King comes to Chicago and he goes and hears him speak, decides he's going to quit his ministry and devote his life to dealing with housing segregation. I was like, "Wow!" Yeah, he marched with Dr. King. He was very active in the civil rights movement. I definitely would consider that person an ally to the movement, absolutely. He really put his money where his mouth was. He

did. The thing that was interesting was except for me and the other youngest lady, she was Latina, and she was the one who spoke Spanish and dealt with all Spanish speaking clients. I was the one who dealt with everybody else. I thought it was really interesting that the two people who kind of dealt the most directly with people and their complaints were the two People of Color whereas the other people who kind of dealt with like the kind of higher up issues and administration were all the White people. It was like we were supposed to speak ethnic-ese for everybody in some ways. I was just kind of like you know what, just because I'm this color does not mean that suddenly I can speak Ebonics or that I should.

There were a lot of problems there and they would wait until the last minute to file their federal grant application, which funded our entire grant. Basically there were times where I would go like two months without a paycheck. As a recent graduate with no savings that was not okay. They would kind of like guilt trip me a little bit about complaining about this, and I'm just sort of like, okay—and I couldn't say this at the time because I just didn't feel like I had the authority or the power to say this, but I'm sitting there like you all each have a spouse that has some kind of pension or some kind of savings or nest egg that you can draw on in some kind of emergency time. It's no big deal to you if you guys are short a paycheck. This is not going to shut off your heat or your water bill. Me this is going to seriously impact, and I'm pissed. Basically they would be like, well, this is a nonprofit organization, and we're doing really important work. How can money mean so much to you, as if it was my fault because I wanted to keep my heat on. It was just one of those things that suddenly I was not dedicated enough to the cause because I had the audacity to want to live, to actually be able to pay my bills.

When you talk out of one side of your mouth about like how you care about social inequalities and then you're totally willing to turn around and treat your employees and your direct subordinates like shit. It's a real privilege, unconscious privilege, to be able to say, "Oh, well we don't need to worry about money. We're doing great work." Well, maybe you don't have to worry about money, but lots of other people do. They would try and guilt trip me for wanting to have a certain standard of living that they promised. All I wanted was them to be straight with me, and that's just something that's always been frustrating with me. But that's what I think is so insidious about privilege—people think that they are doing their absolute best and they're working so hard to kind of offer you this opportunity and how dare you be ungrateful. This is not fair. I'm not going to sit here and take one for the team because the thing is why is it always me that's taking one for the fucking team? I think it's real interesting that it's the People of Color that are at the bottom of the organization that end up having to take one for a team. That's crap.

Esperanza: “I see you as White.”

I talked to a friend of mine and she’s very White, from Oklahoma, and she considers herself liberal. I don’t think she’s very liberal, but she claims she’s a liberal. When I try to talk to her about moving she said, “So are you guys staying, are you moving?” I said, “You know, I don’t know, we just don’t know where to move to, cause ideally we’d want to go back to California, but we can’t afford it and we don’t want to go to a state where it’s all White people.” She’s like, “Why do you even burden yourself with that?” and I thought to myself, “You don’t get it. That’s something you don’t have to deal with, and that’s a privilege that is—you’re just privileged, you don’t have to think about that. I do.” She’s like, “I don’t see you as my Mexican friend, I just see you as Sylvia,” and I said, “That’s weird, because I do see you as my White friend Tina. I see you as White, and I can’t detach race from a person.”

Nicola: “You don’t have a right to call yourself an ally if you treat your students like this.”

There’s this one instructor who means really well in a lot of ways. I think that this person does some important work on LGBT rights. I think that’s incredibly important. I think that’s really awesome, like it’s very needed work. What I don’t respect about this person is that even though they are so adamant about LGBT rights and making sure that there’s spaces for all sorts of different identities, this person is more than happy to sit there and tread on all sorts of graduate student identities and reassert their power any way they possibly can. That really pisses me off frankly. I’m just like, “You don’t have a right to call yourself an ally if you treat your students like this.” Then when people call this person out about it, s/he’s incredibly defensive. I’m like, no, that person is not an ally. I would never consider that person an ally. I would never send anybody to them, sorry.

Emily: “...it wasn’t about the family.”

Here at my agency [*she’s a social worker*] there’s one thing that I think is interesting sometimes. We used to talk about how there were Black cases and even though they say that they [*the agency*] wants to have it where we give the family a case manager that the they’re [*the family*] is gonna be comfortable with, that sometimes we [*Black case managers*] would feel like it wasn’t about the family. They [*the agency*] chose to give it to us [*Black case managers*] because they didn’t feel like that nobody else would be able to work with that person. It’s just like, okay how can they [*White case managers*] learn to work with that person then? It just seems

sometimes that it allows White case workers to avoid their issues with Black families.

Part Three
Scholars on the Ground: Introducing the White allies

Lila—Alejandro's ally

After one missed meeting because Lila had to take one of her clients to the hospital, we finally meet up for our interview. She works with teenagers who have come to the United States alone from Central America and who have been arrested by immigration once they cross into the U.S. She works with them until they are deported. Lila is an engaging young woman, in some ways reminding me a bit of myself when I was in my twenties. In leading up to the interview, I shared with her that I had spent time in my undergraduate work in Central America. Prior to our meeting I went to the link she gave me to look at her photography. Lila's shots captured moments and encounters that she had while traveling. I was reminded of my own travels to Latin American when I was about her age, in my undergraduate work. Lila's sense of curiosity seemed to extend to my research project as well as she enthusiastically wandered with me around the topics of Whiteness, racism, and allies.

Brandy—Lorena's ally

Who knew that this White ally was right in my midst all along! Brandy and I had similar trajectories in our academic and research interests. Both of us have been interested in, and exploring our White identities for many years. This fact reminded me of how isolating allied work can be and the importance of

finding each other and in creating communities of support. As several people have said in this project, this is such hard work. Since our interview, Brandy and I have shared resources: conferences, books, and course syllabi. All of a sudden, I seem to see Brandy all of the time, as if the universe is trying to tell me something! Allies supporting allies—an interesting idea.

Karen—Carol's ally

I met Carol for the first time in a nursing home where she was convalescing after surgery. I checked and double checked before coming to make sure she was up for my visit. She assured me that not only was she up for the visit she was looking forward to it. When I first arrived, Carol wasn't in her room. Her door was open but I didn't want to enter unaccompanied by Carol. After about fifteen minutes, Carol came walking down the hall in her orange furry slippers. She had been walking outside to get some fresh air. My sense is that she'd had about enough of the nursing home and was eager to go home but the doctor wasn't ready to release her. We settled in to the interview with the distant sounds of the various medical machinery buzzing and beeping in the background.

A note to the reader: As with the voices of the participants of color, these stories are all directly quoted from the participants' interviews. What is different in this section is that instead of organizing thematic ideas by the White allies, I have attempted to organize their thoughts in a way that will provide a portrait of each ally related to their experiences with race, racism, and Whiteness. The only places that are not direct quotes from the participants are where I use italics to indicate my own voice.

Part Four
Recollections threaded together in the evolving life story about race:
perspectives by White allies

Lila's story

"Cookie cutter"—Lila's thoughts on how she understands and experiences

Whiteness.

I've lived in New York City and met people from tons of cultural backgrounds, and the White people that I meet, they're very East Coast. There's a certain mentality, a certain attitude; perhaps they're very well-traveled for the most part, cause they're at the hub of places, to just take off and go see everywhere, plus they're swimming in stupid amounts of money. That's kind of interesting too, everything that they spend it on and the materialistic side, but then there's another side where they're such givers too. They're out there—maybe they're not doing social work and getting their hands dirty, but they're able to write a check and participate somehow to help out some group. Much different from living in Arizona, whereas the White that I see here, for me particularly, is very cookie cutter.

I think that when you look at track housing in neighborhoods out here, it's like someone took a cookie cutter and just plopped it down everywhere, so now we have Mesa on one side, which is kind of the same as Surprise on the other side. Everything's kind of there and available for you, and all these homes and families have kind of sprouted up. When you're invited to somebody's home, you drive up to the house and it's like, "Oh, that's the same house that I was just at over here." When you walk inside, it's like the same gray carpet, the same white walls. They decorate it differently, but it's like, where's the individuality? It's all the same, not being different. I guess visually, as a photographer, that's how I see it. It stands out to me a lot when I'm driving, when I'm observing, when I'm taking everything in.

It frustrates me when I do go to meet new people. You get invited to a friend's house and it's like, where's the surprise? Where's the difference? Why are the conversations all the same? Why are the responses all the same? Sometimes it's frustrating, cause from being in different places and traveling around and having great conversations with people of all walks of life, humble people, people who are just swimming in success, people who are in the midline, it's frustrating I think, being here. I feel—sometimes I use that word—it's just too White for me. I just associate it with boring. Because after getting involved with some of the work that I've done and meeting certain people from different cultures, learning

their language, eating their food, dating their men, you know what I mean? It lacks what they say in Spanish *un sabor*, like a flavor. Sometimes I just say that, “It’s too White for me.” Even dating people, I don’t get attracted to White men, because they don’t have a certain flavor, and I think I need that now that I’ve seen it. It’s just something more colorful and more fulfilling, and it’s not so cookie cutter.

“Conquistadores”—As an entryway into the conversation of Whiteness, I gave a scenario to Lila that happened with a friend of mine recently. This friend (a person of color) commented that a particular White person we were both familiar with was “the Whitest person I know.” I asked Lila to interpret what that meant to her. This evolved into a broader conversation about Whiteness.

How would I respond to someone saying that this or that person is the Whitest person I know? I think being it’s a generalization that I would probably associate with being very middle America. That’s how I see it. Maybe they’re not as cultured; they’re insular. I would say not as well traveled perhaps. They don’t have very many friends from other cultures, or associate with different people of different color from different places. Maybe not open to different cultures and ideas and religions, as much as seeing their own as, “Well, this is the way it is. This is the way life is. This is the way it is. There’s nothing else besides the town I’m from and the people that I know and I’ve always known.”

In general I think about Whiteness, especially being American, from my travels and the people that I’ve met. One big thing that stuck out from a particular conversation is White people are *conquistadores*. Since that time when we came over, we’ve just flourished, and we take over. I had a conversation with someone the other day about why America, like the United States, has to be so different than South America? Why? We’re connected; we’re the same land. Why is it that America has just flourished the way that it has and then you have countries south of the border that haven’t? What’s so different? It came from the time where we conquered a certain area. We kept procreating, taking over and other cultures took over South America, and now the divide is just so great.

I think that when you look at—I just think there’s got to be big difference between what’s White and westernized, versus third world too. When I think about White, I know I’m American, and I know from the United States, but I also have to recognize that Europe is a westernized culture. Tons of people are White over there. Australia as well; and I’ve been to

those places too, so I've gotten to see that. I think when a lot of people talk about "White," maybe they associate it with America, but there's so many other places, so then you start to think about what's White versus American, compared to Canadian White, compared to Australian White, and this and that.

I went to Australia and it was really fascinating to me to learn more about the difference between the White people there and the Aborigines, and to think about their history and what's gone down isn't that different from White people here and Native Americans. Conquering land; governments giving the less educated darker cultures money and support, but only maybe to a certain extent, land as well; how the non-White cultures have predominantly been known for having drinking problems and drug problems and this and that. It kind of mimics what went down in America as well, which is very interesting.

Back to this idea of conquistador, it seems like it comes across a lot in politics, especially when you look at the United States politics. When I think of a politician, I see a White person wearing a suit and tie and very clean and kept, running around doing what he wants to do after he's won the election.

On racism and "Shvartzes"—Lila talks about her thoughts on racism.

Growing up with my grandparents, who are from Poland, who speak five languages, who lived through World War II and had so much struggle. They just wanted to come to the United States, make their own way, find the American dream. They never spoke highly of Black people. It was always a derogatory word that they would use in the household in Yiddish, called *shvartze*. *Shvartze* comes from the German word *shvartz*, which is black, and if you translate it to kind of American or English, it would be Schwartz, like Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz; it kinda goes back to Black. I always heard that word in the house from the grandparents, from my dad's side of the family, from my dad, and I knew it was negative, like saying "nigger." I never said it and I never adopted it but it just always felt bad and wrong. We didn't have very many Black friends growing up. It wasn't until high school that I met my first Black person that was a friend.

Ally as "ambassador"—I asked Lila what her thoughts were related to being identified by Alejandro as an ally.

Well, I thought the word was really interesting. We have two girls right now who are working for our company that are public allies, and I like that word too. It doesn't matter what race or religion or what their

background is, but they're doing social work and they're reaching out to the community, and I really like the name, and I'd be proud to like represent that position and have that in my background of things that I've done is a public ally. It's so positive. When I heard the word "White ally," it also kind of connotes something positive to me.

I think how I identify myself is, first and foremost, is an American, as a North American, but I do see myself as a White person too. My grandparents came from Poland and were survivors of the Holocaust and they suffered a ton of discrimination. Everyone in their family, just gone. They were Jewish, and I'm one-hundred percent Jewish. Although I am White, I always felt that being Jewish was like one of those checkmark boxes on an application.

Alejandro has been a friend, a coworker, and we spend a lot of time together, both at work, dancing Salsa, eating breakfast super late in the day, so he's great. I like what he stands for and we've gotten into tons of conversations over dinner parties about politics, people, what we do together, as far as where we've worked at the Jóvenes program; so, yeah, I was eager to jump on the project too.

I kind of considered myself [*as an ally*] when I was traveling—cause when I traveled—I just love traveling. I'll take off by myself; pack up a backpack and go. I think it's great to maybe spend a chunk of money to get to your destination, and then live there for a while and really absorb it, and then have to renew your visa, travel somewhere else, and bring it all in. I kind of gave myself a title while I was traveling, to make more sense of what I was doing at the time, trying to find myself and also kind of test everything that I learned throughout high school and college, but out in the real world. I called myself an ambassador to the United States. An ambassador from the United States to these countries. With the social work that I have done, there's a lot of words for what I was doing; like I could have been a volunteer, an international volunteer, but I really liked the word ambassador. It really clicked with me, because I come from where I come, I am how I am, but I'm very open and interested to what they're doing over there, wherever that is.

