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Piercing Privilege: Confronting the White Problem Through Autoethnography

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PIERCING PRIVILEGE: CONFRONTING THE WHITE PROBLEM
THROUGH AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

in

The School of Education

by
Destiny Marie Adams Cooper
BA, Louisiana State University A & M, 2002
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ABSTRACT

In this reflexive autoethnography, the author explores the “White Problem” by examining narratives of personal transformation resulting from her involvement in Dialogue on Race Louisiana (DORLA), an “educational process for the elimination of race.” The main query of this piece is: How has the author’s relationship to whiteness worked to reify or trouble the “White Problem?” Using writing as a method of inquiry, the author recounts several pivotal experiences that correspond to DORLA’s Original Six Week Series session topics and exhibit personal transformations in her interpretations of racism. After defining the research process, design, and product in Chapter One, the author troubles White privilege in Chapter Two. The author investigates institutional racism in Chapter Three while she examines her struggle and transformation in Chapter Four in terms of the previous two chapters. In Chapter Five, the author explores Affirmative Action, and in Chapter Six she reflects on the transformations resulting from this research process. The author determines that continuous reflexive writing is integral to her work as a White anti-racist, that she will commit to teaching other whites about the White Problem as part of her work toward eliminating racism through this writing, and that her future research will more specifically focus on the “White Problem” in K-12 education and K-12 teacher preparation.

Keywords: autoethnography, dialogue, narrative inquiry, race, whiteness, White Problem

INTRODUCTION

When considering the need for this study, I thought back to my professional training between 1998 and 2002. Though it prepared me to be an effective teacher in many ways, this preparation did not directly address the complexities of being a white teacher in an authoritative position to students of color. Though the program’s methods and theory courses addressed critical issues including race and racism, these concepts were so isolated that I could neither expand my identity nor see—much less question—the persistent racial hierarchy in our country. Despite the decade-long circulation of Peggy McIntosh’s (1990) article “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”¹ prior to my undergraduate education program, I was never explicitly taught as an undergraduate that white privilege is an invisible “set of unearned advantages and/or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis...that helps to maintain the racial hierarchy in this country” (Dialogue on Race Louisiana [DORLA], Ed., p. 21; see also Appendix A).

Even though white privilege is discussed much more often now than when I was an undergraduate, I have since witnessed many white people who have learned about white privilege choose to deny its existence and therefore use that very privilege to simultaneously deny it. More specifically, white people who *choose* to deny white privilege refuse to acknowledge the privilege associated with that choice and thus exercise white privilege through choosing not to accept it. Further, white people can readily deny white privilege because of three grand narratives perpetuated by institutional racism: meritocracy,² the inferiority of people of

¹ Though this and additional articles in the DOR Original Series are not contemporary, they still serve the purposes of DOR as a community program that does not exclusively serve scholars.

²“Meritocracy refers to a social system as a whole in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards in direct proportion to their individualized efforts and abilities” (McNamee & Miller, 2009, p. 1).

color and the unacknowledged corollary of white superiority, and the belief that the United States is now a “post-racial” or “colorblind” society. Though these narratives are identified separately here, they are closely intertwined.

This past April a friend of mine told me about an article circulating on Facebook by a white male student at Princeton who had claimed that white privilege does not exist. After reading this article, I realized that the author, Tal Fortgang (2014), incorporates all three grand narratives to deny his white privilege. He argues that meritocracy is no myth by citing his family’s success despite the many hardships of his parents and immigrant grandparents. By explicitly stating how his family’s values contributed to his success rather than any invisible privilege, he builds the case for meritocracy based on “values like faith and education,” “the importance of parents’ involvement with their kids’ education—from mathematics to morality,” and “altruism and self-sacrifice” (Fortgang, 2014). Consequently, as Fortgang explicitly credits his family’s values for achieving success in a meritocracy, he implicitly blames people who do not succeed in this meritocracy for lacking these values and establishes a superior status based on his success. Therefore, these implications reify the grand narrative of inferiority.

However, Fortgang (2014) resists implicating himself as a racist by framing his claims in colorblindness. Referring to his grandparents’ immigration from Nazi Germany into America, he conveys, “It was their privilege to come to a country that grants equal protection under the law to its citizens, that cares not about religion or race, but the content of your character.” This statement assumes that the United States has reached a point at which all people regardless of race or religion benefit equally from its institutions. Though this may be the intention of the United States as evidenced by laws, it is not the result of those laws (Barndt & Ruehle, 1992 pp. 165-168; Bonilla-Silva & Conley in Smith, Adelman, & California News Reel, 2003; Juarez,

2013, p. 37). Academic achievement and financial wealth gaps, disproportionate representation of people of color in incarceration, and continued disparity in housing and healthcare are visible results of institutional actions over time rather than of individuals.

How do those who work to dismantle racism expose what is readily denied? For me, this work began in 2005 through Dialogue on Race's (DOR) Original Series (See Appendix B), has continued through my facilitation of DOR's Original and Advanced Series (See Appendix C), and has most recently occurred through this research. DOR is an intersubjective inquiry process that has helped me to continually expose and develop my understandings of white privilege and institutional racism. Prior to DOR, I believed that racism occurred when an individual expressed racial prejudice. However, through DOR I learned that

Racial prejudice typically arises from race-based *stereotypes*, and while that has its dangers, it alone is not *racism*. Racial prejudice cannot determine where people of color live, work, shop, play, worship, get healthcare, or their education. Those things are determined by institutions. Only when racial prejudice has institutional backing does it become racism" (DORLA, eds., p. 21; see also Appendix A).

When I first learned about white privilege and this distinction between individual prejudice and institutional racism through DOR, I did not immediately understand white privilege or institutional racism. Since 2005 I have gradually gained more complex understandings of white privilege and institutional racism through personal reflection and DOR's interpersonal dialogic processes. Through these processes I have also learned to recognize "whiteness."

"Whiteness is defined as an identity that is neither problematized nor particularized within discourses on race because it assumes a status of normalcy (Chaisson, 2004; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Tate, 2003 cited in Hayes, Juarez, Witt, and Harltep, 2013, p. 2). Hayes, Juarez, Witt, and Harltep (2013) add, "Whiteness is not about white people but is a mindset" (p. 3). This mindset is evident in Forgang's (2014) claims and is the result of the invisibility, or normalcy, of

whiteness. Whiteness is the set of grand narratives that perpetuate the status quo and are incorporated by individuals into their personal narratives and therefore identities (Phoenix, 2013, pp. 74 and 78-79; Bruner, 2004, p. 699; Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, pp. 44-45). For Fortgang, and those who agree with him, white privilege does not exist precisely because their narratives “[assume] the status of normalcy” (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2).

In other words, narratives expressing individual success based on meritorious values and choices “[assume] the status of normalcy.” Likewise, narratives stating or implying that individuals who have not achieved success come from families that lack meritorious values and choices “[assume] the status of normalcy.” Further, narratives that depict resilience and success of white-skinned ethnic groups assume that equal access and opportunity is the “status of normalcy” for all Americans thereby establishing a colorblind society as “the status of normalcy” for institutional operations. This “status of normalcy” is how the status quo maintains that racism is a problem for people of color, not a “White problem”³ (DuBois, 1940/1968 and Wright, 1957 cited in Hayes et al., 2013, pp. 4-6). Through DOR and my studies as a graduate student I have continued to gain depth, insight, and visibility regarding racism as a “White problem” (hereafter referred to as White Problem). This work is what has led me to this autoethnography.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe autoethnography as “studies and procedures that connect the personal to the cultural” (p. 740). More specifically, Ellis and Bochner state that “authors” in reflexive autoethnographies, “use their own experiences in the culture reflexively to bend back on oneself and look more deeply at self-other interactions” (p. 740). Further, they explain how researchers “have begun to view themselves as the phenomenon and to write

³Or the view “that black people are a ‘problem’ for Whites rather than fellow citizens entitled to justice, and that, unless otherwise specified (Lipsitz cited in Hayes et al., 2013, p. 5)

evocative personal narratives specifically focused on their academic as well as their personal lives” (pp. 741-742). In this work, I share a “primary purpose” with these researchers: “to understand a self or some aspect of a life lived in a cultural context” (p. 742).

When I began to study how DOR contributed to personal transformations in how I “understand [myself] or some aspect of [my] life lived in a cultural context” (p. 742) of race, I realized that I had been engaging in autoethnography for years without knowing it. In order to understand white privilege, institutional racism, and whiteness, I have purposefully engaged in personal writing and continued dialogue with others since 2005. Despite these attempts to understand my culture and myself in terms of race, I had not learned of autoethnography until October of 2013 as a graduate student in a narrative inquiry class.

Once I engaged more purposefully in autoethnography, I discovered that whiteness was more deeply entrenched in my personal narratives than I could see. Additionally I realized that, despite all my progress, some part of me still framed anti-racist work as bringing others up without considering that my pedestal, and not the people below, was the problem.

Therefore, this research project explores the White Problem through the transformations I have made as an active DOR member, as a teacher of high school students, and as a researcher in graduate school. Though APA and other scholars currently capitalize “White” and “Whiteness,” I will not capitalize these in this work with the exception of the White Problem. This writing is meant to trouble whiteness, and I believe that capitalizing it reinforces its “status of normalcy” (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2) while capitalizing it only when naming the White Problem challenges this status. Despite this choice, I will adhere to other conventions of capitalization. Further, “people of color” refers to all non-white skinned people, while “Black,” “Asian,” Hispanic,”

“Cherokee,” or other tribal designations name specific racial categories instead of pairing ethnic terms with “American” as this reinforces the association of “American” with “white.”

CHAPTER ONE: DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

A Public Epiphany

“I have to consider several things,” I said to my narrative inquiry classmates during my group presentation on ethics on Halloween night, 2013. “For one thing, how am I going to research racism when I can never truly understand it? I am a member of the privileged class. What is my purpose? Of course, the temptation is there to make myself look like ‘the good white person,’ but that’s not my purpose.”

“If you don’t mind me asking,” a female classmate of color inquired, “What is your purpose?”

“I don’t know,” I admitted publically. I thought I had known. At first, I was very clear about my purpose. “I want it to be emergent, though,” so many thoughts fired through my synapses. *What is my purpose? Am I exploiting people of color by reporting on this subject matter? I want to eliminate racism, not replicate it through my “research.”* “The ultimate goal of Dialogue on Race is to dismantle racism,” I managed to confidently deliver this despite the insecurity rumbling through my head. Ironically, out of all that rumbling I chose a statement that made me look like “the good white person” by making sure everyone knew that I wanted to eliminate racism.

“That’s a big task” replied the same classmate.

“That’s why we don’t work alone.” *I should know answers to questions about my research. Well, wait. In this presentation my partner and I just encouraged our classmates to ask questions during research. No one can know everything. Isn’t that the purpose of inquiry?*

“Recently a church tore down bathrooms that were still standing from segregation, and the church held a public healing ceremony to ask forgiveness for perpetuating institutional racism. We believe talk is action in Dialogue on Race. That’s why I’ve been involved with Dialogue for almost ten years.” *There you go again. You sound like the “good white” once more. Have my approaches replicated the privileged structures I work to dismantle?* “Initially my purpose was to track participants’ transformations because I know how much Dialogue on Race changed me. Now, I don’t know.”

Situating the Research

That interaction on October 31, 2013, caused me to reevaluate my position with my research for this thesis. During this interaction, I “struggled not to be caught up in the tentacles of the grand narrative” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 25) of research. In the struggle, I became aware of some necessary questions to address in order to situate myself and my purpose in inquiry. While writing reflectively during November of 2013, I recognized that this event initially kindled my shift from the positivist “grand narrative” of *controlling* what knowledge would be discovered to the postmodern approach of *questioning* to discover (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and later fueled the major decisions for this master’s thesis. To situate my place in this inquiry on my transformations through the Dialogue on Race processes, I will frame in theory and delineate as transparently as possible how I traversed the “tensions at the boundaries” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 25) of my social contexts and personal experiences regarding these decisions (Andrews et al., 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Maynes et al., 2008). Specifically, in an effort to establish validity, I will demonstrate how my ethical considerations have shaped my current choices in methods and representation (Riessman, 2008, p. 185).

