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"What is Critical Whiteness Doing in OUR Nice Field like Critical Race Theory?" Applying CRT and CWS to Understand the White Imaginations of White Teacher Candidates

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Abstract:
Critical Race Theory (CRT) revolutionized how we investigate race in education. Centralizing counter stories from people of color becomes essential for decentralizing white normative discourse—a process we refer to as realities within the Black imagination .Yet, few studies examine how whites respond to centering the Black imagination, especially since their white imagination goes unrecognized. We propose utilizing Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) to support CRT to aid in deconstructing the dimensions of white imaginations. Our findings describe how the white imagination operates inside the minds of white teacher candidates, namely through their (a) emotional disinvestment, (b) lack of critical understanding of race, (c) resurgence of white guilt, and (d) recycling of hegemonic whiteness, all of which negatively impact their role in anti-racist teaching in urban schools.

Re-Introducing the Black Imagination

Embedded in the Black[1] imagination is an emotion of terror from experiencing and witnessing the realities of racism (Bell, 1987; hooks, 1995). An example of this is hooks (1995) description of a terrifying childhood event: not knowing if acts of white supremacy would transpire from the many door-to-door white salesmen who entered her Black home. Despite their obvious racial discomfort in being inside a Black home, she admits that "their presence terrified me" because she could not distinguish between the white men who sell products from the white men who "enact rituals of terror and torture" (p. 39). One way that this terror currently manifests is in witnessing the murder of Black people in America (e.g., Oscar Grant, Travyon Martin, James Byrd, and Chavis Carter). The result is the formation of a collective Black imagination that does not intend to essentialize Black identity, but rather recognizes that terror, like other feelings, intuitions, and behaviors, are rational responses to experiencing the terrorism in white supremacy.

Instead of popularized depictions of imagination as unreal, we (the authors) posit that the Black imagination is a legitimate cognitive library that files experiential knowledge of race, racism, and white supremacy. These experiential knowledges are amplified in Critical Race Theory's (CRT) counter-stories (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The Black imagination can encompass other people of color's experiences, albeit with differentiation[2], because it acknowledges that Blackness, just as its ontological opposite, whiteness, is ever-present in how individuals experience racialization (Iijima, 1997; Perea, 1998). If Blackness is a social construction that embraces Black culture, language, experiences, identities, and epistemologies, then whiteness is a social construction that embraces white culture, ideology, racialization, expressions, and experiences, epistemology, emotions, and behaviors. Unlike Blackness, whiteness is normalized because white supremacy elevates whites and whiteness to the apex of the racial hierarchy (Allen, 2001).

Since CRT "recognizes the permanency and endemic nature of race in American education" (Gildersleeve, Croom, & Vasquez, 2011, p. 96), it provides a theoretical frame that upholds historical realities in the Black imagination. Despite its truth, we noticed that the white teacher candidates (pre-service teachers) at a large urban university's urban teacher preparation program resisted learning about race. Because white imagination was maintained by the possessive investment in whiteness (Lipsitz, 2006) and hegemonic invisibility, it acted as a determiner—he who feels entitled to make decisions on behalf of others—of what is and is not truth.

Interestingly, the teacher candidates refused to acknowledge the white imagination's existence. Instead educators, often white, normalized their dispositions under the mechanisms of whiteness-at-work (Yoon, 2012), color blind ideology (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006), and denial (Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005) such that they do not even recognize that their mind was subjective to dominant racial ideologies of whiteness (Picower, 2009). Unlike Descartes' prolific quandary of "I think, therefore I am," white imagination operates as not having to think about what they are, yet in its existence, it still impacts others (Leonardo, 2009; Matias, 2012a; Rodriguez, 2009). By denying the white imagination's existence, we need more than CRT to analyze white teacher candidates' experiences. Since 83% of the national teaching force is middle-class whites (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2012) who have limited experiences with people of color, we question what experiential knowledge they draw from, like the Black imagination does, to understand the dynamics of race, racism, and whiteness. If white educators normalize whiteness to invisibility then how can they recognize the existence of a white imagination used to resist learning about race?

This article examines how applying both CRT and critical whiteness studies (CWS) helps unveil dimensions of the white imagination found in how the white teacher candidates understood dimensions of race. We seek to answer the following questions: In a teacher preparation program (a) What do white teacher candidates learn about race and (b) how can CWS add to how we understand the white imagination?

