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Deconstructing Whiteness: Pedagogical Implications for Anti-Racism Education

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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I have been highly discontented with the multicultural approach to education for some time and it was not until I came upon the newly emerging anti-racism education discourse that I began to see some promise. As a white gay man who is committed to issues of equity within education, I see Anti-racism education as challenging and attempting to solve some of the inequities and racist policies and practices in the present day multicultural educational system. As a white teacher within the educational field, I am convinced that white teachers can not teach anti-racism education until they take on the challenge of deconstructing their white Canadian identities, and begin decolonizing their minds from the racist historical legacy of our past.

Multiculturalism has been a theory used within our Canadian schools for several decades now, and it has become a site under extreme scrutiny by many educators. In this thesis, I take on the political project of exploring the identity development of white bodies through histories of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, and how this process of identity development continues today through multicultural discourses. Hidden within the multicultural paradigm are the historical legacies and racial imageries of our past that continue to perpetuate systems of power and domination within our educational institutions. I discuss the need for a decolonizing
project for white teachers in order to implement an anti-racist praxis into our existing educational system. Without this process I feel that white teachers can not teach in an anti-racist framework, for racism and institutional racism are so embedded into what it means to be white, that we has white people need to decolonize ourselves and create a white identity based on equity and social responsibility.

How does a white teacher, join the anti-racism struggle for change without carrying our colonial, imperial, paternalist, liberal notions of race? How do we stop anti-racist education from becoming a form of liberal multiculturalism? These are important questions to ask, and my intent is to listen and collect data from selected white pre-service participants to ascertain their concept of three identities which I feel are crucial components to the decolonizing process. These include racial identity, teacher identity (what type of person becomes a teacher), and Canadian identity (what is their concept of a Canadian). Once this is understood, educators can begin devising curriculum that will help pre-service teachers through a decolonizing project.
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Chapter One

Bone of Contention

Racial imagery is central to the organization of the modern world. At what cost regions and countries export their goods, whose voices are listened to at international gatherings, who bombs and who is bombed, who gets what job, housing, access to health care and education, what cultural activities are subsidized and sold, in what terms they are validated - these are all largely inextricable from racial imagery.

(Dyer, 1997, p.1)

Multiculturalism has become a site of great contention with many educators, it has become a site in which whiteness continues to remain the center and difference is relegated to the margins of social experience. Anti-racism education has emerged as a response to this discontention; it is a discourse which directly challenges white domination and power while at the same time allowing a space for white people to produce a new anti-racist identity. Since a large proportion of Canadian schools have a disproportionate amount of white teachers, I have a fear that Anti-racism will not reach its full potential without some serious work and commitment from white pedagogues. In this thesis, I take on the political project of exploring the identity development of white bodies through histories of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, and how this process continues today through multicultural discourses. It is throughout these histories that whiteness became invested in an identity based on power and domination. As a white male educator who has been dissatisfied with the lack of critical engagement with race and difference in our schools, and especially
with how whiteness invests itself in racialized systems, I feel this is an important exploratory project. This exploration I feel allows space for white pedagogues to deconstruct their identities and decolonize their minds, creating an identity which does not rely on the bodies of non-white peoples, but one which creates an oppositional space to fight for equality and social justice. It is only when whiteness deinvests itself through the decolonizing project from an identity of power and domination that white pedagogues can begin teaching in an Anti-racism framework.

At the fundamental core of white identity are the racial imageries which exist at an unconscious level and comprise both the human psyche and our cultural systems and images. Racial imageries are cognitive structures that assist white people to categorize the vast majority of information about their world and themselves. How we explore, define and contextualize the world around us is controlled by racialized images, thus, creating knowledge and social institutions which reflect the assumptions that these images convey. How we know about ourselves and others can not be disconnected from how we represent and imagine ourselves, we know ourselves through others and how we define the other effects how we define ourselves (Giroux, 1998). Through the histories of colonialism and imperialism, we as white people have defined and known other peoples and ourselves through racialized imageries, and our assumptions about others and ourselves reflect the knowledge that has been created through these systems. This is a process that continues presently, even in our multicultural educational system, and needs to be disrupted.

In order to understand racism and other oppressions which intersect and interconnect to create systems of domination requires a contrapuntal exploration of white bodies throughout the histories of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. It
is through these histories that language, art, popular culture, and knowledges have formed through racialized cognitive structures, making particular bodies. Bodies which are defined, judged, and accorded particular privileges or disadvantages based on racial markers. Without a contrapuntal exploration, whiteness will continue to be an identity based on domination, an identity that relies on the control and subjugation of other bodies in order to define itself. Racialized imagery and knowledge have become vital to the sustenance of white identities and it has created social relations and institutions which rely on created differences. There is "[a]n epistemology so basically driven by difference it will 'naturally' find racialized thinking comfortable; it will uncritically [come to] assume racial knowledge as given (Goldberg, 1993, p.150). The formulation of these differences are evident in Western concepts of knowledge which are based on binary distinctions such as good/evil, black/white, superior/inferior, and light/dark, thus racial knowledge and imagery uses theories such as binary differentiations that support notions that identify whiteness as superior:

Primitive societies were theorized in binary differentiation from a civilized order: nomadic rather than settled; sexually promiscuous, polygamous, and communal in family and property; illogical in mentality and practicing magic rather than rational and scientific.

(Goldberg, 1993, p.156)

Before exploring the making of whiteness and in particular, Canadian whiteness, through the development of racial imagery and knowledge, a working concept of race needs to be conceived. Michael Omi and Howard Winant have formulated the racial formation approach to race that takes into account the complex dynamics of race as a discourse. Their definition consists of three main elements:

1. It must apply to contemporary political relationships. “New [race] relationships emerge chiefly at the point where some counterhegemonic or postcolonial power
is attained” (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.7). Race is used as a political tool and depending on the social milieu and the historical context of the body politic, race will be used differently. This phenomenon is articulated in Henry Giroux’s concept of a “new racism,” where race is coded in discourses of “welfare reform,” “neighborhood schools,” “toughness on crime,” and “illegitimate births” (Giroux, 1997, p.287). If this political climate were not analyzed, racial imagery would continue to control the minds and bodies of white and non-white peoples and race would continue to be invisible within those political discourses. In Canada, I theorize that race is used in differing ways; multicultural discourses are utilized to mask the uncomfortable racist practices and policies that do exist. Allowing most Canadians the illusion that we live in a relatively non-racist country.

2. Race must apply in an increasingly global context. “The geography of race is becoming more complex...the breakdown of borders in both Europe and North America all seem to be internationalizing and racializing previously national polities, cultures, and identities” (Omi & Winant, 1993, p.7). With the increase of migration and immigration race has come to take on a much more complex meaning, one that is intertwined with national identities, and the globalization of markets which expand to third worlds. First worlds utilize racial discourses to rationalize the control of world markets and resources. “Westerners may have physically left their old colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as markets but as locales on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually” (Said, 1993, p.25).

3. Lastly, race must also apply across historical time. Race is a slow inscription of innate characteristics to phenotypical body types that arose out of the knowledge
creation and accumulation of white peoples throughout the histories of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and capitalism.

This language of race was usually anchored in the signification of certain forms of somatic difference (skin colour, facial characteristics, body shape and size, eye colour, skull shape) which were interpreted as the physical marks which accompanied, and which in some unexplained way determined, the nature of those so marked.

(Miles & Torres, 1996, p.27)

Analyzing race across historical time allows one to map the changing meanings and rationales for using racial markers to justify certain behaviors and practices. It helps the deconstructing process by revealing how the identities of white bodies have become so intertwined with our racist perceptions of others, and the subjugation of those non-white bodies. It also exposes the ever changing and increasingly complex meanings of race in contemporary times.

In George Dei's class The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity (Fall, 1998), as a starting point to the class we created a working definition of race based on our own personal experiences and learnings. This definition emphasizes some of the above and contributes a few more important components to the understanding of race as a socially constructed yet real category:

- Race is socially constructed in a historical and contextual environment.
- Race has everything to do with skin colour but race isn’t just skin colour, it can include markers such as language, culture, and religion. Any of these can create racialized bodies even if physical markers are not apparent.
- Race is phenotype + social construction + social reality.
- Race is a social / relational (power and dominance) category determined by socially selected physical characteristics. Race was created and is used to justify power over other bodies.
- Race is the construction of difference which is the construction of power.
- Race is historically specific and has constantly changing meanings.
Race has been defined as a socially constructed, but real category, which should be analyzed as a political, global and historical discourse. Analyzing race using these tools can uncover how white peoples have created and relied on racial imageries and knowledges to maintain their own sense of self, while at the same time perpetuating white domination and racism. Stemming from the historical and social creation of race is the physical acts and institutional structures of racism. One must be aware that racism is not a problem of prejudice, but prejudice is certainly a result of racism. Racism is slowly learned ways of knowing which are believed to be universal truths; they appear so natural that most white people are unaware of its existence.

Paul Kivel draws a distinction between “racism” and “white racism,” his definition of racism is “the institutionalization of social injustice based on skin colour, other physical characteristics, and cultural and religious difference.” White racism he defines as “the uneven and unfair distribution of power, privilege, and material goods favoring white people” (Kivel, 1996, p.2). These definitions are very much similar; the institutionalization of social injustices is the unfair distribution of power and privilege. It is because of the power and privilege that whiteness holds that we as white people have created and continue to create institutional systems which remain racist. I find it problematic when people try to devise new terms to replace a very real term like racism. In making this distinction, Kevil is making a move to separate himself, and white people from the truth that white racism is the perpetration of social injustices based on phenotypical differences. In separating white people from the term racism it allows the space for them to create alternative definition which divert attention from actual racist systems. I theorize that Canadian identity discourses are discourse about whiteness and that images of whiteness are evoked
when discussing Canadian identity. It is problematic to make the distinction between racism and "white racism" because in a Canadian context racism and white racism are synonymous and can not be separated. In Canada, whiteness holds political, economical, and moral power, thus making racism in a Canadian context both based on phenotypical differences and unfair power distribution. Creating a new term, such as "white racism" is a moot point and only diverts attention from the important issues, and that is dismantling racism and its effects.

There are many theoretical ideas and pedagogical tools used dismantle racism, many however, still incorporate colonial and imperial racist mentalities that are highly intertwined with white identities. Goldberg separates racism education into two distinct categories that have two entirely different outcomes; one perceives racism as stemming from personal prejudice the other theorizes it as a social structural problem (Goldberg, 1993, p.92). Those people who use theories that rely on the personal prejudice approach to eradicating racism believe that changing personal beliefs and stereotypes of other peoples and cultures will eliminate racism. They believe that simple exposure to other cultures will make people more sensitive and thus, less racist. They employ pedagogical methods that perpetuate racist ideals, ideals which stem from our colonial and imperial past. This approach fails to incorporate issues of power and privilege, and it negates to interrogate the making of white bodies in the development of racist systems.

Theories that utilize the social structural approach sway to the other side of the spectrum. Instead of analyzing the personal/psychology of racism like the other, it investigates socially created structures that maintain racism. This has its strengths since it can explore how racism is created and maintained at an institutional level.
and this can include issues of power and privilege. Although it fails, like the other approach, to explore the connections between power and white identity and how whiteness is so invested in maintaining racialized systems of domination. Multiculturalism I argue is one of those pedagogical paradigms which attempt to dismantle racism by disseminating information to disrupt personal prejudices.

The Making of White Bodies

Before embarking on the analysis of multiculturalism and how it's employed today, I first will explore the historical making of white bodies to reveal how white domination becomes implicit in multiculturalism. Mary Louise Pratt explores white subject identity as being influenced through discourses of natural science. “In 1735 The System of Nature was written and attempted to classify all plant forms on the planet” (Pratt, 1992, p.15), and it was through this investment in exploration and naming that whiteness came into contact with other peoples. As explorers began to travel to ever further lands and oceans in their quest to classify and interpret the world around them, they returned with “tales and texts which produced other parts of the world for Europeans” at home (Pratt, 1992, p.18), contributing to the formation of racialized imagery of distant lands and peoples. These explorers interpreted the cultures of these new people, which began the creation of a white identity that defined itself as a civilized people making contact with those uncivilized dark others. Another form of science, which influenced the making of white bodies, was the emergence of Darwinism. According to Banton, Social Darwinism is the application to society those theories which derive from Charles Darwin:

The theory of types in its purest form stated that underlying the superficial variations in human constitutions there was a limited number of permanent types of distinct origins...there had been pure races in the past and that interbreeding was leading to
degeneration. Social Darwinism also saw relations between peoples of different races as biologically determined...operations of natural selection would create pure races out of the prevailing diversity.

(Banton, 1977, p.89)

Darwinism produced knowledges that contributed to racial imageries, it naturalized human differences as biologically determined and innate. White bodies were constructed through these discourses as racially superior; science was utilized to prove white superiority over other bodies and lands.

Correlating with the emergence of natural science and Darwinism was the expanding search for commercially exploitable resources, markets and lands to colonize. These historical moments created systems of domination which necessitated images of whiteness as superior and others as inferior to rationalize broken treaties, genocide, mass displacements, and enslavement (Pratt, 1992). The production of subjugated bodies is discussed to a great extent in Ann Laura Stoler’s work; she utilizes Foucault’s concept of biopower to explore the making of white bourgeois bodies:

A political technology that brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge/power an agent of transformation of human life...Within this schema, technologies of sex played a critical role; sex occupied the discursive interface, linking the life of the individual to the life of the species as a whole.

(Stoler, 1995, p.3-4)

Sexuality became a “dense transfer point” of power, and it was through What Foucault termed biopower, that bourgeois sexuality was “shaped on the imperial landscape where the politics and language of race where utilized” (Stoler, 1995, p.3).

In Western dichotomous thinking whiteness needed an opposite in order to define itself, thus other bodies were racialized and defined in opposition to what the bourgeois imagined themselves to be. Non-white bodies were defined as highly
sexualized and those bodies were crucial for the creation and definition of white bourgeois bodies. Creating a sexualized degenerate body in which white bourgeois could use as a marker to achieve what they considered the pinnacle of sexually virtuous is dichotomous thinking at work. Biopower was used to not only identify and control the degenerate outside the European State, but it was also used to regulate those within the State. It secured a relationship between racism, sexuality, and class which defined the white bourgeois through languages of racial purity and sexual virtue (Stoler, 1995, p.10). Those within the state who failed to meet the stringent requirements suited for bourgeois identity were also racialized and sexualized. Once the English colonized and incorporated Ireland into the European State, the Irish were defined in similar terms as the dark bodies the English were coming into contact with through their other colonial acquisitions. It actually was not uncommon to hear the Irish described as "Black Irish:"

The Irish were described as lazy, "naturally" given to "idleness" and...dominated by "innate sloth," "loose, barbarous and most wicked," and living "like beasts."