Context of Inquiry

Dialogue on Race. DOR's Original Series is a structured six-week dialogue consisting of weekly two hour sessions (See Appendix B). Each dialogue group consists of four to fifteen volunteer participants from the community and two facilitators, one of color and one white. During the first session, participants distinguish between dialogue and debate (See Appendix D). Following this distinction, DOR establishes a common language for participants through definitions of racial prejudice, white privilege, institutions, and institutional racism (See Appendix A). After reading the definitions, participants practice dialogue by answering three topic questions related to DOR's definitions in terms of their personal, social, and historical contexts. After the first session, participants read common texts prior to each remaining session that address the first session's definitions in greater depth and with broader social and historical contexts. During each of the six sessions, facilitators manage the responses to three topic questions. Each session's questions follow the same structure. The first question of each session asks participants to compare the text to their prior views (past); the second asks participants to examine instances (present); and the third asks participants to consider how the topic factors into the elimination of racism (future). The Advanced Dialogue (See Appendix C) follows the same format with three exceptions. First, the Advanced Dialogue is only four sessions instead of six; second, the texts are scholarly documentary videos instead of scholarly articles, and third, only alumni of the Original Series can attend. Thus, alumni-only participation creates advanced levels of dialogue.

Essentially, DOR is a narrative inquiry process. "Dedicated to the elimination of racism through education, action, and transformation" (DORLA, 2013, p. 1), DOR solicits stories from participants in response to texts and others in order to transform individuals (Bruner, 2004, pp.

694-695; Moen, 2006, p. 5). However, DOR's ultimate goal is to transform institutions. This echoes Riessman's (2008) assertion that "Stories can mobilize others into action for progressive social change" (p. 9; see also Chase, 2011, p. 428). By creating a space in which participants question, negotiate, and intersubjectively interpret their past, present, and future selves as interpreted and re-interpreted in terms of various past, present, and future social institutions, dialogue engages participants and facilitators in narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50; Maynes et al., 2008, p. 3; Riessman, 2008, p. 37). Additionally, DOR asks participants to mediate these conflicting identities through intersubjective dialogue.

Dialogue on Race's success greatly depends on the intersubjectivity experienced by participants and the facilitators' adroitness in bringing depth to it. To achieve successful inquiry, facilitators challenge traditional power structures by managing the process, not the participants (DORLA, 2013, p. 19; see also Appendix E). Extremely mindful of relational power (Hyden, 2013, pp. 224-225; Scheurich, 1997, pp. 69-70), facilitators establish and maintain equitable power among participants and between participants and facilitators by engaging in "circular process" methods that contribute to "opening a discursive space" for dialogue progression (Hyden, 2013, p. 227 and 233-235). Facilitators achieve this by posing questions to the group instead of individuals, deflecting most questions directed to the facilitators back to the group, and breaking fixations that stifle dialogue. Additionally, facilitators ground the dialogue in common language, dialogic processes (never debate; see Appendix D), and the three topic questions (DORLA, 2013, p. 19; see also Appendix E). Through these methods, DOR creates a safe space and shared context in which to foster transformative dialogue among multiple subjective perspectives. In doing so, DOR fosters several hallmarks of narrative inquiry: (1) intersubjective meaning-making through narrative interpretations of historical, social, and personal contexts; (2)

diffused power structures; and (3) the honoring of multiple and diverse narrative voices rather than the marginalizing of them (Andrews et al., 2013; Chase, 2011; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Maynes et al., 2008; Moen, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Scheurich, 1997).

Initial Approaches. When I first started my research on DOR in August of 2013 (see Appendix F), I was a full-time student for the first time after eleven years of teaching. I did not realize it at that time, but I had internalized education's positivist approach to knowledge despite identifying with postmodern philosophies. Therefore, I believed in accordance with the positivist approach that valid research projects sought to discover objective knowledge, accurately analyze this knowledge based on a specified objective method, and then represent the researcher's conclusions in a valid argumentative research paper (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8-9).

To research DOR's Original Series, I began with my plan to engage in positivist methods: gather objective data by recording each session that I facilitated, analyze the participants' language to uncover some "truth" (Scheurich, 1997, p. 62) and use the data and my analysis to make an argument proving that DOR is an effective tool for personal and social transformation. In addition to using surveys and follow-up interviews, I initially planned to prove how participants had transformed by focusing on how changes in the use, structure, and content of language and stories told during dialogue indicated individuals' transformations. I had initially planned to track whether or not the participants took institutional action after their dialogue to determine the degree to which DOR successfully inspires institutional change.

Driven by the positivist approach I had internalized while teaching, I decided in August of 2013 to study particular groups. First, I focused on a youth group (see Appendix F), and I honestly thought they would be my only group in this research process. However, these teens were all Black. I suspected that my study might be less valid because only one race was

represented. Therefore, I targeted a new group in October-December of 2013—pre-service teachers (see Appendix F). However, that group turned out to be all white. In my research journal, I interpreted this occurrence as indicative of white privilege and institutional racism in education (further discussed in Chapter Three: Institutional Racism). I did not yet see the power or privilege I assigned to myself by choosing these particular groups, methods, and purposes. As painful as it is to admit, as of October of 2013, I did not even consider these as possible ethical concerns.

At that time, I did not think to consider the inequitable power relationships between myself and the students and pre-service teachers. In addition to the power structures associated with researcher and participant relationships (Hyden, pp. 224-238), I also had authority assigned to me over them as a teacher, adult, and even facilitator. As for my purpose and methods in the early stages of this project, I claimed to be able to know how people have transformed by interpreting their language. From a positivist standpoint from August to October 2013, I felt like I had an expert understanding of teens and pre-service teachers, their linguistics, and their narratives. I assumed my role as a researcher was to use my expertise to find the data in their words that proved my theory in order to accurately portray the “truth” about the transformative processes involved in Dialogue on Race (Scheurich, 1997, pp. 61-66). I did not recognize the superiority that these approaches assigned to me and the reciprocal inferiority they assigned to my participants (Hyden, 2013, p. 229; Riessman, 2008, p. 24; Scheurich, 1997, p. 70). Further, I did not realize that these approaches reified the unjust practices that I work to dismantle through DOR (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 2-3; Hendry, 2010, p. 74; Juarez, 2013, p. 39; Maynes, 2008, pp. 16-20; Scheurich, 1997, p. 70).

Deconstructing a “Self Portrait.” On October 28, 2013, just three days before the narrative in “A Public Epiphany” at the opening of this chapter, two DOR colleagues asked me to view a documentary that they were going to show for a Featured Topic Dialogue. Featured Topic Dialogues are one-time dialogue sessions that focus on one particular, current text that is relevant to dismantling racism. Concerned that white participants’ potential defensiveness and white guilt in response to the film might hinder the dialogue, the event organizers asked me to watch “Mississippi: A Self Portrait” (DeFellita, 1966) and tell them how I thought whites would react to it. “Mississippi: A Self Portrait” was filmed in 1965 after the burning of several African American churches and the murders of Emmet Till and three civil rights activists. It aired only once on NBC in 1966. Exhumed from the vaults for a number of reasons, NBC rereleased the video online in July of 2012.

On October 28, 2013, as I watched the film, which essentially documents how white privilege became invisible in America, I was immersed in the various transformations I have had while attempting to recognize white privilege since I began this work in 2005. To understand how other whites might respond to this film, I had to think of all my responses to each scene that would have occurred at all the different times and places of my life during which I grappled with white privilege. I had no choice but to experience the “three dimensional inquiry space” that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) write about in *Narrative Inquiry*. I immediately understood what it meant to engage in the three dimensional inquiry space by examining personal and social interactions over time and in various contexts. Because I had experienced whiteness differently at various times and in various places in my life, including DOR, I could interpret past interactions in various ways.

Though the whole film jarred me into the “wakefulness” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 182-185) described above, there was one scene in particular that created a “self-portrait” of sorts. Miss Katie, a white woman from a prominent family, tells the viewer through the camera that her work to build and run a “Negro” recreation center “came from a need to show suffering, neglected people that someone cared” (DeFellita, 1966). She asserts, “We can teach them discipline. We can give them dignity, an enthusiasm, and a desire to keep on and to better themselves...teach the mother to care for her baby and give it a better start in life” (DeFellita, 1966). I stared at that superiority in a multitude of old and new ways simultaneously and started to question my motives. What did I hope to contribute by tracking people’s transformations? Was I trying to be like Miss Katie? Was I acting from the situation of “a good white”? Once again, I negotiated my conflicting identities because of Dialogue on Race.

Re-situating Purpose and Methods. This experience on October 28, 2013 influenced my responses during “A Public Epiphany” on October 31, 2013. After writing reflectively about both experiences in November of 2013, I would come to understand that no one could possibly have pinpointed my transformation during my first dialogue. It has been continuous and recursive, and I only know it in reflection. As I worked through these understandings, I also came to realize the superiority I presumed in believing I could “uncover” someone’s transformation by interpreting and analyzing their words (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, pp. 8-9). I believed I had the credentials to find the “hidden meaning” in their narratives (Scheurich, 1997, p. 64), not realizing that the very act of doing so privileged my meanings and interpretations over theirs. At this point I could at last see the ethical issues surrounding my authoritative privilege as a researcher, teacher, and even facilitator, and how this further complicated my presumed superiority (Andrews et al., 2013; Hendry; 2010, p. 79; Riessman, 2008). In addition, I realized

that I had purposefully engaged in reflexive writing about my experiences surrounding dialogue and white privilege. I could not presume that participants in the DOR sessions during this study from August 2013 to July 2014 will also engage reflexively, much less that they will do so in time for this thesis to be written.

These realizations in November of 2013 ignited burning questions: How could I undoubtedly know and document someone else's transformation? How could I adequately interpret or represent the participants' transformations, particularly those who are of color? Would I exploit people of color if I analyzed their words to interpret meaning? Would I exploit the students and the pre-service teachers because of my authoritative position? What do I know about racism? People of color know much more about racism than I do. I have only experienced the benefits of racism. How could I do justice to contributions from people of color? How can I ethically balance the power between myself and my participants? What methods honor all participants and equitably distribute power without replicating the privileged power structures that perpetuate injustices like institutional racism?

After carefully considering these and other questions between November and December of 2013 as well as considering the processes of Dialogue on Race, I reformulated my research purpose and methods. In December of 2013, I chose to inquire my own transformations, particularly in regard to troubling whiteness, rather than the participants' transformations (Chase, 2011, pp. 423-424, 430; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 961).

To identify, discover, and represent my personal transformations, I have examined personal journals kept prior to and since my first Dialogue on Race. Additionally, I have engaged purposefully in writing as inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005; Riessman, 2008). As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) advocate, I have come to "think of writing as a *method of data*

collection [and...] as a *method of data analysis*” (p. 970). Therefore, since August of 2013, I have maintained a new and purposeful reflective and reflexive research journal to track my “writing” and “research stories” over the process of the project (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, pp. 974-975; Riessman, 2008, p. 191).

Further, I have incorporated excerpts from Dialogue on Race’s scholarly articles and other materials in its Original Series “Participant Readings” (DORLA, 2013) booklet, the Advanced Dialogue (DORLA, 2014) booklet of transcripts and supplementary materials and its corresponding videos, including the 1966 documentary “Mississippi: A Self Portrait” (DeFellita, 1966) and the documentary series *Race—The Power of an Illusion* (Adelman & California News Reel, 2003). By analyzing my personal journals and writing and research stories in conjunction with the recordings of these sessions rather than solely analyzing recorded sessions as “data,” I have treated participants’ contributions as personal interpretations that I cannot ethically judge or analyze (Hendry, 2010). I will approach the participants’ contributions as recorded in my field texts and on digital recordings like I approach the Original Series texts and Advanced Dialogue films. Like the texts and films, the participants’ responses are catalysts for my own interpretations and continued transformation and inquiry. Therefore, I will replicate the intersubjective DOR process when I execute these methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3; Maynes et al., 2008, p. 111) instead of replicating privileged positivist methods. Finally, after engaging in the methods described above between December of 2013 and June of 2014, I discovered that my purpose and research questions continually changed as they became clearer through my continued writing and DOR participation and facilitation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Sequence in telling plays an important part in revealing the reflexive and recursive nature of transformation and therefore is unique to each situation. Consequently, representations in each chapter are structured and sequenced to demonstrate to the reader the revelations and transformations that I experienced which did not necessarily occur in a linear fashion. Therefore, this research process has heavily drawn on the “three dimensional inquiry space” that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) discuss in their work *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*.