We wanted to see how teacher candidates in our urban teacher education program understood race when the program rarely engaged the words race or whiteness and, in doing so, maintained dominant racial ideologies like whiteness. After initial interviews we noticed whiteness was maintained and contradicted the program's stated philosophy. Yet, it is the dimensions of the white imagination that we seek to unveil by using CRT and CWS to theorize the realities inside the Black imagination and intricacies of the white imagination. Next, we explicate a method to operationalize the Black imagination so that we can identify and re-understand the white imagination. Finally, we apply both CRT and CWS

to investigate the dimensions of the white imagination embedded in the response of our white teacher candidates. Suffice it to say, this article flirts with Ladson-Billings' (1998) initial quandary by explicating, "What is critical whiteness studies doing in OUR nice field like CRT?" Meaning, we employ both theories to frame a better picture of the white imagination.

Black is Back: Theorizing the Black and White Imaginations

 This article employs CRT to (a) substantiate the Black imagination as a historical reality and, thus, (b) use the Black imagination to contrast how the white imagination responds, reacts, conceptualizes, and blinds itself to realities of race and racism. We employ it because the Black imagination is complete with an intimate perspective, meaning experiential knowledge of racial reality just as Black feminists have an intimate perspective to racism and patriarchy (Collins, 1990). The Black imagination also symbolically embodies how critical race scholars of all races collectively share in the cultivation and nuanced understanding of race (hooks, 1995).

Because of people of color's experiences with racism, the Black imagination can have intuitive sentiments that developed in response to "white Diss-course," a speech pattern that has an innocent facade of color-blindness, yet continues to "diss" or disrespect, people of color (Matias, 2012b, p. 132). For example, Matias (2012b) describes how constant remarks of "where are you really from," "Do you speak English," or "You're so articulate" can be racially fatiguing to navigate. We, the authors, share these intuitive sentiments in witnessing the behaviors of white teacher candidates entrenched in whiteness ideology (Sleeter, 2001). We do not assume white folks are always entrenched in whiteness; yet, because of the particular dynamics of this program and the study, we assert that whiteness was found in the responses of the white teacher candidates.

Like CRT, CWS employs an interdisciplinary approach, which is beneficial to how we conceptualize the white imagination. Unlike CRT, CWS focuses on problematizing the normality of hegemonic whiteness, arguing that in doing so whites deflect, ignore, or dismiss their role, racialization, and privilege in race dynamics. Gillborn (2006) articulates that race and racism leave an "imprint on virtually every aspect of life, from birth to death" such that whites who are an element of "every aspect of life" also are impacted by race and racism (pp. 324–325). Thus, CWS provides a framework to examine why whites believe they are not a part of race when they actively invest in white racial production (Lipsitz, 2006; Thandeka, 2009). These white productions are maintained in education through tracking, teacher beliefs, funding inequities, school disciplining, and overrepresentation in special education (Lewis & Manno, 2011). According to CWS, whiteness is the underlying mechanism that maintains a racist system, and not acknowledging whiteness contributes to the permanence of race and racism (Allen, 2001; Leonardo, 2009).

Also, CWS adds that the normative script of white supremacy is an exertion of whiteness that refuses to acknowledge how whiteness is historically, economically, and legally produced (Haney-Lopez, 2006; Massey & Denton, 1993; Roediger, 2005). Roediger (2005) documents how defining whiteness helped white workers accrue economic privilege. Brodkin (2006) argues that historical housing discrimination allowed whites to accrue greater wealth in equity. Yet awareness to these institutional privileges is often absent while assuming a natural order of things. As such, we can understand how our white teacher candidates normalize their disposition in ways that "do not think of their whiteness or think of it as neutral" (McLaren, 1995, p. 11). For example, one of the authors was

newly hired to teach in the urban-focused teacher preparation program; she shared how one of her white male teacher candidates refused to believe he was ethnic, claiming that white people are not the ones who are ethnic. This belief impacts how the white teacher candidates understand their role in race.

Using an emotional approach to whiteness, Thandeka (2009) argues that white children are racialized to adopt color-blind ideology, despite bearing witness to race as a child, lest they be ostracized from the white community. That is, white children, indeed, see race yet are taught to not see it by white adults. Such racialization produces a deep feeling of shame. However the silence surrounding white racialization produces a façade that must be repressed so that the shame is not felt. Whenever the façade is revealed, whites emotionally deflect their shame through emotional expressions of guilt, anger, defensiveness, and denial. This application of CWS helps us understand the behaviors of our white teacher candidates, not always captured in the words they say.