As international volunteers, we always found it interesting that we were reaching out so much to their children, to their abused, abandoned population, but we were like, "But where are the Chilean people helping the Chilean people?" I was always very safe. I felt very comfortable, but the discrepancy between who had and who didn't have was huge. Then with the volunteers who would come, it was very interesting, because we would spend most of our time in the poorer sections helping out this

population, but then as soon as work was over, we'd go shopping in the other sections, just like an American would.

The person that I dated in South America that I just happened to date was someone who came from a very humble family. As a volunteer, I was spending my time working with this population of poor kids, but then also spending all my free time with him and his family, who also live down there in the south side. I spent like a year and a half there and really got to see how they live, how they're treated, and it was pretty fascinating. The more indigenous cultures were usually poorer and, of course, they would most likely be darker skin tone, and people who had more indigenous features as well. And I would say that the richer were lighter skinned.

I guess from like a White perspective, the indigenous people weren't so timid. It was more like [*she describes her perception of the indigenous community members' reaction to the White North American volunteers*], "Because we are who we are," in Chile for example, "we're a little bit more standoffish and we're waiting for you to make the first move to open yourself up." Once I did start to pick up the language and I could have those conversations, or joke with them in their language, then they opened up like a book. You could give a little of yourself, especially to the women, and they would just sit down with you. "Please come to my house. Let me make you dinner. Let's have some tea or a snack and I'm gonna tell you my life story," but it had to happen on a language level. It's just so important, because if you're on their turf and you're gonna live there for a while and you really wanna like get inside their culture and be accepted and learn more; seriously, not just on the surface, I really think it's your responsibility as a traveler, as an ambassador, to take that initiative and learn the language, so that you can communicate on that level.

This curiosity about people is part of my personality, but when you bring it back to talking about Whiteness, I feel like I grew up so White, and I didn't get to have these experiences. I grew up in Detroit, Michigan until I was ten, and then they moved to Fountain Hills, Arizona in the second grade, and then we moved to Scottsdale, Arizona. And right now, I have the opportunity because of maybe my age or because I'm not connected to a family per se; I'm pretty much solo, and the opportunity and the interest and the curiosity, that I can just go and find that somewhere else. Of course, being a big salad, you can find it here in the United States, but you really have to go somewhere and live there for a while, so that you can *meterse para entrar*, like you have to do it. It's fascinating to me, because I feel like being in the States, living here, being a White person, you can only do so much. [*Lila knew that I spoke Spanish. She would intermittently use Spanish words that better explained her ideas than*

English words could. “Meterse” is a unique verb in Spanish that can take on slightly different meanings depending on the context. But what Lila is essentially saying by “meterse para entrar” is that she immersed herself in the culture in order to really experience it.]

I use my photography as an ally and I think it is such a great medium to tell a story and to do it without involving language per se, because anyone can look at a photograph and evoke a feeling or try to understand something, or interpret it the way that they want to. I also think that photography’s so great as an ally, maybe not a White ally, but for who I am, to raise awareness about certain people, to tell stories, to connect in so many ways, cause it could be a cross-cultural connection, like I’m from America. I’m taking photos of these girls in Chile who lived in an orphanage, teaching them photography. I have the experience and the technical ability to connect these photographs from one country to the next through the Internet or through the people that I know in my circle, who know other people that can pull people in that can purchase the photographs, where the money can go back to painting their orphanage and doing a whole beautification project. That’s a beautiful thing, and that’s kinda how I saw myself as an ambassador too.

When I think about that as an ambassador, I feel really proud because I’m going to these countries and meeting these people; or I have, and I want to leave them with a good impression of what it means to be White and American and I do that because of the time that I spend there, because of the initiative that I take to learn their language and speak the way that they do, to joke with them, to share my experiences, and listen to them, to take a photo and come back and give it to them; all these little things.

I was volunteering for Sojourner for a brief amount of time, the women’s domestic violence center, and I was filing one day for them, and all the women’s names were Latina. It was like, Maria, Josephina, Valentina, and so I just asked someone there, “If you’re an illegal”—cause I was also working at Jóvenes—“and you’re a female and you’re in a domestic violence situation, can you come here to get help?” Sojourner doesn’t turn anybody away. The answer is yes. If you’re being beaten on the East Coast in your house, wherever you’re at, you can take a bus out here to Arizona, and if they have a bed, they’ll accept you, which is unbelievable that America can do that, that the program can do that. Would it be the same if I was in a domestic violence situation as an American living in Guatemala? If I was in Juarez taking photographs and something happened to me, would the police find every bone in my body, or say, “Oh, no, this is her femur bone,” but it’s from another person and they’re covering something up? It’s just very interesting. I’m not saying that the United States is legit one-hundred percent, but we’re able to run those

programs and we have certain things in place, and they're afforded to different people of different cultures, but it's hard for them to do that over there.

Brandy's story

"I think Whiteness in a lot of ways is this kind of amalgamation"— Brandy's thoughts on how she understands and experiences Whiteness.

In a lot of ways I think Whiteness is this kind of piece of identity that, for me at least, I don't have to think a lot about. It just kind of surrounds me, and creates this little protective bubble in terms of how I maneuver in the world and how the world responds to me. Historically, I mean this is part probably what I have been thinking about in looking at your questions, is that I hadn't really thought that much about it until I started working with young people around issues of race and watching high school students being asked to do things like create a cultural presentation. They were like, "What's our culture?" I knew about White privilege and I knew from my schooling, but to actually have to sit with a group of young people and help them kind of articulate what it is.

I did a lot of work with an anti-oppression organization, and so we would bring groups of youths together from all different backgrounds, but I would work specifically with the White youth, because we would pair up adults who had similar identity. For a long time, I was like, "I don't want the White kids, I don't wanna work with them, they're a pain, they're annoying, they don't get it." I was very frustrated, and that same kind of thing of how do I even get them to think about Whiteness, because they would struggle with it, and then they would start feeling guilt. Also in some ways it kind of perpetuated sometimes their racial divisions, because then they would start to see people who faced oppression feeling great sense of pride in their cultural traditions and their own sense of identity, and here were these youth who were like, "We don't have that; that sucks," and "Poor me," instead of thinking about their own empowerment as a White person.

In a lot of ways being White wasn't apparent to them. What we would try to do is tie that back to racism, and this kind of structural hierarchy of race. For them, actually we could use it sometimes to illustrate why racism is harmful also to White people. That took a lot for them to get; that was a lot for them to process. Even just kind of sitting and like, "Oh my god, I don't have a culture, that feels really yucky," not even knowing their ancestry, or identity, or any of that. It's just been, for most of them, really erased. They also would start to feel—it was harder, because they

would start to feel the amalgamation. There might be a Greek youth who grew up in a family where there was a real sense of tradition, or depending on if the Jewish youth wanted a Jewish group or wanted to be part of the White group. Sometimes there would be youth who were White-identified who did have a sense of culture. Then it created this, “Well, how does this happen?” It’s hard even for me to think in terms of how all that works, and who got to hold on and who didn’t, and how did that happen, and what does that mean for our own identity?

I think Whiteness in a lot of ways is this kind of amalgamation of things. I also know historically, cause I did some research on knowing over time how former groups got incorporated into this idea of who is White. There’s a book called *How the Irish Became White*. The Irish were actually in the same category as African Americans for a long time, until this kind of political, I think, and economic force created this sense of Whiteness. It’s a way of kind of erasing any kind of identity among people who could create a collective power, I think.

Having done all of that work in the south, the southeast, the deep south, we spent some time with some of our museum curators there, cause we would do a lot of programming around racial identity. There was this one curator who I loved, because he kind of showed the progression over time of how people started to align politically in the south along lines of class. There was a whole media campaign, as much as there was media then, but kind of a whole campaign, a very color-based race campaign that then divided the working class folks along lines of race. It kind of created even the idea of race. That was what he helped the youth and me start to see: then there was this sense of like our skin color, or something that we have that’s Whiteness, is more what we have in common, and we should align along those lines, because people in political power were fearful that the working class folks would boot them out. He showed us evidence from the political campaigns and stuff over time, which was fascinating when you think about that in terms of the construction of Whiteness.

“If you understand historically what your face brings in the room, and just being really aware of that, and having some humility”— Brandy talks about being an ally.

There are a few things that I know influenced me quite a bit in terms of being an ally. One was the school system of New Orleans—the school system there is very interesting, because public school system, at least when I was there before Katrina was really where people went who couldn’t afford anything else. It was mostly working class folks and

People of Color. There was this whole Catholic school system that where even people who weren't Catholic, like if you can scrape up enough money to pay that tuition that was where you put your kids, cause the school system was seen as being so bad. My mom just felt really strongly about wanting to invest in public schools. I remember her taking a stand about that, and I think even now my dad teases me, because he says even within the public schools you were still stratified, cause there were different levels just like there are now. I think that investment and the exposure to lots of different kinds of people and different backgrounds in terms of race and ethnicity and class, that was one thing that I think certainly influenced me.

The other thing that she did: we grew up in the church, in the Episcopal Church, and my mom was really big on getting us involved in service. I don't even know where we were, this must've been even before we lived in New Orleans, cause we lived in Atlanta before that, and Orlando before that, and Mobile before that. We had sister churches downtown, and I remember my mom would go regularly to serve at the soup kitchen that a predominantly African American Episcopal church in downtown New Orleans ran. We would go with her and either help or just hang out or whatever. I'm also aware of how that investment that my mom made in wanting to bridge and not being scared—because in a lot of ways, people that I was around in terms of being in the suburbs of New Orleans were scared of going into town. That certainly made an impression on me, and to watch her going as a partner; it wasn't like a patronizing—cause I mean they were runnin' their own soup kitchen. We went in and they told us what we needed to do. The pastor was African American. It was like “This church has really got it goin' on; they have this great mission service, so we're gonna go and be part of that.” Everybody that was there serving from within that church was African American. It wasn't like we were making those decisions or anything.

I've also had a series of mentors. It's been really interesting, such an interesting journey, where people were in my life at exactly the right place and the right time, that really kind of helped me keep moving forward and not get stuck. One that I've been thinking about recently is a woman named Makena who ran the anti-oppression organization that I worked for. She's rather amazing; she is of Kenyan descent, but also—well, I guess she would identify as African, but she technically is bi-racial and grew up in England, and was part of the Pan-African movement globally. That's how she met her husband, and then somehow got to Charlotte. Being trained in that movement and brought up—in high school she joined the movement, and was brought up and trained by people who are internationally known activists. The way she viewed the world, and how she would help me to think about and challenge myself, but not in a way

that made me feel like I was a bad person. We had never met, and she had just gotten this job. Something happened one night with the youth and so all of us, the staff, were trying to figure out how to deal with that the next day in terms of programming and how we should shift it. Whatever happened that night, we were suddenly great friends, and stayed friends for a long time.

Then when a position came open she came and asked me, “Would you come and work for me?” She was moving into being executive director. She was always really just great at being able to help me think about how to help the youth move forward, and to own my own stuff and probably most importantly, what it meant to be an ally. That’s why I think this is so interesting, because I think people struggle with that a lot. At the same time that I was working there I was doing a lot of activism with the LGBT community, and she was really interested in positioning our organization as an ally organization within that community that was just forming. We would have lots of conversations and she always said that allies need to take their direction from the community or from the group of people that they want to be allies to and for. She would never want to come in and create an agenda, unless it was an agenda about how to work with other allies. We talked a lot about that in terms of how that looks along lines of race or gender or class, and we set up all our programs that way. We tried to train our youth, because youth with privilege often would come in and be like, “I’m your ally, and here’s what I’m gonna do.” We tried to help them understand that that really wasn’t—where they do have power and privilege is with their own group, and if they wanna do that work that’s really where the work needs to be done. If they wanna do something with the community that they’re trying to be an ally for they really need to take direction from that group.

And I remember having a conversation with Makena about a situation at our work that involved some racial tension within our staff. She and I had started having this conversation about okay, we’ve gotta model what we’re preaching, and what we’re trying to teach young people. We had a White-identified administrative assistant, and in terms of her behaviors—and totally not conscious of it at all, cause she had this wonderful intention and great heart—her behaviors and who she gave respect to, I think, in terms—and authority to, was race-based. We could tell through patterns, and it was making some staff really frustrated.

Makena and I had this conversation, how do we do this? We decided we were gonna bring in some outside folks to facilitate us, instead of trying to facilitate this ourselves. She said to me, “And here’s the role that I need you to think about in terms of how you’re gonna best help her, because you’re best positioned in this team to help her. It may not happen in that

training, cause it may be that she—she may respond really well to this, but she may really not with all of us there. I want to know that you're gonna be okay with taking on that responsibility." That was really helpful. She always did it in a really nurturing way, and having somebody think through ahead of time, instead of putting you in a place where suddenly you're confronted with it and you're not sure how to respond.

Prior to that, I knew it consciously, in terms of I could rationalize through it, but to actually have her help me think about what it means to take that responsibility. She just was really good at modeling that, because she recognized that she didn't have a lot of places of privilege in terms of her identity, but the places that she did, she modeled what she hoped other people would do as allies, which was really nice, cause then I could see that. I think she also gave me a space to really vent because there were a lot of times where I would try to take on that role and be like I can go into this room with all these White power players, and I'll be that voice and try to figure out how to push them on these issues. I would come back from those meetings sometimes just totally wiped out, and just pissed, and she would just let me vent. Then she'd be kind of back in the game, kinda speech, like, "All right, I get it, but what's the word, let's keep movin'," which was really nice.