(Takaki, 1993, p. 27)

Discourses around cleanliness, hygiene, morality and family were also mechanisms used to control and define populations which in turn created the dichotomous identities needed for bourgeois whiteness. White men embarked on their exploratory and colonial expeditions and identified themselves in opposition to what they defined those dark others to be. Representing themselves as virtuous and racially pure necessitated great psychic energy which projected their own degenerate desires and fantasies on to other bodies, for these bourgeois bodies were not as virtuous or pure as they thought. McClintock utilizes the term "porno-tropics" to express this phenomenon well: it is “the European imagination, a fantastic magic
lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears” onto non-white bodies (McClintock, 1995, p.22). Whiteness must be seen as being “occupied with creating its own sexuality and forming a specific body based on it, a class body with its health, hygiene, descent, and race” (Stoler, 1995, p.53). It is through all these mechanisms that whiteness began to define itself. White bourgeois bodies became dependent on the bodies of non-white peoples in order for the created image of themselves to exist.

Whiteness is continuing to create itself through racial language and imagery and it was through the emergence of natural science and Darwinism and the use of biopower that white bourgeois identity was formed. A climate was created in which “racisms provided truth claims about how the social world once was, why social inequalities do or should persist, and the social distribution on which the future should rest” (Stoler, 1995, p.91). It created an identity that put white at the center and non-white bodies at the degenerate margins.

What is a Canadian?

Canadian identity has many complex components to it, and in order to deconstruct what it means to be white, we also need to examine the different discourses which help to create our identity as a Canadian. I must stress here that I am discussing dominant notions of Canadian identity and I am aware there are many competing claims to Canadian identity, such as First Nations, which are struggling to gain political recognition. But I am more concerned with analyzing and dismantling dominant forms of Canadian identity because it is this identity that is coupled with whiteness to create a particular citizen. Much of our identity is in part based in opposition to our neighbors the United States for Shields argues that Canadian
nationalist narratives identify Canada as natural/nature, "off against American mass
culture, entirely originating, or so we are asked to believe, south of the border"
(Shields, 1991, p.163). Canada is physically placed in a geographical position which
makes it overshadowed by the political and economic powers of the United States.
So we as Canadians continually struggles for an identity that is separate from that of
the United States. It are these national narratives which try to separate us, among
many others that are used to identify Canadians as non-American. National
narratives are used to create cohesion among peoples in a particular geographical
space, but these same narratives can also be used to exclude segments of the
population who are not desirable in the making of a national identity. Edward Said
sees national narratives as powerful tools to subjugate populations and their
narratives; he states that:

Nations themselves are narrations. The power to narrate, or to
block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very
important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the
main connections between them. Most important, the grand
narratives of emancipation and enlightenment mobilized people
in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection.
(Said, 1993, p.xiii)

Even though multiculturalism has become a discourse within the Canadian national
identity, it has not allowed the voices of those less desirable people to be heard, or
their voices have been sanitized to suit the political climate of the time. Those
competing claims to Canadian identity that continue to struggle for recognition are
the ones that push for political change.

Multiculturalism is a narrative that defines Canadians as different from the United
States; this is observable in the language used to narrate our countries; the United
States uses the analogy of the "melting pot," while Canada uses "tossed salad" or
“mosaic” in their national narratives. But imbedded in the multicultural narrative is the belief that we as Canadians are not as racist as the United States, or in some cases, non-racist. White Canadians visualize our country as multicultural, a country with a diverse population with no history of slavery and segregation. We even visualize ourselves as a benevolent country because of our kindness in the Underground Railroad. These are narratives I heard most of my life, and continue to hear. While a group of racially mixed friends and I were having a heated debate about multiculturalism and Canadian identity one evening, I posed the question “What is a Canadian?” and their responses reflect those multicultural national narratives. They expressed that there is no true Canadian, because we are a multicultural and diverse country. I further disrupted this Liberal multicultural discourse by stating that many would argue that Canadian identity is only white, male, and heterosexual, but they continued to dispute this idea, sticking to their comfortable notion that Canada is multicultural. Some in the room began to understand my position when I asked my non-white friends if they have ever been asked, “Where are you from?” Indicating that it was assumed that they were not from Canada, that only white people are from Canada. This argument helped them realize that the Canadian multicultural narrative included them superficially, but still rendered them invisible. I continued to explain how multiculturalism is a trope to satiate non-white peoples while relieving white anxiety and guilt about their colonial and imperial past.

Today, Canadian white identity is continually being created and contested, but it still constitutes the same racist histories of colonialism and imperialism. Multiculturalism has recently become a discourse that is important to the making of white subjects, and it is of critical importance that the contrapuntal mapping of
whiteness be undertaken both historically and in contemporary times. The reasons for deconstructing white subject identity, and in particular, a Canadian white subject identity of teachers becomes even more crucial when looking at the shifting population of Canada due to mass migration and immigration. The educational system in Canada has a disproportionately higher amount of white teachers than non-white, and those white teachers are utilizing racialized knowledge and imagery in their classrooms and this has devastating effects for all students. Deconstructing the histories of whiteness can create a space for white teachers to explore their learned investment in racist imagery and allows them to challenge the racist knowledge systems embedded within multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism is a discourse which was created by white men with particular political projects, and since multiculturalism has been created by those in power there are certain knowledges that are given authority. Multiculturalism has been sanitized and/or censored so as not to offend and it allows white people to utilize it in ways that legitimate or delegitimize certain knowledges. Those knowledges which are “easy to swallow” will be permitted to enter the classroom, but those that may challenge any notions of whiteness or white authority will be delegitimated. The dangerous part of multiculturalism is that all of this is achieved while still allowing white people to appear as Liberal proponent of multiculturalism. Looking at the historical beginnings of multiculturalism and how multicultural discourses evolved to constitute the same colonial practices of our past, will open a space in our classrooms for white Canadian teachers and students to uncover the colonial, imperial and racialized practices that stem from the histories of their white identities. They then can begin to challenge multicultural discourses and move
towards an identity which is based on an anti-racist praxis.

**Ideologies of Canadian Multiculturalism**

The 1960's were a socially and politically turbulent time for both the United States and Canada. The United States experienced many civil rights movements, the most widely known grew through tensions created by a history of slavery and Jim Crow laws directed towards black populations (Raines, 1977, p.135). In a Canadian context it began with issues of national language between French and English, and this unease became extremely volatile. Also, increasingly vocal and militant minorities such as First Nations, youth and immigrant groups made the government seriously look at its policies regarding equity (Ng, 1995). This forced the then Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau to re-evaluate government policies and the future of Canada with its increasing multiracial populations, and he established multiculturalism as a cultural policy on October 8, 1971. Roxana Ng (1995) states that multiculturalism is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, but an ideological frame put in place to govern a new reality. An ideological frame "identifies ideologies as processes that are produced and constructed through human activities...once an ideological frame is in place, it renders the very work process that produced it invisible and the idea that it references as common sense" (Ng, 1995; Gramsci, 1971). Once multiculturalism became an ideology which people accepted, the actual political pressures that produced it became invisible. Any remaining pressures can now be ignored because multiculturalism is believed to rectify these issues. Multiculturalism becomes common sense and the language surrounding the discourse becomes commonly used by white people to appear liberal and progressive to the pressure groups without having to relinquish any power. This notion of "common sense" is similar to
what Michel Foucault discusses as the “power of truth,” where the most effective and non-obtrusive power is exercised through discourses, not physical force:

There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth...we are forced to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function: we must speak the truth.

(Foucault, 1980, p.93)

This “power of truth” is present within the multicultural discourse. Its creation and enforcement works through a liberal white male hegemonic discourse created by the same government whose ultimate goal is to remain in power. The discourse of multiculturalism is presented in a way which allows whites to appear liberal and non-racist, while at the same time not deconstructing their own complicity in power and privilege. The government constructed a truth discourse in the name of multiculturalism based on similar racist discourses of the past. Once multiculturalism as an ideological frame was implemented, liberal white teachers began to employ multicultural pedagogies, in turn perpetuating racisms and not initiating the change of institutional racist practices. Not only does multiculturalism allow whites to feel non-racist because they “celebrate diversity,” but it also has had the power to satiated some of the non-white populations. As Foucault says:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.

(Foucault, 1980, p.119)

Multiculturalism has been used as a “power of truth,” and it is the making of a Canadian white identity that perceives itself as liberal and non-racist. Power and
domination continue to work through discourses of multiculturalism, and I will
demonstrate how this is happening in the educational system.

There are many pedagogical approaches to multicultural education which are
utilized in Canada, and Goli Rezai-Rashti (1995) separates them into five main
approaches. The following is not an exhaustive list and other multicultural
pedagogies may exist, but the following is a short breakdown of the main approaches
that are used in Canada:

1. **Education of culturally different groups**: This is designed to sensitize and
   prepare teachers to meet the needs of minority or culturally atypical students.
   Here we find programs such as English as a Second Language and Transitional
   Programs.

2. **Education promoting the understanding of cultural difference**: Programs of this
   sort advocate educational institutions' responsibility to understand the positive
   contributions made by culturally diverse groups.

3. **Education stressing cultural pluralism**: The emphasis here is on advocating the
   recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity and the acceptance that citizens have
   a right to retain their cultural identity.

4. **Bicultural education**: These programs are designed to prepare students who can
   become competent in at least two cultures.

5. **Cultural/intercultural education**: This approach highlights every aspect of
   multicultural education, namely, the concerns for cultural and linguistic
   continuity, issues related to ethnic and race relations, aboriginal peoples’ rights,
   integration of immigrants, bilingualism, and human rights (Rezai-Rashti, 1995,
   p.4).
Each of these multicultural approaches was created through good intentions and some serious concerns about education for all students. Although when critically exploring its implications for students and teachers, one can see the inability for multiculturalism to challenge racism and its inability to create a Canadian white subject which does not base its identity on the bodies of non-white peoples. The first approach, *education of culturally different groups*, takes the form of programs that help students to learn and adapt to their new country. The most common form is teaching students, usually immigrant students, English and the cultural ethics and practices of Canada. Its intention is to prepare “minority students for their social and cultural negotiations with dominant white mainstream society. At the same time, it is expected that white students will also acquire knowledge and familiarity with the language and culture of minority groups” (McCarthy, 1995, p.31). The consequences of attempting to prepare students for social and cultural crossover is that it usually sends them on a trajectory towards assimilation into the dominant white culture. Assimilationist theory does not tackle issues of racism, but attempts to shed students of cultural traits that are not similar or desirable to the dominant white culture of Canada. Unfortunately, most of these students are non-white and their bodies have already been racialized, carrying with it many consequences, and making full integration into Canadian society impossible since the dominating definition of a Canadian is defined as white, male, heterosexual and able bodied. As for white students, the chance of acquiring knowledge and familiarity of the language and customs of differing groups is relatively unimportant in a country which values and rewards white languages and cultures. As well, it is impossible for these white students to learn the language and customs of minority groups when these same
groups are being forced to shed those cultural traits.

The second approach, *education promoting the understanding of cultural difference*, although seemingly practical, is problematic. These programs are seen under the guise of cultural understanding models of education and are based on the presumption that with the proper information white students and students of color will transcend racial stereotypes. "By fostering understanding and acceptance of cultural differences in the classroom and in the school curriculum, educational programs based on the cultural understanding approach, it is expected, will contribute towards the elimination of prejudice" (McCarthy, 1995, p.27). There are three reasons this approach is destined to fail, first, there is a lack of integration of multicultural pedagogies into the curriculum and this only creates an "us and them" dichotomy, with whiteness at the center of valued knowledge and other cultures are relegated to the margins. This approach usually encompasses implementing thematic cultural studies, much like black history month, which only presents multicultural education as insignificant knowledge, too primitive to be included in the dominant white cannon, thus marginalizing the whole concept of multicultural education.

Cultural fairs demonstrate the second reason cultural understanding approaches to multiculturalism do not fulfill its obligation to eradicate racisms. Cultural fairs usually are events which display cultural dancing, food, clothing, art, and customs to an audience of observers. These fairs create a space which often exhibit essentialist representations of differing cultures based on nostalgic notions of the past, negating that cultures are not static, but always changing, and fluctuating in response to social interactions. There is a danger in representing cultures as only a thing of the
past because it negates their existence in the present. Aboriginal cultures are represented through images from the past; museums and books have attempted to preserve a dying culture and continue to portray a dated representation. Many fail to recognize that Aboriginal peoples are still active and their culture has changed historically and politically with time. Anne McClintock writes that:

Colonized people do not inhabit history proper, but exist in a permanently anterior time within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans; the living embodiment of the archaic primitive.

(McClintock, 1995, p.30)

This is evident within the multicultural frame because other cultures are depicted as frozen in time, as static and unchanging. They are represented in the form of cultural celebrations, negating the fact that cultures are not only celebratory but also in struggle against domination. Also, cultural fairs and similar types of events "overemphasizes the differences among ethnic groups, neglecting the differences within any one group...which results in multicultural approaches that treat ethnic groups as monolithic entities possessing uniform, discernible traits" (McCarthy, 1995 p.28). Once a group of people is believed to have discernible traits, then innate characteristics are allocated to them, allow a climate for racist beliefs to flourish.

Theorizing racism as stemming from prejudice or stereotypes is the third reason that multicultural education will fail its objective. To solve racism by trying to falsifying white racial knowledge and imagery, without exploring how this knowledge came to be known, is to locate racism in biased ideas and assumptions in people's minds: prejudiced attitudes, stereotypes, and lack of information about non-white peoples. Christine E. Sleeter sited a study of twenty-three white preservice students who undertook intensive course work around concepts and issues related to
Deconstructing Whiteness

multicultural education and also spent 100 hours with low-income minority children. She found “the remarkable phenomenon of students generally using these direct experiences to selectively perceive and reinforce their initial preconceptions” (Sleeter, 1993, p.158), of non-white students. She also found that “while some studies find white students’ attitudes to improve somewhat immediately after receiving instruction, studies do not report lasting changes in whites’ perspectives and/or behavior patterns” (Sleeter, 1993, p.158). So the very essence of this approach, to dismantle stereotypes by disseminating information, basically re-establishes or strengthens those very stereotypes because they rely on white essentialist nostalgic notions of the past as cultural information. Educators need to disrupt racial knowledge by deconstructing whiteness; they need to discontinue gazing upon the other and begin gazing upon the self. If educators do not begin deconstructing the identities of white people then when non-white peoples attempt to disrupt essentialized representations of themselves they are invalidated as inauthentic knowers:

For the most part, [white scholars] seem to be very disappointed that modern Indians do not act like the Indians of their undergraduate textbooks or the movies they enjoyed as children and they seem determined to attack contemporary expressions of Indian-ness as fraudulent and invalid because modern Indians fall short of their expectations.

(Deloria, 1992, p.399)

Even when presented with alternative representations whites do not dismantle their essentialized, racial notions, but instead de-authenticate the Aboriginal view because “Indians do not have the right to have a point of view when scholars know reality to be different” (Deloria, 1992, p.399). Multicultural education that attempts to change whites’ prejudices or stereotypes to solve racism creates a white subjectivity that
continues to identify their cannon or knowledges as superior to those knowledges of non-white peoples. Whiteness also essentializes culturally different groups as a means of defining, naming, and thus, controlling them. In the end, their identities become defined in opposition to those non-white bodies.