The three dimensions of this inquiry space are interaction (personal and social exchanges), continuity (temporal contexts of past, present, and future), and situation (the place or contexts within which interactions occur). Almost identically to Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 50), in regard to narrative inquiry, Ellis and Bochner (2000) assert that autoethnographic researchers “zoom backward and forward, inward and outward” (p. 739) while examining “multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural (p. 739). Clandinin and Connelly (1994 cited in 2000) expound, stating that researchers zooming inward investigate “the internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions;” researchers zooming outward examine “existential conditions, that is, the environment,” and that researchers zooming backward and forward are considering the “temporality—past, present, future” of events (p. 50). Since my transformations have not been singular occurrences, I anchor my representations in the most recent manifestations of my transformations while considering the inward, outward, backward and forward interpretations of the events leading to these manifestations and their future implications. In other words, in order to re-make sense of whiteness, I will structure my narratives in ways that reveal my transformation rather than replicate narrative structures that reflect the “normalcy” of whiteness.

Research Purpose and Questions. Humans exercise narrative to make sense of the world, to create or confer power onto systems of dominance, and to define selves as a resistance to these systems, in effect, re-making sense of the world, re-making systems of dominance and resistance, and re-making selves (Tamboukou, 2013, pp. 88-105; Chase, 2011, pp. 422). I like the cyclical implications of this statement as it reflects the cyclical processes I have engaged in as a result of DOR and between August 2013 and June 2014 to create this project. Additionally, the opening sentence gives me hope that DOR can dismantle institutional racism, that education will cycle out of legislated positivist doctrine (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 2), and that this inquiry could produce a meaningful contribution to selves and systems.

Over the course of this inquiry I continuously returned to a question that Tamboukou poses in *Doing Narrative Research*: “How has our present been constituted in ways that seem natural and undisputable to us, but are only the effects of certain historical, social, cultural, political, and economic configurations?” (Tamboukou, 2013, p. 88). In other words, how can we see what is invisible? How can we name the status quo when it is the backdrop of our lives? This research project addresses these research questions:

1. What personal experiences before and after my participation in DOR contributed to my understanding of whiteness?
2. How and why did my interpretations of these experiences change over time?
3. How have these interpretations worked to reify, trouble, or resist whiteness?
4. How has my relationship to whiteness contributed to the replication or disruption of racist practices in my work toward dismantling racism?

Theory

The purpose of answering these questions is to trouble whiteness, particularly in response to Hayes, Juarez, Witt, and Hartlep’s call

to move toward a more racially cognizant Whiteness, where White students and faculty members can have a space to identify themselves as White, to recognize the unearned advantages they accrue because of being White, and to demonstrate how their presumptive, unexamined privileges make them culpable for racist practices. (Hyatt & Warren, 2003; Readon & Evans, 2007; Urrieta, 2006 cited in Hayes et al., 2013, p. 10)

Further, I ground this cultural critique of whiteness with bell hooks's (1994) assertion that "we need strategies for decolonization that aim to change the minds and habits of everyone involved in cultural criticism" in order to disrupt "the colonized/colonizer mind-set" and "not to simply reinscribe old patterns" (p. 5). Therefore, I attempt to trouble whiteness by "decolonizing" my internalized whiteness specifically as framed by hooks' question later in the same paragraph, "What does it mean for us to educate young, privileged, predominantly white students to divest of white supremacy if that work is not coupled with work that seeks to intervene in and change internalized racism that assaults people of color?"

Finally, the crux of the theoretical input for this research lies in its importance to me. Once I realized between October and November of 2013 that my motives in anti-racist work were at least partially motivated by self-interest and self-service (Hayes et al., 2013, pp. 8-9) through the "white savior" grand narrative I had internalized, I also realized that my identities as researcher, teacher, and person overlapped with my activist identity. As Laurel Richardson states in the article, "Writing: A Method of Inquiry," "The ethnographic life is not separable from the Self," (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 965), so is my ethnographic life not separable from my teacher self, or from my personal self.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) specify, "good teaching involves ethnography too...When we learn how to open ourselves to ourselves and to each other, we find it easier to drop some of our resistance to different ideas" and essentially work toward empathy. In this research, and in my life, my identities are inseparable. Concretely, facilitating DOR has increased my capacity to

facilitate learning in my classroom and with my children at home. Learning how to listen to my children at home and to the young adults I teach has increased my capacity for listening while participating in and facilitating DOR. Listening during DOR has expanded my personal identity, and I have acted on that in multiple, inseparable ways, including advocating for policy and working toward generating a political will for policy makers and voters to work toward achieving social justice. Therefore, this study examines transformations that have impacted my inseparable personal, professional, and political identities woven together as a single “Self.”

Representation: Choosing Autoethnography

I have chosen to represent my inquiry as a reflexive autoethnography because it is not a dominant form, and the purpose of my inquiry is to disrupt dominant narratives (Chase, 2011, p. 423; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5; Holt, 2003; Maynes et al., 2008, p. 114). To fragment biography as a genre, Smith (1998) asserts that all writing is essentially autobiography (p. 192) because all written text is ultimately influenced by the author’s creativity, influences, biases, and choices (p. 187, 194, 197, 201, 202). Scheurich (1997) concurs, “While these generalizations [in research] are said to represent reality, in my view they mostly represent the mindset of the researcher” (p. 64). Therefore, autoethnography not only resists dominant forms by focusing on the subjective experience, but also helps expose how people internalize these dominant forms through reflexively writing to understand experiences with internalizing dominant narratives.

Furthermore, this form reflects the dialogic inquiry processes of DOR. Ellis and Bochner (2000) define autoethnography as “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (p. 739). In DOR, participants orally “display multiple layers of consciousness” by “connecting the personal to the cultural” through stories of personal experience grounded in institutions. My inquiry will

do the same for my experiences. Additionally, it is the most ethical representation. Any other form would compromise ethics regarding the interpretation of the participants' stories. Because I am not willing to assume that I can determine another person's transformations by analyzing his or her language, autoethnography is the most ethical form of representation for this inquiry (Riessman p. 185).

CHAPTER TWO: WHITE PRIVILEGE

In Session II, white people often struggle with McIntosh's suspicion that "whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege" (McIntosh, 1990, p. 31). Because whiteness assumes a "status of normalcy" (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2) white people have trouble recognizing that they were "carefully taught" about how to interpret normalcy. In retrospect, I see exactly how I was carefully taught.

When I was little, my father told me I could be anything I wanted to be. I remember sitting on my dad's lap, watching Regan campaign for reelection. My dad, a teenaged-democrat turned businessman-republican, chose to purchase a house on the Cajun side of an almost-city that bubbled with culture and economic desire. My life existed on the cusp of these two worlds; living exactly 15 minutes away from either area, I developed my cultural identity with my dad's family in the rural Cajun settlement called Down the Bayou, and my academic identity at the private Catholic school in the burgeoning city called Town.

Separated physically by a waterway, Down the Bayou and Town were also separated culturally. Though both areas were surrounded by bodies of water, Down the Bayou's waterways were lined with personal and commercial fish boats, and the boats were lined with huge green drag nets, smaller white cast nets, crucifixes, and people visiting or conducting business. The

roads mimicked the waterways Down the Bayou. Homes, Catholic churches and chapels, businesses, schools, and people commingled along the winding two-lane shore.

Whereas everything Down the Bayou cohabitated, in Town, everything had its place, especially the people. Businesses lined the main roads and subdivisions and houses grew increasingly larger as one moved increasingly away from Down the Bayou. There were fewer churches, and they were not exclusively Catholic. The churches and schools were tucked away near neighborhoods; the people were tucked away in homes or offices. Although many people, like offshore workers, mothers, small business owners and children, regularly stayed outside Down the Bayou, only the unemployed seemed to stay outside in Town, and they were all Black.

I remember the subtle lessons I received on race. Most of them were through my observations; white people don't always have to be told to be carefully taught. Because I travelled from the cusp of Down the Bayou to Town every day to go to school, I frequently passed by neighborhoods that my cousins from Down the Bayou and friends from Town barely noticed. One friend from Town confirmed this suspicion at my ten-year high school reunion in 2006 confirmed this; she confided in me that she had no idea Town had ghettos until she became a police officer. She was appalled at the poverty that was hidden from her for over twenty years, and she did not hesitate to tell me that the color of poverty was Black.

I remember riding the bus to school as a child, and seeing the poor Blacks outside; I remember seeing the same on the ride home. Black poverty looked like run-down buildings and lopsided trailers, like sagging houses and faces and bodies on sagging porches. Even the bayou side sagged more with poor Blacks in front of it. I remember comparing this to Cajun poverty. I was carefully told that Cajuns lived off the land, that Cajuns take pride in their culture of subsistence and self-reliance. When my family left Town and passed through housing projects to

visit my mother's family in New Orleans, I was told that Blacks outside signified laziness, welfare, and dependence. I no longer had to infer.

These experiences from my childhood made the disadvantages of racism and victimhood associated with people of color much easier to see than my whiteness. In fact, when I was growing up, I did not see myself as white. I associated white with people in Town, with people who had more money and had either left behind their Cajun roots or had none at all. I associated white with my teachers, none of whom had a Cajun accent, and with the rich social celebrities of New Orleans. I thought of myself as Cajun instead of white. Largely isolated from the white world, Cajuns resisted assimilation for a longer period of time than most immigrants.

Compulsory education and expanding industry in the region changed all that, though, and by my dad's generation increasingly more Cajuns assimilated. In my dad's family, my grandparents' generation was the first to attend formalized school; my dad's generation was the first to graduate from high school, and my generation was the first to go to college. I was the third cousin to go, the second to finish, and the first to move more than 20 minutes away from the house I was leaving in 1996. Meritocracy was no myth to me at that time (McIntosh, 1990, p. 34). Though my world expanded exponentially during my college years, I did not fully become aware of my whiteness during that time. I still thought of myself racially as Cajun, as other.

After switching my major from business to secondary education in 1998, I delved into my classes. In the fall of 2000 and the spring of 2001 I had an education teacher who very consciously taught her students about social issues. On the very first night of her methods class in the fall, I met Denise for the first time. Denise, whose almost brown skin and long, bronzed, curly, gelled hair composed her Hispanic appearance, stood up during introductions to declare, "I

am Denise, and I am proud to bring the only African American perspective to this class.” Moved by her brazen choice, I immediately admired her and sought her friendship.

Denise and I partnered several times over the methods course but worked together almost all the time during the theory course in the spring. She and I formed a rhythm and a commitment to social justice. We confronted all the “isms” we learned about in complex ways, often leading class discussions. As we spent more and more time together, I started to identify with Denise. We shared stories of adversity growing up. She told me stories illustrating how hard it was for her to be a light-skinned Black person, especially when most of her family was dark-skinned. She felt like an outsider everywhere, and so did I. I told her of how hard it was for me to constantly adapt my identity to the different expectations of Town, Down the Bayou, and New Orleans and how, eventually, I felt like I belonged nowhere. Because I perceived our experiences as being similar, I believed that Denise and I could share similar ways of being in and interpreting the world. I felt like she and I shared an “othered” status. I still had not learned to see my whiteness or my privilege.

I have returned to one night in our theory class again and again over the last ten years wishing I had not been so ignorant of my whiteness at that time. Near the end of the spring semester in 2001, our teacher assigned readings about racism in education. Though our teacher provided greater depth than the typical multicultural gloss associated with many lessons regarding diversity education in America at that time, she did not go so far as to give us a lesson on white privilege either.

Our all-female class had read articles by people of color expressing their experiences of racism in education. The other white females in class systematically denied the claims in these articles. Though I had never experienced any of the claims directly, I remembered stories from

my grandparents that rang with similar truths. Denise, once again the only person of color in the class, tried to use her voice to speak out and claim these experiences as hers; however, she was systematically denied also. I tried to intervene, to help, to speak up for her. Chaos erupted, and Denise ran out of the classroom and onto the balcony outside. I followed.