There's a lot about our relationship that I see in Lorena and my relationship, of just lots of listening and affirming, and being able to ask questions, like, "I really don't get this; help me understand it from your perspective." I can't actually imagine Lorena having a friend, a White friend that wouldn't—a real friend that wouldn't be able to engage around those issues. I'm not totally surprised [*that Lorena identified her as a White ally*], but certainly that makes me feel good, that I'm at least doing something right in that area. I learn from her all the time and it's great, because sometimes—she also is really good at reminding me when we have discussions that not every person has a similar position, even within the same racial or ethnic group. Sometimes I make assumptions—I actually am more radical than her in some instances around issues of race. What I mean by that is I chalk things up sometimes even more than she does to systemic racism. If we're talking about a student I might give them more leeway in terms of thinking about what might this mean in terms of the impact of racism on them and their experiences and how they're able to maneuver through school than she is. She helps me to understand that culturally some of that is about individual vs. collective. I think I learn a lot, and she reminds me of that which is good.

Lorena and I were in the MSW program together, and you're sitting in classes with people and you start hearing people talk and knowing what people are working on and how people present themselves. You start to

align with people that you know have similar views, but also are there for the same reason. I think she and I both recognized that there was a certain seriousness about what we were really wanting to learn, like really get the stuff and really do some serious work and I like the way that she presented her ideas in class. She's incredibly insightful, and always really thinking very critically about things. She's also not afraid to say if she thinks something different, or even to say, "I don't really understand how all this connects; from my view I see it differently."

Then we did our internship at the same place. My mentor at the time—cause I was also learning the law in that program—is still is one of my mentors. She's very passionate about social justice, and she really, really understands these issues and really pushed us as students to think about them. At the same time I had gotten linked into the Intergroup Relations Center, which no longer exists out here. I was a facilitator. I participated and then I was trained as a facilitator, and then did some other programs with them. My mentor and I were working on a model to take into neighborhoods, cause we were really interested in the idea of taking it to a neighborhood that was traditionally very White. There were a group of people who were there who were retired and older White couples, but Latin American families were moving in, and there was this kind of tension in terms of language barriers and racial and ethnic barriers. We wanted to try this out, and actually did do a little mini-pilot of it. It was fabulous, cause they ended up building a community-based project out of it and doing a cleanup together, which was really cool. I was learning a lot and being trained in that and kind of really questioning, thinking about my own stuff, and then in classes, and I think then going into our internship, taking those issues in. Lorena was working in communities where race and class dynamics were all over the place and really processing through that stuff and finding people who we could safely do that with, and who would push us to grow and think outside the box, but also were that safe place to just vent and be pissed and whatever. Then this was the work, and you just keep going.

You asked me a question about what I've seen people do that is not helpful in terms of being an ally. I think that making space for a White ally to understand that it's necessary—you know that book *Why Do All the Black Kids Sit Together at School*—those spaces are important and being able to honor that but at the same time building enough of a bridge and having patience and determination to build trust. I don't think you should just be able to go in and say, "Trust me, I'm here to help," and expect that people are gonna be jumping up and down and doing a cheer. If you understand historically what your face brings in the room, and just being really aware of that, and having some humility. I don't think White people are taught this at all.

That's the thing with the young people. We did these whole programs around reprogramming, cause their history classes in school were so whacked. Re-teaching them history, and why people feel the way they do. Even re-teaching what's happening around them, because we would have students share with each other experiences of walking into a store and being followed, and what that meant, what that felt like, and what that would do to their sense of self. For students to just sit and listen, and to understand that their world is not just how they experience it. They don't get that in school at all. I didn't, either—trying to make spaces where people can kind of sit and think about those things, but having some historical context to it. Maybe again, back to humility; I think some of it is just knowing that you don't know, and being okay with that, that it's not an ego thing.

“Social work faculty are scared of addressing it.”—Brandy talks about her thoughts on Whiteness and social work education.

I think that social work faculty are scared of addressing it [Whiteness]. They're predominantly White. I've been to a couple of schools who've gone through the hiring process and they're desperate for candidates who identify as anything other than White. Even just structurally, I know in terms of our education system from the lowest to the highest that people don't have access to that level of education, so it's really limited. What that means in the classroom is that it's gonna be mostly White faculty having to address things like White privilege and Whiteness, and even just putting a name to it.

I think some faculty address Whiteness in the classroom but overall it's not dealt with. I think we talk about cultural competence, whatever that is. It doesn't always include that systemic kind of structural piece, and that's unfortunate. Because we've broken into like this micro- macro- thing, then it's really easy for people to say, “Well, that's macro.” This goes back to what I was talking about: to have this historical context and the systemic contexts, that is so integral to your understanding of your own sense of self and your interactions with other people. You can't separate those out.

I think we've lost a lot of those roots of social justice and where we really started, and in the settlement houses of the community and the people really deciding what the work should be, and having at the same time a support group about whatever, and an advocacy group about changing some labor law right there in the same house. We don't have that anymore, very often. In terms of cultural competence and Whiteness in

social work pedagogy, I see a shift: one is this learn about the cultures so now you have some idea, even though we all know that they're lots of variety within each culture. That takes away this kind of political economic—the formation of Whiteness really is very different from culture. That's not really what culture is. To take it out of its context I think is unfortunate. Then it just kind of—there's all these cultures, and then there's Whiteness, which is not even acknowledged, right? It's all the otherness.

That's one thing that I think is unfortunate, and even the idea that people could be competent I think is—in terms of use of language and the discourse of it, is really problematic. I'm also struggling a little bit with the evidence-based practice thing. When I taught research methods I had them read a research article and have them talk about how they might you use this with certain client groups and what potential biases are there. They have a really hard time with that, cause I think there is still that kind of positivist lens of: the researcher is invisible and totally objective. The only thing you critique is the design or the sample, and I find that really problematic.

There's a couple of skills that I think every social worker needs, and they need to be able to learn how to have respectful dialogues. We do in every class I teach. I think in terms of assignments, or if I'm getting them to think critically about something, I always want to know how does this relate to race, class, gender—embedding these issues in everything we talk about. The interesting thing is then how you balance that so that students don't feel like their whole world is crumbling around them. You hear people come in thinking they know what social work is, and these kind of givens that then get called into question. That's stuff we need to be able to struggle with, and help our students struggle with.

Karen's story

"I'm a Heinz 57."—Karen's thoughts on Whiteness and racial identity.

I met Carol through The Walk to Emmaus which is a nondenominational Christian retreat and just kinda hit it off. Just in the process of—I think there's times—we all have things that we do. I'm a smoker. I'm not a heavy smoker, but I'm a smoker, and Carol's a smoker. When we would be out, and then you just start conversation and have become very close friends. I don't know what it means to be a White ally other than to me you're saying that I'm just who I am.

I'm White but I'm pure at heart, that what you see is what you get. Who was it? Somebody said I never met a—Will Rogers—never met a stranger

I didn't like. I tend to be that way with people. Very few people when our life paths cross have I ever just assumed who they were, what they did. The coverings that we have don't matter to me. You get to know them without making judgments because she's Black or because she's short or because she's heavy or because somebody's got one eye that looks north and one that looks south. You get to know people and their hearts not the shell. I think just the commonality was Christianity and that we just sat and visited. I can't say exactly if there was something that clicked, if there was something special about her, you just talked and got to know each other.

When I think of what Whiteness is, I think of segregation. I think of the Civil War. That was sad that we had to go through that. That people were the way they were. The White people thought they were somebody special. I have mixed genes. The strongest gene I have is American Indian—Mattole. I'm on the Bureau of Indian Affairs official roll call. When you're filling out paperwork, if you can mark White/American Indian, those are what I will mark because I am White, but that is the history I've got. If you could go on my mom's side of the family it's Irish-English-Welsh. It's all Europe, right. How they ever got here I'll never know. I'm a Heinz 57. My tribe was Mattole and it's a very small tribe that lived at the mouth of the Mattole River in Northern California. Because I can prove and know that my Indian heritage and know what my family went through, so I'm very proud of it. They were massacred and it's quite a tale. They just hunted fished and farmed and peacefully lived in their own little place. In fact, the tribe has gotten so small that there's three tribes, the Mattole, the Bear River, and the Wiot who've all gone together now and have one council.

There's a reservation but it's not like here where they've got reservations and the Indians are there. I mean, there's land, there's some Indians that live on the land. Looks just as poverty-stricken as any place else when you drive through reservations. What's really interesting is we assume it's poverty-stricken, but if you go back and you learn the history of the American Indians, they lived in harmony with nature. Having a groomed yard and all this stuff was not a priority in their life. They lived simple lives and were very mobile.

I was raised in the '50s when Black and White was Black and White. The connection with Carol I think was just really a connection of heart because, like I said, I don't see her as Black. I don't see her, whatever tags that people would put on her. She's just Carol. She's just another human being.

Karen's thoughts on "racial"/racist issues.

I think it's really sad that there's still so many racial issues. It just is. It makes my heart really sad. I'll turn the news off because it's just what can I do about it? I don't know. Now I've got a friend I grew up with that lives back in Chicago. There was one Black family where we grew up and she was just part of the community. Well, Bev grew up in the same age, same class as I did and stuff. She's very racial [*I clarify with Karen that she is using the term "racial" interchangeably with "racist"*] now just because of what she has to deal with. Because where she's living the Black think they're better than the Whites, and it's just ugly and it's sad. Bev's very racist. She wants nothing to do with Black people. I mean, she will literally if they're coming down the sidewalk, she'll step off the sidewalk and let them go by.

Up until I was in high school my grandmother would not say that we were American Indian. When she was growing up—Grandma was born in 1895 or 1905. It was early enough that the area where she grew up there were still people—probably like racist people with the Black and White issues now was with American Indians. Her dad said if anyone ever knocks on the door and asks—because they would come say what nationality are you, we're doing census or something. If you were American Indian they'd shoot you. You'd say you were French-Canadian to account for the cheekbones and the nose and the features that would want to make someone think that you were American Indian. She grew up in that fear. Even though verbally within the family we knew we were American Indian, but she would not say it to anybody else or put it on paper because she grew up with that fear as a child.

We never discussed how my mom's family felt about her marrying an American Indian but I grew up, we were all within probably five, six miles of each other. The nucleus family of the '50s weren't as mobile and moved away from home like we do now. But they accepted my dad. My parents met because dad was friends with people that grew up—I called them Aunt Dee and Uncle Ray, but they're not blood aunt and uncles. They're, in fact, closer probably than some blood family. They ran what was called the Sweet Shop which was an ice cream soda fountain back home, and my mom worked for them. Well, Uncle Ray and my dad were like brothers. Him and my dad were best friends through school. My dad went in to get a soda or, I don't know, ice cream or something, and my mom was working there.

In fact, the issue of my parents' marriage was actually with my Indian grandmother. Because of her fear of letting someone know. Because she was raised with that fear as a child that you don't tell anybody we're Indians for fear of being shot or being killed. My grandmother looked very Indian, my dad a little less. I've still got the nose, and I'm the only

one. I didn't like this little piece on my nose, and I often thought about getting it taken off. Well, now that's who I am. I'm proud of that little—it's not the prettiest, but that says a lot.

I guess it's kinda funny, and I don't know if it's gonna help you. I don't see racial. I don't feel racial. I am just who God created me to be. I'm just me. You are you. Carol is Carol. Like I said, the package on the outside I guess I don't even consider it. That's like what we're talking the other day about, now there're gay people. The lady next door's son came to visit, and you could tell he was gay by looking at him. After he left she goes, well, you know he's gay don't ya? I said, "So?" She goes, well, he has had some bad experiences. I said it doesn't matter to me. He is who he is and he's your son. We're all different. We're all made different. There's none the same.

Between being raised, and then finding God in my life in the church, I think just enforced more that I was probably raised more in a Christian family than I ever thought I was because of acceptance. Even though my family was not an active Christian family. We didn't go to church every Sunday and do all these things, but it's just kinda all rolled together that—and probably part of my grandma's fear that was shared with us. You grew up knowing—see and that's funny cause being raised in the '50s there was a lotta things you saw or heard but you never questioned. You didn't ask. We were quieter. Part of it is just I think I've grown up just that you accepted it because that's the way it was then.

Racism today, it makes me really sad. That people just can't accept people for who they are, take time to get to know people. People in, you will find, or I have, in the West Valley, Buckeye, the good-ole boys, that area tend to be more racist on that side of town. It would be like that because we have a Black President now, they have no respect for the man, nothing. Or they will use the old derogatory dumb N word. I'll get e-mails from them and I just write back and I go you know I don't like this, I don't want it. Like when they talk about President Obama, that's our President. I don't care if he's green, he's President of the United States. I was born that you respect that office and the person that's got it. I can disagree with him 'til the cows come home or I can agree with him. It's not up to me to like him or dislike him. He's my President.

I don't get loud, belligerent vocal. I will just say I don't accept this, and please don't send it to me, don't say it to me. They all know how I feel. It seems like they respect that. Every now and then they'll forget. The words will come out, or they will send an e-mail or refer to something. I just go, John—he's a really, really good friend, and he's just one that I'll pick on and use his name. I'll say, "You know I don't like it." Just by

being open and honest and letting them know that—they're still awesome friends. We do great things together. They do wonderful things for their community.

Well, you run into it [racism] not just with friends. You run into it every now and then. If there is an opportunity that I can open my mouth, but it's not to preach, it's just to flat out say, "This is 2012, grow up!" Most people accept me for who I am because if they get to know me—and that's just the way I am. I'm just gonna say it and go on about what I do. No one's ever punched me in the nose, so I guess I'm okay.

"It's about respect."—Karen's thoughts on being an ally.

I've never really had a deep conversation with them about it. Other than just saying it doesn't matter who this person is and to be able to use President Obama now is a good example that it doesn't matter. The respect for either a job like President or respect for your elders or respect for the teachers in the school—that was somethin' really strong that we grew up with. If adults were sitting in a room talking, and unless there was a death or something, you could walk in the room, and you stood at the side and you didn't say a word until you were acknowledged. You didn't come running in and just scream and yell or run through their conversation like you see things nowadays. It could very well be that this has something to do with racism today. Because if we don't have respect for each other how can you have a friendship conversation that if you say the sky is green, okay, that's your opinion. I'll accept it. In my eyes it's blue. Everybody's got an opinion, but it doesn't always make you right.

"Sowing the seeds."—Karen talks about how to teach about being anti-racist.