The third approach to multicultural education, *education stressing cultural pluralism*, is based on the premise that if non-white students are learning in an environment which fosters a "universal respect for the individual ethnic history, culture, and language of the plurality of students," (McCarthy, 1995, p.32) it will have a positive effect on individual self-concepts, and in turn boost their academic achievement. Improving self-concepts of non-white students is rooted in a cultural-deficiency perspective, it assumes that students of colour have low self-concepts and embedded in this approach are the colonial mentalities that consider white people the saviors to non-white people. Many people perceive the "main causes of their difficulties [are] located in their homes and communities such as parental attitudes, gang influences, and 'deficient' language skills" (Sleeter, 1993, p.160). Also, since modernist discourses are prevalent within Western thought and we use universal and essentialist notions of culture, deficiencies can be attributed to innate characteristics of the students themselves. This is dangerous because it removes the blame for low retention and success of non-white students from the educational system and locates it within the students' innate abilities or community environment. Although improving self-concept through a better learning environment can help, it is a slippery slope to begin pathologizing the egos of non-white students without examining the institutional structure of the educational system.
Living in a society which holds meritocracy as a key component of national identity creates a belief that proper education will improve academic achievement and hard work will help non-white youth break the cycle of unemployment since the labour market will absorb large numbers of qualified non-white youth. I want to stress here that those creating these programs of multicultural education may have good intentions, but those intentions are coached within a white supremacist discourse since they connote pathology of non-white peoples. If jobs are not attained by non-white youth, it often is attributed to innate characteristics of their race. Instead of examining the racist structure of the educational system and labour market as problematic they find fault in non-white youths' weak self-concept, which in itself is racist. Those in the educational system fail to see their own complicity in upholding and perpetuating racist knowledge and imagery that affect non-white youth in fundamental ways. Also, this notion that the labour market will absorb "qualified minority youth" is quite optimistic, and forgets to take into account the racism which is practiced everyday in the workforce. In his investigation of the fortunes of educated black and white youth in the job market, Troyna concludes that "racial and social connections, rather than educational qualifications per se, "determined" the phenomenon of better job chances for white youth even when black youth had higher qualifications than their white counterparts (1984, p.81). Thus, cultural pluralism in the curriculum may boost minority youth self-concept, but it does not address the more crucial problem of systemic institutional racism and the racist identities of white teachers.

The fourth approach to multicultural curriculum, *bicultural education*, educates students to become competent in at least two cultures. To be competent in another
culture, according to Frances Henry in “The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society” the student would have to learn and put into practice knowledge which is unattainable without being a member of a particular culture, the student would have to learn the following:

The totality of the ideas, beliefs, values, knowledge and way of life of a group of people who share a certain historical, religious, racial, linguistic, ethnic, or social background ... Culture is a complex and dynamic organization of meaning, knowledge, artifacts, and symbols that guide human behavior, account for shared patterns of thought and action, and contribute to human, social, and physical survival.

(Henry et al, 1995, p.326)

How is a student expected to acquire knowledge that anthropologists have been attempting to understand for decades? The liberal multicultural discourse presents a facade of teaching their students other cultures but presents an appropriated and colonized version of that other, for it is usually the only way in which whiteness is able to see the other, through the lens of the superior to the inferior. One must remember that throughout history, whiteness has attempted to understand other cultures, and in doing so has either destroyed, misinterpreted or appropriated them as their own through colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. bell hooks talks about “eating the other” as a phenomenon taking place within popular culture, this I feel can also be seen within the educational institution.

Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other’s history through a process of decontextualization.

(hooks, 1992, p.31)

White students are expected to consume or “eat the other” in this bicultural education approach to multiculturalism. How can this be achieved without essentializing and
erasing the other's history? An even more important question is, should competency of other cultures be an educational goal? White students should not become competent in other cultures until they begin learning about themselves, by constructing a white identity through the decolonizing process. Understanding of cultural difference is unattainable when whiteness continues to view others through colonial lenses.

The fifth approach to multicultural curriculum, *cultural/ intercultural education*, highlights many aspects of multicultural education, namely, the concerns for cultural and linguistic continuity, issues related to ethnic and race relations, aboriginal peoples' rights, integration of immigrants, bilingualism, and human rights (Rezai-Rashti, 1995, p.4). Many of the components in this type of curriculum are based on some important concepts such as aboriginal rights, human rights and race relations, and can be a beginning at resistance and institutional change. But, since it combines most of the approaches discussed earlier in the paper similar problems arise and make it very difficult to create institutional change when whiteness is not contrapuntally interrogated.

Within liberal multicultural discourses, racism is understood primarily as the product of ignorance, which in turn, is perpetuated by individual prejudice and negative attitudes. Also, whiteness has historically been constructed on the backs of non-white peoples, so multiculturalism becomes a discourse that continues to use non-white peoples to create whiteness:

> The contemporary crises of identity in the west, especially as experienced by white youth, are eased when the “primitive” is recouped via a focus on diversity and pluralism which suggests the Other can provide life-sustaining alternatives.

(hooks, 1992, p.25)
Pedagogical approaches need to address these serious issues in multicultural education. Since white teachers continue to perpetuate power and privilege and still represent non-white bodies in racialized ways, there needs to be a move towards examining whiteness and its implications in education. In summary, multiculturalism fails to address the following:

- Multiculturalism negates to examine the power relations within social institutions as the main proponent in upholding systemic racism.
- Multiculturalism fails to examine the interconnectedness of social oppressions, their reliance on, and support of one another.
- Multiculturalism in its present form in the educational system uses methods which uphold white racial domination through an “us and them” dichotomy.
- Multiculturalism fails to integrate other forms of knowledge, histories and cultures into the curriculum, but still “otherizes” by placing these discourses outside of the dominant white canon.

The main question now is how does a white teacher join the anti-racism struggle for change without carrying our colonial, imperial, paternalist, and liberal notions of race? This is an important question, because it points to our identities as white people, and reveals how they are implicated in the types of knowledges we produce. Knowledge is not produced in a vacuum, but is effected by the identity and agenda of the knowledge producer, and the socio-political climate in which the knowledge is produced. Since we see a move towards an anti-racist educational praxis in a lot of the educational literature, there needs to be a commitment by white pedagogues to begin the work of exploring our identities as white people. We need to deconstruct how our identities have been created through colonial histories, and how the knowledges we have come to know as “truth” have also been created through these same colonial histories. It is time for white teachers to challenge their understanding of knowledge production and its connection with their identities as white people. We
need to begin creating new knowledges which reflect the political agenda of anti-racism education instead of remaining complacent behind the mask of multiculturalism.
Chapter Two

A Move Towards Anti-Racist Education

Anti-racist education is fundamentally a perspective. It’s a point of view that cuts across all subject areas, and addresses the histories and experiences of people who have been left out of the curriculum. Its purpose is to help us deal equitably with all the cultural and racial differences that you find in the human family. It’s also a perspective that allows us to get at explanations for why things are the way they are in terms of power relationships, in terms of equality issues.

(Lee, 1991, p.1)

Multiculturalism has been an important step in the evolution of our educational system but it is now time to continue the evolutionary process and begin implementing an anti-racist perspective. In the previous chapter I have explored the historical making of whiteness and how multiculturalism has been a discourse which contributes to the making of very particular white people today. I now want to explore the principles of anti-racism and introduce white racial identity development theory into the equation for helping our preservice white teachers join the anti-racist struggle for social change.

The implementation of multicultural education began a process of analyzing education through the lenses of race and culture, and it created a climate for many to critique and inquire about improved ways of educating our ever-increasing diverse population. Unfortunately, multiculturalism has remained static at a superficial
juncture that only emphasizes the consequences of negative attitudes, ignorance, and miscommunication, which proponents seek to remedy by cultivating empathy, appreciation, understanding and tolerance of difference. Although multiculturalism has made people increasingly aware of the cultures and customs of other peoples, and has made race relations a topic of debate, it has made little impact on the lived experiences of non-white students within the educational setting. Multiculturalism remains in a dangerous position because it disguises racism and its causes within a cloak of liberal politics that celebrates acceptance and tolerance without interrogating the histories that created the present day race relations. Razack states that we must challenge the widely held view that "relations between dominant and subordinate groups can be unmarked by histories of oppression [where] problems of communication are mere technical glitches [or] misunderstandings that arise because the parties are culturally, racially, physically, mentally, or sexually different" (1998, p. 8). History is an important context when analyzing human relations. It is a context which allows us to answer the questions of how human relations are socially organized along racial lines and how systems have been put in place to sustain unequal power arrangements. Multiculturalism has failed to look at the historical making of power relations, its connection with whiteness, and how it is reproduced in our classrooms. It fails to seriously address issues of power and privilege and its effects on non-white students. These students are still experiencing racism from teachers, administration and fellow students that effect their educational outcome. Institutional racism is experienced through unequal disciplinary actions, mandatory curriculum, and tracking programs, and the higher rate of drop out among non-white
students is an indication that the needs of these populations are not being met (see Dei et al., 1997).

It is time to move beyond multiculturalism and begin exploring how difference based on race and culture, has been created and utilized to confer benefits to certain populations. Education needs to examine how power is at play in every aspect of our lives and how it effects non-white and white peoples. Before education can take up this challenge, white teachers need to question their notions of what is equitable education and begin identifying power and white racial domination as factors that inform their identities as teachers. White teachers need to begin examining their investment in whiteness instead of relying on racialized bodies to ease their racial anxiety by diverting attention from whiteness to the celebration of other cultures. They must begin a journey of self-discovery by uncovering how whiteness has been constructed and continues to be created through histories of power and domination; they need to deconstruct their white identities and recreate themselves through the decolonizing process.

Decolonization is the process of liberating oneself from oppressive regimes and it not only includes physical oppression but also psychological oppression. This is why I talk about the decolonizing process for white preservice teachers because I theorize that we are oppressed by our colonial and imperial past and by an identity which requires extreme psychic energy to maintain. We need to take conscious and tangible political action to decolonize our white identities for it is time to move beyond the comfort of multiculturalism and begin the challenge of utilizing an anti-racist praxis to achieve equity within the educational system.
It is important, at this point, to articulate what I mean by an anti-racist praxis. Rymer and Alladin define praxis as existing “when theory and action are entwined in a process that causes action to inform theory and theory to explain action” (1996, p. 159). This pairing of action to theory is crucial, as you will see later, when trying to implement an anti-racist pedagogy within an educational setting; theory becomes decontextualized without action. Theory should not only be visceral, but needs to be grounded in concrete actions such as struggles for social change. It is these social struggles that inform theory and give it life and validity to those who utilize it. Remembering the histories of struggles become important because it can then be utilized to clarify actions taken via the theoretical ideology. One must not forget the original struggles which informed theory because this history is crucial to the creation of the theory. If histories are not taken into consideration and remembered, theory can hold a dangerous position since its original purpose is forgotten it can then be used to justify actions and policies that are detrimental to racialized populations.

Rymer and Alladin then continue to explain that praxis must develop over time through a reflection of ones experiences while in the classroom (1996). One of the most significant reflections should be directed at one’s self. This includes an inward inventory of our own misconceptions and biases, but should also include an historical exploration into how our identities as white people are entwined with those biases. Once white people explore their histories and begin to understand and unravel the complex connections between whiteness and power, they begin the decolonizing process which is the action needed to inform the theories that are so crucial for an anti-racist praxis.
Many may ask why I make a connection between whiteness, decolonization and anti-racism? There is an important connection; one which has been ignored and I feel has hindered multiculturalism and many other methods of racism reduction work. White racial identity, until recently, has not been analyzed or challenged and when this work is carried out, we begin to see how white privilege and power are essential for upholding white racial domination. Many white people have been taught, through the multicultural discourse, that racism is only individual acts of meanness, not systems of domination stemming from our own identities as white people or they fail to recognize racism as an invisible system, such as privilege, that confers dominance on their group. Peggy McIntosh states that "whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'" (1990, p.31).

Anti-racism education challenges this normative assumption of whiteness, and it demands that we as educators address issues of power and privilege. White people can begin challenging their power and privilege only if they partake in the decolonization process, which strips whiteness of its historical and political power to produce and constrain racialized others and it also gives white people the freedom to produce an identity based on equality and social justice. This is work which needs to be accomplished, and it creates a powerful connection between our identities as white teachers to the decolonizing process in order to teach in an anti-racist framework. I fear the full potential of anti-racist education will not be achieved unless white teachers undertake this important task of decolonization.
I want to stress that I am not attempting to re-centre whiteness within the anti-racist discourse, but I do feel it is important for us as white people to look at our own investment in whiteness before we can really understand and implement the principles of anti-racism education. To some this may look like I am re-centre whiteness but this is not the case. White people require the time and space to answer the important question, “how does a connection with a past practice support a disconnection from a present practice and/or a development of a new one?” (Foster, 1996, p. 3). We need for a brief time to centre whiteness, not to dominate, but to deconstruct our past, so as to disconnect ourselves from an identity that needs to be the centre in order to exist.

Fundamentals of Anti-racism Education

George Dei has written extensively about anti-racism education and it is important at this point to briefly outline his vision of anti-racist education. Many of these principles challenge some of the ideological holes in multicultural education and also incorporate new components which multiculturalism failed to address. He has divided anti-racism education into ten interrelated principles, but stipulates that other principles may be added since there is a diverse vision of what anti-racism education should incorporate. Here are the basic concepts of his principles taken from his book *Anti-racism Education: Theory & Practice* (1996):

The first principle of anti-racism education recognizes the social effects of race, despite the concept’s lack of scientific basis. Throughout history scientists have continually tried to establish genetic, or biological differences between races in order to justify racial domination or exclusion, but have not been successful.

It is acknowledged that...the biological and genetic sciences established conclusively in the light of empirical evidence that
the attempt to establish the existence of different types of "races" of human beings by scientific procedures had failed. The idea that the human species consisted of a number of distinct "races," each exhibiting a set of discrete physical and cultural characteristics is therefore false, mistaken.

(Miles & Torres, 1996, p. 25)

Even though science can not find biological difference between races, we as educators must still recognize that there are social meanings attached to race which effect the lives of racialized bodies in our schools in dramatic ways. We must analyze, and challenge the social meanings of race in the classroom, giving students the tools to critically explore the world around them. Anti-racism also looks at the changing meaning of race historically and recognizes racism as a discourse concerning the body, in terms of how the body is read differently in shifting and complex terrains.

The second principle addresses the issue of intersections and interconnections of all oppressions for a complete analysis of how difference effects all our lives. One cannot understand the full social effects of race without comprehending the intersection of all forms of social oppression. This is important to articulate, for students enter the classroom with multiple identities and to recognize those identities and how they connect to create systems of oppression or privilege allows students to visualize themselves in the process of knowledge production. Anti-racism discourse recognizes the interconnectedness of all oppressions, including gender, class, and sexuality and attempts to analyze both the historical and contemporary reality of people's lives. Social oppressions can not be separated from one another because they support each other in interdependent and complex ways.

Anti-racism's third principle asks us to acknowledge that there are enormous social, political and economic benefits that historically have accrued, and continue to
accrue, to certain individuals in society due to the dominance of white male power. This is similar to what Peggy McIntosh illustrates when she wrote her paper entitled *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (1990). She discloses how she came to realize that her own privileges as a white woman were oppressing others and she coined the term “unpacking” as a means of naming and dislodging those privileges. Anti-racism education recognizes the power and privileged positions of all members in society, but the focus is on institutionalized power and how it contains a reservoir of privilege for the white male heterosexual to freely tap into.