I stood there with her silently thinking that I understood. I stroked her back and imagined that I shared her sadness. I tried to reassure her, explaining that those girls just could not see outside of their experiences and that their lack of insight had nothing to do with her.

She remained silent, sagging at the rail, her emotions dripping everywhere from her body except from her mouth.

I don't know how long passed before our teacher found us. She asked us some questions about the situation, encouraging us to think about what it means that we were the only two out there while the rest of the class denied not only the experiences in the articles but also the experience happening right then.

Denise and I chose to stay outside for most of the remainder of class. We returned to a more rigid class than before. I felt that I had done the right thing by standing by her.

At that time of the incident, I thought of myself as a compassionate person. I believed that I had stood with my friend against a room full of bigots and racists. At the end of the semester Denise wrote a letter to me. She said that she did not have many white friends, but that she could see my heart was in the right place.

I graduated in 2002 and took my first teaching job believing that my heart was in the right place, and to me that place was grounded in a compassionate commitment to social justice. After almost three years of being a white teacher to about 90% Black students and 10% white students, I still had not accepted my whiteness. In August of 2005 Hurricane Katrina devastated

our region, and my students wanted to host a community forum exploring the racism that had come to the forefront of their observations and lives. After reaching out to and meeting with a mentor of mine, I signed up for my first DOR Original Series to begin in November of 2005.

During Session I: Definitions and Distinctions, I learned that individual prejudice is not the same as racism. We introduced ourselves and discussed examples of injustice to distinguish between prejudice and racism.

“I can see the fear in white women’s eyes when I pass them” one Black male participant shared. “I have even seen a white woman clutch her purse. I’m not going to hurt anybody. But some people react to me like I will. And it’s because I’m a Black male, so I’m a perceived threat. What other reason could there be?”

Well I don’t act like that.

I sat silent in the group, listening, processing, thinking.

“So is that an instance of prejudice or racism?” asked the lead facilitator.

“Well, those people didn’t block my access to any institutional services, so I guess that was just an act of prejudice.”

At the end of the session the co-facilitator introduced the next week’s topic, white privilege. I winced. *Oh my god, we are really going to go there. I’m only white because other people see me that way. I’m really Cajun.* Still, something felt uncomfortable to me. I felt confined by those words, intimidated by the topic. *Besides, I’m not racist or prejudice. I see people for who they are, not for their color.*

“At the beginning of Session II we will take 15 minutes to discuss your observations and experiences regarding race from the week in between sessions. See you next week.”

I left the first dialogue session happy to escape but not wanting to show it. Neither did I want to acknowledge the question penetrating the back of my thoughts—*If I were truly not prejudiced, why did it matter?*

Over the next week I started paying attention, purposefully. And then it happened.

I passed a Black man on the street. I noticed the immediate tension in my body, my initial reaction of looking away, and yes, of clutching my purse closer. I was horrified with myself.

I am not who I think I am.

This realization opened me up to the dialogue process. Once I realized I had much to learn, I opened myself up to that learning. Though I did not quite grasp all of the concepts, I was asked to train as a facilitator after the last session. The facilitators assured me that I would learn more through training and would not have to facilitate until I felt comfortable.

One of my facilitators, Brian, a white male, had mentored me during my undergraduate studies as he was a graduate student at the same university. Nichole, a Black female who was a participant with me in that first DOR, had also mentored me as an undergraduate and served as my student-teaching supervisor. Both Brian and Nichole were doctoral candidates in education at the time, and the three of us decided to collaborate to plan and implement a teen curriculum for DOR in my classroom. My principal, who was a participant in that DOR group also, approved an elective for the spring semester for our curriculum.

As we met to plan, we also dialogued about white privilege and institutional racism. I trusted Brian and Nichole and was very open with them about my interpretations at that time. They were very patient with me, and gradually I peeled back those initial layers to understand that, no matter how I self-identified, the world bestowed on me the privileges associated with

whiteness and that my life was a result of that benefit regardless of the oppression that was only two generations removed.

At that point, I understood why McIntosh wrote the list of advantages for white people in her article “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (McIntosh, 1990, pp. 32-34). As I worked through this understanding, I returned to that moment in my theory class with Denise. Through my reflections and reinterpretations of my classmates’ reactions in terms of the knowledge I gained about white privilege through the dialogue process and written reflection, I could understand why white people need a list of all the things that we cannot readily see. Further, I realized that Denise declared her racial perspective on that first night of class in order to establish her identity for the rest of the class.

Though this realization allowed for me to accept my white privilege and its benefits, I required a much longer time to recognize and accept how entrenched the superiority of whiteness was in me and subsequently in my narratives, including that moment with Denise. I would not realize that I had so deeply embedded the grand narrative of the inferiority of people of color and the reciprocal superiority of white people until reflecting on that moment with Denise while writing this thesis.

Over the course of this research process I participated in several DOR-related events in a variety of roles, and I purposefully wrote about these experiences in my research journal. When I started drafting stories for this chapter, I looked back through these journals. One entry in particular stood out to me about white privilege. As I was reading it several months after writing it along with the draft about Denise, I realized how much more complexly I think about white privilege now than when I first started working through my whiteness.

I wrote the following excerpts from my research journal directly after acting as a facilitator for a group participating in Session II: White Privilege. This dialogue group was greatly divided in their prior progress toward understanding white privilege. Three participants, two of color and one white, had obviously already grappled with and expressed complex understandings of white privilege while the three other participants, all white, had obviously had little to no exposure to this concept before this session. Additionally, one Black participant continuously challenged McIntosh's list of "Daily effects of White Privilege" (McIntosh, 1990, pp. 32-34). At one point the participant said, "I understand that McIntosh was showing advantages to white people, but in this light, Blacks are always the victim. And I am not comfortable with that." The reflection below is based on the dialogue session as a whole but was driven by my wrestling with this statement; I was not comfortable with Blacks being victimized either; however, I recognized the need to expose Black victimization as "the status of normalcy" (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2) to all participants, not just the ones who already see it.

Researcher's Field Notes (April 8, 2014): McIntosh intentionally wrote the list to demonstrate what advantages all white people do or could have despite pockets of people of color who also have some of these advantages. The point is that every white person has every advantage (with extreme exception) on the list whereas some people of color have some advantages on this list...does the fact that some people of color have some experiences indicate transcendence of the system, or does it indicate a more intricate system than we can see?...

Because American status quo is determined by white privilege, conversations about race typically reflect the disadvantages for people of color. Thus, these conversations indicate little to no agency for people of color. Simultaneously, these conversations focused on the disadvantages of people of color exclude the advantaged agency of white people. Regardless of how much

agency any individual of color or of whiteness might enact, America's status quo perpetuates two contradictory narratives: all men are created equal, and people of color are disadvantaged...If conversations regarding race in the status quo always revolve around people of color being at a disadvantage and are simultaneously absent of the advantages for white people, then the status quo creates a "compassionate" white interpretation of people of color as the disadvantaged agentless who need help. It also creates the "uncompassionate" interpretation of people of color as a threat...Though neither of these is truly "better," both of these perceptions are uninformed and privileged, and our national narratives tell us that to be "compassionate" is better than to perceive a threat...Therefore, many whites act from a place that they think is compassion, but it is uninformed condescension. Meanwhile people of color do enact their agency, but are storied in terms of the white narrative—except in spaces like Dialogue on Race...

White guilt kept coming up among the participants. People were resistant to it; they didn't want it to be necessary. White guilt, though unnecessary in the long run, is inevitable at first. White guilt is not terminal. It is the impetus for whites to accept unintentional culpability and to choose to act in a newly informed compassion or to reject it, to maintain the status quo...

After rereading this entry, my mind jumped back to that night on the balcony with Denise. I re-interpreted that moment through these new insights. I realized that, at the time of the original experience, I believed that my agency was best used by "helping" Denise. What I could not see at that time was the condescension in my perceived compassion. As I wrote in the above "Researcher's Field Notes (April 8, 2014)":

If the conversations regarding race in the status quo always revolve around people of color being at a disadvantage and are simultaneously absent of the advantages for white people, then the status quo creates a 'compassionate' white interpretation of people of color as the disadvantaged agentless who need help.

Additionally, I wrote, “Regardless of how much agency any individual of color or of whiteness might enact, America’s status quo perpetuates two contradictory narratives: all men are created equal, and people of color are disadvantaged.” Though I was not aware of this belief at the time of the event, I viewed my friend as disadvantaged. In other words, I viewed this situation as her problem, not a White Problem.

Almost fifteen years after that moment at the rail with Denise, while writing this thesis, I went back to Denise’s letter. As I reread it, I thought of that night in class, and then I thought about all the things I had written to create this project. As I reread “Chapter One: Definitions and Distinctions” of this thesis, the following statements resonated with the same confinement and intimidation I experienced in my first DOR session when learning of white privilege:

What is my purpose? Am I exploiting people of color by reporting on this subject matter? I want to eliminate racism, not replicate it through my “research”... I did not think to consider the inequitable power relationships between myself and the students and pre-service teachers...I did not recognize the superiority that these approaches assigned to me and the reciprocal inferiority they assigned to my participants...Further, I did not realize that these approaches reified the unjust practices that I work to dismantle through DOR... I stared at that superiority in a multitude of old and new ways simultaneously, and started to question my motives... Was I acting from the situation of “a good white”?

And then I thought of Denise’s silence on the rail as I read her letter telling me that my heart was in the right place. I thought of that situation in a whole new light. I thought of how I missed my chance to witness for her. I thought of how kind she was to me despite my ignorance. I thought of how I was just as bad as, if not worse than, the girls who remained in the classroom that night that she ran out. At least those girls claimed their superiority. I denied it. Worse, I imagined that I could empathize with her. I had won my “good White people medal” (Hayes & Juarez, 2009 as cited in Hayes, Juarez, Witt, & Hartlep, 2013).

Initially overcome with guilt, I again returned to my writing in the above field notes:

White guilt kept coming up among the participants. People were resistant to it; they didn't want it to be necessary. White guilt, though unnecessary in the long run, is inevitable at first. White guilt is not terminal. It is the impetus for whites to accept unintentional culpability and to choose to act in a newly informed compassion or to reject it, to maintain the status quo.

At this point in my re-interpretation, I realized the deeply cyclical nature of working through whiteness and white privilege. With each new level of awareness, I now anticipate experiencing new forms of guilt and new lines of inquiry. With this I now recognize my next line of inquiry, and it began in May of 2014 when I co-facilitated an Advanced Dialogue with Maxine.

Maxine is a co-founder of Dialogue on Race, a woman of color, and my most influential mentor and colleague in working toward dismantling racism. I have looked up to Maxine as a model for living with the purpose of eliminating racism as she has been living with this purpose her entire adult life. Maxine's stories of her contributions to integration in our region and her role in creating and sustaining DOR as well as her continuous coaching through inquiry have contributed to my growth as a person, teacher, facilitator, and activist. Of all of my DOR colleagues, Maxine has been most instrumental to my changing interpretations of whiteness, white privilege, and institutional racism.

During the last session of the Advanced DOR that she and I co-facilitated, the white participants expressed disgust and sadness with the ways white people have built and sustained a racial hierarchy in the United States. While some white participants were overwhelmed with guilt, others focused on the institutional implications raised by the film.

"This is just depressing," Sarah, a white female shared. "I feel physically hurt."

"I just didn't know," admitted Claire, another white female.

"It's a lack of education for all of us," added Lucy, a Black female participant.

“Well, it’s hidden in plain sight,” explained Eric, a white male. “Not everyone is aware, and institutions themselves are a big part of the problem.”

“It’s all there,” said Sandra, another white female. “I went back and looked at my college books, and it is all there. I just didn’t see it. Was I dumb?”

“None of you are dumb,” I replied, “You just did not know how to question the information you were given. But now you do. So let’s examine the institution of housing. How does what you learned from the video apply to your life or other’s lives today?”

“Well, the housing bubble still exists today,” shared Eric. “I live in a mixed neighborhood, but there is talk among some white families of how this once prominent neighborhood will be the next to be depleted in this area. They are considering moving to another neighborhood because of that fear.”

“So let’s unpack that,” I prompted.

“It all just makes me feel so guilty!” revealed Sarah. “We don’t see what we do. We don’t see the horrible repercussions of our actions. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do.”

