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APA NEWSLETTER ON

The Black Experience

GEORGE YANCY AND JOHN H. MCCLENDON III, CO-EDITORS

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FROM THE EDITORS

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In this edition of the *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience*, we are pleased to include an article by Mallory Roberson, entitled "An Act of Bearing W(h)it(e)ness: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future Struggle to Desegregate Public Schools in Central Arkansas." I (Yancy) first met Mallory Roberson at the University of Central Arkansas where I had been invited to give a talk on race and embodiment. An undergraduate student then, Roberson demonstrated an advanced understanding of philosophy, and passionately and critically engaged the topic of white privilege, race, and embodiment. Roberson begins her excellent paper, which is a variation of her MA thesis, by describing that in the fifty-seven years since the Central High School Crisis of 1957, public schools in central Arkansas have seen a period of stagnant de facto segregation despite a plethora of court-ordered desegregation compliance measures that have cost the state millions of dollars. From the courts to the classroom, desegregation efforts in Little Rock have continued to obfuscate the role white normativity plays in creating and maintaining inequality. Roberson argues that by not acknowledging white privilege or systematic racism, policy-makers design solutions devoid of reason or context. Before desegregation can prevail, white privilege and systematic racism must be challenged and made accountable. We are pleased to publish her work here.

We are also delighted to include two book reviews. Karlyn Crowley provides an insightful overview of George Yancy and Maria del Guadalupe Davidson's edited book, *Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect*. And Jessica Patella engages the significance of such themes as embodiment and theological anthropology as these are explored within M. Shawn Copeland's book, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being*.

For those who are interested in publishing their work in the *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience*, we encourage you to contact the editors. We will be delighted to read your work and determine its relevance for inclusion.

ARTICLE

An Act of Bearing W(h)it(e)ness: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future Struggle to Desegregate Public Schools in Central Arkansas

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There is a picturesque scene embodied right in the heart of Arkansas. The best time to view it is early morning, just as the first beams of sunlight dance across the sky. Standing directly in front of the Little Rock capital building as the sun surmounts the horizon like a beacon of hope, one will find the company of nine rigid figures, eternally memorialized in bronze. The faces of the figures are youthful but grave, as though they carry the weight of adversity squarely on their shoulders. A few of the figures lock arms or otherwise embrace, and eight of the nine carry schoolbooks. A plaque situated behind the monument reads, "'Testament': Civil Rights Memorial, Sculpture of the Little Rock Nine."

The Central High School crisis of 1957 placed Little Rock, Arkansas, in the national spotlight. As a result, there are few across the country who have never heard the account of the nine courageous African American students who dared to integrate the previously all-white Central High School despite mobs of wrathful white faces and protest by the governor of Arkansas himself. Walking in the midst of these bronze figures, as the enormous capital building looms overhead, one cannot help but meditate and reflect. What did the actions of these nine teenagers teach the nation about the power of conviction and resolution? More than fifty years after the fact, how has the nation paid tribute to the sacrifices and anguish placed upon these young people in the name of racial justice? What's more, how have Little Rock inhabitants kept the spirit of their rich history alive and focal?

There are nine plaques that form a circular contour around the Little Rock Nine monument. Each of the plaques presents a meaningful quote alongside the name of one of the Nine. Dr. Roberts's plaque reads:

My choice to join this group of nine was an act of bearing witness to the sacrifices of all those who have spilled their blood in the ongoing fight for equal rights in this country. My acceptance of the

baton they passed along is my testimony to future generations who must finish the work started by the ancestors we share in common.

The determination of the Little Rock Nine boldly threw open the doors for public school desegregation in Central Arkansas, but has the testimony of Dr. Roberts and his eight allies been honored beyond the scope of these bronze figures?¹

The years following 1957 saw masses of white families, aided by structural incentives such as the construction of Interstate-630, move further west of downtown Little Rock.² These white families partook in the suburbanization of the western outskirts of the city as the promise of bigger lots, bigger houses, and whiter school districts became a commodity.³ The students in the western portions of Little Rock were enrolled in the majority-white Pulaski County Special School District. In addition to the westward expansion of Little Rock, other families who desired to escape the presence of black bodies in the Little Rock public schools turned to private schools or relocated to neighboring cities like Benton, Bryant, Cabot, and Conway.⁴ With numerous means to simply funnel white children out of the Little Rock public schools, the Little Rock School District and North Little Rock School District were left with a student population that was majority black by the beginning of the 1980s.