The *fourth principle* of anti-racism education problematizes the marginalization of certain voices in society and, specifically, the delegitimation of the knowledge and experiences of subordinated groups in the education system. Our Canadian educational system was established by, and created in the same model as the educational system of Europe, and carries with it knowledges, assumptions, and biases which are present in Western thinking. Anti-racist pedagogy engages the different and multiple ways of knowing in our world in order to advance the course of social knowledge. It also decentralizes white knowledge as universal and allows the space for other knowledges to enhance our lived experience. Western concepts of knowledge are not inherently better than other forms; we have been raised to put trust in it and to believe our knowledge as truth. There is a certain amount of truth to our knowledge because it emanates through our experiences with the environment and each other, but other knowledge systems are just as valuable. They also are based on their experiences and interactions with their environment and can contribute to a heighten understanding of the world around us.
Anti-racism education's *fifth principle* stresses the importance of providing a holistic understanding and appreciation of the human experience, comprising social, cultural, political, ecological, and spiritual aspects. It is time we quit treating children as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge and information, we need to understand that children are social and spiritual beings and begin teaching in a way which fosters their social, spiritual and cultural development. Educators must imbue in their students the importance of collective responsibility in relation to upholding the virtues of the social and natural worlds. The individual must develop a deep understanding of the conscious self and how this self relates to others. Today, we are living in an individualistic culture and it has created a population that negates the importance of the natural world, relationships with people, and communities in the development of a healthy self. We need to change this, so students can recognize their connections with the natural world, local communities and themselves, only then will a commitment for equity and social responsibility that is so fundamental to anti-racism education be fostered.

The *sixth principle* believes students do not go to school as “disembodies” generic youths. Identities such as racial, class, gender, disability and sexual affect and are affected by schooling processes. If there is the recognition that students come from different social locations/identities, then educators can connect the materials to the students' life, making it easier for students to answer the popular question, “Why or how is this relevant to me?” This is related to the *second principle* because they both stress the importance of recognizing the identities of students. One recognizes identities as related to oppression or privilege while the other on how students engage knowledge in differing ways depending on their identities, but both take the
step of addressing the importance of identity development and knowledge production. If educators take this into consideration they can create curriculum which will engage all students while at the same time considering the differing and multiple ways of knowing and learning when evaluating student achievement.

Acknowledging the pedagogic need to confront the challenge of diversity and difference in Canada is the seventh principle in anti-racism education. It sees schools as “working communities” and the powerful notions of “community” and “social responsibility” is brought from the margin into the center of the process of delivering education. Schools are not institutions isolated from the communities around them, and should encourage community involvement with the education of their young whenever possible. Creating partnerships between teachers, students and community members will create a learning environment which is stable and consistent for all students. Schools should seek peaceful co-existence among students, teaching staff, school administrators, parents and local communities through instilling mutual respect, collective work and collective responsibility.

The eighth principle acknowledges the traditional role of educational systems in producing and reproducing racial, gender, social, and class based inequalities in society. The public school system historically served the material, political and ideological interests of the state and those of industrial capital, and it still produces and reproduces the hegemony of the state. Teachers must begin challenging the hegemony that exists in the school system and anti-racism education demands that all within the educational system make the necessary moves to make equitable educational institutions and practices. Programs must also be put in place to target students marginalized on these bases, because research continually shows that
education has historically not worked for all students. These programs must be supported by all and continue until the existing systems have changed so as to educate all students.

Anti-racisms ninth principle stresses that the school problems experienced by youth cannot be understood in isolation from the material and ideological circumstances in which the students find themselves. Many youths experience the strains and stresses of family breakdown, abuse and violence, and economic deprivation in a job-scarce economy. All of these circumstances can have an effect on educational outcome and need to be addressed in a sensitive manner. According to Reynolds and Koski (1995) when discussing how to meet the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth in our school system, they see the role of the school counselor as an important position:

School counselors are in a position to make the difference in creating positive school climates, because they have the necessary attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In fact, they believe that school counselors can become change agents, and they encourage them to take an active role.

(Reynolds & Michael, 1995, p. 91)

Counselors can be key players in creating a positive school environment and in helping students understand and deal with life's difficulties. Counselors can provide necessary support services for students and teachers and can act in a leadership role for their schools, but first, schools need to make the commitment to allocate resources for counselor training and development.

The tenth principle questions pathological explanations of the family or home environment as a source of the problems some youth experience in relation to schooling. This is one reason I feel that the ninth principle can become a "slippery slope" if white counselors do not participate in the decolonization process. It is quite
easy and dangerous for teachers and counselors to associate an experience of a non-white student to the whole race, creating a system which does not look at individual circumstances, but blames an entire community for isolated incidences. There may in fact be situations students must deal with, but this does not reflect on the entire community. Such racist explanations only serve to divert away from a critical analysis of the institutional structures of education.

All of these principles are extremely important for the education of our youth, but I feel there needs to be an added component that addresses the issue of white youth and their identity development. This is not to divert attention from the violent consequence of racism that non-white youth experience in our educational environment, but in order for anti-racist work to be beneficial for all peoples, whiteness needs to be named. As Ruth Frankenburg has recently argued, "to speak of...whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination. Naming whiteness displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance" (1993, p. 6). This naming and marking of whiteness is the beginning step of the decolonizing process, and again, in order for white teachers to guide their white students through the decolonizing process, they must take that journey themselves.

Decolonizing to a New Identity

The decolonizing process can be an extremely confusing and painful process and can generate powerful emotional responses such as guilt, shame, anger and despair, but it is a journey that white teachers need to begin (Tatum, 1992). Anti-racism education needs the commitment of all teachers to work towards a racial self-
actualization that will benefit the education of our youth. Carter stipulates that when “whites’ racial identity is discussed it is done in terms of their political views or in terms of how they view people in other racial groups. Whites, while socialized in a racially constructed world, are taught not to be aware of themselves in racial terms” (1997, p. 199). Since white people think themselves as normative or non-racial (race is a concept applied to people of colour), we need to disrupt this allusion and begin developing a healthy racial identity. Within Dei’s principles of anti-racism education, we need to incorporate principles that address the needs of white peoples’ identity development. He has stressed the importance of recognizing the social effects of race, and how power and privilege maintain institutional inequalities, but he fails to incorporate white racial identity development theories into his principles as a way of addressing these issues. I feel that white students will resist exploring issues of race, power and privilege if they are not given the tools to effectively deal with the disruption this project can cause to their sense of self.

White racial identity theory was initially introduced by Janet E. Helms (1992), and her theory can be used as a tool to support white preservice students through their decolonizing process. Helms stresses that four initial steps are required in order to begin the process of developing a non-racist identity:

[First] making a decision to abandon racism, [second] observing the ways in which racism is maintained in your environments, [third] learning the differences between expression of racism and expression of White culture, and [fourth] discovering what is positive about being White. (Helms, 1992, p. 14)

These are very difficult steps to make because the white person must be able to acknowledge that racism exists and that their own racist tendencies contribute to racialized systems. The fourth step is probably the most difficult since "white" and
"racism" are treated as synonyms and there are few positive white role models (Helms, 1992). This is why we need to build a positive white identity, one which is based on ideologies such as equity and social responsibility. Her theory also proposes a six-level process for achieving an identity that is non-racist, the first three levels represent a move away from racism, and the three later levels represent a more complex move to a non-racist white identity. Helms' theory is an important tool for white teachers to use during their decolonizing journey. While they explore their histories and deconstruct what it means to be white, they will begin to move along these white racial identity levels. Being aware of the levels will help white teachers gauge their progress, and name what they are psychologically experiencing throughout this journey.

Helms suggests viewing her model of identity development as not discrete, stepwise stages, but more as levels of liquids of different weights contained in a cylinder. That way each person may have different levels of each type of stage and the levels may evaporate or expanding depending on the persons racial life experiences. Thus, at any particular time, one might expect the person to react from whatever stage is dominant (has the most liquid) when a relevant event occurs (1992). This is important to remember because it shows how identity development continually fluctuates as one reacts to their social environment. It also points to a need for white people to continually challenge their notions of race, power, and privilege in their lives. The following are the stages of white identity development taken directly from Helms' guidebook designed for white people or for those who want to understand the white person in their lives (1992, pp. 24-33):
First Phase of Identity Development

1. **Contact:** This stage is characterized by an innocence and ignorance about race and racial issues. In the Contact stage people generally present a picture of either naïve curiosity or timidity about other races. The person discovers that other racial groups exist, but does not consciously think of her/himself as white. The person claims to be colour blind and to ignore or minimize differences in treatment due to race. The person begins to leave the Contact stage when he or she is forced to face the political implications of race in this country, or has reached a level of maturity that allows understanding of the consequences to a white person of offending other whites and cannot find a way to avoid or assuage the internal tension that arises as a result of these new awarenesses. The primary self-protective strategy of the Contact stage is denial.

2. **Disintegration:** This stage is characterized by sometimes overwhelming feeling of guilt, confusion, and lack of a racial membership group. This is the person's first conscious acknowledgement that he or she is white and that certain benefits accrue from belonging to the white membership group. Thus, the person is caught in a moral dilemma, to be loved, valued, and respected by other white people, he or she must subscribe to immoral social practices, but to conform to them denies the common humanity of all people. Since this quandary is painful to one's psyche, the person often resolves it by distorting reality. That is, the person learns to blame the victims of racism. As the person's system of distortion becomes more complex, he or she enters the Reintegration stage.

3. **Reintegration:** Most closely approximates what white people mean when they profess their lack of racism. The person is not only consciously white, but
considers whites to be superior to all other racial groups. During the earlier stages, the person discovered the imperfection of whiteness and consequently of oneself as a white person. As an emollient to one's wounded self-esteem, he or she denigrates, appropriates, and ignores the contributions to the society of groups other than whites. Thus, the primary self-protective strategy during this stage is displacement or scapegoating; that is, resolving one's inner turmoil by blaming people of colour for one's condition rather than whites.

Second Phase of Identity Development

4. **Pseudo-independence**: In this stage, the person maintains a positive view of whiteness, but begins to scale it down to more realistic proportions. That is, the person is no longer invested in maintaining the belief that white is superior or perfect, though he or she does not yet have a new belief system to replace previous socializations. To replace the old beliefs, the person begins to adopt white liberalist views in which it is assumed that people of color can be helped to become the equal of whites through such activities as affirmative action programs, special education programs, and so forth. The primary self-protective strategies of this stage are intellectualization and denial. That is, on an intellectual level the person recognizes the political implications of race in this country, but he or she still denies or does not consciously admit the responsibility of whites in general and oneself as a white for maintaining racism.

5. **Immersion/Emersion**: Is characterized by an effort to understand the unsanitized version of white history in the United States [and Canada]. It involves an active exploration of racism, white culture, and assimilation and acculturation of white people. During this stage, the person assumes personal responsibility for racism.
and develops a realistic awareness of the assets and deficits of being white. The moral re-education of other white people becomes a central theme of this stage. Sensitization is the primary self-protective strategy as the person actively seeks out experiences with other whites that will help her or him understand the meaning of being white, and thereby grow beyond racism.

6. Autonomy: Realistic self-appraisal forces the white person to confront the loneliness and isolation of being a consciously positively white person in a white society that denies and distorts the significance of race and the societies of peoples of colour who have reason to be suspicious of consciously white people. As a means of reducing her or his own isolation, the person begins to actively confront racism, as well as analogous forms of oppression in her or his environment. Moreover he or she seeks within race and cross-racial experiences that permit the person to develop a humanitarian or equalitarian attitude toward people regardless of race. Thus, confrontation and inclusion are the primary self-protective strategies of this last stage.

It is interesting, as a white person, to see myself evolve through these stages, and I do not think this work I am producing would be possible if I were not at the Autonomy stage. I speculate that most teachers in our present day multicultural educational system would probably be in the Pseudo-independence stage and I would like to see them move to the Autonomy stage of development in order to teach in an anti-racist way. This is not to say they are permanently at this stage, like Helms points out, the stages are levels of liquid that fluctuate depending on the persons racial experiences. So, if racial events occur at the school which challenge a teacher's racial thinking, they may move back to the Reintegration stage or forward to the
Immersion/Emersion stage. I feel that white people can work with issues at the Autonomy stage if they begin deconstructing their identities as white people. They need to begin searching for unsanitized versions of histories and begin the decolonizing process so needed to be at this stage of white identity development.

What is Decolonization Anyway?

In bell hooks book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994), she refers to the process of "decolonization of the mind" for non-white peoples struggle for liberation. This is also essential process for white teachers to undertake in order to for us to implement an anti-racist praxis. White teachers need to think about their multiple identities, and how those have been created through the colonial forces of our history. Not only have non-white people been colonized, but also, white bourgeois ruling classes needed to colonize their own white subjects in order to expand the colonial forces globally. Without a cooperative citizenry they would not have been able to achieve the massive colonial endeavor they accomplished.

Because the colonizing forces are so powerful in this white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, it seems that black people are always having to renew a commitment to a decolonizing political process that should be fundamental to our lives and is not. And so Freire’s work, in its global understanding of liberation struggles, always emphasizes that this is the important initial stage of transformation - that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one’s political circumstances. (hooks, 1994, p.47)

Even though hooks is speaking about black peoples’ struggle here, I feel white people also have to go through the process of decolonization in order to practice anti-racist work. It is through this decolonizing process that white teachers and students need to explore histories of colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, and how whiteness
has been constructed through these histories. Without that process white people will continue to unconsciously perpetuate systems of domination and privilege. White people must become aware of the way knowledge has been created through these same histories, and it is those knowledges which define us and dominate the minds and bodies of racialized others.

Decolonization is the thinking critically about the self and our identity; it is to consider the social/subject position of oneself in relation to your students, the school as an institution, and the communities in which white teachers educate. "Unless [one] looks at what people already understand to be their learning about themselves and other people, any new information that [one] may provide is only going to reinforce their prejudices and be organized in the same way (Thomas, 1987). Decolonizing the mind involves an inward reflection by white teachers, it requires an "unpacking" (McIntosh, 1990) of one's identity and an analysis of how one's conception of who they are effects the possibility of an anti-racist pedagogy. Decolonizing the mind also involves challenging white teachers' common sense knowledge, allowing them and their students to partake in knowledges which are traditionally marginalized, beginning a shift in power within the classroom. We must engage multiple ways of knowing in our world in order to advance the course of social knowledge (Dei, 1996, p.30). Anti-racist teaching engages difference and explores the meanings which are attached to difference. This can only be accomplished by deconstructing the identities of the very people who constructed the hierarchies and social consequence of those differences.

One of the main problems with multicultural education is that teachers emphasize learning about the other, those that have been systematically excluded from the
curriculum. This is not to say that multiple forms of knowledge and experiences should not be included in the curriculum, but only emphasizing the other allows white teachers and students to remain complacent in their participation in power and domination. In Michelle Fine’s paper Witnessing Whiteness, she stresses the importance for educators to turn from an analysis of minorities and the inequalities that they suffer, to whiteness, and the merit that it is awarded (Fine, 1997). This process I feel is a form of decolonization for both white teachers and students, this decolonization challenges the historical making of whiteness, particularly of white teachers and students, and it also challenges representations of non-white peoples which are created or policed by white hegemonic practices. Fine’s conception of whiteness is based on a relational approach to blackness:

Whiteness, like all “colors,” is being manufactured, in part, through institutional arrangements...Schools and work, for example, do not merely manage race; they create and enforce racial meaning...whiteness is actually coproduced with other colors, usually alongside blackness, in symbiotic relation. Where whiteness grows as a seemingly “natural” proxy for quality, merit, and advantage, “color” disintegrates to embody deficit or “lack.” Whiteness and “color” are therefore not merely created in parallel, but are fundamentally relational and need to be studied as a system.