Maxine asked, “What would happen if the white families in that neighborhood knew the consequences of their actions? What if they knew that they were going to create depleted neighborhoods by moving out? Would they stay? Would white people make those decisions if they knew that racism oppresses white people too?”

Though I am almost positive Maxine has said this in previous dialogues, I was finally ready to hear her and grapple with these statements because I was going through the process of realizing consequences of my past actions that I had never previously been able to consider. I too was questioning my experiences in terms of new information. Finally, I heard Maxine. White people are oppressed by racism too.

By revealing these stories, it has become clearer to me that whiteness, especially “compassionate” or liberal whiteness, not only maintains the invisibility of white privilege, but also maintains the invisibility of white oppression. In other words, whiteness maintains the “status of normalcy” (Hayes et al., 2013 p. 3) that racism is oppressive only to people of color and only advantageous to whites. However, as I continue this work toward disrupting whiteness and eliminating racism, I will continue autoethnographic research exploring the oppressiveness of white privilege for whites. Instead of framing inquiry regarding white privilege only in terms of the advantages for white people and the disadvantages for people of color, I will expand this frame to include the disadvantages for white people.

CHAPTER THREE: UNDERSTANDING INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

My family sold my grandmother’s house without telling me after she died. I didn’t know that my last time in her house *was* my last time in her house. I wanted closure in lieu of a flighty memory; I thought that I would be able to swap stories with my family at least one more time in that house. I wanted to purposefully provide a final etching of those stories told more than twice into the house’s structures. My grandmother died nine years ago this past October 6, 2014. It doesn’t feel like nine years since she passed. It certainly doesn’t feel like more than two decades since our weekly visits ended. Those Sunday afternoons still feel like yesterday.

“You want some mo’ coffee *sha*?” Ma Ma asked. Ma Ma Cye was notorious for making such strong coffee that spoons struggled to integrate creamer and sweetener into the bitter black.

“I’ll have one more, but that’s it for today.”

“Des, did I ever tell you ‘bout dat teacher, dat one when I was little who tought she was better than everybody?”

“Yes, but tell me again.”

“We had dis one teacher, Des,” Ma Ma began, “and she jus’ tought she was better den everybody else. I mean she jus’ really looked down on us, specially ‘cause she didn’ know no French, and she was scared we were talking about her.” After a little pause while sipping her coffee she added, “And we were.”

She then raised her trickster eyebrows behind her next sip to let me know who the smart people in that classroom really were. She continued, “So one day she had on dis fancy dress. I mean too fancy to wear in dat classroom dere, but dat’s what she wore dat day. A fancy blue dress wit all kinds of layers under the skirt and a big, huge bow in the back.

“Now back den we didn’ have no indoor plumbin’. So we was carrying on while she was trying to teach and she got real mad. We was jus’ giggling on the inside, trying not to let it show in the outside. I guess she got so mad she needed a break, so she went to de outhouse.

“She was dere a long time and when she came back it smelled awful. Ooooh! It smelled. She kept looking around at us, sniffing around da room. As she walked around, we saw dat dere on her bow was a big smear of—you know—poop. She hadn’t cleaned herself all de way. So here she was, in our class, sniffing around and not saying a word. We were all laughin’ and pointin’ as quiet as we could. Eventually, she realized what she had done, and I guess she realized dat dress was too fancy to come to school in too cause we never saw her in it again.”

After another long sip of coffee with more solemn eyes she would end with, “You know, Des, I tink she learned some humility dat day. I don’t remember her treatin’ us so bad after dat. She even stopped making us speak English at recess after dat.”

During my second year of college I realized that my love of hearing and telling stories was rooted in listening to and telling stories at my grandmother’s house. I also realized that I wanted to combine my love for learning with my love of telling and listening to stories, so I

switched my major to secondary English education. Delving into my new curriculum, I chose an anthropology class that focused on culture and folklore. As we read stories and learned about different cultures, I missed home. I missed going to Ma Ma's every Sunday. I missed listening to her stories; no one listened to me the way Ma Ma Cyé listened to me.

Toward the end of the semester my folklore teacher let us choose projects, so I chose to read a book of Cajun folktales from Louisiana. Hoping to cure my homesickness through my education, I instead experienced the one story I never shared with Ma Ma Cyé.

While reading this book, I came across a story about a teacher who thought she was better than everyone else. I read my grandmother's words in a book recorded by another narrator. This story belonged to all Cajuns, and was about a cultural clash between teacher and students. This was the beginning of a long journey of reconciling academic and cultural identities

As I progressed in my education program, I returned to this story to form my teaching philosophy. This story represented for me all the things that I did not want to be as a teacher. She represented oppression to my grandmother; she looked down on her language, her behavior, her culture, her dress. The teacher in this story did not appreciate the values of Cajuns. When thinking of the teacher from my grandmother's perspective, the perspective that I inherited, I did not even consider the intentions of the teacher. Her intentions were inconsequential.

However, when I reflect on this story and this teacher at this point in my life, I purposefully imagine her intentions. I imagine that teacher as a young white girl whose eyes radiated with the hope of changing the world, or at least her corner of it. I imagine that she meant to do well, to educate the poor, backwards, Cajun children. Maybe she did not even really think of them as poor and backwards—just in need of an education. Only now can I see that, on the

one hand, these intentions matter greatly, and on the other, these intentions are inconsequential in an entirely different way than I had perceived before.

From my grandmother's perspective, her intentions did not matter at all. The teacher treated my grandmother and her classmates as though they were inferior. Whether she knew it or not, that teacher demanded whiteness from Cajuns. And that story was so important to our culture that it became a folktale passed down like a legacy.

Ironically, now, I recognize that I was more like her than I was aware of early in my career. When I first started teaching I was on fire with a commitment to social justice. Certified in English, social studies, and business education, I took my first job as a social studies teacher at a tiny alternative school in a primarily Black district. The school was made up of about 90% Black students and 10% White students. My second year I taught four different classes over seven periods: World Geography, Intro to Career, Drama, and Civics. Though I had only about 75 students, I struggled with teaching these very different subject areas as a new teacher.

With only one planning period and four preps, I strategically planned independent activities for one class at a time to give me more time to plan and grade. While teaching improvisation to my drama class of all Black students, I incorporated episodes of *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (Hatrick Productions, Warner Bros. Television, and Riverside Productions, producers, 2004), a contemporary television show that broadcast actors engaging in improvisation games. I had planned for students to independently watch an episode for the first 45 minutes of class and take notes on the games. Then, for the last 10 minutes of class, I planned to lead a discussion gaging the students' interests in the games and their observations of how the actors played them. Unfortunately, I planned to repeat this lesson Monday-Thursday and wait until Friday to have students play the games they liked.

“Man, I’m so tired of this show!” Donald said as he entered class that Wednesday.

“What’s going on?” I asked as I motioned for him to stand by me at the door.

“I’m just tired of this show. I don’t want to watch it anymore.”

Donald and I had a good relationship. I also taught him world geography. I tried to win him over, “Well, it’s already Wednesday; there’s just two more episodes left. Besides, who doesn’t want to watch TV in class, huh?” I smiled and nudged his elbow.

“Whatever, Mrs. Cooper.”

I thought maybe he was just having a bad day. I sat at my desk to get my work done. Looking back, I realize that I did not really listen to him at that moment as much as I tried to convince him to cooperate.

Not long into the show, he exploded. Now his frustration went public.

“Mrs. Cooper, I’m tired of this show! I told you I can’t watch it anymore.”

“Yeah, Mrs. Cooper. Me too,” others chimed in.

The betrayal, disrespect, and overall overwhelming feeling of the responsibilities of teaching jumped out of my mouth, “I spent a lot of time planning this and recording these episodes. We will get to play the games Friday. I planned this lesson so that you all could have a fun break this week and so that I could have some time.” *Why don’t they appreciate this lesson? Why are they so needy? Don’t they know I care? I thought I had a good relationship with these kids, especially Donald! What is going on with these kids?* “I just need time! I just need some time to grade. Can you please, please, just give me today and tomorrow?”

“No,” Donald retorted. “I can’t watch Wayne Brady do one more thing! I can’t stand it! Write me up so I can get out of here!”

“Fine.” I replied as my face flushed with the crimson heat of embarrassment, anger, and failure. I would like to say that it flushed with ignorance, but ignorance never shows itself in the moment. You only know it looking back.

Looking back I acknowledge that I had absolutely no ability to process what Donald was trying to tell me. I had no capacity for understanding that my students might not like the way that Wayne Brady, a Black performer, “talks white” and “acts white.” I had absolutely no consideration for their reactions to him. And in looking back, I surmise that, though I had the best intentions in the world, my results did not yield social or racial justice.

After realizing that I did not yield the results I intended, I thought back to a fundamental ideology that DOR advocates: in terms of institutional racism, results matter, not intentions. In other words, intentions, like those of Ma Ma’s teacher or Miss Katie or me, are inconsequential when evaluating the results of institutional racism. During this writing process I wrote the following excerpt analyzing the all-white pre-service teacher representation in the October-November 2013 DOR group in order to process these concepts:

Barndt and Ruehle (1992) state that “an institutions ‘foundations’ relate to its stated or underlying purposes, its historical traditions, its foundational spiritual and moral teachings, and its financial undergirding” (p. 168). The authors further explain that, “If any of these are affected by racism, the structures, practices, policies, and personnel of the institution will also be affected” (p. 168). I interpreted this particular instance of homogenous racial groups of students and teachers as a manifestation of the “historical traditions” of the education system.

Historically, the American institution of education denied or limited access to people of color through various forms of legislation, policy, and practice. This systematic denial in conjunction with legal attempts to dismantle racism that do not consider or address the

disparities created by the systematic denial has resulted in “indirect racism.” One example of this indirect racism is the occurrence of mostly white teachers in positions of authority over mostly students of color...Further, Barndt and Ruehle (1992) use the exact incident of “predominately white” teachers teaching in “a multiracial community” as an example of structural institutional racism. They state, “It is a structural issue if the staff or leadership of a multiracial community or institution is predominately white and does not represent proportionately its membership—teachers in a school system...and others in a variety of institutional settings” (p. 168).

The concept of intentions complicates the interpretation of this phenomenon even further. As I continued to research I found an example of historical influences on education that almost mirror the results of education today. In “Learning to Take the Bullet and More,” Brenda Juarez (2013), a white teacher of undergraduate education students, discusses how white educators’ actions after the Civil War did not yield results congruent with their intentions:

I’m thinking, for example, how W. E. B. DuBois (1935, 1973) and Carter G. Woodson (1933/2000), among others, astutely noted that the education many of the helpers and friends of the race from the North and elsewhere after the Civil War were providing to Black children amounted, in reality, to a form of educational slavery. With plenty of warm feelings of racial good will to spread around, these so-called friends of the race were very effectively preparing Black children and youth to take their places as second class citizens within a supposedly democratic nation based on colorblind, race-neutral ideals of equality and justice (p. 37).

Through this passage I discovered the intricate relationship between the intentions and results of good-willed white people, the intentions and results of institutions, and the foundations of whiteness in both of these.

After writing these stories and revisiting “Mississippi: A Self Portrait,” I was horrified all over again to see myself *and* Ma Ma’s holier-than-thou teacher in Miss Katie as she told me through the camera that her intentions to open the “Negro” recreation center “came from a need

to show suffering, neglected people that someone cared” (DeFelitta, 1966). I felt immediately ashamed as I recognized this attitude fueling my thoughts and reactions in the story about Donald—and I felt even more horrified when I questioned whether I would feel that way if I were teaching mostly white students.

As I continued to watch “Mississippi: A Self Portrait” (DeFelitta, 1966), I found insight into the complex relationship between intentions and institutional results in a segment on economics. The following section represents a dialogue between the film and my thoughts. The documentary scenes are recounted below each figure in regular typeface followed by my italicized thoughts.

A white man seated behind a desk discusses Mississippi’s “economic problem,” a large portion of Negro laborers with no market for their services because machines provide cheaper labor. He stated that Black families remain on former plantations, like his own. “We actually no longer need them in our operation” he explains, “but I think, quite obviously, if someone who has been born in a place and has worked for you or your family for a generation or two, that they can’t be asked to move on” (DeFelitta, 1966, 20:04).