A Method for Our Imagination

Our study took place in a large, Western state, urban university where teacher candidates are both undergraduates and post-bachelors students working towards a state teaching license. What sets this program apart from many others in the state is its urban location and its explicit focus on urban education. For example, the teacher candidates student teach in urban schools with large population of Black and Brown students and where at least 50% of the students received a reduced-fee lunch.

Our team consisted of five researchers, four of who are professors and one who, at the time of the study, was a first year doctoral student. Of the four professors, two were newly hired in the teacher preparation program but had no influence on the philosophy at the time of the study. One of those two professors was intimately involved in teaching the Social Foundations and Issues of Cultural Diversity in Urban Education course that many participants in this study reference. Four of the five researchers are people of color, but all of them identify as race scholars (self-identified as a Black and African American female; brown-skinned Pinay; South Asian; white anti-racist ally; and a Latino male). Even though our research team was racially diverse we all ascribe to the Black imagination as historical reality, providing a consensual standing.

Because the teacher education program had a specific focus on urban education with a philosophy of social justice and equity, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, and an asset approach to understanding urban students of color and the communities they come from, the researchers sought to investigate the extent that these philosophies were embedded in the dispositions of their teacher candidates.

We operationalized the Black imagination by methodologically employing Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR). CQR highlights the use of multiple researchers and the process of reaching consensus, followed by a systematic way of examining results across cases (Hill, Knox, Thompson, Williams, Hess, & Ladany, 2005). The primary steps for CQR methodology are developing, collecting, analyzing, and coding themes. However, in acknowledging that CRT only shed partial light on the formation of a white imagination, we opted to code the data with both CRT and CWS codes (Table 1). For example, instead of using CRT to define majoritarian stories (Mitchell, 2013) we opted to use whiteness literature on white discourse (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006; Matias 2012b), because we wanted to identify how majoritarian stories were manifestations of white discourse that impact people of color. Another example is using CRT to code a theme of unintentional racism (Delgado &

Stefancic, 2001) and recoding it as exertions of whiteness (Rodriguez, 2009) to demonstrate how intentionality is not the focus of the racism but how impact is felt.

After e-mailing all teacher candidates enrolled in the program about participating in a study about race and racism, the doctoral student, who had no power relation or prior experiences with the participants and identifies as a South Asian woman, conducted 16 semi-structured interviews of those who volunteered. We focused our questions on what the interviewees learned about race and racism in the program and their perspective on how race impacted their development as new teachers. Follow up questions on whiteness were not included because teacher candidates had no exposure to such literature. Based on the findings of this study, one of the research members eventually redesigned a teacher preparation course with whiteness literature. Of the 16 teacher candidates interviewed, 15 self-identified as white and were at different levels of completion within the program and coursework. The varying degree of their completion within the program could not be controlled nor did we collect syllabi, limiting the scope of the study. However, all of the candidates took Social Foundations and Issues of Cultural Diversity in Urban Education, which was the mandatory first course in the program. The course has foundational (e.g., sociology, philosophy, race and ethnic studies, etc.) approaches to urban education, addresses social justice, culture, and inequity, and includes a field trip. Interviews were transcribed, systematically coded, and reviewed by the research team who generated common themes. These themes were chosen because they were recurring topics, sentiments, and behaviors displayed in interviews.

Dimensions of the White Imaginations of Our White Teacher Candidates

Our analysis discovered four common themes that informed the white imagination: (1) Teacher candidates were emotionally (dis)invested in racial justice; (2) Students recognized that they are white, but did not push themselves beyond that acknowledgement; (3) Students resonated in "white guilt"; and (4) There was an overall engagement and endorsement of hegemonic whiteness. All of these themes help us unveil the dimensions of the white imagination. Below are selected interview excerpts that showcase the themes.

Emotional (Dis)Investment as Supporting White Supremacy

When hooks (1995) writes about race and racism, readers feel her emotions. They feel her rage. She asserts a, "renewed, organized black liberation struggle cannot happen if we remain unable to tap collective rage" (p. 20). hooks demands that society never forgets how racism feels because that feeling is necessary to undergird the emotional investment and commitment to eliminate racism. However, when we interviewed the white teacher candidates, they lacked expressions of empathetic emotions; many talked about race nonchalantly or without a personal emotional investment to the topic. Seemingly emotionally frozen—taken from Tatum's (2008) analysis of being emotionally frozen because of a paralysis of fear—some of the white teacher candidates appeared immune to the feelings of racism precisely because they are white. For example, one of the participants, Cindy, talked about her experiences at the schools sites and on campus.

> In my school I would say 99% of the teachers are white so it's been pretty easy to fit in. Haven't felt uncomfortable in any way. The principals are white too so I haven't felt uncomfortable.