I don't know how you'd teach it. I think if I teach it I'd teach what I live by, example. If you're trying to teach or do something and you don't live it, it's not true, it's not real. I think, of when we talk about allies. It's not just something one does, it is what one is. You're authentic and you are who you are. We can change but how we change—I guess, change would be one at a time, if you can change one person. If I could get somebody out in that Buckeye group, just one that would be great. Like I said, I keep sowing my seeds and my fertilizer, and someday maybe it'll be okay. It would be nice in a perfect world.

How did I not take on those racist ideas of my time? It probably goes back to my parents raised us to respect everybody, not just your elders, mostly your elders, but it was you respected people. You were polite. You were kind no matter what. That's just the way it was, but yet I know being raised that way, that's not how all people in the '50s were raised

because a lot of people were very black and white. It's interesting cause I'd get in loving conversations with my mother-in-law. She's Norwegian. She'd say somethin' about well, "savage American-Indians da, da, da, da, da." I go, "Yeah, the Vikings that came and pillaged and raped and stole and that's history." She mighta been a little bit racist towards Indians because they had problems in South Dakota with uprisings. Oh, what was that thing that was in the hills? Was that in the '60s? There again, you're gonna say that the Indians are all this way. Well, the Norwegians were all this way. No, and then we laugh and walk off and go on. It was just that banter but never really sat and hammered it out. Didn't need to.

I'm thinking that in really teaching how to be an authentic ally, one has to already be one themselves. If you've got a class of twenty people, and you get just one to start to grow. Well, it'd be like a plant. You plant a seed for this plant and this plant and this plant. They're gonna take different amounts of water, direct sunlight, not direct sunlight. Some are gonna take strong fertilizer. Some are gonna take a little. You're gonna have students that are gonna sit there with these big block walls up that maybe don't want to change, don't want to be there. You gotta figure out how to chisel away at the bricks. Where's the knob to even open the door, to crack it to see, to figure out—quite a challenge, girl! It's just like raising your children. Each child is different. What works for one doesn't always work for the other.

Part Five

My own self-narrative threaded together in the evolving life story about race

I am struck by some of my reactions to the interviews with the White allies.

One of the first things that jump out for me is the variation among these three allies. This variation challenges my own assumptions that there is a uniform approach to being an anti-racist White ally and creates the possibility that there may be a spectrum of the ways in which White allies can perform anti-racist work. For example, there are aspects of Lila and Karen's performance of allies that appear to take a "color-blind" approach in their understanding about how to be a White ally. To varying degrees they both talk about seeing people beyond their race. Karen's ideas about color blindness are much more prominent than

Lila's in that she repeatedly emphasizes her approach to experiencing people as more than their physical appearance and making "connections of the heart." I found that during these interviews, my "critical voice" kept popping up for me. My critical "theorist-self" struggled with the need to dismiss Karen's thoughts as naïve. And yet, here she was, identified by a Person of Color as a White ally.

I challenged myself to remain open during my interview with Karen. I began to wonder if there are degrees of being a White ally. Might there be a spectrum of anti-racist identities where it's possible to have "super" White allies as well as "sort of" White allies with variations along this spectrum in between these two extremes? Does this have implications for how we teach about doing anti-racist work? Is being a White ally a fluid and dynamic process rather than a fixed one where either you are or you're not? Or does that really matter? This line of thought illustrated for me my own binaried assumptions about anti-racist work. I had just assumed that what one Person of Color would need in a White ally would generally look similar for all People of Color, aware now of my own internalized essentialized thinking about White allies.

I began to consider how Karen's "connections of the heart" and Lila's "ambassador" identities shaped their relationship with Carol and Alejandro. Apparently Carol and Alejandro resonate in some way in how Karen and Lila perform their allied-ness. Perhaps the resonance between these People of Color and their allies has more to do with the concept of authenticity. This notion of authenticity came up in many of the interviews.

Across both groups of participants, several people directly discussed the ideas that anti-racism is intrinsic to who a person is as part of their personality and make up as a human being. I wonder if this authenticity trumps our flaws in the actual performance of anti-racist work. Does intention count in how People of Color experience White allies? And if so, in what ways? In other words does Karen and Lila's color blind philosophy take a back seat to their intrinsic and heart felt commitment to being an ally even when it's not a perfect approach? And what would a perfect approach really look like in practice? Is this even possible? The skeptic in me wonders, can we really teach people within the formal and constraining school structures to develop intrinsic anti-racist identities or is it something that just happens along certain White people's paths of life?

One of the other themes that seemed to come through in various ways among all of the participants is this idea of "presence" and being present for and with each other. Some used words like "in the trenches" and "having my back" or "really listening" to each other. As I re-read my transcripts, I simultaneously listened to the recordings and I began to wonder about our ability as teachers and students to create classroom spaces where we are fully present with each other and the need for this intimacy when tackling issues of racism within the frame of healing. I thought back to something I wrote earlier in the dissertation about using a "witnessing" approach to anti-racist work and what it would mean to have a classroom space that allowed us to "bear witness" for each other as we progress in our abilities to connect with experiences beyond our own. The skeptic

in me also wonders about how our formal institutions of learning would receive the notion of learning using our emotional as well as cognitive selves.

The stories presented by all of the research participants were contextualized within spaces of emotions. I have been moved to tears by some of the stories recollected by the participants. I feel amazed that they felt they could share these stories with me and this openness gives me pause as I wonder what it was that enabled this level of sharing. It almost seems to me as if there is this collective need for public spaces that would allow us to bear witness for each other, the pain and trauma that racism has caused as an integral part of undoing racism.

When Esperanza shared her painful story about the multiple racist aggressions against her within the space of a few hours at the conference she attended, I thought, this is the reality of racism that White people don't understand. It was one racist aggression right after another: White professor ignored her as she held the door open for him, same White professor ignored her again a few moments later in his introductions, White colleague who misunderstood White professor's actions as "hurting Esperanza's feelings" rather understanding the his behavior as dehumanizing to Esperanza, and culminating with Esperanza's being mistaken for a waitress as she's coming back from the bathroom because of her brown skin—all within the space of a few hours! How do we create spaces for White people to understand these contemporary manifestations of racism today? And should People of Color have to re-experience those traumatic experiences as the only way for White people to

become educated? And even when they/we become educated, what if White people chose to turn the other way even when we know better? These questions have profound implications for teaching about anti-racist work.

I found myself incredibly intrigued by Alejandro's idea that we need to reframe racism and "un-victimize People of Color." This resonates with Trina's notion of White people not being the "savior" where People of Color are "rescued" from their circumstances. Their comments make me realize why this work of anti-racism is so hard. I was reminded of all of the times that I have heard White people express their trepidation in doing anti-racist work for fear that they'll "offend" someone by doing "it" wrong (whatever "it" is). Wouldn't it be so easy if we could just come up with a recipe and say, "Okay my fellow and sister White people, this is how we do anti-racist work." It makes me wonder about teaching and learning spaces that allow us to experiment with each other and to find our own unique ways of enacting anti-racist work. Inherent in this work I think, is to help White people to build emotional muscle that this work requires. From the stories shared in this study about racism, it is clear that living life in a racist world requires a great deal of emotional muscle by People of Color. It seems to me that the project of undoing racism also requires White allies to match that courage.

In this chapter we have spent some time getting to know the research participants. In the next chapter, I turn to a more traditional analysis of their ideas in the context of social work pedagogy. You'll notice in the next chapter that some of the points of analysis parallel some of the main ideas shared in this

chapter. You'll also notice that some of the quotes from participants are used in each chapter. This was intentional. There are a few quotes that felt important enough to look at twice. I first wanted to present the ideas of the research participants without an authoritative research voice standing over them before I contrasted and compared their ideas with my own and that of other scholars.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

“I can’t help but dream about a kind of criticism that would try not to judge but to bring...an idea to life; it would light fires, watch the grass grow, listen to the wind, and catch the sea foam and scatter it. Criticism that hands down sentences sends me to sleep; I’d like a criticism of scintillating leaps of imagination. It would not be sovereign...it would bear the lightening of possible storms.”
(Foucault, 1997, p. 323)

And the conversation continues...

This research project was born out of a desire to rethink and expand upon the current approaches to teaching about diversity and cultural competence in social work education. I began to ponder the ways in which an anti-racist framework might offer new ways of thinking (and teaching) about cross-cultural and allied social work practice. I suggested that social work educators might want to intentionally challenge and question our current paradigms in the ways that we teach about things like race and racism by including a paradigm of Whiteness. In formulating a definition of Whiteness, I used ideas put forth by Michael Eric Dyson that he articulated in an interview in the book *White Reigns* (1998) by Kincheloe, Steinberg, Rodriguez, and Chennault. In this interview, Dyson suggested that in order to fully understand the complexity of Whiteness, it should be contextualized as an identity, an ideology and an institution.

One of the ways I resist a Whiteness approach in this dissertation itself is by using a polyvocal approach in the production of knowledge. In essence I’m not just *talking* about a counter-Whiteness approach to education but am also *using* a counter-Whiteness approach in my own educative process. I have used

the thread of conversation to tie my ideas together and as a way to resist what often happens in educational institutions where academic voices are privileged over voices rooted in practice and experience. There are several conversations happening in this dissertation. One conversation is carried on between my hybrid academic and experiential selves. Rather than positioning this hybridity as two separate and binaried selves, I positioned them as fluid, interdependent and mutually informing of each other. The conversational actors are Becki the person, Becki the social work practitioner, and Becki the emerging academic scholar and social work educator. In another conversation, I brought academic scholars together with people from my childhood who served for me as scholars on the ground. Both of these groups of scholars have significantly shaped and influenced my educational journey culminating in this dissertation and research project. In that conversation among scholars, I challenged and resisted dominant notions of epistemology, specifically about how and where knowledge is produced. In yet another conversation, the narratives of my research participants are threaded together in an attempt to put them in conversation with each other and the reader.

While not a dramatized life story of a person, I use the principles of life story narrative to introduce a non-fictionalized life story about race. From this life story lens we, "...no longer view the story as a noun, a thing...[it is] regarded instead as a verb, as an activity, a literary experience characterized by a process of construction (by the writer) of deconstruction and reconstruction (by the reader). The reality of the text, therefore, resides within the interaction between the writer

and the reader” (Barone, 2000, p. 247). In constructing this fabric of ideas by my research participants, my goal was not necessarily to find commonalities or differences but rather to juxtapose their ideas next to each other as a way for the reader to find their own meaning within the overarching themes of the research topics of allies, Whiteness, racism and anti-racism.

I want to explain the narrative move I will make in this chapter, as I shift from using life story principles of narrative to enacting life history construction. In life stories, the words and experiences as described by research participants stand alone without any mediation or interpretation from the researcher/theorist (Barone, 2001). Life histories however, are research participant’s stories that are contextualized in some way by social and historical contexts. Proponents of life histories like Goodson (1995) say that “Stories need to be closely interrogated and analyzed in their social context” (p. 90). Lorena might disagree with Goodson on the need for academics to reinterpret her ideas:

The older faculty are real authoritarian, maternal, paternal. They’re gonna teach us because we just don’t know, and we just don’t get it. Whereas, I think, as we move toward the younger faculty, they check in a little more. Or at least with me, they’ll check in and say, “Lorena, I’m viewing it this way, do you think that’s okay?” They see me as someone with knowledge and more of a peer. Whereas the older faculty, it seems like they don’t miss an opportunity to check me or correct me or question the positions that I take. (Lorena)

I also do not agree with Goodson who argues that life stories cannot stand alone precisely for the reasons so eloquently articulated by Lorena. However, in keeping with a non-binariied view of how knowledge is produced, I do see the value in blending elements of these life stories within a broader conversation and

context. And for that reason, like Barone (2001) I have used a hybrid approach in this dissertation. The broader context that I use to analyze participants' narratives is that of social work pedagogy. I do this by treating the research participants as consultants in the context of shaping social work curricular possibilities, particularly as it relates to Whiteness in social work education.

In this final chapter of the dissertation, I attempt to move the conversation forward by creating yet another discussion between myself, academic scholars and my research participants. Social work scholar Stan Witkin (2007) draws from Foucault's notion of "problematization" and the need to "...engage in ethical dialogue" (p. 15). Witkin further describes a problematized conversation as one that:

...privileges inquiry over advocacy...that is instead of defending ideas, interlocutors explore their limits with the aim of enhancing understanding. By working to keep our conversations truly dialogical, we can increase awareness of multiple ways of understanding and how authority operates to favor certain conceptualizations over others. *We begin to notice what (or even that) we fail to notice* [my italics]. We come to understand that through the fluid, interactional, embodied, inchoate, and interdependent process of dialogue we can enlarge the range of possibilities available to us. (2007, p. 15)

Witkin's thoughts here about discourse speak, once again, to a "messy" notion of knowledge production. To have "messy" discourse here in this chapter is a model for new possibilities for classroom discourse as an act of resistance to the current discourse in social work education that tends to shy away from ambiguity and tension. At this point in the conversation, this chapter seeks to do exactly what Witkin proposes, which is to "begin to notice what we fail to notice" (Witkin,

2007, p. 15), to question what we think we know, and to problematize our current thinking about “cultural competence” in social work education.

The context for identifying what we’ve missed in social work education relates back to my reason for conducting this research in the first place, which is to question the current paradigms of social work education about oppression, and more specifically around race and racism and to the possibilities for incorporating Whiteness in our teaching paradigms. Polkinghorne describes what I have in mind when he says:

Narrative inquiries produce a storied description of a practice process carried out in a concrete life space. Unlike theoretically driven research, they do not produce a list of techniques or procedures that are promised to work in every setting. They offer their readers a vicarious experience of how a practice was conducted in a concrete situation. From this the readers’ experiential background is enlarged, their repertoire of possible actions is increased, and the judgments about what might be done in their own practice in similar situations is sharpened. (Polkinghorne, 2010, p. 396)

In this chapter, I am not interested in offering any final “techniques or procedures that are promised to work in every setting.” Rather, I hope to merge the theoretical with the experiential in the hopes that our imagination about new possibilities will be stimulated related to anti-racist social work pedagogy and where ideas by scholars within and outside of the academy are put in tension with each other for new and unexpected ideas to emerge for anti-racist practice and teaching.