This man behind the desk associates Mississippi’s economic problem as a Black problem, but it is a problem that whites created through slavery and Jim Crow. When I wrote about Donald, I treated him and his classmates in the same manner. I thought they were the problem because I did not have the capacity or the responsibility to see the results in class that day as my problem. Does this mean I carry out institutional racism as a teacher?

In a voice-over, the reporter points out the “paternalism tinged with guilt,” of this Southern structure, “an outgrowth of the slave-master relationship requiring subservience of the

slave” that motivates white people to “care for” the Negro as the camera pans across art depicting field slaves then zooms in on the slave master (DeFelitta, 1966, 21:08).

Ugh. In that moment with Donald and his class, I repeatedly attempted to achieve Donald’s and his classmates’ “subservience” and framed it as care. How can I ever genuinely care for someone if I cannot authentically listen? My lack of awareness prevented me from being able to act the way I perceived myself to be, blocked my ability to hear and respond to my students, and in effect privileged me over them, yielding the opposite of my intentions. Further, how do I reconcile my desire for compliance from students with my desire for social justice?

Continuing the voice-over, the reporter introduces the next scene. He tells the viewer that a white plantation manager has “insisted” that the crew go into the homes of “his Negro field hands so that all could see, and he hoped, finally understand.”

This desire of the plantation manager for others, namely white others, to “see and finally understand,” signifies to me that whiteness gets to name “the status of normalcy.” (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2). In other words, the plantation manager believes he can establish some “truth” or “reality” with proof rather than acknowledge someone else’s experience. That is the exact tactic I took in class. I tried to convince my students that my plans were good for all of us despite their experiences, perceptions, and observations.

In a close-up shot of his face, the plantation manager declares his intentions to contrast the tenants who have ended up “in good shape” with those who have “been here with me 23 years and in the same shape he was 23 years ago” (DeFelitta, 1966, 21:22). Then, as the plantation manager guides the camera crew through his land, he describes the first tenant, Moe Stewart, as “a good timer” who “has lived well and has plenty” (De Felitta, 1966).

The manager says, “Moe, these men want to look through your house.” Moe complies, and the ensuing exchange between Moe and the plantation manager display the subtleties of power in their relationship. For instance, though Moe shows the manager and the crew the entrance, the plantation manager says, “You open the door,” softly at first, then repeats the command more assertively (DeFelitta, 1966, 22:00). After a few additional exchanges indicating the power dynamics between the men, the plantation manager tells his tenant, Moe Stewart, “We’re trying to show these people, uh, how you can live if you work for it.”

Just like the plantation manager, I initially “politely” coerced Donald in order to “win him over,” but then I got more assertive when he did not so quickly or consistently comply the way Moe does. I was shocked by Donald’s non-compliance; I thought of him in the same way the plantation manager thought of Moe, as a deserving person who respected me. I thought I had a good relationship with Donald, but what kind of relationship is good only as long as the power dynamics tilt in my favor? As soon as he tried to claim his own power, I could not handle it. I wonder how many other times I acted this way and just don’t remember?

After several repetitive exchanges, the camera again cuts to the plantation manager walking through his property to the contrasting tenant’s house. The plantation manager walks in the front door without any greeting and says, “Louella, come out here. I want to show them the inside of your house” (DeFelitta, 1966, 24:45). Louella complies; the scene continues:

Plantation Manager: I want to show them the difference in the house form over here and your house, and I just want, would like for them to hear you say just why you don’t have the chickens and hogs and cows and the yard and the butane gas and the things like that that the others have. Now you just tell them in your own words.

Louella: Well, the reason I think I don’t, y’know, be in good shape like the rest of ‘em—

PM: Talk louder

L: My husband don’t stay at home to help. Just, and I stay here and do the very best I can. I have the desire to have hogs, chicken and gas, convenient—

PM: Well, you have that (*over Louella’s “convenient”*)

L: Convenient to my home (DeFelitta, 1966, 25:26)

After a few repetitive exchanges, the plantation manager reminds Louella of how much he cares for her

PM: Now you been under me I'd say 30 years

L: Yes, sir. More.

PM: And I knew your dad. Have I ever tried to help you?

L: Yes, sir. You really tried to help me be, and for us to try to have something.

PM: You can tell 'em about whether I instruct you right or not, can't you? You tell 'em how, well, what I do about trying to get your men folks to help you. (The camera cuts to who is presumably Louella's daughter; see Figure 6).

L: Yes, Sir. You tried. (Camera cuts to close up on presumed daughter).

PM: Well, I think you gonna have to bear down a little harder. (Camera cuts to infant in bed, presumably Louella's daughter or granddaughter).

L: Yes, sir. That's right. (Camera fades to black; DeFelitta, 1966, 26:10).

I'm feeling exhausted seeing myself in these people. I wanted Donald and his classmates to believe that I knew best, that I "tried to instruct [them] right." But when I saw Louella's daughter—when I saw her sagging face, hair, clothes, body—I thought of how whiteness does not only oppress but depress. And then, that ominous shot of the baby! That child is likely close to fifty years old today, still living with this legacy, just as the camera indicates. The plantation manager's brand of social justice is a large part of the White Problem. How many times have I tried to convince others—white or of color—into compliance? How many times have I storied my students or others just because I can? How many times did I replicate this without knowing?

"I just don't know why he won't believe me," said Sarah, a white participant in the Advanced DOR I facilitated in May 2014. "I just, I know better now, and I want him to know better too. How am I going to fight racism if I can't convince my own grandson that his views are just wrong?! I was a teacher for over 25 years. That's what I do. I share my new knowledge!"

Maxine said, "We didn't tell you that you were wrong. We asked you questions. We presented you with new information, and asked you questions."

In Sarah's voice, I heard me, Ma Ma's teacher, Miss Katie, the "friends of the race" educators (DuBois in Juarez), and the plantation manager. I have to constantly question my intentions in this work; even though intentions don't matter when evaluating the results of racism, they do matter when evaluating the causes. Though it has been painful and guilt-ridden, unraveling these internalized oppressive structures has helped me to take responsibility for the "White Problem" rather than just feeling depressed or guilty or angry about it.

CHAPTER FOUR: STRUGGLE AND TRANSFORMATION

Though the subtitle "Struggle and Transformation" in Session IV of DOR's Original Series refers to King's struggle to transform the institutional foundations and structures of this country, I have discovered through this autoethnographic process that part of my work to dismantle racism as a white person includes personal struggle and personal transformation. This became particularly evident to me as I wrote and reflected on the stories in these chapters and on my experiences in DOR.

I had not yet gone through DOR when Donald and I engaged in our power struggle narrated in the previous chapter of this thesis. Though that incident inspired me to create "Get Right," a classroom system that diffuses hierarchical power structures by allowing flexibility in participation through increased possibilities in student choice, I did not yet realize how race played into that hierarchy. Though I knew my students perceived me as white, I still perceived myself as "Cajun" at that time.

Growing up, Cajuns were not white to me. Cajuns never measured up to the expectations of the status quo; and honestly, most Cajuns were very proud of that. I incorporated that mindset

into my identity. I was proud to be Cajun; the only problem was that I had to *tell* people I was Cajun. In other words, my actions reflected the status quo while my beliefs reflected what I considered a minority status. I assumed that discrimination against Cajuns, because I viewed us as minorities, was at least comparable to, if not the same as, discrimination against people of color. Through continued dialogue and reflection, I have learned that, if I am discriminated against because of my Cajun ethnicity, that discrimination does not compare to the institutional racism imposed on people of color.

While reflecting on these thoughts while writing for this project, I re-learned that I can step in and out of identifications while people of color cannot. For example, I can identify as Cajun when convenient or white when convenient. When considering this, I thought again of Denise, my friend from college who declared her African American racial identity on the first night of class. She knew that the all-white class would perceive her as Hispanic based on her skin color; therefore, she chose to publically identify herself. She had an awareness that I would not gain until over a decade later; she knew that people assign meaning to race.

My experiences in this last year while researching my transformations through DOR have reinforced that I must continuously struggle to transform my whiteness. For example, though I had already acknowledged that “Cajun” is not a race but an ethnicity by the time I participated in an Advanced DOR in February of 2014, I gained a more sophisticated understanding of my initial perception that Cajuns did not belong to the white race while watching “Episode 3: The House We Live In” (Smith, Adelman, & California News Reel, 2003) in preparation for Advanced DOR Session IV.

To illustrate my viewing experience, I have formatted the section below as a dialogue between the film and my thoughts. Film descriptions and excerpts are in regular typeface while my thoughts are in italics:

In a segment on immigration, the narrator describes white perceptions of immigrants in the early 1900's: "Like Mexicans and African Americans, Italians, Slavs, and Jews were often desired as laborers—but also feared, seen as promiscuous, lazy, or stupid" (Smith et al., 2003, DVD Scene 3). *Growing up, I associated the narrator's description of white's disdain and arrogance toward immigrants with whiteness, not Cajuns. Further, when I was growing up, the status quo still characterized Cajuns as promiscuous, lazy, and stupid.*

Historian Mae Ngai adds an historical perspective:

Some historians have suggested that these new immigrant groups from Europe, uh, were 'in-between peoples,' they were in transitional stage. When compared to, uh, Anglo Saxon Protestants, groups such as Italians, um, or Jews were seen as not being fully white perhaps, but when compared to African Americans, or when compared to Asians, um, their whiteness became more salient, became more visible. (Smith et al., 2003, DVD Scene 3)

Yes! This is it—this is why I saw Cajuns as neither white nor of color. We were in a "transitional stage" on the racial hierarchy. That is why I conceived of Cajun as its own race.

Just after, the narrator asks, "Could European ethnics become fully white, and thus fully American?" *I was still asking myself this question when I started DOR in 2005. I did not accept, or even see, my family's assimilation, especially because not every person in my family or circle of friends assimilated. My dad made specific housing and educational choices for his family and career choices for himself and his family that assimilated more into white middle class than some of our other family members or friends. However, he also maintained his Cajun identity. I learned from him how to step in and out of identities.*

Later in the film, historian Matthew Jacobson adds,

There's this whole very standard narrative of the European mobility model. We came here with nothing. We worked hard. We, we pulled ourselves up by our bootstraps. And it's offered up as proof of the openness of the American economic order (Smith et al., 2003, DVD Scene 8).

How many times do I have to see myself? I thought I had worked through this, but it feels like the first time I'm hearing it again. No one withheld citizenship from my ancestors. No one stopped my grandfather from trading his lifestyle of subsistence for a manual labor career in the oil field. No one stopped my father from choosing a corporate career over manual labor. Sure, our family maintained resilience in the face of hardships, but that was not the only reason we have been successful.

I have been successful because I learned how to navigate the standards of the status quo. Over the course of this last year, standards have come up more and more in dialogue. I am not sure if I am hearing it more now than before or if more people are talking about it now than before. Either way, whiteness setting the standard, or the "status of normalcy" (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 2) has been at the forefront of my thoughts in this past year.

"What are the stories we tell about race?" asked Maxine. She was the lead facilitator for Session III of an Advanced DOR I participated in during March of 2014. "Where do you see the story we tell? In which institutions? How do you see the story we tell in these institutions?"

"Well," I began, "If the story we tell is that people of color are inferior, then students of color have to prove that they are actually learning. How will we know if they are actually learning? Through standardized tests. What happens when those students fail and prove that they are inferior? First, cut the funding to the school, then after repeated failure, close the school."

"Why are the students failing? Is it because they are inferior? If it isn't, then why?" probed Maxine.

“They are not inferior. It’s the standardized testing. It requires standardized knowledge. And if knowledge is going to be standardized it has to reflect the dominant ideology—the status quo. And racially, in this country, the status quo is whiteness. The kids aren’t inferior in intelligence. They are not choosing answers that reflect whiteness.”

Three months later I facilitated an Advanced Dialogue with Maxine. Again, during Session III, Lucy, a Black parent of a child in the same public school district in which I teach, said, “The education system implements all these tests set by standards determined by others—you know, Black people don’t write these tests—we’ve never been on an equal educational field. And now we have these white standards imposed on children who are Black and Brown—but only in public schools. Only in public schools do they have to prove—private schools don’t have these same standards. Why? It is a structural perpetuation of racism.”