(Fine, 1997, p.58)

So in order for white teachers to practice anti-racist pedagogies, they must first decolonize their minds, they must challenge each others' reasons for fighting racism, because we must insist that white people take the responsibility for confronting racism instead of relying on non-white peoples. This opens a space for a critical pedagogy that challenges white teachers, and communities to transform power relations in terms of who makes decisions and who's values, beliefs, and ideas which constitute the organizational norms are being produced and reproduced. Unlike
multiculturalism, anti-racism pedagogy requires a deep commitment from white educators to rethink themselves, their learnings, their environment, and their students.

We are living in an increasingly global economy, and Canada is beginning to feel the effects of population change caused by mass immigration and emigration from non-European countries. White educators need to be able to communicate and teach ever more diverse populations, not just teach, but educate in a holistic way that stresses social responsibility and community involvement. This cannot be achieved in a fully anti-racist way unless white teachers and communities move beyond their complacent mask of liberal multiculturalism. They must move beyond an identity of whiteness that relies on non-white bodies but one which creates an oppositional space to fight for equality and social justice. Giroux discusses a pedagogical approach that allows white students to move beyond whiteness as dominance:

Whiteness that offers students a possibility of rearticulating “Whiteness,” rather than either simply accepting its dominant normative assumption or rejecting it as a racist form of identity...[providing] a space for white students to imagine how whiteness as an ideology and social location can be progressively appropriated as part of a broader politics of social reform.

(Giroux, 1997, pp. 293 & 315)

It is time that we begin looking at the way we educate our teachers in this country. We need to create spaces, and produce curricula that will foster white identity development of our teachers so they may teach "all" our children. In order for this to be accomplished we must examine what types of discourses white teachers bring to their careers and why they have chosen education as a career. Most importantly, we must find out what their concepts of race are, and whether they given any thought to their own identities as Canadian, white teachers.
Chapter Three

Dialogue About Identity

The lack of self-reflection about being a white person in this society distances white people from investigating the meaning of whiteness and prohibits a critical examination of the individual, institutional, and cultural forms of racism...For white educators, in particular, this invisibility to one's own racial being has implications in one's teaching practices...What is necessary for white teachers is an opportunity to problematize race in such a way that it breaks open the dialogue about white privilege, white advantage, and the white ways of thinking and knowing that dominate education.

(McIntyre, 1997, pp. 14-15)

Implicating the Researcher

I entered into this research experience as a student, an educator, and a white Canadian concerned about issues of race and equity within our school system and even beyond to larger social systems in which we live. I do not consider myself an expert with regards to issues of racism, but I am well educated and continue to be a self-reflective person with regards to my identity and I have made a political choice to challenge all forms of social oppression in every aspect of my life. I have made a commitment to challenge my own privileges and role in upholding racist systems through a politics of resistance in both my academic work and personal life, and I have made a personal choice to continue this work. I know I occupy a space as a white man, which is privileged, and I use that space to influence personal and
political change that is equitable for all peoples. I also use that space to begin working with other white people on their journey of racial development.

My racial politics combined with the history of my life experiences are greatly implicated in this research and I have used them to inform the knowledge which I have created in this thesis. The need to stress this is important because I feel there is no true objective knowledge, but only knowledges that are created at a particular time by a particular body/bodies. This project entails analyzing other peoples’ stories and I need to be clear that this knowledge is created through me at this point in time and it reflects at what stage I occupy in my racial identity development and the position of my racial politics. In other words, I can not be objective. This research has made me increasingly aware of how knowledge is produced, and how it is continually transformed through interactions with the social world, it has made me increasingly aware of my identity as a white, gay male and how that identity informs the construction of knowledge I produce.

Conducting the interviews for this thesis was terrifying, challenging and exciting. Terrifying because it not only exposed the participants’ personal life to me, a stranger, but it also exposed my own personal beliefs to a stranger. In writing this thesis, I as the researcher am implicated, who I am and how I understand the world are revealed within the lines of this thesis and that is a terrifying position. I do feel this was a vulnerable yet necessary position for my own personal growth, and doing this research has been a growth experience. I not only was continually challenged to examine myself, to ask questions of why I was doing this research, and whether systems of domination and privilege are in anyway re-inscribed or created, I also had to refrain from presenting myself as an expert on the subject to the participants. I
wanted the interview to be a relationship, a dialogue between two white people about race and I did not want to taint that dialogue with the power dynamics that an expert/non-expert would have imposed on the interview. Critics of the idea of objectivity have pointed out that there are no disinterested positions to be adopted in scholarship, and to this I must agree. This is why I have positioned myself in this thesis and I also stressed a “dialogical” approach to the interview process, thus exposing my intentions and revealing my biases. Frankenberg suggested a methodology she used in her own work which I utilized to help alleviate the power dynamics in the interview relationship. I did this because I wanted to break the illusion that the knowledge I was creating is objective in any way:

Rather than maintaining the traditionally distant, apparently objective, and so-called blank-faced research persona, I positioned myself as explicitly involved in the questions, at times sharing with interviewees either information about my own life or elements of my own analysis of racism.

(1993, p. 30)

This was an important component for the interview process because if anything, it allowed me to be open and learn from the experience, both about the thesis topic and also about myself. Throughout the interviews I continually saw my own reflections in their responses. I saw myself in their pain, frustration, anger and confusion because I am them and I still visit those feelings as I continue to rethink myself as a white person.

I would like my research to be seen as not a critique of preservice white teachers, or to preservice programs, but as a beginning, a tool white teachers can utilize in their own personal growth and commitment to the education of our children. Even though the responses collected from my interview participants are being used to analyze the identity of white Canadian teachers, the knowledge collected can help in
the anti-racist struggle for educational change. Once we as white teachers ascertain who we are, we can begin the process of exploring the historical making of that identity and begin deconstructing and decolonizing ourselves towards a newer identity. It was exciting to see everything in this project evolve, and to play a key role in the knowledge production that can be utilized for the education of our preservice white teachers. I hope that by exposing and implicating myself in this knowledge production process I have created a space for preservice white teachers to model my methods and begin analyzing themselves in the knowledge production processes in their own classrooms. All teachers should be aware of the knowledge they produce in their classrooms, because as teachers they are implicated in that knowledge. Who, what, and where they are in life will influence how that knowledge is taught, and what type of knowledge is rewarded. If teachers analyze their whiteness, among many other identities, they will begin to see themselves in that knowledge production and this will hopefully open a dialogue among white teachers about race and how their whiteness effects educational outcome for many students.

I interviewed five white women that ranged in age from 23 to 45, who were all registered in the Preservice Teacher Education program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto in 1999. In order to obtain participants for my research I attended a preservice class at the beginning of the academic year. I wanted to involve participants prior to them being exposed to some of the content of the preservice program, that way I would get a better understanding of what types of people pursue teaching as a career and the identities they initially carry into the preservice program. Unfortunately none of the men in the class volunteered for the study. It would have been interesting to see if men would have
responded differently to the interview questions. The lack of men in my study did not worry me too much because most of the teachers in our educational system and the students in our preservice programs are mainly women. So to some extent I feel that the interview participants do reflect the general population with regards to the gender of teachers in our educational system.

A member of my thesis committee was the professor of the preservice class in which I obtained my participants. I felt it was important to receive guidance and academic advice from a member of the preservice program who was also invested in creating educational change. In order to adhere to my ethical responsibility to the participants, the professor remained blind to who volunteered and did not see any of my writing until the class was over and all grades were submitted.

In the beginning, I introduced myself and outlined my theoretical ideas with regards to multiculturalism and anti-racism to the class. I informed them of my intent for this project, that I wanted to hear from selected participants about their life experiences in order to uncover three identities of white preservice students which I theorized are crucial components for anti-racism education. These include racial identity, teacher identity (what type of person becomes a teacher), and Canadian identity (what their concept of a Canadian is). Once all volunteers were gathered I informed them that their identity would remain confidential and that at anytime they could withdraw from the study if they ever felt so inclined. We then met one-on-one at a mutually agreed upon place to carry out the interview.

I developed fifteen questions to help guide the interview process and all questions were to the point and made as clear as possible. Whenever a participant did not understand, I would expand on the question by giving examples that related to my
own life (see appendix for interview questions). The first question was designed to
get an idea of what type of climate the interviewees grew up in, where in Canada,
what type of family structure and the types of influences that guided them into the
preservice program. We then went on to discuss what led them to the teaching
profession and why they wanted to become a teacher, and what made them think
they would be a good teacher. We then shifted the topic to race; I wanted to explore
whether they ever gave race any thought and when they first were exposed to non-
white people. This then led into a discussion on whiteness. I wanted to find out how
they experienced being a white person and if they ever classified their whiteness as a
race.

The next set of questions dealt with the concepts of Canadian identity and
multiculturalism, which I feel are connected in very fundamental ways. As I
mentioned in the first chapter, national narratives are used to create cohesion among
peoples in a particular geographical space, and I feel that multiculturalism has been
one of those narratives that have been used over the past three decades to create a
very particular citizen. This is why I grouped these questions together, to discern if
there was a connection between what their conceptions of a Canadian were and their
understanding of multiculturalism.

Let Us Begin the Dialogue

I found the interview process interesting, and it was exciting to finally have
conversations which we as white people very rarely have together. Initially, I was
quite concerned by the type of people who would potentially enter our classrooms to
teacher our children because their knowledge on race and other forms of identity was
very limited. Then I realized these students were just beginning their program and
were going to learn new skills and grow tremendously over the next year. The reason I stress this is because these interviews are a snap shot in time. They capture the knowledge and self-awareness of these women at a particular time in their lives; they do not reflect the growth and learning that might have occurred throughout their preservice and practical training experience. Ideally, it would have been a more interesting approach to interview the participants several times throughout the year to reflect that growth. However, these interviews do allow a momentary glimpse into what types of people become teachers and the identities they carry into the preservice classroom. With that information, educators can begin tailoring the preservice curriculum to meet the needs of their students and to begin a move towards an anti-racist praxis.

Three of the participants were raised in cities outside of the Toronto area. One was born and raised in a rural town in Saskatchewan and another was from Montreal. Their reasons for pursuing a career as a teacher were quite diverse, but there was a common connection that ran through all their stories; most were dissatisfied with their teachers or the educational system as a whole. The following are some of the reasons for pursuing teaching as a career choice, but remember that all the names have been changed to preserve anonymity.

Faith: Why do I want to become a teacher...other than I completely love teaching. (laugh) I don’t know, I just think I grew up with some teachers that were awful, like terrible teachers who took their positions almost for granted and they abused it. It turned me against teaching, but in a way it brought me to it. You know, because I thought there are the few teachers who were different, so good that you thought, “wow, if I could be like him or her that would be great!” So I think my own experiences in school perhaps drew me closer to it.
Karen: I had to support myself during high school. I started doing a lot of tutoring, I've been doing that forever, like, just always. I've always enjoyed it, and it has been a big source of income. After so many years I have worked with a lot of different immigrant students, and I really enjoyed that. And I wanted a chance to continue that work but I thought if I could do that more in a classroom context because I don't know. It seems to me from hearing from the students I deal with, that they aren't getting their needs met within the classroom. And so, they have to pay me money because they aren't getting what they need to out of their class. So I thought it would be neat to work in a classroom and help students like that get their needs met.

Michelle: Why I wanted to become, basically...how can I explain it. I wasn't labeled a very good student in high school. And I realized that I had the academic potential, but because I was labeled somebody who was a problem I didn't get the education I believe that I deserved. So when I went to University, like I said, I did really well in University, and I thought that I would make a better teacher because of my experiences.

As the responses indicate, there exists a passion to create change, whether stemming from their own experiences in school or the experiences of others with whom they come into contact. Both Karen and Faith feel there are things which need to be changed, and that is the main initiative that is pushing them towards education as a career choice. They want to begin that change; they want to assist other students in obtaining an educational experience different from their own, one which is more conducive to learning. This is exciting to hear, because as an anti-racist pedagogue, I can work with this passion, and begin exposing those preservice students that have limited awareness of how power and privilege effect the lives of marginalized people, to issues of equity, race, and other social oppressions within the educational system. This exposure may begin broadening their personal passions.
to include larger social issues. In essence we need to take those personal stories and begin making connections to broader social inequalities to create an awareness and desire to change existing oppressive systems.

The next six interrelated questions all revolved around issues of race and racial identity, beginning with the participants’ definition of race and slowly moving towards an understanding of how race effects them in their everyday lives. When I asked them to remember their first recollections of being aware of race, three reflected back to earlier ages and two not until much older. It is interesting to hear these stories because some of their experiences are very similar to my own. Growing up and living in a country, which at the time was very white, and where images of whiteness were and still are predominant in much of the mass media, made most white people and me, pretty much insulated from race. Most of us did not have to be exposed to non-white people. Some of the participants’ experiences are filled with memories of excitement, awe, and hurt. There was sometimes an uncomfortable unease when this topic was first introduced, but once the memories began, the stories unraveled.

Karen: Uhm, really young. Uhm, I’m trying to think just how young. The first thing I can really think of was when I was in public school my Dad went on a business trip to Ottawa and my parents brought me back a, I don’t know if this is good or bad thing, but they brought back this leather headband for me. And I thought it was the coolest thing. I guess I already like, whenever I used to play, we used to play cowboys and Indians, my friends and I, and I always wanted to be the Indian. I really thought they were the better people. (laugh) You know? So I got this thing and I thought it was so cool, and I remember I wore it to school and uhm, I got harassed like so badly. Like everyone started like going you know like “woo woo woo woo woo” they were like just
completely bothering me and I was so like proud when I came to
school with this thing on. I never wore it again.

This experience is filled with much hurt and shame. As a child Karen learned two
things from this incident: first, she became aware that Indians were somehow inferior
to white people. Before this experience she thought Indians were the better people,
but her peers reminded her that this could not be possible because Indians were
savage and ran around with their hands cupping their mouths screaming “woo, woo,
woo, woo.” Secondly, she quickly became aware of her privileged position of
whiteness. She was able to take off the headband, never to wear it again. She
remained white and was accorded the privileges and respect that white people
deserve. It is interesting to see that children at such a young age can identify
difference and know the meanings attached to such difference. It really indicates to
what extent racism is such an integral part of our lives. Michelle and Rose's stories
are quite different; they were much like me, and had been insulated from race until a
much later age.

Michelle: First aware of race, hu, University! Ya, I would, I was first aware
of race, living in a small town race wasn’t really an issue. I mean
there were four black families that everybody knew, maybe two
East Indian families, so it was a very homogeneous setting.
Uhm, when I got to University I went to York, so it was a rude
awakening so to speak. Uhm, that’s when I became aware of
race. When I really became aware of race was when I started
taking courses, uhm, I think I was most effected by race, my
boyfriend who is black, Jamaican, Canadian, and that’s when I
really realized how much of an issue it really is.