Having not felt "uncomfortable in any way" suggest an emotional diss-investment precisely because the work of racial justice is uncomfortable. Yet, she describes that if she were a person of color her experiences would be different.

> I think it would have been different. First my cohort, all of us are white. I think they would have to work a harder to prove themselves, or have a stronger belief or stance on certain things.

Finally when Cindy goes into a discussion about one particular teacher candidate of color she reverts to victim blaming rhetoric.

> There's one person of color in my Math class it seems like she's really smart and knows a lot about the Math but she's also a little tough around the edges.

The interviewer noted how this particular interviewee shrugged her shoulder often and often discussed the topic of race in a dismissive tone. She said all this with a nonchalant sentiment that counters hooks' rage. The only rage demonstrated in some of the interviews was feelings of anger or guilt of their own white identity. For example, when asked about if her race was important to teaching one teacher candidate, Teri, responded:

> Yes. I generally feel it's a negative though. I feel like being white, it is what it is. So being white, I get told over and over that I'm not going to be as effective and there's nothing really I can do about it.

Although she remained seemingly emotionally disinvested about other questions, she demonstrated a deep emotional investment to her anger about being taught about race. During the interview her tone changed from casual to angry, sounding exasperated that as a white person she gets "told over and over." During the interview, she even rolled her eyes during this segment. If hooks argues that in order to engage in a transformative resistance against racism we must first engage our feelings, then we also must examine the emotional disposition of the candidates embedded in their interviews. For example when asked if they "had any experiences with racism, privilege, and oppression," many said no, one even mocked the mention of racism.

> I don't feel like I've experienced it. I can't—can't even think of any instances where I've even observed it. (Katie)
> Nope. (Tara)
> Racism? (Catelyn)

In these interviews the demeanor changed when the interviewer questioned their personal experiences with racism. One of the participants laughed and questioned, "racism?" while others shook their head no with a giggle. Employing CRT, these teacher candidates' white racial positionality makes them unaware of how they actively engage in white supremacy (Gillborn, 2005). In Katie's interview, the doctoral student interviewer pushed back in her response of never experiencing racism, privilege, or oppression.

> Interviewer: The school where you are right now—it's very diverse.

> Katie: No, I really haven't. I think that we were actually just talking about that at our site school, with the diversity. I don't think I've seen any racism, but I think I've seen some ignorance or some, like, glossing over. Like, not even that. More like just assuming that everybody is the same and not recognizing the student's differences.

> Interviewer: Not realizing that there is another perspective to an event or a situation?

> Katie: Ya. Exactly, so I think that is a form of it, but it's more just the ignorance of it and the misunderstanding I guess.

Gillborn (2005) argues that white supremacy is maintained when race dynamics are taken for granted. Katie's claims of "I don't feel like I've experienced it and I can't even think of any instances even where I've even observed it" takes for granted how her white racial position overlooks dynamics of race. Although insightful on how mechanisms of racism operate, this does not solidify our understanding of the white imagination inside this white teacher candidate's mind. Namely, how does assuming white positionality equating to a tabula rasa of race influence the collective formation of white racial ignorance in the white imagination? Although CRT was beneficial when analyzing the effects of racism, privilege, and oppression of people of color, we needed CWS to fully understand how this white teacher candidate's nonchalant claim to never having experienced racism produced a white imagination that reinforced dominant ideologies and, in its production, downplayed the reality of race in the Black imagination.

Overlaying CWS we saw more operations of whiteness in the construction of the white imagination. For example, white privilege is enacted when Cindy and Katie emotionally choose not to see their own privilege within a structure of race. Their nonverbal communication via laughter, shrugging, and rolling their eyes demonstrates how they were emotionally disinvested in issues of race, racism, and white supremacy. Mills (2007) describes this as an epistemology of race ignorance that actively invests in not knowing rather than innocently/passively overlooking. When Katie claims she has not seen or experienced racism during her teacher preparation experiences, she is exerting her whiteness by engaging in the color blind discourse (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006;Yoon, 2012). Challenging the falsity of her statement, the interviewer pushes back to remind her that she teaches in a diverse school, a counter hegemonic move that recognizes that Kate's epistemology of ignorance assumes that diversity equals people of color and that only people of color experience racism. Katie then claims she still has not seen any racism in her school, yet because of the falsity embedded in the white imagination she then states, "We were actually just talking about that at our site school." If, in her opinion, racism does not happen then why was she talking about it at her school site? In her white imagination, ponderings of race and racism become so confusing that they become contradictory (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2006). We also see some evidence here of "color-muteness" or "the routine act of knowingly deleting race words from discourse, rather than being truly 'color-blind'" (Pollock, 2004, p. 35). Are we to believe that a group of teachers were talking about what they do not see or possibly what they truly see but refuse to admit? This dynamic of color blind rhetoric is again seen in Catelyn's response: "I wouldn't say racism. I would say oppression."