More specifically, I am interested in an exploration where postmodern and poststructural ideas are put in tension with each other related to social work education’s relationship with structures of oppression. By doing this, I resist the

structural vs. poststructural conversation. Rather, I am interested in the relationship between the two. Again as I have stated earlier in this dissertation, I contend that we cannot separate out individuals from structures. Structures do not exist without individuals creating and maintaining them. Structures are not fixed and their shift is always influenced by changing human and environmental conditions that interact with them. I am concerned with how theory is practiced in the world rather than with academic debates that are limited within the theoretical realm. I ground this discussion within the complicated space of social work as being both rooted in social change and social control. If we are to have an honest conversation about the direction of social work education, I believe we must acknowledge both of these positions that social workers occupy within the human service industry.

In this focus on praxis, I resist the usual (and very over-simplified) academic debates that seek to position modernism, postmodernism, structuralism, and poststructuralism as the all-encompassing solution to complex problems. Rather, I return to ideas discussed in chapter one of this dissertation where binaried notions of micro vs. macro are reframed in terms of the relationship that exists between them. In these new conversations the goal is to explore, uncover, and resolve confused social work pedagogy that simultaneously teaches social work students to reproduce AND resist structures of oppression. In one pathway for resolution, I want to advocate for a more integrated social work pedagogy that maintains a focus on individual agency and the structural change. To be sure this is a very messy space because it purposely keeps all of us “on the hook” for

solving the problems of oppression in society; social work educators, social workers and our clients. In terms of race and Whiteness, Nicola's experiences with interviewing White people on the topic of race and Alejandro's observations about academia highlight the dangers of oversimplifying the complexity of race:

The thing that was really fascinating about that is like I kind of, I felt bad because my friend helped me out, but like he looked like such a like clean cut, corn fed, Midwestern dude, like just the typical like Whitest White dude ever. I thought, okay, yeah, he's not threatening at all, but the interviews I got from him were just so dull, like just so dead on like question after question after question. He was doing me a favor. I didn't want to go in there and coach him too much about how he should probe or do any of that, but I really made the assumption that the Whiteness would be the biggest barrier. The interviews just weren't that good. They just really weren't, and the students were much more—they told me all kinds of crap that I was just like, man, I really had nothing to worry about. They were very open about their ideas about it, did not hold back. (Nicola)

In academia—I haven't personally experienced this—but I've talked to multiple students where—they're called upon to give the minority perspective. It's like, so we have the standard, right? Now let's look at the other, the foreign. Teachers call on students of color and say, "Can you, as an individual, speak upon the black experience or the Hispanic, Latino experience?" Yet we don't ask White students to speak for the White race because it's the standard. A White person isn't representative of the White experience because it's just the whole, it's the norm. Whiteness is and isn't invisible.
(Alejandro)

Nicola and Alejandro's experiences highlight the fact that we need to move away from pedagogies that oversimplify complex issues. How can one theoretical lens fully explain such complicated and deeply entangled issues like race and oppression? By encouraging this new kind of critical and complicated conversation, perhaps social work educators might grapple with how to move forward from the overly simplistic and mechanistic "cultural competence" models that exist today.

Noticing what I failed to notice...

I offer an example of my own humbling experience as a result of this research project with having to rethink what I thought I knew. I was challenged by what I learned about two of my participants' ideas about race which they saw as fluid and complicated. Alejandro and Karen complicated my own assumptions and bias about how one thinks of themselves in racial terms. What is most interesting is that Alejandro was my youngest participant and Karen the oldest. The fluidity of their self-concepts of racial identity cuts across their generational distance:

I'm from Cuba and my family is very much, like, we're White. I remember, actually, when I got to college and I began to learn about race, ethnicity, and diversity, and all these different things. I would talk about White people—I would say “White and Caucasian.” They'd [his family] be like, “I don't get it, we're White.” I began to see how, generationally, their identity is not my identity. My parents and my grandparents identify as White Cubans. I identify as Hispanic Latino... I don't identify as White. For me, I will say, personally, on the Census under race, I always put for myself either “multiracial” or “other,”... I think it's partly because it doesn't describe my experience in the United States.... I almost want to identify as Black. I see the black community and I find an affinity with them. Even though I never grew up in a black neighborhood, I've never really had many close friends that are black, or African-American, and yet there's something specifically about that community, that culture, that I find myself almost identifying more with black than White. (Alejandro)

I have mixed genes. The strongest gene I have is American Indian—Mattole. I'm on the what do they call it--Bureau of Indian Affairs official rollcall. When you're filling out paperwork, if you can mark White/American Indian, those are what I will mark because I am White, but that is the history I've got. If you could go on my mom's side of the family it's Irish-English-Welsh. It's all Europe, right. How they ever got here I'll never know. I'm a Heinz 57. (Karen)

Alejandro and Karen's stories about how they think of themselves racially blur my own binaried thinking about race. I was particularly struck by Karen whose

European and Native American roots were so equally integrated into her sense of her racial self. She has an acute awareness of the experiences of genocide and oppression perpetrated against the members of her tribe, recounting in great detail her grandmother's fear of identifying her family as Native American for fear of "being shot." Yet, she also fully embraces that aspect of herself that is White and uses her White identity in solidarity with Carol and other People of Color. I have subsequently had to re-think my own binaried way of thinking about racial identity into a more complicated view particularly in terms of the cultural competence approach in social work education that positions race as distinct and fixed categories.

When Alejandro said this about his own racial identity development, "I think it's partly because it doesn't describe my experience in the United States," it caused me to shift from my own oversimplistic thinking about racial identity. I began to wonder about the racial identity development process of his generation (today's college age generation) where culture and race are shaped not just by genealogy but by experiences in the world. And then it hit me! In my binaried thinking about race and racial identity, I had fallen into that trap of Whiteness that mandates the categorization of people's races in order to be understood. When in reality, Alejandro and Karen's stories were reminders of what I thought I already knew—that race making in the United States is socially constructed and dynamic. What a lesson this was for me and cause for me to turn back to an interrogation of how Whiteness still pervades my own thinking!

Dyson's definition of Whiteness begs for a critical conversation that incorporates the underlying influences of dominant social, economic, and political ideologies and hegemony of Whiteness and critical theory offers an expanded view of Whiteness and how it operates within our society. I advocate for a similar critical conversation within social work education. Giroux uses the term hegemony which describes the process by which the public is powerfully indoctrinated into a way of thinking about the world not by force but rather, "mediated via cultural institutions such as the schools, the family, the mass media, the churches, etc" (1997, p. 48). His point is that hegemony often becomes unconscious and is so embedded in our psyche that it takes on a "natural" or "common sense-ness" quality that invests it with such high levels of legitimacy that it goes unquestioned and is generally accepted as universal "truth." Brandy says this about the hegemony of White identities:

In a lot of ways I think Whiteness is this kind of piece of identity that, for me at least, I don't have to think a lot about. It just kind of surrounds me, and creates this little protective bubble in terms of how I maneuver in the world and how the world responds to me. (Brandy)

Brandy notes that her White skin and White identity circulates in the world around her in invisible, yet powerful ways. Her experience gives us a good segue into a discussion about critical approaches to social work education.

Complicating the conversation further with ideas from critical theory...

Critical theory is concerned with un-masking hegemony by questioning these universal truths. Giroux asserts that, "Self-critique is essential to a critical theory" (1997, p. 42). What if we thought about critical social work education as

a blending of authentic allied work with that of critical theory and called it something like, critical allied social work (CASW)? Several of the research participants' ideas seem to allude to this notion of critical allies which offers instruction to social work educators interested in CASW:

Talking with a White person like yourself, it makes me feel like we have someone who's in the majority who has the privilege and is yet acknowledging that conversations need to happen. (Alejandro)

Alejandro contextualizes White allies as those people who don't wait for People of Color to take on this issue of White privilege. Like Alejandro, Trina locates a level of responsibility with people who are members in dominant groups:

I think when a person is making an effort to become educated about something like that [*Whiteness and racism*], I think it's admirable, because what you're trying to do, and this is as far as what I've seen ally is, a person who interrupts the acts of oppression. Coming from a group that is oppressed or is mistreated, you would like to see those from a dominant group come to an understanding, become educated about what that means, about the group itself. (Trina)

Trina's comments remind me of earlier comments made by Alejandro where teachers too frequently ask students of color to speak for their race as a way to educate the rest of the class. Perhaps Trina and Alejandro's insights instruct us to teach White students about how to take more responsibility for educating themselves about racism. Nicola talks about a dynamic in the classroom where she observes students of color sharing their experiences with racism while some White students take on a more voyeuristic behavior and just "consume" what others are saying in class:

People don't understand the kind of baggage that people have about talking about race and those difficult things. It's hard and sharing personal stories about how it's been hard for you and how you dealt with

it, whether you've succeeded or failed, because I think it's freaking hard and not being able to see, oh wow, these people that I admire are also struggling with it, I just think that that really closes people off to the learning process in a lot of ways. I really am very suspicious of people who sort of sit back and just kind of want to consume. It's just like, "Okay, no, you don't have the right to just collect my stories as if you're some kind of butterfly collector," like you have done the hard work to be able to engage with us, like respect what this takes. (Nicola)

Nicola's thoughts illustrate the difficult dialogic terrain of race. For Nicola, it would seem that attention, validation, and engagement in the class is indicated by participation in the discussion. But does it really mean that if a student is quiet that their silence indicates a disengaged position? This reality is something that the teacher must be aware of and plan for in the way that they construct and facilitate these critical discussions. Each of us has different ways of processing information and in how we engage ourselves in classroom conversations. A teacher who understands and validates the diverse ways in which students engage themselves in classroom discussions might plan for this by offering a variety of ways for students to enter the dialogue. Some examples might be the use of small group discussions, dyad discussions, and the use of electronic discussion boards forums. Or it might include artistic avenues for classroom engagement—poetry, music, theatre.

Critical allied social work practice takes on a social action component for

Carol:

When I look back at American history some of the biggest examples of allies we had were Quakers. They did things because it was the right thing to do whether it was providing a service, bringing a meal, holding a hand, whatever, throughout history the role that they played for communities of color. Significant. Particularly what comes to mind is the underground railroads with Harriet Tubman. Along that route, how many of those

homes were Quaker homes, and the backlash that they got because of being involved and saying it doesn't matter what somebody's socioeconomic status is or what their race is or gender. (Carol)

Carol uses Quakers as an example of allies in action. She suggests that part of being an ally is in being courageous and taking action even when there is “backlash” against you. She may even suggest that this “backlash” is a test of one's commitment to being an ally. She also sees Quakers as allies in that they did whatever was necessary to meet the needs of People of Color in their ongoing commitment to social and racial justice. How might these (and other) ideas help inform a critically allied social work pedagogy?

A CASW self-critique within social work education might incorporate aspects of power and privilege and the material and symbolic interests being served by our values and actions. This critical self-critique should also engage a counter-hegemonic approach to the education of social work students that fosters and models resistance to oppression and assimilation. Critical theory seeks to make that which has been rendered invisible, visible, and to challenge dominant views of “natural” and “common-sense” thinking. Alejandro weighs in on this:

Conversations on race, equals conversations about minorities—and it's not the case. Race is race. It's including everyone. It almost perpetuates the idea that the majority is race-less or is the standard, and everyone other than White, right, is some exotic or foreign concept that needs to be dissected....perception is reality. If a society is built on these assumptions of Whiteness, then the majority will prevail, in that sense. What I seem to have noticed is that minorities, right, or People of Color, in this case, will begin to internalize that Whiteness or those perceptions as like, “I need to adopt these cultures,” or American culture is White culture. Right? (Alejandro)

Alejandro observes that White and Whiteness are hegemonized as the invisible and internalized norm. Whiteness is organized on a conscious level to gain social leverage for the purpose of access to social resources. The hegemony, (at all three levels of identity, ideology and institution) of Whiteness is used to persuade non-White groups to accept the existing social structure as right and proper, despite the fact that the existing social structure only directly benefits White people.

Trina's ideas illuminate the vested interest in a Whiteness hegemony:

I think there's this unconscious desire to hang on to the privilege. So as a result of that, I think you hold on to it, and you don't want people interrupting that. (Trina)

Earlier I discussed Arizona's legislation to end ethnic studies programs and it provides an excellent example how the hegemony of Whiteness operates within education. To have an educated and informed brown skinned population is a threat to hegemonic structures of Whiteness.

From a critical social theoretical perspective education should be rooted in resistive discourse that understands curriculum development as a political act. Tension is used to intentionally engage and openly struggle with a vision of what social justice means in both theory and practice. Emily describes her Professor's use of dynamic tension in her diversity class in their discussions on race and Whiteness as an exemplar of CASW education:

I remember when we talked about Whiteness. How uncomfortable a lot of people got angry. Even Black people got angry. White people got very angry and said what they needed to say. Then it was Black people that even got angry that was just like, "leave those White people alone. They didn't, you know that was their forefathers." That kind of stuff. It was just like really interesting to sit back and just watch all of this because really everybody was making good points, but it seemed all jumbled. I

know in the beginning it felt like we weren't going anywhere. That teacher, she was really great. She made sure to bring in a lot of stuff. It was almost like she purposely asked us questions so we kinda were like all over the place, and we just didn't know what we were gonna do. Then she brought in lessons for us, and we had conversations, and she asked the right type of questions to kinda help us bring it together and have more of an understanding and what the goal of the class was. I think that the majority of us got it. I did see a lot of people come together. (Emily)

In this classroom, Emily describes a teacher who was intentional about first destabilizing what her students thought they knew about race and then helped them reconstruct more complex understanding about race. The teacher seemed to use pedagogical strategies of both content and “messy” classroom discourse to help students reconstruct more critical notions of race-making in the United States. Brandy, on the other has different experiences in social work education.

It is important to note that Brandy and Emily have different standpoints in this discussion. Emily earned her Masters degree in social work education about ten years ago and has been a practicing social worker since her graduation.