Michelle talks about her experience as a rude awakening. Her move from an
environment which was predominantly white to a more diverse population
encouraged her to confront issues of difference which she never had to acknowledge until the presence of non-white bodies became ever more apparent. Even though the town she came from had a few non-white people, those people were kept at a distance or remained invisible by the dominating existence of whiteness. Rose speaks of a similar awakening when she moved to Toronto to continue her schooling into higher education.

Rose: Wow! Uhm...when I was in university, it is important that you understand when I was in school, in high school, I think we had one black or two black kids in the entire school, and we all. I mean we never thought it like that, like "oh my god he is black" or whatever We were very close to, it didn't matter if they were black or white. We didn't even look at it like that, believe it or not, when I was in school. It was when I got into University, uhm, that I really became aware of race because I came from an environment that was predominantly white when I was in high school and then going to university and seeing so many diverse groups... I realized that there not only was a difference in colour, race so to speak, groups of people. But there was also a difference in religion, and that was something I had not been very exposed to when I was young.

It would be interesting to speak with those few black students with whom Michelle interacted with as a child. I would like to hear how they would explain their experiences in high school. Rose seemed uncomfortable speaking about her experience; instead of talking about her interactions with these black children she relieved her anxiety by explaining how race was not an issue, and how everyone got along. Razack calls this a "race to innocence, a belief that we are uninvolved in subordinating others" (1998, p. 14) and I remember making these same moves to innocence. Since white people are not affected by race and do not have to think
about it, they assume that no one else is affected by its presence. Rose’s memories appear to reflect a utopian environment where everyone got along no matter what race they were and we know this is not always the case. Dei et al, has worked extensively on investigating the types of racist structures and practices that may be affecting non-white students in the educational system and they are very real and have had devastating effects on non-white students (1997). Rose, like many white people, was oblivious to the institutional and individual racism that may actually have existed for a few of these non-white students.

The discussion got interesting when I asked the participants to give their definition of race. There was a general confusion around this concept, and many of them were struggling to give what they thought was the definition. Jackie and I had an interesting discussion which points to some of the confusion experienced:

Jackie: It is really interesting that you ask that because...I really didn’t understand what race meant. Or I still don’t know if I do. But...uhm...the way that race has been defined to me now that I understand it to be, is really your ethnic background more, and I...your...its...its...that what I think I understand that she (teacher) is telling me. It is your background.

Gabriel: You see race as your background, so when people see you they define you because of your background?

Jackie: So your ethnic background...(long pause)...I have always thought of myself as Canadian, because I was born here, my grandparents were not born here, but I was and so, if you ask me what my grandparents were I would say that they were Ukrainian and that's their race. Uhm...I never thought about my race or my background at all. I never considered myself Ukrainian or...uhm...that's my father's side, or American, or whatever. I've never dissected myself that way. And I have never
dissected anybody else that way either. It wasn’t, I didn’t realize that it was important to know or not to know.

Gabriel: So you don’t see that there is a distinction between ethnicity and race?

Jackie: I’m still struggling with...which is which, and uhm...I gather, I’m still struggling with why, why it’s important. Uhm, even the diversity in class there are people that feel that you should immediately find out someone’s identity, there are people that want you to ask what their identity is right away. And there are people that don’t, so, like there are individuals, and that’s the thing we talked about a lot is how do you, uhm, find what’s important to each individual. I mean until you start talking to an individual how do you really know if they want you to know that or not. Uhm...Uhm...U of T Scarborough is really diverse and uhm and a wonderful place to be, but I, we raise ethnicity background, that didn’t come up you know, we didn’t have to talk to each other and say, were you born here? Or where are you from? Or what is important to you as your identity? It just kind of evolved from your talking to people and so that really was new to me and, and, U of T Scarborough is pretty diverse. And it was great! It was not a, it was not something that came up all the time. But uhm, maybe we lived in some kind of a, just a pretty neat place and we were kind of sheltered or cocooned in our environment and because, from these classes I am learning that it’s not so OK, you know, that there is a lot of problems out there.

Jackie is genuinely confused at what race means, she is struggling with the distinction between race and ethnicity and is trying to understand them better, but continues to collapse the two as synonymous. This is a common occurrence with most of the participants as you can see with Michelle’s response, she is finding it difficult to define race along colour lines because she is not looking beyond the colour line. Remember from chapter one, I define race as having everything to do
with skin colour but race isn't just skin colour, it can include markers such as language, culture, and religion. Any of these can create racialized bodies even if physical markers are not apparent. Since Michelle is using an inadequate definition of race, she begins to incorporate ethnicity to make up for the minimal definition she is attempting to utilize.

Michelle: What does the concept of race mean to me? Hum! It's hard once you really learn the definitions of race as referred to ethnicity, to me race is defined in this country by colour, that's sort of the way I feel about it. Uhm, but it doesn't really incorporate everybody's identities because there is really no colour, so to speak, for the difference between Chinese and Japanese. So it, it's a categorization to me, based on colour and maybe ethnicity if you brought it in properly.

Race is a concept which also confuses Faith, her struggle revolves around the differences of colour and she is stuck on binary differentiation of black and white and is struggling with how to classify those which do not fit the black or white mold.

Faith: (long pause) I think race in simple terms as either, I think of colour of skin, I think. Is that what you mean by what I think of race?

Gabriel: Yes, whatever definition you would use for race.

Faith: I would think in terms of, I think probably colour of skin, I wouldn't go into like origin, or background. Like Italian versus Maltez. I think more of white versus black. Yes...and then non-white, maybe white and non-white though...see that doesn't work either. Maybe white, black and then other. I'm not sure how I would categorize Asian, cause I wouldn't categorize them as white or black. That's why I don't like using the term race. I guess that's if I had to make a definition, I would base it on the colour of skin.
The reason I asked this question was because I wanted to discern whether white people really thought about race. Was race ever a topic of discussion in their lives, or is it something that we as white people remain blind and ignorant about? The next question relates to the first because it exposes how insulated the participants are from race. Most white people live in environments that are exclusively white, explaining the lack of knowledge on racial issues. Without racialized bodies present, white people remain complacent in their own little white worlds. This does not mean that the existence of non-white bodies will somehow solve this problem, but it does expose white people to alternative ways of knowing. What white people do with that knowledge is quite different. So what is the racial make-up of the people in my interviewees lives?

Faith: The racial...there predominantly white, European, well white

Jackie: It's pretty diverse and I would say that is because of UofT. When I came here, I started at zero, uhm, and when I first moved to Ontario...we literally worked seven days a week, so every Sunday we would go out for lunch, for whoever's turn it was. So...we got introduced to Dim Sum, I got introduced to Japanese. For me that was, that's when I really started to learn about other food and cultures...I would say it depends what I am doing. My church is predominantly white, uhm, part of that is because of where I live, and I live in suburban Toronto. So, uhm, from that perspective I would have to say that particular group of people are white.

Karen: Uhm, I think it's pretty diverse. Uhm, my boyfriend is Chinese, and I'm really close with his family and the old landlord I had for about five years. I lived there and he had like a niece and a nephew that were like a year old and a few days old and I took them out for Halloween every year. I'm very involved in their lives and I really, I don't know, I just fell this uhm I don't know, I feel like a kindred spirit to them. Which is strange because they
don't speak very much English and I only learned a bit of Chinese and stuff. I guess my background, well I'm Jewish, so uhm I have a lot of Jewish friends which I didn't so much when I was younger. And uhm...you know and they actually go to synagogue and stuff. I don't think I have a lot of black or South Asian people in my life, like that I know about. I don't really know why.

Most of the participants do have friends or acquaintances who are non-white. So why is it that all of them have not really given race a thought, or are confused about the concepts meaning? Most of this has to do with our own white identity and the fact that our customs and knowledge systems dominate others, everything ranging from governmental systems to educational systems are constructed through white knowledge. We as white people are not challenged to think in different ways, we can remain oblivious to other knowledge systems. Also, whiteness and all meanings attached to it are considered the norm, so there is a privilege that is bestowed upon those that carry that identity, making it difficult for white people to move beyond that comfort zone.

Since all of the interviewees had difficulty defining race as a concept, when it came to asking whether they felt white was a race and what white meant to them, I got some interesting and confused responses. This question got some particularly interesting emotional responses; ones which I had not foreseen, so I feel it is important to include all of the dialogues we had so that the patterns that emerged can be interpreted.

Michelle: I wouldn't consider white as a race, but white is a race.

Gabriel: So why wouldn't you consider it a race?
Michelle: Because...I guess if you define race as peoples’ background...the concept of whiteness doesn't really do it. German are white skin but they have different experiences then people who lived in Poland. Polish people who are white. I think that it has become a construction, but I guess I don't necessarily agree with it. So...I guess it's considered a race, but I don't necessarily agree with whiteness being a race.

Michelle seems to be having some difficulty with the distinction between ethnicity and race, but she is also finding it difficult to be placed within the category of white. She is finding it too restrictive as an identity. I was not able to get her to expand on why she did not agree with white as a race, but I was able to get interesting responses from the other participants. The following conversations may explain why whiteness as a race is a little hard for many white people to accept.

Rose: I don't know if anybody I've spoken too, any body who's white who can not say at the same time that they've got an Italian background or Portuguese background and their white and uhm, I feel that's a (long pause) no one is pure white. No one is pure white. Impossible! (long pause) If I were to look at you and say your from the white race and I look at myself as from the white race, but, (long pause) I don't want to elaborate more.

Gabriel: Why don't you want to elaborate?

Rose: Maybe it's because of what's going on in my head right now. I am having a hard time with being white. Uhm, on a personal note, uhm, I am having a real hard time with this.

Rose continued to describe her difficulty with white being classified as a race and it stems from her guilt about the past. She did not like being associated with our colonial and imperial past; so in order to alleviate this discomfort she denied that white could be a race because "no one is pure white." Rose wasn't the only one who
found it difficult to accept her whiteness as a race. Jackie also had an emotional reaction stemming from guilt and frustration.

Jackie: No, aah, I hate the term white!

Gabriel: Why?

Jackie: Because the only time, it's been very recent that I've heard white (accent on white). Uhm, and I've pretty much heard it in a negative connotation. So, aah, I feel there is a lot of stereotyping, that all white people are clumped into the same negative connotation and that's unfortunate. I think that...there are people, there are definitely people, I guess there is the Klux Klan, or people that are a lot more quite and reserved in their feelings towards people that maybe uhm...and I think we all have a lot to learn. But I think there are people that are trying and uhm, to me that's just as bad as stereotyping all whatever as whatever. You know it's not true, each individual is a person.

Gabriel: So you would agree that white is a race, that you are uncomfortable with the term for yourself?

Jackie: Your asking me if white is a race?

Gabriel: Well you said it was, but you feel uncomfortable with that.

Jackie: I mean the term, I don't, I don't know if...if it's a race. I'm not really sure, but that doesn't help you does it?

Gabriel: No, no, anything you say, there is no right or wrong answer.

Jackie: Well, I'm confused about what white really means, maybe that part I'm saying...

Gabriel: But you are uncomfortable with the term?

Jackie: I am. Very! In class I told the teacher that I was offended by it. Because the only connotation that I've ever had, it's like when you ask me, what was your first encounter with a person of colour, or another person, or a person that was not of white colour, I mean is colour a race? I don't know. Uhm...I'm not sure. How can you lump everyone, to me there is a preconceived idea
of what white means and it's not necessarily a positive thing. You know? It means dominance and power, to me that connotation means everyone is trying to take over, you know, the world, kind of thing. I'm not sure that's true. There's a lot of ordinary people that, that aren't like that.

When I had a discussion with Faith there were similar issues that arose, but it seemed that she was beginning to engage in critical thinking about race and history and she was beginning to move beyond guilt and start engaging her history. Her arguments are quite problematic and simplistic, but it is a beginning that will hopefully evolve.

Faith: What does being white mean to me? I think it means that I fortunately have a...I think I am fortunate because other people don't have equal privileges or the same privileges. I think that it sort of divides me an divides others. But personally I think it means I can do a lot that others can't. I think it means that I have a horrible past. Like in terms of slavery, and a lot of European history, I think it's something that haunts many white people.

Gabriel: Does it haunt you?

Faith: Uhm, lately. More than it ever has before because of the courses I am taking. I think the more you become aware of the actual origins of racial tension you realize that white people, some white people forced their...what do you call it...superiority on others. I think that it is nothing to be proud of and I don't think it's good to constantly reproduce. I'm not, not proud of being white, but if you connect superiority with whiteness then I'm definitely not proud of it. What was the question again?

Gabriel: What does it mean to be white?

Faith: Uhm...I can't separate being Maltese from being white.

Gabriel: You see it the same?
Faith: I see it being me. I don't see myself as only a white person, just like I don't see myself only as a female. I think everything is connected. So, other then thinking of the historical implications of being white, like the things that have happened there's much else I think of it.

Gabriel: So what I hear you saying is that you're proud of being white if white is something that looks to the past to recognize and rectify, to make it not happen again?

Faith: Exactly! We have to be aware of the fact that the hierarchies that exist now are not my fault directly, but they come from a past of white...domination. If I am going to recognize the fact that I am white I can't take it as I am white and I got power and I'll do this and I'll do that. Because I have to recognize that I, I think, "I" in general. I forced many people to leave their countries, to die, to be brutally handled and all that stuff. So I think to be white is to recognize and to critique what's out there, to also relay information, like to tell people this hierarchy exists. Exists because there is discrimination in society.

I want to stress here that these are not uncommon emotional reactions when one is first confronted with issues of race. I vividly remember my own turmoil as I began to learn about the history of race and racism. My guilt and shame were so severe that I surrounded myself with black people allowing myself the illusion of not being white. But in time I was able to move beyond my guilt and began developing a healthy white identity; one that did not internalize my past but one that used it to move forward and begin fighting for change. Using the racial identity stages that Helms developed, it would be evident that these preservice students are at the first stage of Contact because there is evidence of an innocence and ignorance about race and racial issues. Also it would seem that they are also utilizing the self-protective strategy that Helms finds common at this stage – denial. Four of the participants are
denying that white is a race, and by doing this they separate themselves from a history and identity which is too painful to acknowledge. Faith however, is beginning to move away from her guilt and is starting to acknowledge that her white history is something she can accept and learn from; it is who she is, but it is not who she has to become.

The remaining questions were to determine how the interviewees defined a Canadian and whether they believed Canada to be a racist country. I then combined those questions with their understanding of multiculturalism to explore whether there is a connection between multicultural discourses and white Canadian identity. As I stated in chapter one, I believe multiculturalism is a discourse which is used by those in power to create a very particular national narrative. I theorize that this narrative is interconnected with white identity and if we are able to identify the relationship between the two we will then be able to disrupt the narrative. Once this narrative is disrupted we can then incorporate the fourth principle of anti-racist pedagogy which engages the different and multiple ways of knowing in our country in order to advance the course of social knowledge and to expand the definition of what it means to be a Canadian.

Many of the responses were similar in that they all reflected a feeling of diverse harmony, and it would seem that we as white people really do believe the multicultural discourse. Some of the participants even found it difficult to acknowledge that Canada could be a racist country.