Substituting "oppression" for "racism" is another discursive move that silence realities of racism in the Black imagination. According to her white imagination, since she does not

experience racism, it is nonexistent and can be replaced with oppression. She equates racism to her feeling of oppression described below.

> Catelyn: I felt in my internship the teachers didn't respect the teacher candidates. That whole feeling like we've been in education for 25 years you're just a little pipsqueak.
>
> Interviewer: Is it like a status thing?
>
> Catelyn: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Superiority?
> Catelyn: Absolutely, power, experience, knowledge, you don't have it.
>
> Interviewer: So you were made to feel that way and that was not ok.
>
> Catelyn: Absolutely, absolutely.
>
>   This is again seen in Donna's interview. When asked if her white identity is imp tant to how she imagines herself as a teacher.
>
> I think it does more now because I've had more opportunities to examine my race, ethnicity, and dominant culture, but I realize that my ethnicity is really not the majority anymore.

   Although Donna self-identifies as white and middle class she ends her statement with she is "not the majority anymore," which contradicts literature on race and class. Donna's argument that her white middle class identity is actually not dominant obscures realities in the Black imagination such that the white imagination assumes whites are the true victims and are not racially dominant.CWS acknowledges the dangers of whiteness, especially when whites assume the role of Determiner (with a capital D) of what is and what is not racist. This places the manifestations of race and racism in the hands of those who racially benefit from the subjugation of people of color. For example Katie states, "I don't think I've seen any racism, but I think I've seen some ignorance or some, like, glossing over." Or, Truley's, "Ya. I mean, I experienced social justice. But it was intentional right? The whole course 1 was designed that way so ya I've experienced racism." Since there is substantial evidence that issues of race, racism, and white supremacy are prevalent in schools, particularly those highly impacted by poverty and racial segregation (Taylor & Clark, 2009), it is likely that Katie has seen issues of racism, but does not recognize them. Truly erroneously synonymizes racism to learning about social justice, misconstruing what is racism in the white imagination. Both assume to be Determiners of what constitutes racism despite initially claiming they never saw or experienced any racism. This confusing behavior frames the white imagination because Katie refuses to see "ignorance and glossing over differences" as a form of white racism (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001) and Truley refuses to acknowledge that racism is not learning about social justice. Because their white imagination weaves in and out of seeing and not seeing, experiencing and not experiencing, and deeming if it is or is not racism, all with little to no emotional investment, it maintained racism and their beliefs in whiteness. Not seeing or experiencing racism, despite defining

what it is as Determiners, the white participants ultimately did not see their own contribution to the perpetuation of racism.

"I'm White": Knowing You're White is Not Enough

Several of the teacher candidates acknowledged that they are white but did not recognize how that might impact their work as educators. The majority of students denied that their white identity had a role in their classrooms or life experiences. This half-awareness contributes to the collective formation of the white imagination in a very curious way. The white imagination is one where white individuals can be cognizant that they are white, but believe such a racial marker does not have any influence on a racialized society, like education. This is demonstrated in the interviews below.

> Interviewer: How do you describe yourself?
>
> Hayley: Well I'm white.
>
> Interviewer: Is being white important to your image of yourself as a teacher?
>
> Hayley: No.
>
> Interviewer: Has it influenced your teaching?
>
> Hayley: No.

Like the majority of our research participants, Hayley openly acknowledged that she was racially or ethnically white, yet did not offer any recognition or articulation of what her white identity means. That is, although she is able to identify that she is racially white, she is nonetheless critically unaware of what that racial marker means to the racialization of both herself and her students of color. Fine, Weiss, Powell, and Wong (2004) use CRT to argue that the lack of understanding or acknowledging white racialization of identity contributes to racism. Through this exchange, Hayley rendered her whiteness, embedded in white racial identity, as invisible thus limiting the opportunity to truly recognize and proactively disrupt race and racism.