Brandy also earned her Master's degree about ten years ago, went into social work practice and is now currently deeply involved within social work education as a faculty associate at a large university. She says this about her observations on how Whiteness operates within social work education:

I think some faculty address Whiteness in the classroom but overall it's not dealt with. I think we talk about cultural competence, whatever that is. It doesn't always include that systemic kind of structural piece, and that's unfortunate. Because we've broken into like this micro/macro thing, then it's really easy for people to say, “Well, that's macro.” This goes back to what I was talking about: to have this historical context and the systemic contexts, that is so integral to your understanding of your own sense of self and your interactions with other people. You can't separate those out. (Brandy)

What Brandy points out is that social work education has organized itself around a false binary of, “macro” and “micro” practice. In terms of Whiteness and racism, this split creates the false illusion that direct practice (micro) in social work is somehow separate and unrelated to institutional racism (macro), and that institutions and macro social work practice does not need to deal with the micro influences of racism and Whiteness. Once again, as I have mentioned previously in this dissertation, this macro/micro split suggests that issues of racism are “over there” with “those bad people and places.” This false dichotomy renders us (social workers) as the, “good people” as immune from, and innocent of, racism and Whiteness. What it also does is to reduce the efficacy of a unified social work profession to advance social change at any level of systemic influence. For example, if as a direct practice social worker, I feel that institutional forms of Whiteness and racism are not my terrain but that of “macro” social workers, we remain split as a profession and lose potential power as a unified force in solidarity against racism and other forms of oppression.

Another example of the ideology of Whiteness in social work education is in how we position race itself. Brandy says this about how race is positioned in social work education:

In terms of cultural competence and Whiteness in social work pedagogy, I see a shift: one is this learn about the cultures so now you have some idea, even though we all know that they’re lots of variety within each culture, that little caveat always. That takes away this kind of political economic—the formation of Whiteness really is very different from culture. That’s not really what culture is. To take it out of its context I think is unfortunate. Then it just kind of—there’s all these cultures, and then there’s Whiteness, which is not even acknowledged, right? It’s all the otherness. (Brandy)

Brandy seems to say a few things about the current cultural competence model in social work education. First she points out the over-simplistic approach to culture by essentializing very diverse groups. She also seems to indicate that social work has lost sight of the social, political and economic interests involved in race making in the United States. She speaks to the importance of the inclusion of these material contexts when teaching about race. She also notes that our current cultural competence approach does not address Whiteness in social work education. Once again, the effect is to position Whiteness as the invisible center to which all things not White are “othered.” Brandy’s ideas speak to another issue in social work curriculum related to how diversity content is included in coursework.

When social work curriculum is designed to deal with “all things diversity” in one “diversity” class, it reproduces an “othered” philosophy of difference and locates issues of diversity outside of the rest of the curriculum. Concepts outside of the diversity course are taken for granted as being sanctioned, credible, and vested with authority. Conversely, an allied approach to teaching about issues of difference whenever or wherever it happens (in life or in coursework) is explained by Carol:

What often happens is, as allies, it is about a choice. You can say okay, how do I make it visible? Do I make it visible? I’m tired, I’ve had a long day, but it is about taking that moment and intentionally make it a teachable moment. Because sometimes, somebody may be willing to hear somebody because it’s coming from somebody of difference or because it’s coming from sameness. But if I don’t make the effort, I’m losing that chance to make it teachable so the behavior continues. (Carol)

What if we were to take Carol's idea of "teachable moments" into social work curriculum where we intentionally created opportunities for students to have critical discussions about Whiteness throughout the curriculum, in both micro classes and macro realms? Social work educator Stan Witkin says about a postmodern social work approach:

By raising questions about the warrant for dominant beliefs, exposing their underlying assumptions, and critically examining processes of knowledge generation, legitimation, and representation and their influence on what we know or can know, postmodern scholars have diminished the hegemony of official knowledge and opened new avenues for understanding. (2007, p. 3)

How might we plan our instruction to "out" forms of dominance that have been imbedded in the tools that we use in social work practice? How might we create teaching strategies that pay special attention to: 1) helping each of us to identify our own membership within dominant groups, and once identified, 2) finding ways to use that membership responsibly by become allies in challenging those systems of domination?

Translating critical social work into the classroom...

In beginning to answer these questions, we can use a specific example of a much used course topic in social work education: teaching about mental health. We might begin to construct a critical curriculum on mental health by starting with the "bible" of diagnoses used in the mental health industry. What if we were to interrogate and examine the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) on issues of Whiteness, heteronormativity, gender, class and capitalistic interests in diagnostic categorization of human emotions. How might curricular spaces be developed to

nurture leadership among members of dominant groups to question and challenge dominant systems that have classified, categorized and pathologized all human emotions?

I am reminded of a conversation with a colleague about her frustration with a student who wanted to “diagnose” a five year old child’s emotional distance and anger as “reactive attachment disorder.” This child’s parents had died as they tried to cross the border from Mexico to the United States and the child was now all alone in the U.S and was referred to counseling services for her “behavior problems.” Like my colleague, I wondered what this student had been taught in their social work courses that encouraged him to take such a limited and pathologized view of this little girl. I remember thinking to myself, *She’s a child whose parents have recently died a violent death and is in the care of strangers in a strange country with people who speak a strange language! Who wouldn’t be sad and angry and mistrustful of the world around them!?* Instead of a teaching approach that sought to understand the normalcy of this child’s responses to the trauma in her life, this student was given the message (somewhere in his social work courses) to pathologize the child’s behavior as something “abnormal” and in need of classification. It is a missed opportunity to engage in a more critical pedagogical approach that might have discussed issues of power and control and the human emotional consequences for racist and classist policies of U.S./Mexican immigration as well as the economic interests of a mental health system that needs to label normal human emotions as abnormal in order to get paid by corporate or public funding entities. Using this case as an example, what

harm might we be causing to the future clients of our social work students by teaching them that human emotions have to be understood strictly within the context of categorization, classification and pathology? Instead, we might want to theorize about what a critical social work classroom might look like in practice.

In a critical social work classroom, education might be a reflexive process designed to stimulate learners to meander around new information and then to incorporate this new information by integrating it within their own lived experiential knowledge that also decenters knowledge as something that only the instructor “has.” This de-centered approach is based on the belief that each of us has things to learn and to teach and that we are all co-learners who occupy roles of both learner and teacher. Nicola’s ideas about cooperative and collaborative classroom space seem particularly relevant here:

This one person, I really just was taken with her approach to doing these difficult dialogues, with her approach to really being very able to self-disclose with like—I looked up to her very, very much. I think what she did was she really modeled this very open sort of practice, like this very kind of like I’m going to share—this mutual self-disclosure. She really practiced what she preached. It wasn’t so like she said, “Oh, well, we need to practice mutual self-disclosure, but it’s really just the students disclosing, and me as an instructor I’m still going to keep this sort of hierarchical relationship where I’m not going to actually tell you about the struggles that I myself have faced because I’ve never actually done the work.” Because I think it’s BS to sit there and say like, okay, well, we have to talk about these difficult issues and you [students] have to be the one that’s taken out of your comfort zone as if it’s some kind of punishment, but you yourself [professor] are not going to subject yourself to that sort of practice. That’s bullshit. I just think that that’s really cruel to ask of a student and not be able to model how to do it because the thing is I think people assume that it’s just really easy to share that sort of stuff. (Nicola)

Specifically, a critical theoretical approach would require both teachers and students to be courageous with each other in exploring very scary terrain where we would unpack the ways in which individuals reenact and reproduce structures of Whiteness. In this case Nicola's ally rejected the notion of the "distanced" and "objective" teacher instead opting for an inclusionary teacher/learner position. Perhaps this instructor/ally questioned assumptions embedded within the structures of education about what it means to be a teacher and a student. This questioning is an example of how structures exist both within and outside of ourselves. I purposely use the language of structures of Whiteness because that which goes unacknowledged goes unchanged. Emily highlights the need for these kinds of reflexive conversations around race in the social work classroom:

A lot of even people in my classes when I was in school, didn't wanna talk about race when we brought up those things and the majority happened to be White people. It really made them feel uncomfortable. I think there are some People of Color that didn't know how to deal with that and they were very angry, and it just made the whole class be uncomfortable.
(Emily)

A framework for creating critical social work education and operationalizing that in the social work classroom needs to include an honest and direct conversation about how much of our current practice is rooted in White supremacist thinking and imperialist history.

When I think back to Esperanza's experience with her children's school and their need for her to racially identify her kids on a form that did not provide the racial category that she identified with, I wonder about all of the tools, the forms and the assessments that social workers use with clients, particularly as it

relates to the ways in which Whiteness is embedded in so much of what we take for granted. How many of our clients have felt just like Esperanza?

I'm gonna tell you something that just happened...at school...last week. The administration approached me at my kid's school and said, "Oh Esperanza, we need you to fill out the registration forms again. I said, "Really? Why?" They said, "Well, the federal government--they changed this and that and you need to check these boxes off." I said, "Okay," so I started filling one out and one of 'em said, "Ethnicity: Hispanic, Latino," so I checked it off. Then it said "Race:" and it said, "White, Asian, Black, and Native American." I looked at her and I said, "Hmm," where's the 'Other' box?" She said, "Um, well there's kinda no 'Other.'" I said, "Well,"—parents, White parents were around me, and I said, "Have you looked at my children?" I said, "They're not White," I said, "They're not Black; they're not Asian." I said, "They're more Native American than they are White." I'm not checking off a box if there's no "Other," and she says, "Well, you have to." I say, "Well, I'm not going to, because my kids are not White." (Esperanza)

In order to honestly shift our paradigm we have to "mark" the impact of Whiteness in our profession and all of the ways in which the very behavioral models, parenting techniques, views about "normal" human functioning must be deconstructed throughout social work curriculum. We have to render Whiteness visible and then discuss openly the reasons why it still pervades our profession albeit for many, unconsciously. In whose interests do these mechanisms of Whiteness serve? To illustrate this kind of a questioning process, I turn briefly to the issue of licensing in the profession of social work as an example of how we might engage students in critical discourse about something that we take for granted as an authoritative voice over our practice.

Ideologies of Whiteness in social work institutions...

With the advent of social work licensure, social workers have become increasingly embedded in corporate medical and mental health systems and

structures. This evolving conversation about social work education should concern itself with disrupting the material interests that keep systems of Whiteness intact. Carol gives an example of this investment related to the structure of university leadership:

Just look at this school. As I understand it, even though it has an entire network, has probably—even though we have federal mandates for accessibility, communities of color and expectations around that, from my understanding it's probably less than ten percent of the entire faculty, staff of this school that are communities of color. I'm like what the hell? One of the places that—actually there's two places that's alarming. I can think about the—I call them the board of rejects, but the Board of Regents, and I don't believe there's any communities of color on that Board of Regents. What it begs the question is, how is it that a school this large has an underrepresentation of communities of color and how has it not waved a red flag for EEOC? (Carol)

If we relate Carol's concerns to social work, we might want to interrogate the ways in which our identity as social workers have become assimilated into the dominant, capitalist belief systems about human service work and the ways in which we are increasingly viewing those people who we serve as “consumers.” Metaphorically speaking, social workers have their own “Board of Regents” in the form of the State Licensing Boards who are given the power to make decisions about which social workers are invested with the authoritative power to be granted a social work license. Many states actually require anyone who calls themselves a social worker to have a social work license.

As the social work profession becomes more embedded and “legitimized” by the corporate medical knowledge system, are we increasingly assimilating ourselves into what Marx calls a “distorted consciousness” (Allman 2007) which allows us to distance ourselves from the macro structural conditions that are

largely the creator of the economic systems within which our clients are oppressed? Trina describes the function of institutional and structural Whiteness:

I think Whiteness works on different levels. I mean you see a structural level you have to talk about it in terms of hegemony. It goes back to that term, where there is an invisible hierarchy of sorts in society that Whiteness has a certain privilege and the system's set up that way. Individually you can see it in terms of racism. So in some sense oppression is here at a structural level. Education fits in that larger framework as structural. I don't know if it has its own place because you could always talk about it also in terms of religion or other institutions that could fit in that level. I think it's more structural. (Trina)

In using Trina's lens about the effects of systems of Whiteness being set up to maintain privileges for certain people at the expense of the marginalized, we might ask ourselves, is the profession of social work, by way of our systems of education and licensure, increasingly losing our commitment to critical social work praxis based on social justice and social change? Witkin charges that, "The social work research community has been relatively silent about attempts by the U.S. government to legislate methodology and undermine fields such as indigenous, ethnic, and queer studies that do not assume a traditional scientific worldview (2007, p. 3). Are we allowing ourselves to be co-opted by an ideologically capitalist version of who our clients are, and in defining (and delineating) what our role is in working with clients? As a result, we may become increasingly complicit in the reproduction of systems of inequity and oppression.

Once again, I use the context of social work within mental health to envision a more critically conscious approach. A critical look at the mental health care "arm" of our profession would include an analysis of the dominant views (and subsequent practice) that our clients' problems are pathologically located

within their own individual inabilities to negotiate the world around them rather than understanding their behavior as a coping response to pathologically abusive structures that marginalize and systematically oppress large numbers of people who don't (or won't) assimilate into the dominant White structures. A critical social work course might discuss the material nature of The Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM) as being rooted in a White supremacist view of mental health and the degrees to which it serves the status (Whiteness) quo.

For example, in courses on mental health it would be interesting to study how often (if ever) teachers ever use anything but an Anglo-Eurocentric theoretical and knowledge based approach to understanding mental health and wellness. How might we interrogate the economic and political interests of the DSM as the exclusive and authoritative guide to categorizing someone's mental health. A critical approach might also locate this manual in the specific political, social, and economic paradigms of a White, male, heterosexist medical model paradigm. From a more critical lens, students would be engaged in a discussion about the degree to which social workers reify dominant paradigms every time it is used without any balance or critical thought. An honest discussion would also include a conversation about the ways in which clinical social workers and clinical social work education have bought in to the distorted version of what "normal" is as defined by a White structural capitalist hegemonic system, thereby acting to reproduce this particular system of Whiteness.