Faith: Canadian? (long pause) Hmm! You see I think there is a difference between an ideal and what may exist. I don't think just because you are a citizen, see you’re a Canadian, but I think when we think of the ideal Canadian, we think of someone. I
think of someone who's accepting, who promotes diversity, and...who uhm...it's more then just being born here. I mean I wasn't born here, but it doesn't make me less of a Canadian then anybody else. And a...you know being a Canadian I think is accepting others.

Faith's belief that someone who is accepting defines a Canadian is an interesting opinion because it definitely fits with the multicultural discourse. Being taught that you must be accepting and tolerant of all cultures is one of the main discourses which multiculturalism puts forth; multicultural theory stipulates that if we just accept and celebrate diversity we can transcend racism and become a non-racist country. All of the participants stressed that diversity and immigrant experiences are important to what makes a Canadian, and a few made it clear that Canadians are not the same as the United States:

Karen: I do think it's different than America, but I don't know, I think a lot of Canadians feel that way.

The interesting part of the discussion emerged when I asked them to speculate how others outside of Canada visualized a Canadian. The participants now began to change the definition of a Canadian from an identity of diversity and acceptance to an identity of whiteness.

Karen: White, white, and probably like almost same as Americans, but white I think is what they would think. Like that if you’re from Canada, than you’re white. Like even though people from all kinds of places are born in Canada, and you know, they have racially different features. They would still think, you know, if they saw a Chinese they would sort of think your from China, not like, oh your Canadian.
Gabriel: Do you think that people within Canada visualize Canadians like that also?

Karen: Yes, I do. Uhm, I do. I guess it is unconscious that white people are from here, unless they have British accents or something. And that uhm, non-white people must be from somewhere else, they could have been born here.

The story has changes quite dramatically. Why is our internal identity as a country incongruous with what others visualize us to be? As I will later discuss, I theorize that our internal identity is one which is used to control and contain Canadian people and that the identity those outside our country see is a more realistic representation of the dominance of whiteness in our country. Karen was not the only one who thought that those outside Canada visualize us as a white country, Faith also began to realize that maybe others do not visualize Canadians the same ways we do.

Faith: Oh boy! See I think it depends where you are because in Europe I think the people are wonderful people, they think we are so polite, and we are generous, we are neutral, we are peacekeepers, you know, we are not aggressive people. We are not like the Americans.

Gabriel: What about racially?

Faith: I think we are racially diverse.

Gabriel: Is that what outsiders think or is that what you think a Canadian is?

Faith: OK, sorry ya, that's probably what I think a Canadian is. I think that, see I can't speak in general, in terms of all Europeans, but I can speak for people I have spoken to. A question has been asked of me many times. "Do you have black people in Canada." But I don't think they are aware of how racially diverse we are.
A pertinent tie to these questions of Canadian identity is to discern whether the interviewees visualize Canada as a racist country. This is an important discussion to have because it is directly tied to the multicultural discourse in very particular ways. As you may recall from the first chapter, I discuss the notion of "common sense" knowledge, and theorize that multicultural discourses have become a form of such knowledge. So now white people have started using multicultural language to appear liberal and progressive without having to disrupt their white power and privilege. We as white people have gotten so used to using multiculturalism as a crutch and we have come to understand our country as multicultural that some find it hard to accept racism to be a part of our country's identity. Two of my interviewees express their struggle with the idea that Canada can be a racist country.

Faith: This is hard...uhm...I wouldn't think so...are we talking in terms of government?

Gabriel: As a country as a whole, would you consider Canada as a racist country to live in?

Faith: (long pause) Like would that mean people encounter racism?

Gabriel: Correct.

Faith: OK (long pause) I guess no, I think we are...uhm...I think we do have racism...see I wouldn't classify it as a racist country, but I think racism exists. (laugh) So I guess that would classify it as a racist country. Ya, I think...that's actually a brutal statement...but ya...

Gabriel: You're finding it hard to say that Canada is racist?

Faith: Ya, that's brutal!

Gabriel: Why is that?

Faith: Well because to think of it as a racist country would mean we made no progress. OK, I think we've had progress, I think that you know people are beginning to realize that you know, racism
is wrong. Not quickly as we are hoping and not as quickly as we need to. But you know there are limitations, there are...I mean that fact that we need to...uhm...constantly make people aware of differential treatment, differential, uhm...like class...

Faith is struggling with the whole idea of Canada being a racist country; she is stuck on the multicultural notion that racism is individual acts of meanness instead of institutional systems meant to keep certain people in power. Jackie also had some difficulty in accepting that the country she lived in could possibly be racist. She made it clear that the different types of oppression confused her; she may not have been able to separate race, gender and sex from their intersections, but she was trying to talk her way through the dilemma.

Jackie: Well...do you mean as people that are racist and then what do you mean by racist country?

Gabriel: Well, in order to be a country you need to have people, so when I say country I do mean the people, the institutions, everything which makes up a Nation.

Jackie: I should tell you that I have a hard time separating race from gender or sex. I have a hard time separating the oppressions. So, I'm saying that because it is true. I mean in any corporation...how many minorities are in position of power? Uhm, how many, we've had one woman Prime Minister for a few months, uhm, and we've never had a person of another, that wasn't white, maybe Catholic but not...But I also think it is different depending on the area of Canada that you live in. I mean there are still areas that are completely, probably completely still all white or very few, you know, you have the Chinese restaurant. That was very common for you to have the one restaurant in the town and everyone else white. So, I think that even within those towns, whether that town is racist or not it's very much according to the people that live there. I think in
Toronto, there is less racism because there is more understanding because you naturally are integrated with other people. And so you learn more. And I think putting a human side to people makes a big difference.

Throughout this entire dialogue she has had difficulty answering the question, it seems like she somehow is trying to figure it all out while talking with me. It seems difficult for her to admit that racism exists as a component of our Canadian identity. She actually considers those who live within a major metropolitan areas like Toronto to be less racist in some way. Again, this is a multicultural misconception; the belief that those who have more contact with non-white people will become more sensitive and tolerant and hence less racist and this may not be the case.

I now want to record a few of the comments that I received from my participants when I asked them to give me their ideas of what multicultural education entails.

Jackie: Well...ok...I think it is being sensitive to the needs of every child and aahh...and every race, and religion. Because...because what we might think is the norm, might not be the norm to another individual. And...and it is something that concerns me, because there is a lot that I don't know and I realize everyday how much more I don't know. So, uhm, when you're teaching does a person uhm do the things you say offend the person. I don't mean the obvious things I mean the normal things that you're saying and also does the child even understand. And I don't mean from a language, I don't mean if they can't understand the language I mean uhm, there could be things that you say that are just common to here. And if the child's not from here, then there needs to be more explanation, more sensitivity to the fact that they're not going to know that. And even more practical things like, uhm, like a person who is Muslim that doesn't want to wear shorts and t-shirt to her gym class. That kind of stuff. I just really think it's being sensitive to every child, trying to be
sensitive to every child, and try to make sure they're comfortable.

Faith: Multicultural education? I guess it's, when I think of multicultural education, I think of like, an appreciation for the different cultures. You know, an awareness of them, you think of classrooms dividing up into groups and each group picks a country and has to make their food and present some sort of...speech about the country. That's about multicultural education.

Some of the participants were quite aware of the limitations of multicultural education and were actually skeptical of its present day implementation.

Michelle: Multicultural education. Huu! They give a month and a week here to different identities and that's supposed to say it is multicultural. So we give black history week, and sometimes we turn it into a month, and we can say we are giving multicultural education, but...I mean the meat of it is Eurocentric. To me anyways. I guess their idea is to incorporate other peoples experiences and to incorporate other peoples histories, but I guess I don't see it being done.

This question I feel is related to my investigation and critique of the five approaches to multicultural education because it revealed that three of the participants continue to believe in some of the multicultural tenants I discussed earlier and thus would be perpetuating colonial practices within their classrooms. This question allows us to see what preservice white teachers' preconceived ideas are with regards to educating a diverse student body. Also, combined with the totality of the interviews it gives educators the information to identify the racial identity stage of their students. With this we can create curriculum that will inspire students to seek out and critically engage their histories and also begin engaging other knowledges that will help them
expand their understanding of the world beyond a gaze of whiteness. With the appropriate support we can aid our students through the decolonizing process while at the same time moving them through the stages of identity development.
Chapter Four

**Who Are Our Teachers?**

I worry that so many people at schools of education are absolutely determined not to do wrong when it comes to multicultural, anti-racist work but are equally resolute not to do right. We white educators have to educate ourselves, to combat actively and directly, the racism in other white people, and we cannot do that by keeping our tongues tied when it comes to white racism. We must take on the leadership roles that are required to combat pathological whiteness and eradicate racism accompanied by all of its negative academic effects.

(Titone, 1998, p. 159-160)

Now that I have examined the interview data and identified points of commonalty and convergence, it is time to ask the question, "who are our teachers?" This is an important question to begin answering when attempting to implement an anti-racist praxis within our schooling systems. White educators must take the responsibility to implement this knowledge I am producing, among many others already existing, so that we can begin devising methods to guide our preservice students away from an identity of "pathological whiteness" to a healthier white identity. It is time that we face our "pathological whiteness" and begin moving towards an identity that can partake in the implementation and rewards of an anti-racist praxis. This can only be achieved if white teachers begin the decolonizing journey and start exploring how they as white people are implicated in the construction of race and racialized systems.
Our identities as teachers are so much implicated in what and how we teach, much like how I am implicated in the writing of this thesis, that it is important to begin exploring who we are as white teachers. Like I said before, these interviews only give us a brief indication of who comes into the preservice program, but it does help us ascertain some of the needs of many preservice teachers with regards to the implementation of anti-racism education.

**Teacher Identity**

Colonialism and its legacy has been and will continue to be a very real phenomenon in our social practices and institutions. As you may recall from the first chapter, in order for the white bourgeois ruling class to create an identity based on notions of racial purity and sexually virtuous they needed to control the minds and bodies of people within the European state as well as those they came into contact with through their imperial projects. I theorize that not only have we as white people been colonized, but we have also been taught to colonize others in the process of moving to different lands. As teaching in public schools has largely been created through this colonial history it has become a profession that has played a significant role in this country toward the process of colonization. That implicates our educational system and the teachers involved with teaching our children in sustaining colonial practices. For this very reason I feel it is important to understand what types of discourses people bring into the teaching profession and what are their motivation for choosing this career.

In some way or another all the participants felt they had experiences or knowledge that they wanted to impart onto our children. They visualized themselves as patient, understanding, good listeners, and able to make some sort of difference
in the lives of their students. However, two of the participants revealed stories that reflect the colonial mentality I am talking about, they both wanted to help non-white students improve in their academic success. One wanted to help immigrant students and the other stressed an interest in working in inner city schools with black youth. Although their intentions may come from a genuine concern to help, this is reminiscent of the missionary projects taken on by many religious orders that have historically destroyed people's culture and religions. This is evident when Michelle states she wants to help black children, she says she wants to “bring whole histories into the schools, and work with black youth. And, I hope to teach in an inner-city school. School where the children are, I guess, labeled misbehaved.”

There are several assumptions that are at play in this missionary mentality. First, many white people presume that non-white people want and need our help and second, they believe that our help will benefit non-white people. Here we see the remnants of our colonial past, for the only way that this mentality could exist was if white people still perceived themselves as the civilized and non-white people in need of our civilizing knowledge. Said states that this is basic for any imperial or colonial endeavor and I believe it is still very much present today.

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.

(1993, p. 9)

This missionary mentality that can exist among white teachers is so tainted with discourses of domination and is so fundamentally interconnected with our sense of being white that we need to take an inward inventory of our reasons for wanting or
needing to work with non-white people. If this work is not done our drive to help non-white people could be connected to our need to appear non-racist. Unfortunately, this is a false sense of security and does not presume a non-racist identity since racism is imbedded within this missionary mentality.

Multiculturalism is a discourse and paradigm which has been implemented into the educational system and has been utilized now for several decades. But, if our teachers are continuing to enter their classrooms with these missionary mentalities that support and perpetuate our colonial histories, how effective are their pedagogical styles going to be with regards to race and racial issues within the classroom? Could this be one of the reasons for high dropout rates and low student achievement among non-white students? I would not know this until I actually watch the interactions between white teachers and non-white students, but I do theorize that this could have a tremendous effect on the educational outcome of all students. Not only does this effect non-white students but it also re-enforces and re-inscribes our colonial identities onto white students, perpetuating an identity that continues to use race and racism to support its existence. If we try to implement anti-racism into the schools today white teachers will continue to use these identities in the classroom, making it impossible to execute some of the principles that are so crucial for an anti-racist praxis.

This is why I stress the importance of a decolonizing project for preservice teachers. We need to begin exploring our colonial and imperial histories and start understanding the connection between that history and our identities as white people. We need to work with that knowledge and begin freeing our minds from the colonial chains that continue to imprison us.
Racial Identity

All of the participants I interviewed had not really thought about race before, as you were able to see from their confusion about the term during the interview. They showed what Helms calls an "innocence and ignorance about race and racial issues" (1992, p. 24) which is a characteristic of the Contact stage of racial identity development. Three of the participants found it difficult to define race and quite often got it confused with ethnic identity. One defined it strictly along lines of colour and only defined black and white as racial categories. This participant got confused with this definition when she attempted to make distinctions between Chinese and Japanese; with this she gave up and decided that race did not incorporate everybody and thus did not like using the term. This discomfort with the term race is not an uncommon occurrence even among scholars who theorize about issues of race and racism. Many scholars attempt to divert attention from having to deal with issues of race by theorize that race does not exist due to its lack of biological proof and like the participants believed that the term should not be used as a concept of study. They believe we should utilize a different terminology, one which moves away from the biological implications that race carries with it. This I feel is a moot discourse because as I have indicated before, the meanings of race have changed historically to meet the needs of those in power, and although race has been based on biological determinants its social effects still regulate peoples’ lives in a very real way. Getting rid of the term does not change that reality.

Whether race is defined in terms of biology or socially determined it is still utilized to define and control peoples’ lives. The reason I mentioned this critique of race is because it is a move that my interviewees used to stop the dialogue on race
and it is a good example of how much we as white people are uncomfortable with the term and its implications. It is not an isolated incident among preservice white teachers, but is a common occurrence even among scholars. We need to stop debating the existence of race because it does exist, and we need to begin the work of disrupting racisms debilitating effects on non-white people.

Much of the participants' confusion between the terms race and ethnicity I speculate stems from their lack of identification with whiteness as a race. The only way they could define themselves was through ethnic markers which for many of them did not have much of an influence in their identity development, but was somehow a way of appearing connected with a group. Even though most of the preservice teachers had an awareness of race at a young age I think these interactions were from a comfortable distance so they were not challenged to think about race or their own racial identities, hence the reason they found race hard to define. Hopefully by the end of the preservice program these students should have a firm grip on the definitions of race and ethnicity.