As stated above, whites have accrued institutional privileges through institutional discrimination toward people of color. Refusal to admit to materializations of whiteness, such as economic and real estate advantages, mask how modern white privilege developed. Maddy stated, "I don't feel that being a white woman is favorable or unfavorable." Despite the real formation of whiteness, this white teacher candidate professed that being white is irrelevant to her experiences as an educator, stating:

> Like, "Oh you're a woman and you're white so let me give you privileges." I'm not getting anything, like, just because I'm white. I'm not getting a higher grade just because I'm white. And it doesn't matter if I'm a woman or my age or because I'm white, I just know that I'm here, I'm learning, and I'm bringing what I know from my life and my experiences.

This defines what constitutes anti-racist teaching in the white imagination of the teacher candidates. That is, anti-racist teaching "doesn't matter if I'm a woman or my age or be-

cause I'm white" when, in reality, it does carry meaningful connotations.

Maddy, like Haley, denies benefitting from white privilege. Based on the program's commitment to social justice and equity, students were expected to understand their role as advocates for urban students by actively resisting oppression instead of remaining complicit in recycling it. However, Maddy did not actively resist whiteness. Instead she further distanced herself from people of color by reverting back to her whiteness and claiming, "I'm not getting anything because I'm white" and proceeding to describe how she has never received privileges. This distances herself from people of color because by not acknowledging white privilege, she denies it, and allows white supremacy to reign supreme; a condition that impacts people of color through its enactment of racism. Essentially, she dismisses her complicity in white racism.

Maddy may not have received her privileges by "getting higher grades." Yet, Maddy does not examine how her whiteness has given her a curriculum that glorifies whites (Matias, 2012a), provided her with pedagogies that spoke to her middle class white identity (Anyon, 1981; Lareau, 2000), or provided her with accumulated familial wealth that led her to participate in this demanding full-time program that does not allow time for outside employment (Oliver & Shapiro, 1997). Until Maddy learns how her white racial identity affords her privileges and supports her whiteness, she will not be able to see the interconnectedness of racializations of whites to that of people of color. Because this did not take place, the white imagination reinforces a liberal narrative that says knowing one is white and acknowledging white privilege is enough to be anti-racist and socially just.

Some teacher candidates got so confused about their understanding of race and racism that they wove in and out of their whiteness. They did this by remaining indecisive as to whether or not their white racial identity played a role in their lives. For example, Sandy initially claimed her racial image was not important. However, she oscillated between whether her image really does affect her development as a teacher.

> I don't think it is really important to my image of who I am. As a teacher, I think it could have a role. Maybe with what I've seen at least in River High. In my prior teaching experience, being white hasn't really been a factor or issue of any sort, affect on my teaching ability or how students react to me. I don't know.

Sandy acknowledges that her white identity could have played a role at River High but not at her previous teaching experience. By acknowledging that the program situates their teacher candidates at site school placements that are predominantly Black and Latino low-income schools, as opposed to her pre-site teaching experience in white middle class suburbia, Sandy reverts back to her whiteness by racially codifying words. That is, she does not mention the word race yet acknowledges racial dynamics by explicating differences between an urban racially diverse school(River High) as opposed to white suburban school. Although these candidates accept their identity as a white it must be noted however that knowing you are white is not enough.

Reappearance of White Guilt
For some of our research participants, recognizing that they are white and discussing race surfaced substantial feelings of guilt that they found difficult to move beyond. When asked if being white impacted her as a teacher, Teri responded:

> Yes. I generally feel [being white] is negative. I feel like being white it is what it is. I'm lucky to come from the most privileged group in society but I really want to work in urban schools. So since I am white . . . I get told over and over that I'm not going to be effective. There's nothing really I can do about it as a white teacher, because I can't fully understand the difficulties that my students are going to be going through and so no amount of sympathetic learning is going to be a replacement for the life experience that students of color experience. I'm just another white woman coming to be a social worker in the school.

The only role that this teacher candidate argues others deem fit for her is that of a "social worker," who will provide solutions to what she perceives as Black and Brown problems. Yet she does not interrogate why that is or why she refuses to discuss it. Since one of the authors conducted the interview, it was noted that during this portion of the interview Teri's answers were said with anger. In fact, during the interview the interviewer commented that Teri "raised her voice" and "seemed angry." Thandeka (2009) argues that this emotional outburst stems from a deep shame of adopting color blind ideology as a child, one in which she knows, yet refuses to admit, is false. Accordingly, her deflection of feeling shame can be one interpretation as to why this vehement response was expressed. Teri's linguistic choices provoke sympathy for white stereotypes in that it plays on white victimhood, which is a discursive move in white diss-course that ultimately masks the realities of terror that people of color endure from racial stereotyping (Ringrose, 2007). Additionally Teri asserted that the program made her feel white guilt when she comments that the program, "sort of feels like oppression." She explains:

> I know it's not, but it sorta feels like getting called out on something you cannot change, you won't be able to change, and asked to feel uncomfortable in a way that we may be have not been asked to feel before.