After that session, I thanked her for her comment. I told her how reassuring it was to hear a parent confirm my suspicions. We talked about how impossible it feels to change the system. We talked about how we keep banging our heads against the wall just to wake up and do it again.

Our conversation got me thinking. I went home and did some writing right after our conversation. Thinking about King’s call for “fundamental transformation of the political and economic structures of this society” (Harding in DORLA, 2013, p. 48), I wrote the following:

Juarez (2013) states, “Whites who refuse to challenge the true structural, institutional, and societal causes of inequity are as culpable of racist practices as are those who deny perpetuating these practices” (p. 44). Though I challenge these practices to some extent in my classroom, I by no means have yet to challenge these practices in other institutional levels of education. Honestly, I am not sure I know how. I have so many things to consider when deciding how to resist unjust practices beyond my teaching practices.

Do I refuse to proctor standardized testing? Do I campaign for parents to opt out of testing? Do I refuse to teach using the specific objectives outlined for me and my students even though my evaluation, and consequently my pay, depends partially on fulfilling this teacher-related objective? In the long run, would any of these tactics do any good, especially if I am the only person carrying them out?

Then, I remembered back to the second action King calls for to end racism. Vincent Harding says, “King said the way you deal with racism is to find a common vision that will join you together” (in DORLA, 2013, p. 48). And I have learned that I cannot join people of color in the fight unless I struggle through and transform my whiteness.

CHAPTER FIVE: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Just before I turned 12, my dad made a business deal. With the help of a silent partner who had made a ridiculous amount of money making pipes for oil wells, my dad purchased the car dealership he had worked at since he was 18.

“I can’t buy it just yet,” my dad said. “I have to comply with some Affirmative Action policy. I got to put it on an availability list to offer it up for minorities to purchase before I can finalize the deal.”

“What?!” I was so angry, “You worked so hard for that! They are going to make you put it up for sale before you buy it? That does not make any sense.”

“Well, it’s the way it is. And the guy who told me about it said it’s just a formality anyway. Nobody ever makes a move on the list, but they have to publish the list.”

“Still,” I said, “If we are all created equal, then why would you have to offer what you worked so hard for to somebody who didn’t put any effort into it?”

That guy that told my dad about the list turned out to be right. Not a single person responded to the posting.

I never had much contact with affirmative action after that—at least not that I have been aware of—until DOR. Even with my knowledge gained through DOR, affirmative action has always been the most difficult racial topic for me. Actually, I feel like the first time I got a solid understanding of affirmative action happened within this last year.

In August of 2013, Bobby, a Black male, Vietnam War veteran, activist, and an influential mentor and colleague to me, co-facilitated a Youth Dialogue with me between August and October of 2013. Though I have facilitated with him numerous times, I felt like I heard the following analogy that he told during Session V of that Youth Dialogue for the first time.

Bobby said to the group, “Imagine there is a race. Now imagine that all the white people in the race had free use of both legs, but the people of color have one leg tied. Now after a couple laps, imagine how great the difference will be in the two groups. After a few more laps, untie each leg, but don’t do anything else. No one can cut across the field; the white players don’t have to stop. What happens?”

After hearing this analogy, I revisited my dad’s situation. I didn’t realize it at the time, but that silent partner’s investment was a form of affirmative action for my dad. In fact, my dad had numerous privileges that I just did not see at the time. These occurrences were at the backdrop of our lives: there were no owners of color, no managers of color, no salesman of color. Instead, the white owners chose from white salesman when they needed a new manager, and there were only white managers to offer the dealership to when they were ready to sell. There weren’t even mechanics of color—the black men that worked at the dealership only washed cars. Where was the threat that I perceived in that moment? Sure the availability list was published beyond the dealership’s geographic area, but how many places were all that different?

When no one did respond to the listing, I interpreted that as a good thing at the time. The threat had been avoided. Unaware of the analogy, I assumed that people of color were not qualified or not willing to take on the responsibility. After learning the analogy, I can see that people of color had not caught up yet—we were still not all equal. But that was almost 25 years ago. What about affirmative action now?

An exchange between Bobby and a participant in the pre-service teachers’ dialogue between October and November of 2013 provided insight for me in regard to affirmative action.

Becky, a white female, said, “I see how the implementation of affirmative action is a white privilege thing. You know, just the fact that we can say, ‘Oh, yeah, wait—Let me try to

make up for my sins.’ Well, who implemented it? White people implemented affirmative action. I mean as far as I know there were no Black higher-ups that would have implemented it.”

Bobby and I looked at each other. We both had to digest this for a moment.

“Well, yes, the powers that be would have had to agree to the terms and then implement it. Bobby, do you have anything to add?” I know this topic is my weakness.

Bobby said, “I’ve never heard anyone say that affirmative action was of white privilege, but that is dead on. I immediately thought of integration when you said that, and I was closely involved in that in this region. Whereas white people saw it as integration, Black people saw it as desegregation. And so, when it came to implementing it, of course the powers that be get to implement it, and it was with white privilege. Not only was integration implemented by whites, but so was affirmative action. You’re dead on...and one more thing... We felt like integration was set up to fail in this region and that’s why we’re still dealing with it 50 years later. So now I have to wonder if affirmative action is the same way.”

This exchange gave me new lenses for seeing the White Problem before I learned its name. I wrote in my research journal in November:

Many whites interpret the *de facto* results of *de jure* measures as a reification of the myths of inferior/superior races, meritocracy, and colorblind/post-racial society that Whiteness depends on to maintain superiority and institutional racism. Therefore, many of white America’s attempts to address institutional racism, though based on good intentions, have produced results that perpetuate racism rather than dismantle it.

After reading about the White Problem while conducting research for this thesis in December, I opened myself up to new interpretations of racism and heard so many things for what seemed like the first time. I felt much like Sandra must have during our exchange Sandra in an Advanced Dialogue that I referred to in Chapter Two of this thesis:

“It’s all there,” said Sandra, another white female. “I went back and looked at my college books, and it is all there. I just didn’t see it. Was I dumb?”

“None of you are dumb,” I replied, “You just did not know how to question the information you were given. But now you do.”

Once I knew how to question the White Problem, I saw increasingly more instances *to* question. In various pieces of writing, I questioned how whiteness shaped policies and legislation addressing education. I questioned busing and determined that transporting kids of color into white neighborhoods was an institutional change founded in whiteness. I questioned why education’s funding policy rewards schools that perform well on standardized tests with money while punishing failing schools by withholding money and eventually closing the school. I questioned why I could not identify a single white neighborhood that had to close a school in our area, but could list several schools that had closed in Black neighborhoods in our region. I questioned why more people don’t question policy rather than schools, teachers, or students. I questioned why conversations about race tend to revolve around the players and not the game. I questioned the motivation for standards and standardized testing in education, and I questioned their link to whiteness.

All these questions are sub-questions to ones that I posed in Chapter One of this thesis:

Over the course of this inquiry I continuously returned to a question that Tamboukou poses in *Doing Narrative Research*: “How has our present been constituted in ways that seem natural and undisputable to us, but are only the effects of certain historical, social, cultural, political, and economic configurations?” (Andrews et al., 2013, p. 88). In other words, how can we see what is invisible? How can we name the status quo when it is the backdrop of our lives?

I return to whiteness as “the status of normalcy” that contributes to the White Problem in the next section. The following regular typeface lines are from the Preface of this thesis, and the italicized lines are my thoughts in terms of affirmative action from this moment of writing:

This “status of normalcy” is how the status quo maintains that racism is a problem for people of color, not a “White problem” (DuBois, 1940/1968 and Wright, 1957 cited in Hayes & Hartlep, 2013, pp. 4-6). *This section is grounded in this statement.*

In other words, narratives expressing individual success based on meritorious values and choices “[assume] the status of normalcy.” *If affirmative action is not based on merit, but preference, quotas, mandates, set-asides, and other means instead, then people who benefit from affirmative action will not be accepted into the status of normalcy. The status of normalcy perpetuates the contradictory belief that, on the one hand, if people of color have values, then they can prosper in a meritocracy, while on the other hand, people of color mostly get jobs because of affirmative action. When re-interpreting my original position on my dad’s situation with affirmative action, I made racism a problem for people of color by blaming them for needing affirmative action; I believed that if they worked harder, then they would not need it.*

Likewise, narratives stating or implying that individuals who have not achieved success come from families that lack meritorious values and choices “[assume] the status of normalcy.” *This response extends the thoughts above: I made racism a problem for people of color by assuming that they lacked the values to work hard enough to be successful.*

Further, narratives that depict resilience and success of white-skinned ethnic groups assume that equal access and opportunity is the “status of normalcy” for all Americans thereby establishing a colorblind society as “the status of normalcy” for institutional operations. *I made racism a problem for people of color when I said, “If we are all created equal, then why would you have to offer what you worked so hard for to somebody who didn’t put any effort into it?”*

One person thinking this way hurts few, but when institutions act—intentionally or not—on this “status of normalcy,” then the only way to address racism is through the White Problem.

CHAPTER SIX: TALK IS ACTION

During a YA conference in June of 2014, I had lunch with a white female professor whose scholarly work revolves around race. After I told her about my work with DOR and this thesis, she asked, “Why are you committed to this cause?”

“Well, at first because I wanted to save people,” I replied as the professor threw her head back with an understanding laugh. I smiled and continued, “Now, well, I guess I am figuring that out by writing...I suppose some motivation is to live in my integrity; if I say I believe in equality and want to work toward social justice, then I have to ask myself how I can do that as a white person. I mean, at some level I would like to believe I am as altruistic as I would like to believe I am, but I don’t know.”

Since Halloween night of 2013, I have been questioning my intentions. Though I was horrified to see myself in Miss Katie, the “friends of the race” (DuBois in Juarez, 2013, p. 33), Ma Ma’s teacher, and the plantation manager, I was equally horrified that I could not immediately determine my role in dismantling racism if I were not the “good white” (Hayes et al., 2013; Juarez, 2013). Writing this autoethnography has helped me realize that I have to constantly work through my internalized whiteness, or “status of normalcy” (Hayes et al., 2013, p. 3) to resist acting as “the good white.”

“Because White supremacy is a White problem,” Juarez (2013) writes, “then, I do not see Whites as allies to anything, but rather as responsible agents who need to get busy in dismantling the historical apparatus that we as a racial group have created over time (p. 44).” Part of the historical apparatus lies in the whiteness we have internalized. Part of the historical apparatus lies in the standards whiteness sets, and another part lies in the institutions that serve us.

As a professional educator, I hope that this work can contribute to teacher preparation for white teachers in particular. Though not every bit of this writing reflects education, for me, I had to get through the stories in this thesis before I could focus solely on education. That is certainly a next step for me in this research. I would like to continue this autoethnographic work with a focus on being a white educator to students of color as I agree with Hayes and Juarez (2009), Juarez and Hayes (2010) as cited in Juarez (2013):

Importantly, the historical record suggests that people of color teaching White people about their Whiteness has never been a particularly productive, fulfilling, or successful task assigned to people of color; people of color teaching White people about race and racism is quite like victims of rape trying to teach their victimizers about why rape is morally wrong and they should not do it, to put it quite bluntly (Hayes & Juarez, 2009; Juarez & Hayes, 2010). An alternative approach to teaching whites about Whiteness and social justice is to have White people teach each other” (38).

In doing this work I have finally been able to see how difficult it must be for people of color to work with whites in anti-racist settings.

On June 18, 2014, Maxine and I facilitated a Dinner and Dialogue for the Advanced Dialogue we facilitated in May. Lucy, a woman of color, cried as she spoke of Maxine’s strength in this work. This interaction reminded me of an interaction that I had with two women of color in my first dialogue. The three of us were talking during the ten minute break during each DOR session when one of them said to us, “I get so frustrated having to teach white people about their own ignorance. This just doesn’t seem worth it.” The other woman of color agreed with her as I tried to hide the wince I felt in my entire body. Looking back now, I wonder if they purposefully planted a seed for me.

At that time I wondered why they felt that way—why would people of color be angry at white people who want to end racism? In retrospect, only after writing this, can I understand. I have written about many—but certainly not every—time that my whiteness showed. I think of all

the times Maxine, Bobby, and Nichole, and all the other people of color who have ever engaged with me must have felt when I showed my whiteness.