It is time that we move beyond multicultural approaches to education that stress learning about other races and cultures and begin looking at our own identities as white people. This is going to be a complicated task since a majority of the participants had an emotionally difficult time accepting whiteness as an integral part of their identity; it was either never thought of as an identity, or it was laden with such intense emotions that it was rejected. Some of the women found the term white did not have any meaning and it negated their ethnic backgrounds such as Polish, Jewish or German. Four of the participants encountering a sense of discomfort when discussing whiteness because of either the guilt they were experiencing from knowing
the atrocities of their history, or the clumping together of all white people into one stereotype which would associated them with the negative connotations associated with whiteness. The second reason is related with the first because I feel it is their guilt about what white people have historically perpetrated on non-white peoples which is causing them to disassociate from whiteness. Although guilt is a natural stage in the development of a healthy white identity, it can become immobilizing if not addressed properly. Kincheloe and Steinberg warn of the dangers guilt can cause if one does not move beyond its debilitating grasp:

As whites gain consciousness of the racialization of their identity, some feel guilty about their association with a group that has perpetrated racial oppression. Such shame can be immobilizing to the extent that it interferes with the construction of a progressive white identity that is psychologically centered and capable of acting in opposition to racist activity. Often guilt-ridden whites in the midst of the identity struggle engage in a form of self-denigration that expresses itself in a conceptualization of nonwhite cultures as superior to white cultures – more authentic, natural, sacred.

(1998, p. 10)

As educators we must empathize with our students as they begin to experience these emotions and we must give them reassurance that these feelings are part of the normal process of racial development but we must also push them to move beyond guilt. We must give our students the tools to seek out histories of whiteness not only told by white people, but also by non-white people to provide white preservice teachers with whole historical knowledge of themselves. This will assist them in the integration of a cohesive racial self so that they can begin challenging existing oppressive institutions. We must also stress to our students that although history influences who we are, knowing about our past also allows us to change what
we become. Giving the students the knowledge and support to take this journey will help them move beyond guilt and begin developing a positive white identity.

One of the factors, which could contribute to the lack of racial knowledge, is the amount of isolation white people encountered when it comes to interacting with non-white people and even the amount of exposure they have to racial issues within their daily lives. Again, this does not mean that those who do have non-white people in their lives will somehow possess further developed white racial identities, but it can help in increasing awareness of race and racism.

Frankenberg has done extensive research on the social construction of whiteness within white women and she has explored, through interviews, what she calls the "social geography of race." She refers to geography as the "physical landscape – the home, the street, the neighborhood, and the school," which I feel are important components when analyzing white preservice students exposure to race. Where they are situated geographically influences who and how they will come into contact with other bodies particularly racialized bodies. She continues to explain the notion of social geography and she states that the "physical landscape is peopled and that it is constructed and perceived by means of social rather than natural process" (1993, pp. 43-44). This expresses a lot about us as white people, for if many of us can go through our young lives without interacting with non-white people, it actually tells us how much we do unconsciously or consciously control our environment when it comes to race.

Physical spaces are not created naturally; they are socially created just as race has been. Since our neighborhoods, homes, and educational institutions have been created through racialized histories it would make sense that there is an unconscious
segregation occurring when it comes to where white people live. This will effect to what extent white preservice teachers have relationships of closeness or distance with non-white people. As I speculated, all of the participants had very minimal interactions with non-white people throughout their early years of life. The extent of their exposure to race was either through a teacher or by knowing that there was a few black people in town. One mentioned the existence of a Chinese restaurant as her exposure to race. It would appear that the social geography these women experienced isolated them from race, and since we as white people posses the power and privilege to define whiteness as the norm, many of us never need to think of race. Most of the participants were exposed to race later in life when they either relocated to Toronto or were exposed to some of the racial politics that exists in a University environment. But there still is a naive ignorance about race and racism, which I feel has a lot to do with our identities as white people.

Before we can begin working on the racial identity development of white preservice teacher, we must first make them realize that white is a racial identity. Many of the women I interviewed found it very difficult to admit white was a race, and they struggled with the idea that they could be defined according to the definition of whiteness. Since whiteness has had the power to confer upon itself the title of normality, I feel that most white people fail to see themselves as a race because we do not see ourselves as racial beings but as human beings – the quintessential embodiment of humanness. White preservice teachers need to understand that white is as much of a social construction as other racial categories. Once they become aware of this they will be able to see the arbitrariness of meanings
attached to whiteness and begin deconstructing those meanings and decolonize themselves towards the Autonomy stage of racial identity development.

So then, what types of people are educating our children today? At this point in time there is little investment by preservice programs to begin an exploration of whiteness, many but not all still utilize multicultural discourses. We as white educators are neglecting our preservice students’ needs for a holistic education if we continue to not interrogate power, privilege, and the historical making of white bodies. In short, we will continue to educate our teachers in a way that will sustain colonial power and disadvantage non-white students. We will continue to support and foster our white students to develop identities that are debilitating to the development of an equitable society.

Canadian Identity

There is a connection between the multicultural discourses used today and how we as white people define our image of a Canadian. Remember that national narratives are used to create cohesion among peoples in a particular geographical space and I theorize that multiculturalism has been used as a national narrative to create particular white bodies, bodies that rely on the language and ideologies of multiculturalism to define themselves as innocent. Since it was introduced in 1971 multiculturalism has been used as a political ideology to define this country as a diverse country, one which celebrates and welcomes diversity with open arms. This discourse has been so successful that we as Canadians, especially white Canadians have come to define our country in such terms as peace keepers, polite, tolerant, and accepting of others. When asked to describe a Canadian, many of the women used similar multicultural language, for example, Faith said “I think of someone who’s
accepting, who promotes diversity...being a Canadian I think is accepting others.”

Another popular response among the participants was to mention the United States and our difference from them; they also described Canadians as diverse and stressed the importance of the immigrant experience as a component that makes us Canadian.

Throughout history differing discourses have been used to define and regulate bodies and national borders, whether it be discourses of hygiene, science or democracy, they all have centered on the superiority of whiteness. Multiculturalism has become one of those discourses which define and regulate and in the end help white people unconsciously alter the reality that exists in our country. The tolerance, acceptance and politeness that subjects cite as characteristics of Canadian identity forestall suggestions of intolerance, rejection, or disrespectful treatment – characteristics which are reserved to define the other. I am trying to express that multiculturalism is a white discourse, one which defines white Canadians as civilized while at the same time projecting our negative traits onto the racial other. Schick conducted similar work as I have with white teachers and also came up with this multicultural narrative, she states:

In the Canadian context, the negative qualities that undermine national unity are projected onto others including poor and working-class people, racialized and ethnic minorities, and First Nations peoples. By the projection and vilification of the other, negative attributes are distributed along class and race lines and reinforced by assumptions that the differences are innate. In contrast, the identity of who can be a "true" Canadian is restricted to those who can offer "tolerance," generosity, and magnanimity to all.

(1998, p. 178)
Therefore, it is no surprise that a “true” Canadian is still unconsciously considered white; a white person who will except, tolerate, and teach racial others to be more civilized like us.

The contradiction between the participants’ imagine of an accepting Canadian and what is actually represented in our discourses with others becomes apparent when I asked how they think others outside Canada visualize or define a Canadian. The reason I asked this question is because as a country I feel we project an image of ourselves to other countries, and I feel that this image is very different than what we may imagine it to be. It actually may be a more accurate representation of the types of discourses that define us as a country. I theorize that multiculturalism is a discourse used in Canada to serve a political purpose, but this discourse does not filter past the borders of our nation. Multiculturalism is used to create cohesion within our boarders, it is used to foster national pride and unity. But, our international and national policies and actions with other countries portray a very different picture of who we are as Canadians and this I feel is the realistic representation of what we as white people image a “true” Canadian to be. The multicultural discourse gives us as white people the illusion that we are a diverse and accepting country; that we live in a land of equal opportunity and that everyone will be rewarded for individual hard work, but this negates the institutional and systemic racism that permeates our country.

The replies, which I received from my interviewees, show that the multicultural discourse may not be the only discourse which defines us as a country and that our identity may not be what we assume. They all speculated that other countries probably define us Canadians as white and they stressed that most seem to forget
the diversity of people we have in our country. One of the participants recounted an incident she had with a friend in a European country who asked her, "Do you have black people in Canada?" now this says a lot about what types of images Canada is projecting outwards. I firmly believe that Canada projects a strong image of whiteness and all of the institutions ranging from media, education, and government help create and perpetuate these images. A lot of the participants used Europe as a reference point when giving examples, which in itself shows the pervasive dominance of whiteness when discussing Canadian identity.

I am arguing that we need to move away from our multicultural system of education because it has created a whole set of discourses and illusions which maintain white domination and privilege. We as white people need to begin the work of deconstructing who we are and take on the project of decolonizing our identities so we may be able to partake in the anti-racist project. I feel that my analysis of teacher identity, racial identity and Canadian identity indicates how we have become so reliant on racialized systems to maintain our own sense of being. In order to for us to move away from systems of domination and towards systems of equity and social responsibility we must sever our reliance on these racist systems.
Chapter Five

Conclusion: Memories of Whiteness

Whiteness has content. While its content changes with context – this is, changes spatially and temporally – mapping terrains of whiteness and interrogating the spaces and logic of such terrains has become vital. Indeed, "mapping whiteness" has the potential not only to raise consciousness about one's own possible complicity in supporting oppressive regimes (that is, living whiteness oppressively); it also positions one to encounter a multitude of critical languages that can be used to rethink and live whiteness in progressive ways.

(Rodriguez, 1998, p. 33-32)

One question which still remains unanswered is what does this decolonizing project look like? Even though I have written extensively on what decolonization entails and what we as white people need to do in order to begin the process, I feel that many still require concrete examples of what the decolonizing project may actually look like as a life process. This is why I have decided to conclude this thesis with a story of my own personal journey through the decolonizing process. Throughout this story you may see similar patterns that my participants speak about, and you may see new ones, but they are all my experiences and have brought me to where I am now. This story does not have an ending because I keep challenging my notions of whiteness and continue to go through the decolonizing process. There is one piece of advice I would like to give white people as they begin their self-reflective work; this is a life long journey, it is a process, not an arrival.
I possess vivid memories of Port Alberni, the small logging town in which I grew up; the large surrounding mountains combined with the paper mill’s pollution and suffocating odor created an impression of oppressive confinement in “the hole,” as I used to refer to it. The sense I had of being trapped was not only physical but also psychological. The small town, working class mentality, in which I was raised, stressed strict adherence to gender roles and created expectations which perpetuated a working class status. Throughout my youth I was taught, like most young men, these gender roles and expectations; I was taught to secure a good job in the mill, marry a nice girl, and support my wife and children. Dissonance between these internalized expectations and my own dreams created stress which I had to resolve by moving away.

Port Alberni was mainly a white town, there was a very small population of Indian and Chinese peoples and one family that was black. First Nations people were highly present because an the out skirts of town (separated by a river) was an Indian Reservation. Although I went to school with all these children and played with them in the schoolyard, I did not continue to play with them outside of the school environment. Looking back, I also realize that as I got older, the non-white students in my school became less predominant in my group of friends. I never went onto the reservation unless we had to drive through it to get somewhere else. The bridge which separated the reservation from the rest of the town was bright orange and was a physical presence that served a very particular purpose. It marked the border between the civilized town and the uncivilized reservation. Race was never talked about, it was as if these non-white people did not exist in our town.
Television and theatre allowed me to escape into the land of make believe and, like many who dream of running away with the circus, I dreamed of running to Hollywood. In retrospect, the decision to pursue a degree in theatre was my way of fleeing from gender and class expectations. I worked for a year at a local fast food restaurant to save money, then moved and began a theatre program in Vancouver. I stayed relatively engrossed in the program and kept myself busy for the two years. Once I completed school I had plenty of time to reflect on life and over time realized my passion for acting was a crutch. It allowed me to hide from who and what I am.

Exploring my sexual being, and recognizing I was not unique in my attraction to my own sex, gave me the strength to deal with past socialization regarding my sexuality. Resolving past issues around gender expectations and religious indoctrination assisted me in accepting my gay identity as a positive state of being. I began reading any literature related to gay and lesbian lives and identity development, and became increasingly interested in other dimensions of identity such as gender, race, and ethnicity. Being a member of a marginalized group I became increasingly angry at the oppression I as a gay man was experiencing by a heterosexually dominant society. I evolved into a highly political person, and began to partake in rallies, demonstrations, conferences and political campaigns that challenged existing social systems. A deeper understanding and analysis of oppression as a social force which effects the development of marginalized people renewed my excitement and altered my educational focus toward a degree in psychology.

My involvement in an interracial relationship with a black man led me to transfer to an American university. This relationship exposed and challenged me about many
issues concerning race and I would say that at this point in my life, like one of my interview participants stated, I was rudely awakened to issues of race. Racial identity became an increasing concern in my life as I started to recognize how socially constructed racial categories negatively effected the lives of non-white and white people. I began to fervently read every book I could get my hands on regarding race, authors such as bell hooks, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Cornel West, and June Jordan increased my understanding of race tremendously. I began taking many courses offered at the university which analyzed the experiences of different marginalized groups. My knowledge of racism, sexism, classism and heterosexism broadened to incorporate an understanding of the intersections of social oppressions.

At this point in my life I would say that I was at the Reintegration stage of my identity development. I professed a lack of racism and believed myself to be superior to other “racist white people.” I was discovering the imperfections of whiteness and consequently myself as a white person. Helms states that the primary self-protective strategy during this stage is displacement or scapegoating; that is, resolving one’s inner turmoil by blaming people of colour for one’s condition rather than whites (1992). However, I was quite opposite than this, I surrounded myself with non-white people as a way of disassociating from my whiteness. The way I dealt with my guilt was to pretend I was not like other white people, how could I be if all my friends were non-white?

During the last year of my undergraduate education I was given the opportunity to co-teach a class entitled The Making of a Pluralistic Society, and this launched me into an environment with other white people who talked about race. This was the first
time I read Peggy McIntosh's article *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and this began my journey towards an identity that did not need non-white people to sustain it. I had now begun the decolonization process. While I was co-teaching this class, I was taking a journey with my students (who were white) and it was at this point I feel I entered the Immersion/Emmersion stage of identity development. The moral re-education of white people became my goal for these students and it not only exposed them to critical race theory but it also allowed me to explore my whiteness. I began to carve out an identity that was more positive and I became increasingly aware of my own privileged position in society and what I wanted to do with that position.

This led me to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. My goal was to challenge my privileged position by teaching other white people about the decolonizing process. As an educator I have become aware of the influence higher education has on students developing many types of identities, including sexual, racial, and gender. Students are confronted with many ways of thinking about the world that challenge old ways of understanding. This is why I want to change the fact that education is a field that is dominated by white western thought and I am interested in challenging white supremacy in educational theory and practice. I felt it was important for the future of our educational system and Canada as a country that white people start taking responsibility for the racism that exists today. In this difficult task, I feel white people are in need of positive white role models, and I hope that by writing this thesis, I can be counted among those role models.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX
INTerview Questions

1. Where were you born and raised? Tell me a little bit about your childhood.
2. Tell me a little bit about what brought you to the preservice program.
3. Tell me why you want to become a teacher.
4. What qualities do you have that make you think you will be a good teacher?
5. Tell me when you were first aware of race? Describe the situation which led to this awareness.
6. What does the concept of race mean to you?
7. What would you say is the racial make-up of the people in your everyday life?
8. Tell me what your race is?
9. Would you consider white as a race? Why?
10. What does being white mean to you?
11. If you had to describe what a Canadian is, how would you do that?
12. How do you think those outside of Canada visualize a Canadian?
13. Do you see Canada as a racist country? If so how?
14. Tell me what you think multicultural education is all about?
15. What are your theoretical ideas on how to teach in a multicultural setting?