In order for Teri to disrupt the hegemonic power of whiteness, situating her identity in guilt will not suffice. For white people to not participate in the whiteness exerted and become antiracist, they must challenge the norms of whiteness and dig deep into their own white histories to understand the issues around white privilege, normativity, and supremacy that need to be disrupted. Yet, resonating in guilt produced in the white imagination a sense of reverse racism where white stereotypes, white guilt, and white discomfort is equal to the terror found in the Black imagination. This becomes problematic because anti-racist work must move beyond guilt (Matias, 2013).

So what Does Critical Whiteness Studies Have to do With It?: Endorsing Hegemonic Whiteness

Many of our white teacher candidates expressed how learning about race and racism reinforced their normative beliefs of how race and racism is a non-white problem. Some of our teacher candidates employed popularized terminologies of social justice, such as poverty, socioeconomic, unconscious bias, and cultural diversity, all words that typically relate to social justice. Yet when speaking them, they did not seem to understand why those concepts are intimately tied to their privileged position as white folks. For example, Rachel describes the power of understanding race and poverty by stating, "I felt weird because it's a really powerful thing. We are dealing with race, poverty, socioeconomic, everything."

Yet, she then articulates, "it was a little bit too much for me." She does not understand that whiteness allows her to wash her hands of the importance of race and poverty by stating it's too much for her, a condition that people of color must endure.

Here Rachel does a good job of using vocabulary to engage in the language of critical race dialogue, using terms like race, poverty, and socioeconomic. However, employing the terms without a complex understanding of what they mean is problematic. Furthermore, the fact that she ends with "it's too much" and does not emotionally push through how her role as a white teacher is inextricably tied to race, poverty, and socioeconomic also is problematic. Another white teacher candidate, Brie, explains her knowledge about race, but does not engage herself.

> I don't really know, I think I'm still grappling with this. I think that you need to understand all of your students from all different ethnicities and not group them into one. How you do that I'm not really sure yet, but you have to be aware of who they are.

Brie talks about not "grouping [students] into one" category and of a need to "understand all of your students." Such phrases are popularized in social justice teacher preparation programs, yet fall short of their socially just potential when Brie admits she does not know how to do that. Furthermore, she professes that we need to "be aware of who they are" yet never demonstrates awareness of who she is as a white female teacher beyond stating that she's white. This becomes apparent when she continues the interview.

> You know, before this program, I never really thought about it. I'm white so I'm the dominant ethnicity. I'm middle class, so I don't really come from a poor family. So you don't really ever think about it. You just go along with what they teach you in school and you never really examine your prior understanding of ethnicity or race, or at least I didn't. So what was the question?

Brie acknowledges her privileged status by recognizing she is white and middle class, yet when she goes into an analysis of how schools reinforced her privileged identity she stops speaking in first person and fails to "own" her experiences. Such a discursive move separates her privilege from the larger context of hegemonic whiteness. Brie stated, "you just go along with what they teach you in school," reflecting an assumption that she played a passive role in the learning of whiteness. However, whiteness is an active investment (Lipsitz, 2006; Mills, 2007), and, thus, to presume that Brie had not actively invested in subscribing to whiteness falsely relinquishes her responsibility of race oppression.

Another student, Emily, articulates the importance of revealing unconscious biases (Tatum, 1997) yet, never admits her own unconscious biases. When asked about her identity and understanding of race she instead discusses relationships she has with people of color.

> I'm from—originally, I'm from Illinois where I lived on a college campus so we had a lot of the foreign students, lot of people from Thailand and Korea. You know, some of the Asian countries. We had a girl from India who lived with us and made us ethnic food. So I had that interaction, but I never, like, thought about the issue of racial diversity like I am now. So moving past, kind of re-vealed some biases, some unconscious biases that I had without even knowing.

In CWS, this is a predictable discursive practice used to amplify one's relationships to people of color to ultimately self-profess oneself as a non-racist (Tatum, 1997).While Emily claims that all that experience was nothing like the "issue of racial diversity" that she understands now, she still engages in that normative discourse pattern to show her white liberalness to racial diversity. Then she changes topics when she says she is "moving past biases" and unveiling some "unconscious biases that [she] had without even knowing." This demonstrates some awareness that biases are wrong, but she never identifies what her racial biases were and how they were wrong. This discourse falsely performs anti-racism by engaging in a discussion about how racial biases are wrong, but by never truly engaging in what the racial biases are that were wrong she never enacts anti-racism. Her white imagination assumes that to be anti-racist one need only restate or re-perform a politics of disgust for racial biases without reconsidering how performing disgust for racial stereotypes deflects the personal process needed to identify one's own racial biases (Zembylas, 2011).