In a more general sense, a critical social work discourse would engage in a thoughtful and complex discussions about how we hold on to our social justice

commitment to social change while working for corporatized human service agencies that exploit us, our clients, and our community for monetary gain. Additionally, a critical response within social work education might be to discuss strategies with our students in ways that we can mitigate to varying degrees our resistance in being complicit in this exploitation of clients.

In strategizing with students on how social workers can resist this exploitation, we might want to engage in pedagogy that talks about how to practice social work as an ally to our clients by, "...trust[ing] in the oppressed and their ability to reason" (Freire, 2000, p.66). Carol discusses the dangers of an overly theoretical approach to teaching that is not connected to practice:

There was this White social work professor I had that was teaching a course in diversity and I'm like you could have read it but you haven't applied it from the inside out. They were very awkward in their speech, their encounters with relationships, particularly when their perspective was challenged. Awkward—very awkward. The best way to describe it was they looked like they were skating on thin ice. Both non-verbal, the language that they used was also kind of like—nervous and awkward. Not very comfortable in their own skin. It was one that their sense of feeling authentic came from book knowledge versus real life knowledge. I'm like so you read the book and now you're trying to vomit it up. Here's the real world. Yeah, I wasn't impressed. In fact, it was one I wrote complaints about it to the director at the time. You should have a person teach a class that has some experiences, you know? Not what they read out of a professional journal.

Carol's experiences as a social work student highlight the importance of connecting theory to practice. In the critical social work classroom, we would ground all social work courses within a practical realm, blending theory with practical application and helping students strategically think through the limits

and possibilities for their work in solidarity with their clients that advances social change.

We might position our work as one that balances a “helper” role with one that advocates for an emancipatory role. In our role as “helper,” social workers may inadvertently end up reproducing oppression and marginalization by encouraging our clients to assimilate into dominant value systems. For example, a balanced helper/advocate social work position on poverty would focus on both individual behaviors by clients (micro) that exacerbate their economic circumstances with an emancipatory one in which we advocate for changes in structures that sabotage the success of people who are trying to work their way out of poverty (structural). Again, I advocate for a new and more critical conversation in social work that refuses the “micro OR macro” argument and instead embraces the “micro AND macro” conversation.

In the most recent annual meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE annual meeting, Atlanta, GA, 2011), participants in the audience of the plenary session indicted social work education (and CSWE) for “having lost our way,” and advocated for us to go from “the case to the cause.” They argued that social work has become too embedded in a micro approach to practice and education that is overly focused on individual functioning without attention on structural and environmental impacts on the individual. Emily’s description of a White ally has implications for a critical social work practice that builds credibility and trust with individual clients by taking action against injustice:

Somebody who can be there with you on the front line, that's how I would describe my White ally. When you have somebody that's willing to advocate, and they're willing to show that they're also gonna be there with you. That's how a person shows you who they truly are and how much they're your friend. Because I think that any of us, whether White, Black, whatever, if we see something that's an injustice we should speak up. If you don't speak up about it then it's really like you're just one of those types of people that let life just go be like that for someone else. (Emily)

Emily's definition of ally calls social work educators and practitioners to rethink our perceived limits with clients and again blurs this notion of the micro/macro split. What kind of ally are we if we're not willing to "be there with [clients] on the front line" even as that front line shifts from the micro line to the macro line? How does this notion of work on the "front line" shape the ongoing conversation? And as Karen says,

If you're trying to teach or do something and you don't live it, it's not true, it's not real. I think, of when we talk about allies. It's not just something one does, it is what one is. You're authentic and you are who you are. (Karen)

In a new conversation about social work education we might want to take up the call expressed at the CSWE conference by discussing the tensions and synergies between "the case and the cause," particularly in how we teach students to move fluidly between the two, thereby rejecting the micro/macro binary. In his ideas about radical pedagogy Giroux (1997) calls on us to focus on human agency in the ways in which we understand, make meaning of, and reproduce the dominant and hegemonic conditions. Central to a radical social work pedagogy is the ability to teach students how to create a practice that balances visionary yet realistic strategies from the oppressive and rigid systems while not succumbing to defeatist and pessimistic attitudes where we position ourselves as unable to effect

systemic change. These strategies also need to work at the level of identity in ourselves and our students.

Whiteness at an identity level of social work education...

At an identity level, how do we complicate discussions about race in social work education? I remember a conversation I had with a student in a class where systems of Whiteness were deeply explored. This student decided to focus her final project entitled, “What it is like to work with White people”. In her presentation, she took note of how as a Person of Color, it felt good not be the problem of focus. She expressed in deep detail what it felt like to turn the tables and “to put White people under the microscope.” Lila’s likening of Whiteness to *conquistadores* is relevant here.

One big thing that stuck out from a particular conversation is White people are *conquistadores*. Since that time when we came over, we’ve just flourished, and we take over. I had a conversation with someone the other day about why—what was it? Why America, like the United States, has to be so different than South America? Why? We’re connected; we’re the same land. Why is it that America has just flourished the way that it has and then you have countries south of the border that haven’t? What’s so different? It came from the time where we conquered a certain area. We kept procreating, taking over... (Lila)

We might want to think about the possibility that certain aspects of social work education have become the *conquistador*, the colonizer where Whiteness has “taken over” and reified the “procreation” of ideologies of dominance. How has this conquered and reconquered space served to reify patterns of dominance over communities of color? And what might a revolt of independence look like in a liberated social work pedagogy? I return to the story about my student’s project

on understanding White people as it is instructive in thinking about liberated learning spaces.

What began as a discussion by this student about individual racial identity evolved into a classroom discourse on new understandings of Whiteness. We talked about how Whiteness frames diversity, racism, and oppression as the problem for people of color, thereby leaving White supremacist structures as unmarked and unacknowledged even though they are at the very root of the problem. It was one of the most complex and layered student-led discussions that I have experienced with undergraduate students. Her presentation allowed the class an entryway into their own discourse on unpacking structures of Whiteness in social work education and led into a critical conversation about the increasing dominance of human service industries whose primary focus is on generating capital and profit without any commitment or attention to social change, justice work, or social justice values. The discussion began at the level of identity and then moved into levels of ideology and institution. The students talked about the ways in which human service industries are having an increasing influence on our identities as social work practitioners and educators.

Taking these ideas forward...

In constructing curriculum about cultural competence perhaps we might talk about a model that infuses the entire curriculum with content that analyzes these systems with a critical lens as opposed to one course requirement on “diversity”. As noted earlier, this approach separates out diversity from all other content. Instead, we might figure out an approach that uses a core course

dedicated to content on critical social justice frameworks and methods for critical thinking and then infuse this social justice analysis into all of the other required courses. Students would be required as part of their assignments throughout their social work education to critically evaluate all course content from a social justice lens.

In a critical approach to unpacking the ways in which we reproduce systems of Whiteness, we must take ourselves to the edge of what we think we know. As Apple (2004) urges, we can use our experiences as data from which we critique ourselves and question those very ideas and ideologies that we hold sacred. Freire describes a concept called “circles of certainty” (2007, p. 38), in which he describes ideologies as reactionary in nature to fixed ideas of what’s already happened in the past or what is destined to happen in the future. He believes that both of these reactionary positions limit future possibilities rooted in collective freedom. According to Freire, in these circles of certainty we become locked in old ways of viewing the world, using commonsense ideas that have become unconsciously embedded into our thoughts and beliefs that prevent us from engaging in the struggle for something new to emerge.

Critical theory is concerned with interrogating the underlying issues of society and in rejecting the pathways of “easy wisdom”. It rejects the notion of the “correct” idea and calls upon us to see that which is hidden and repressed, particularly in relationship to those who benefit from these “correct” notions. Like the diversity model that Fox (1983) proposes (mentioned in Chapter Two of this dissertation), we must engage in the struggle of the complexities of the

problem and resist the temptation to seek easy or over-simplistic solutions. To use the current term in social work education, cultural competence is an ongoing process rooted in critical thought and actions. It requires pedagogy that builds skills for courageous social change practice. Anti-racist pedagogy helps students and teachers in building their skills to deeply engage in (rather than avoid) the complexities of race relations and in challenging policies that seem unjust and rigidly White-centered.

The potential real life consequences of an overly simplistic and mediocre social work pedagogy has dire consequences for the clients and communities we serve. When we don't teach our students (by modeling it ourselves) how to manage theory and practice in all its messiness and unpredictability, we end up having a hidden curriculum that instructs our students in the practice of social control in which they will end up encouraging clients to assimilate into the dominant and oppressive systems. Freire says, "One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness" (2007, p. 51). It seems as if we are in a confused time about our role in social work education as it relates to issues of oppression; that is, we say that we want our students to act as social change agents yet aspects of social work education might actually perpetuate and reproduce these hegemonic systems we seek to change. Is our confused identity as social worker educators a manifestation of our submerged consciousness because we have unconsciously adopted the dominant values about how we view the nature of oppression? Fundamentally, as social work educators, as we

struggle with our identity and our intentions about what and how we teach, it seems clear that we ought to be discussing and debating issues that call for an expanded social work pedagogy. In this debate we should push our profession to work in at least two ways: 1) advocate for pedagogy that encourages social workers to find their role in transforming society for the purpose of liberation and 2) advocate for pedagogy that simultaneously encourages social workers to develop practices of resistance against the reproduction of existing systems of oppression and assimilation.

hooks (1994) states, “We cannot be easily discouraged. We cannot despair when there is conflict. Our solidarity must be affirmed by a shared belief in a spirit of intellectual openness that celebrates diversity, welcomes dissent, and rejoices in collective dedication to truth” (p. 33). We are challenged in a critical discourse about cultural competence in social work education, to adhere to a vigilant consciousness about the influences of the material world on ourselves, the dispossessed and marginalized communities in which our students work and in which our constituents live every day. We must not be lazy or apathetic even when our “evidence-based” research tells us that we have “the truth.” A critical approach understands the partiality of all “evidence” and also embraces the notion that research and education is never neutral and is always infused with, and informed by, conscious and unconscious ideologies. We must constantly and intentionally create spaces of distance between ourselves and our “truths” by critically exploring and interrogating them, especially when we become

comfortable in them. It's time to launch ourselves into this new and complicated conversation.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, Laura S.; Gibson, Priscilla. (2007). Reframing Multicultural Education: Teaching White Privilege in the Social Work Curriculum. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(1), 147-160.
- Abrams, Laura S., Moio, Jene A. (2009). Critical race theory and the cultural competence dilemma in social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 245-261.
- Adams, M., Bell, L.A., and Griffin, P. (2007). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice 2nd Ed.* New York: Routledge.
- Akerlund, Mark, Cheung, Monit. (2000). Teaching Beyond the Deficit Model: Gay and Lesbian Issues Among African Americans, Latinos, and Gay Asian Americans. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(2), 279-293.
- Allman, Paula. (2007). *On Marx. An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx.* Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Almeida, R., Hernandez, P., Dolan-Delvecchio, K. (2005). Critical Consciousness, Accountability, and Empowerment: Key Processes for Helping Families Heal. *Family Process*, 44(1), 105-119.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria (1987). *Frontera: The New Mestiza.* Aunt Lute Books: San Francisco.
- Apple, Michael. (2004). *Ideology and Curriculum.* New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Banks, J. A. (1994). Transforming the Mainstream Curriculum. *Educating for Diversity*, 51(8), 4-8.
- Barnett, Timothy. (2000). Reading "Whiteness" in English Studies. *College English*, 63(1), 9-37.
- Barone, Thomas. (2000). *Aesthetics, Politics, and Educational Inquiry: Essay and Examples.* New York: Peter Lang.
- Barone, Thomas. (2001). *Touching Eternity, The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching.* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Barone, T. & Eisner, E. (2006). Arts-based educational research. In *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*, Judith Green, Gregory Camilli, and Patricia Elmore, editors. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 93-107.

- Barone, T. (2007). A Return to the Gold Standard? Questioning the Future of Narrative Construction as Educational Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(4), 454-470.
- Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an Ally: Breaking the Cycle of Oppression in People*. Halifax, ON: Fernwood Publishing.
- Brayboy, B. (2005). Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory. *The Urban Review*, 37(5), 425-446.
- Butler, A., Ford, D., & Tregaskis, C. (2007). Who Do We Think We Are? Self and Reflexivity in Social Work Practice. *Qualitative Social Work*, 6, 281-299.
- Cain, Roy. (1996). Heterosexism and Self-Disclosure in the Social Work Classroom. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 32(1), 65-76.
- Canda, Edward R. (1989). Religious Content in Social Work Education: A Comparative Approach. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 25(1), 36-45.
- Carrilo, Dorothy F., Holzhalb, Carol M., Thyer, Bruce A. (1993). Assessing Social Work Students' Attitudes Related to Cultural Diversity: A Review of Selected Measures. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 29(3), 263-268.
- Carter, C., Coudrouglou, A., Figueira-Mcdonough, J., Gwat Y., MacEachron, A., Netting, F., Nichols-Casebolt, A., Nichols, A., Risley-Curtiss, C. (1994). Integrating Women's Issues in the Social Work Curriculum: A Proposal. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 30(2), 200-216.
- Chambon, Adrienne. (1999). Foucault's Approach: Making the Familiar Visible. In A. Chambon, A. Irving, L. Epstein (eds.), *Reading Foucault for Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press, 51-81.
- Chau, Kenneth L. (1990). A Model for Teaching Cross-Cultural Practice in Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(2), 124-133.
- Cramer, Elizabeth P. (1997). Effects of an Educational Unit About Lesbian Identity Development and Disclosure in a Social Work Methods Course. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(3), 461-472.
- Chase, S. E. (2005). Narrative Inquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voices. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 651-679.

- Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry, Experience & Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Clayton, T. (1998). Beyond Mystification: Reconnecting World-System Theory for Comparative Education. *Comparative Education Review*, 42(4), 479-497.
- de Lange, Janice. (1995). Gender and Communication in Social Work Education: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 31(1), 75-81.
- Denton, Roy T. (1990). The Religiously Fundamentalist Family: Training for Assessment and Treatment. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(1), 6-14.
- Fellin, Phillip. (2000). Revisiting Multiculturalism in Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(2), 261-279.
- Fine, M. (1994). Working the hypens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 70-82.
- Foucault, Michel (1990). *Introduction Vol 1 of the History of Sexuality*. 1978. Reprint, New York: Random House.
- Foucault, Michel. (1994). *Power*. New York: The New Press.
- Foucault, Michel. (1997). The Masked Philosopher. In P. Rabinow, (Ed.), *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: The Essential Works of Foucault*, New York: The New Press, 321-328.
- Fox, Jerry R. (1983). Affective Learning in Racism Courses with an Experiential Component. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 19(3), 69-76.
- Freire, P. (1982). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Garcia, Betty. (1997). Changing Perceptions of Diversity and Oppression: MSW Students Discuss the Effects of a Required Course. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(1), 119-129.
- Garcia, B., & Van Soest, D. (2000). Facilitating learning on diversity: Challenges to the professor. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 9(1/2), 21-39.
- Gair, Susan; Miles, Debra; Thomson, Jane. (2005). Reconciling Indigenous and

- Non-Indigenous Knowledges in Social Work Education: Action and Legitimacy. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(2), 179-189.
- Garland, Diana R. & Escobar, Donoso (1988). Education for Cross-Cultural Social Work Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 3, 229-241.
- Giroux, Henry A. (1997). *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope, Theory Culture and Schooling*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Gold, Nora.(1996). Putting Anti-Semitism on the Anti-Racism Agenda in North American Schools of Social Work. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 32(1), 77-89.
- Goodson, I. (1995). The Story So Far: Personal Knowledge and the Political. In J. Hatch & R. Wisniewski (Eds.), *Life history and narrative*, London: Falmer Press, 89-98.
- Gorelick, S. (1991). Contradictions of Feminist Methodology. *Gender and Society*, 5(4), 459-477.
- Granger, Jean M. & Portner, Doreen, L. (1985). Ethnic and Gender-Sensitive Social Work Practice. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 21(1), 38-47.
- Green, Robert G.; Kiernan-Stern, Mary; Bailey, Karen; Chambers, Katrina; Claridge, Rebecca; Jones, Garrett; Kitson, Gwen; Leek, Stephanie; Leisey, Monica; Vadas, Kristina; Walker, Kerri. (2005). The Multicultural Counseling Inventory: A Measure for Evaluating Social Work Student and Practitioner Self-Perceptions of Their Multicultural Competencies. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(2), 191-208.
- Great Performances. (2012). *Let Me Down Easy*, written and performed by Anna Deavere Smith. Public Broadcasting Services.
- Gutiérrez, Lorraine; Yeakley, Anna; Ortega, Robert. (2000). Educating Students for Social Work with Latinos: Issus for the New Millennium. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(3), 541-557.
- Hemert, Katherine A. (1994) Should Social Work Education Address Religious Issues? Yes! *Journal of Social Work Education*, 30(1), 7-11.
- Hill-Collins, Patricia. (1990). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall Inc.

- Holman-Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the Personal Political. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 651-679.
- hooks, bell. (1990). *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*. Toronto, ON: Between the Lines.
- hooks, bell. (1994a). Narratives of Struggle. In P. Mariani (Ed.), *Critical Fictions: The politics of imaginative writing*, Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 53-61.
- hooks, bell. (1994b). *Teaching to Transgress*. New York, NY: Routledge
- hooks, bell (2000). "Racism and Feminism: The Issue of Accountability." In Les Back and John Solomos (Eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism*. London: Routledge, 373-388.
- hooks, bell. (2010). *Teaching Critical Thinking*. New York: Routledge.
- Humphreys, Griffith (1983). Inclusion of Content on Homosexuality in the Social Work Curriculum. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 19(1), 55-60.
- Hylton, Mary E. (2005). Heteronormativity and the Experiences of Lesbian and Bisexual Women as Social Work Students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 41(1), 67-82.
- Jackson, A. (1981). A Model of Social Work Education for Multiracial Practice in Great Britain. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 17(1), 102-110.
- Johnson, Alan G. (2006). *Privileges, Power, and Difference*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kane, Michael N.; Houston-Vega, Mary Kay. (2004). Maximizing Content on Elders with Dementia While Teaching Multicultural Diversity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 40(2), 285-303.
- Kaomea, Julie (2001). Dilemmas of an Indigenous Academic: A Native Hawaiian Story, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 2(1), 67-82.
- Keating, AnaLouis. (2007). *Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kincheloe, J., Steinberg, S., Rodriguez, N., & Chennault, R. (1998). *White Reign*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Kivel, P. (2002). *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Klees, S. (2008). Reflections on Theory, Method, and Practice in Comparative and International Education. *CIES Newsletter* 147.
- Knight, Carolyn. (1991). Gender-Sensitive Curricula in Social Work Education: A National Study. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 27(2), 145-155.
- Latting, Jean Kantambu. (1990). Identifying the "Isms": Enabling Social Work Students to Confront Their Biases. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(1), 36-44.
- Lather, Patricia. (1991). *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*. London: Routledge.
- Lather, Patricia. (2010). *Engaging Science Policy: From the Messy Side of the Messy*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Lawrence, S. M., & Tatum, B. D. (1997). Teachers in Transition: The Impact of Antiracist Professional Development on Classroom Practice. *Teachers College Record*, 99(1), 162-178.
- Limb, Gordon E.; Organista, Kurt C. (2003). Comparisons Between Caucasian Students, Students of Color, and American Indian Students on Their Views on Social Work's Traditional Mission, Career Motivations, and Practice Preferences. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 39(1), 91-109.
- Lister, Larry (1987). Ethnocultural Content in Social Work Education, *Journal of Social Work Education*, 1, 31-39.
- Lorde, Audrey. (1984). *Sister Outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Madison, Soyini D. (2005). *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers.
- Madriz, Esther. 2003. "Focus Groups in Feminist Research." In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 363-388.
- Marshall, I. & Ryden, M.(2000). Interrogating the Monologue: Making Whiteness Visible. *College Composition and Communication*, 52(2), 240-259.
- Morris, Judith Kolb. (1993). Interacting Oppressions: Teaching Social Work Content on Women of Color. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 29(1),

99-110.

- Nagda, Biren A.; Spearmon, Margaret L.; Holley, Lynn C.; Harding, Scott; Moïse-Swanson, Dominique; Balassone, Mary Lou; De Mello, Stan. (1999). Intergroup Dialogues: An Innovative Approach to Teaching About Diversity and Justice in Social Work Programs. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 35(3), 433-449.
- Nakanishi, M., Rittner, B., (1992). The Inclusionary Cultural Model. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 28(1), 27-35.
- Netting, F., Thibault, J., Ellor J., (1990). Integrating Content on Organized Religion into Macropractice Courses. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(1), 15-24.
- Newman, Bernie Sue; Dannenfelser, Paul L.; Benishek, Lois. (2002). Assessing Beginning Social Work and Counseling Students' Acceptance of Lesbians and Gay Men. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38(2), 273-288.
- Olson, M., Craig, C. (2005). Uncovering Cover Stories: Tensions and Entailments in the Development of Teacher Knowledge, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 35(2), 161-182.
- Osayunde, Ewuare. (2010) *Word to the Wise: Unpacking the White Privilege of Tim Wise*. Retrieved from <http://theresistance.podomatic.com/>
- Palmer, Parker J. (1998). *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pewewardy, Nocona. (2007). *Challenging White Privilege: Critical Discourse for Social Work Education*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education.
- Pillow, Wanda (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175-196.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1995). Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis. In Hatch, J. and Eisniewski, R. (Eds.) *Life History and Narrative*, London: The Falmer Press, 5-24.
- Polkinghorne, D. (2010). The Practice of Narrative. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(2), 392-396.
- Richard W., Voss; Hat Sr., Albert White; Bates, Jim; Lunderman, Margery Richard; Lunderman Jr., Alex. (2005). *Journal of Social Work Education*,

41(2), 209-227.

- Roche, S. (2007). "Postmodern Call and Response: Social Work Education in the Modernist University." In Stanley Witkin and Dennis Saleebey (eds.), *Social Work Dialogues: Transforming the Canon in Inquiry, Practice, and Education*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education, 299-325.
- Rodwell, Mary K.; Blankebaker, Adell. (1992). Strategies for Developing Cross-Cultural Sensitivity: Wounding as Methaphor. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 28(2), 153-166.
- Rossiter, Amy. (2001). Innocence Lost and Suspicion Found: Do we Educate for or Against Social Work? *Critical Social Work*, (2)1. Retrieved from <http://www.uwindsor.ca/criticalsocialwork/>
- Rust, V., Soumaré, A., Pescador, O., Shibuya, M. (1999). Research Strategies in Comparative Education. *Comparative Education Review*, 43(1), 86-109.
- Schick, C. & St. Denis, V.(2005). Troubling National Discourses in Anti-Racist Curricular Planning. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28 (3), 295-317.
- Schiele, Jerome H. (2007). Implications of the Equality-of-Oppressors Paradigm for Curriculum Content on People of Color. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43(1), 83-100.
- Sheridan, M., Wilmer, C., Atcheson, L. (1994). Inclusion of Content on Religion and Spirituality in the Social Work Curriculum: A study of faculty views. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 30(3), 363-376.
- Smith, F. & Stuart, P. (1982) Integrating Ethnic and Minority Group History Into Social Welfare Policy and History Courses. *Journal of Education for Social Work*, 18(3), 101-108.
- Soifer, Steven. (1991) Infusing Content About Jews and About Anti-Semitism Into the Curricula. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 27(2), 156-167.
- Solórzano, D., Yoso, T. (2002). Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8(1), 23-44.
- Stromquist, N.P., (2005). Comparative and International Education: A Journey Toward Equality and Equity. *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(1), 89-112.
- Tice, Karen. (1990). Gender and Social Work Education: Directions for the 1990s. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(2), 134-144.

- Thompson, Audrey (2003). Tiffany, friend of people of color: white investments in antiracism. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(1), 7-30.
- Tikly, L. (2001). "Postcolonialism and Comparative Education Research" in Watson, K. *Doing Comparative Education Research*, Oxford: Symposium Books, 245-263.
- Tochluk, Shelly. (2008). *Witnessing Whiteness: First Steps Toward an Antiracist Practice and Culture*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Tuhiwai Smith (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Zed Books Ltd: London.
- Toyosaki, S. Pensoneau-Conway, S.L., Wendt, N.A., Leathers, K. (2009). Community Autoethnography: Compiling the Personal and Resituating Whiteness. *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*. 9(1), 56-83.
- Trainor, Jennifer S. (2002). Critical Pedagogy's "Other": Constructions of Whiteness in Education for Social Change, *College Composition and Communication*, 53(4), 631- 650.
- van Soest, Dorothy. (1996a). The Influence of Competing Ideologies About Homosexuality on Nondiscrimination Policy: Implications for Social Work Education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 32(1), 53-64.
- van Soest, Dorothy. (1996b). Impact of Social Work Education on Student Attitudes and Behavior Concerning Oppression. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 32(2), 191-202.
- Van Soest, Dorothy; Canon, Robert; Grant, Darlene. (2000). Using An Interactive Website to Educate About Cultural Diversity and Societal Oppression. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(3), 463-479.
- van Voorhis, Rebecca Morrison. (1998). Culturally Relevant Practice: A Framework for Psychosocial Dynamics of Oppression. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 34(1), 121-134.
- Van Den Berg, Nan; Crisp, Catherine. (2004). Defining Culturally Competent Practice with Sexual Minorities: Implications for Social Work Education and Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, Spring/Summer2004, 40 (2), 221-238
- Villaverde, L. E. (2000). Border crossings: The act and implications in the

- production of art vis á vis patriarchy and whiteness. In N. M. Rodriguez & L. E. Villaverde (Eds.), *Dismantling White privilege: Pedagogy, Politics, and Whiteness*, New York: Peter Lang, 41-58.
- Voorhis, Rebecca Van; Wagner, Marion. (2001). Coverage of Gay and Lesbian Subject Matter in Social Work Journals. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(1), 147-159.
- Walker, A. (1983). *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Walker, Robert, Staton, Michele (2000). Multiculturalism in Social Work Ethics. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 36(3), 449-462.
- Walls, N.E., Griffin, R., Arnold-Renicker, H., Burson, M., Johnston, C., Moorman, N., Nelsen, J., Campos Schutte, E. (2009). Mapping Graduate Social Work Student Learning Journeys About Heterosexual Privilege, *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 289-307.
- Walters, Gail; Strom-Gottfried, Kimberly; Sullivan, Maura. (1998). Assembling Pieces in the Diversity Puzzle: A Field Model. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 34(3), 353-364.
- Warren, John T. (1999). Whiteness and Cultural Theory: Perspectives on Research and Education. *The Urban Review*. 31(2), 185-201.
- Weaver, Hillary. (1999). Indigenous People and the Social Work Profession: Defining Culturally Competent Services. *Social Work*, 44(3), 217-225.
- Webster, Yehudl O. (2002). A Human-Centric Alternative to Diversity and Multicultural Education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38(1), 17-36.
- Witkin, Stanley L. (2000). "An integrative human rights approach to social research." In Carole Truman, Donna M. Mertens, and Beth Humphries (eds.), *Research and Inequality*. London: University College London Press, 205-219.
- Witkin, Stanley L., Saleebey, D. (2007). *Social Work Dialogues: Transforming the Canon in Inquiry, Practice, and Education*. Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education Press.
- Wright, Handel K. (2003). An endarkened feminist epistemology? Identity, difference and the Politics of representation in educational research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 197- 214.

Young, Michelle D. (2000). Considering (irreconcilable?) contradictions in cross-group feminist research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(6), 629-660.

APPENDIX IRB APPROVAL



Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: Jennifer Sandlin
EDUC - HIR

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 10/19/2011

Committee Action: Exemption Granted

IRB Action Date: 10/19/2011

IRB Protocol #: 1110006949

Study Title: Authentic White Allies

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