After almost ten years with DOR, I am just forming a solid understanding of racism as a White Problem. I feel as though I am just beginning in this work as much as I feel accomplished in it. I would like to close with a story that Maxine taught me. It is an analogy for ending racism, and we use it when people say that racism will never be eliminated:

Fifty years ago, the status quo maintained that almost anyone could smoke almost anywhere. As non-smokers petitioned for institutional change and knowledge expanded, institutions made gradual changes. Doctors ceased smoking endorsements, and medical studies reported the detriments of smoking instead of its benefits. Laws gradually changed governing where people could or could not smoke. Ashtrays disappeared from grocery store aisles, office desks, and airplanes. Indoor smoking-area signs migrated outside, eventually settling twenty-five feet away from entrances. Medical facilities, then restaurants, then universities declared their air smoke-free. The media gradually launched campaigns replacing the glorification of smoking with concrete consequences: amputated body parts, voice boxes, and leathered skin. As laws changed, so did people's attitudes about smoking. None of the laws required people to quit; however, institutional changes made smoking less convenient, less attractive, and less desirable. The shifts in American perspective toward smoking did not happen because all the smokers quit smoking. The shift happened because institutions no longer tolerated smoking. Likewise, if institutions no longer tolerated racism—whether intentional or unintentional—at each of the five levels, then shifts in personal attitudes would occur, and more importantly, racism would be dismantled.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Definitions and Distinctions (Page 1 of 2)

DIALOGUE — ON RACE — LOUISIANA

KEY DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS

Racial Prejudice

Racial prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion against an individual based on their color without just grounds or sufficient knowledge. Anyone can be racially prejudiced; they can carry positive or negative stereotypes of others based on racial characteristics.

Words such as racism, prejudice and stereotype are often used interchangeably, while definitions of these terms overlap, they actually mean different things, racial prejudice typically arises from race-based stereotype and have their dangers, it is racism that has the power to determine the degree of institutional access a person has.

White Privilege

White privilege is a set of unearned advantages and/or immunities that white people benefit from on a daily basis beyond those common to all others. The biggest problem with white privilege is the invisibility it provides to those who benefit from it most. It is the invisibility that helps maintain the racial hierarchy in this country.

The definition is significant in that often people see how race puts people of color at a disadvantage but seldom see the corollary of white skin advantage. *"If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtue of their own."* Peggy McIntosh

Institutions

Institutions can be either private or public, but all are interconnected through their common task of helping our society to function. Therefore every government agency, state, federal or local; every business, industry large or small is an institution, whether factory, office or retail store. Within the communications industry, each newspaper, radio, TV station, magazine or computer network is an institution. Every school and university, sports team and franchise, every art gallery, dance studio and thousands more groups are institutions. In America, the power to run our society is given to institutions and they then have the power to grant or deny access to various members of society.

What is Institutional Racism?

Institutional racism is a system that created race categories for people based on their color, backed by a broad range of laws and policies for unequal distribution of resources that empowered institutions to keep the practice in place. In other words, these laws excluded people of color from eating, sleeping, residing, walking, riding, working, playing, worshiping, voting or doing virtually anything at the same time or place in which white people were doing these same things. Often called Jim Crow Laws, these laws lasted from 1877 – 1954.

Racism although legally banned in the mid 20th Century still operates in America today. It is more subtle, less visible, and less identifiable, yet its barriers still limit access to people of color.

Appendix A: Key Definitions and Distinctions (Page 2 of 2)

Racial Prejudice + Institutional Power = Racism

KEY DEFINITIONS AND DISTINCTIONS continued

Civil Rights Movement

The black freedom movement called the Civil Rights Movement encompasses social movements in the United States whose goal was to end racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans and enforce constitutional voting rights to them.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act was enacted July 2, 1964 is a landmark piece of legislation in the United States that outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in schools, at the workplace and by facilities that serve the general public (known as "public accommodations")

Affirmative Action

Equal opportunity employment measures that Federal contractors and subcontractors are legally required to adopt. Intended to prevent discrimination against employees or applicants for employment on the basis of color, religion, sex, or national origin, that is outreach campaigns, targeted recruitment, employee and management development and employee support programs.

The measure is designed to redress the disadvantages associated with overt historical discrimination. The desire is to ensure public institutions, such as universities, hospitals, and police forces, are more representative of the populations they serve.

Affirmative action is still controversial. Some policies such as racial quotas or gender quotas for collegiate admission have been criticized as a form of reverse discrimination. Such implementations of affirmative action has been ruled unconstitutional. Affirmative action as a practice was upheld by the court's decision in Grutter v. Bollinger

Appendix B: DOR Original Series Description



DIALOGUE ON RACE LOUISIANA

DIALOGUE ON RACE – Original Series

An educational process for the elimination of racism.

The Dialogue series is a structured two hour weekly series limited to 15 participants. The sessions are led by trained facilitators. Participants prepare for the discussions by reading short articles before each session. The facilitators set a safe environment for open honest discussion around three topic questions with one 10 minute break during the session. All sessions begin and end on time.

Understanding what racism is and how it operates through institutions in our system is the core of this education process..

The Dialogue recognizes that racism is not an “us versus them” issue in communities. Racism is an institutional construct that was built into our system and much of it exist today unintentionally and indirectly. However as long as racism exists, our institutions will tend to operate to the advantage of one race over another instead of full access for all equally.

The Dialogue on Race is an award winning program that has been proven to be effective in helping people understand what needs to be done and what they can do.

Session I – Definitions and distinctions needed in the discussion of the subject of race

Session II – White privilege which talks about how the privileges experienced by whites are invisible to most white people

Session III – Understanding Institutional Racism shows how racism operates and that it is largely indirect and unintentional.

Session IV – “Struggle in Transformation” is how the last movement to end racism served to make many positive changes we enjoy today around race and what is left for us to complete to ensure full rights for all citizens

Session V – Affirmative Action – the constitutional change designed to roll back racial discrimination and level the playing field. A look at its benefits and drawbacks

Session VI – “A time for Action” and “Can we Talk” - two articles used to discuss how participants can activate what they have learned through the process that will serve them in being a part of eliminating racism

Appendix C: Advanced Dialogue Description

DIALOGUE — ON RACE — LOUISIANA

DIALOGUE ON RACE – ADVANCE SERIES

Dialogue on Race Advanced series enhances participants understanding of race, foster better communication around the topic of race and facilitates intelligent action when confronted with race issues.

Four Sessions

Session I “Mississippi: A Self Portrait “An NBC News Documentary: Dateline aired May 1966
<http://www.nbcnews.com/video/dateline/48178080#48178080>

The documentary film by Frank De Felitta was filmed in 1965 less than a year after a series of murders, lynchings and church bombings in Mississippi. The film examines how white Mississippians reconciled themselves to their culture. The results of the brief cameo appearances in the film of a black waiter led to us having this video 50 years later.

You can click on the link above to view the film before attending the first session

Race: “The Illusion of Power” (on DVD) Sessions 2, 3, & 4

Session II

Episode 1: The Difference Between Us -- examines the contemporary science - including genetics - that challenges our common sense assumptions that human beings can be bundled into three or four fundamentally different groups according to their physical traits.

Session III

Episode 2: The Story We Tell - uncovers the roots of the race concept in North America, the 19th century science that legitimated it, and how it came to be held so fiercely in the western imagination. The episode is an eye-opening tale of how race served to rationalize, even justify, American social inequalities as "natural."

Session IV

Episode 3: The House We Live in; asks, If race is not biology, what is it? This episode uncovers how race resides not in nature but in politics, economics and culture. It reveals how our social institutions "make" race by disproportionately channeling resources, power, status and wealth to white people.

Appendix D: Dialogue vs. Debate

Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

DIALOGUE TRAITS	DEBATE TRAITS
Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward understanding.	Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.
In Dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.	In debate, winning is the goal.
In Dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.	In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.
Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.	Debate defends assumptions as truth.
Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.	Debate causes critiques of the other position.
Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.	Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: openness to being wrong and openness to change.	Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
In Dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other people's reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.	In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In Dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.	In Debate, one searches for glaring differences.
In Dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.	In Debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.
Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks not to alienate or offend.	Debate involves a countering of the position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.	Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate implies a conclusion.

This comparison of Dialogue vs. Debate was created by the Study Circles Resource Center. The Center helps all kinds of people engage in dialogue and problem solving on critical social and political issues. For more information, go to www.studycircles.org. This material was adapted from a paper prepared by Shelly Berman, based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility.

Appendix E: Facilitator's Responsibilities

What Is Facilitation?

Facilitation is the verbal exploration of an issue in a shared space marked by openness, respect, and movement. Talk is action, and in dialogue, participants are guided to discuss specific topics that pinpoint the impact of racism.

Participant's Roles and Responsibilities:

1. Actively and honestly participate in the discussions.
2. Demonstrate respect by listening attentively to others and allowing them to complete what they have to say.
3. Remain open-minded, and allow open discussion of experiences, fears, and other feelings. Attend at least five of the six sessions.
4. Do the homework.
5. Notify us when you are not coming to the session.

Facilitator's Responsibilities

The facilitator is a neutral, non-evaluative, non-judgmental process manager. The facilitator is neither the traditional chairperson nor the traditional decision-maker.

1. The facilitator never competes with the group members.
2. The facilitator helps the group break fixation by offering problem-solving strategies and making "process comments."
3. The facilitator respects and defends the group members and their ideas from attack.
4. The facilitator doesn't allow any person to be put on the defensive.
5. The facilitator keeps the group focused on the topic at hand.

Appendix F: The Research Timeline

Date	Research Event
July 2013	Chose DOR as for research topic
August 31, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session I
September 9, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session II
September 14, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session III
September 21, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session IV
September 28, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session V
October 5, 2013	Facilitator Youth DOR Session VI
October 15, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session I
October 22, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session II
October 24, 2013	Autoethnography in Narrative Inquiry Class
October 28, 2013	First Viewed “Mississippi: A self-Portrait”
October 29, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session III
October 31, 2013	“A Public Epiphany” in Chapter One
November 5, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session IV
November 12, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session V
November 19, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher DOR Session VI
December 3, 2013	Facilitator Pre-Service Teacher Dinner and Dialogue
February 3, 2014	Advanced DOR Participant Session I
February 10, 2014	Advanced DOR Participant Session II
February 17, 2014	Advanced DOR Participant Session III
February 24, 2014	Advanced DOR Participant Session IV
April 8, 2014	Fill-in Facilitator Star Hill DOR Session II
April 15, 2014	Fill-in Facilitator Star Hill DOR Session III
April 22, 2014	Fill-in Facilitator Star Hill DOR Session IV
May 7, 2014	Facilitator Advanced DOR Red Shoes Session I
May 14, 2014	Facilitator Advanced DOR Red Shoes Session II
May 21, 2014	Facilitator Advanced DOR Red Shoes Session III
May 28, 2014	Facilitator Advanced DOR Red Shoes Session IV
June 16, 2014	Facilitator Advanced DOR Red Shoes Dinner and Dialogue
July 3, 2014	Completion of Autoethnographic Thesis

Appendix G: IRB Approval

ACTION ON PROTOCOL APPROVAL REQUEST



Institutional Review Board
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
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P: 225.578.8692
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irb@lsu.edu | lsu.edu/irb

TO: Steven Bickmore
English Education

FROM: Robert C. Mathews
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: February 4, 2014

RE: IRB# 3432

TITLE: Evaluating Dialogue as Transformative Pedagogy through Dialogue on Race

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review type: Full Expedited **Review date:** 2/5/2014

Risk Factor: Minimal Uncertain Greater Than Minimal

Approved **Disapproved**

Approval Date: 2/5/2014 **Approval Expiration Date:** 2/4/2015

Re-review frequency: (annual unless otherwise stated)

Number of subjects approved: 100

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Robert C. Mathews, Chairman 

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –
Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:**

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. SPECIAL NOTE:

**All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>*

THE VITA

Destiny Marie Adams Cooper, originally from Houma, Louisiana, earned her bachelor's degree at Louisiana State University in 2002. Certified in 6-12 English, social studies, and business education, she has primarily taught English for the past 12 years in East Baton Rouge Parish. She earned National Board Certification in English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood in 2012 and is a candidate for a master's degree in August 2014. She will return to public schools as a teacher and researcher along with a new role in instructional support for teachers.