The participants refused to critically understand how their white imagination produces a perverted sense of race understanding. Namely, recognizing oneself as white and admitting to white privilege, but not understanding the complexity of those privileges, are erroneously understood as enough to engage in anti-racism within social justice education. For a genuine anti-racist approach, emotional investment of race, one that allows white teacher candidates to delve in their own discomforts about their role in racism, must be re-understood from the perspective of the Black imagination. This cannot happen until the teacher candidates realize their investment in whiteness through their discursive patterns and emotional deflections within the white imagination. By mistakenly presenting itself as a viable alternative to the realities in the Black imagination, the white imagination, upheld by hegemonic whiteness, ultimately attempts to delegitimize the realities in the Black imagination.

Limitations: A Study Within Scope

Since the study had a small sample size, we acknowledge that the generalizability of our findings are limited. Many of the participants came from one program in one institution, and, thus, the feelings, sentiments, and ideas presented in this article may not be representative of the entire program or the entire field of teacher education. Also, the study focused on perceptions and beliefs of teacher candidates and not on the comprehensive experiences of teacher candidates. Therefore, to better complexify the findings, a systematic analysis of the entire experience of teacher candidates must be conducted. However, even with these limitations, the findings are telling about the nature of teacher candidates matriculated in an urban-focused teacher education program and should not be overlooked. In order to prepare a more racially just teaching force it becomes imperative that we take into consideration how whiteness manifests itself such that it seems invisible and normal; it is this normativity that is problematic.

A Continual Struggle: Momentary Conclusion

In the end, since the white teacher candidates did not acknowledge the construction of the white imagination to everyday acts of whiteness, racism was upheld. Although CRT has made impacts on anti-racist teaching, our white teacher candidates blocked its racially just quality. They did so by solidifying a white imagination, a fabricated consciousness based

on social constructions of whiteness, that they equated to the Black imagination, a process they used to delegitimize the Black imagination. For example, this white imagination racially codified words and attempted to equate them to terminologies like white supremacy, whiteness, and racism (Pollock, 2004). This sharply contrasts the Black imagination, where the latter terms are employed instead of racial codifications. Since the study's purview was to examine the white imagination's existence and unveil its dimensions, we cannot claim to have tested effective ways of self-interrogation, something that we look to do in the future. Rather, we believe that as educators committed to racial justice, something must be done, lest we continue to place teachers with this imagination in urban schools. To disrupt the white imagination we refuse to silence the realities embedded in the Black imagination by allowing the discomfort (in the form of white guilt, white vehemence, and white uncertainty) of the white teacher candidates to outweigh the people of color's terror. Our findings suggest that not teaching about whiteness produced teacher candidates who claimed to be invested in anti-racism, but who nonetheless showed complicity in hegemonic whiteness. Their investment to whiteness provided greater security in their white identities. By (a) not acknowledging what it means to be white and (b) remaining in guilt, the white teacher candidates could not "re-imagine" their role in anti-racism.

For the future, we will include both CWS and CRT readings so that white teacher candidates can identify and understand how the existence of the white imagination impacts their understanding of race dynamics, a process that influences their relationship with urban students of color. Instead of field trips only in "Black communities" (a hallmark of the program) we suggest teacher candidates should also deconstruct how white communities are normalized as good communities. In fact, we have them take a field trip to the white communities to deconstruct the sense of community and pride there. Finally, we find ways to embed racial justice throughout the entire program even if it begins with putting racial justice in its philosophy. Despite continual resistance we recommit ourselves to teaching the realities in the Black imagination. For if we overlook the realities of terror so intimately understood in the Black imagination by safeguarding the white imagination, we run the risk of continuing the terror that terrorizes us all.

Special Note

To critical scholars of race. May the vibrant color of your work be heard amidst the white noise.

Notes
1. In an attempt to re-equalize racial labels and terminologies in educational research articles, this article capitalizes Black and Brown to give credence to the racialized experience of people of color as a proper noun. It also strategically lowercases the word white to challenge white supremacy in language.
2. The authors acknowledge that people of color experience generalities of racism and white supremacy but also experience specificities based upon the racial categories to which they belong.

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