In late November 1982, the Little Rock School District sued the North Little Rock School District, Pulaski County Special School District, and the State of Arkansas Board of Education for desegregation noncompliance. At the time the lawsuit was filed the Little Rock School District student population was 70 percent black.⁵ The districts spent millions of dollars in attorney fees throughout the seven years of litigation prior to the 1989 settlement. The court decision allocated funds to the districts to aid in more aggressive desegregation plans, including the formation of majority-to-minority programs and the development of six interdistrict magnet schools.⁶ As of 2009, a full twenty years after the 1989 settlement, \$919 million had been paid to the three districts.⁷ The following year, in 2010, the student population of the Little Rock School District was indistinguishable from what it was before the case was ever filed—70 percent black.⁸

Furthermore, recent developments, litigation, and investigations have exposed still more barriers for desegregation in Pulaski County. The construction of open-enrollment charter schools pulls even more white students away from the public schools and makes it nearly impossible for the three public school districts in Pulaski County to maintain the appropriate desegregation ratios.⁹ The charter schools are being unconditionally approved time and time again by the Arkansas State Board of Education without regard to how they might impact desegregation numbers.¹⁰ Simultaneously, investigations into the spending practices of the Pulaski County Special School District and North Little Rock School District (the financial records of the Little Rock School District were not yet available at the time of the investigation) reveal that the desegregation money is being used to cover additional general district

expenses rather than specific desegregation programs.¹¹ In conjunction with this finding, the State of Arkansas is actively petitioning the court to phase out desegregation payments with the ultimate goal of ending the payments altogether within a few years.¹²

Despite the factual realities, standing in front of the monument dedicated to the Little Rock Nine provides a feeling of hope. The fact that nine teenagers barely old enough to drive could stand square in the face of hatred and generate positive change is inspiring. But despite all efforts—after courts ended *de jure* segregation, after courageous acts of defiance drew the attention of the nation, after the 1989 settlement terms created specific programs aimed at desegregation, and after nearly a billion dollars was spent to ensure desegregation programs were carried out—why do schools in Pulaski County remain as racially divided as ever?¹³

Desegregation efforts in Little Rock have failed in large part because the basis of such efforts has disregarded the ways in which racism manifests itself in the lives of white people. Even the language of what constitutes a “truly desegregated” school, where the student body is no more than 50–55 percent black, illustrates how whiteness has been taken out of the desegregation equation.¹⁴ By using the presence of black bodies as the standard measure against which desegregation gains are compared, as the quantifiable “other” in the room of previous normativity, whiteness as that which is the invisible norm is affirmed. Constructing desegregation in these terms suggests that the desegregation battle is somehow a “black problem.”

Thomas Merton once said, “We owe a definite homage to the reality around us and we are obliged, at certain times, to say what things are and to give them their right names.”¹⁵ It was not mobs of angry black people who greeted the Little Rock Nine on the lawn of Central High School in 1957. Black families did not constitute the majority of those that fled the Little Rock public school system after the enforcement of court orders made desegregation a reality. Black families are neither beneficiaries nor signatories of the racialized social order that heaps undo privileges on white individuals. Black individuals do not make up the majority of the Arkansas Department of Education board or, for that matter, any other government agency in the state. The “reality around us” suggests that the struggle to desegregate these schools is not a “black problem” at all; in fact, the problem is exceedingly white.

Bearing witness to the legacy of the Little Rock Nine obliges one to recognize that what the nation learned about the manifestation of racism from the Central High Crisis in 1957 remains relevant today. School desegregation in the public schools of Central Arkansas has yet to become a widespread reality because the dialogue surrounding desegregation has failed to include the role that whiteness plays in the maintenance of segregation. The scope that has been used over the past fifty years to conceptualize, measure, and discuss desegregation in a way that only focuses on black people must be widened to encompass the presence and responsibilities of white people in the struggle for desegregation. Desegregation cannot be

accomplished independent of the society in which the *Brown* decision came about; therefore, the “invisibility” of whiteness must be illuminated and brought to the forefront for critical examination and recompense. If veritable gains in the realm of school desegregation are ever going to be accomplished, racism, white privilege, white normativity, and the epistemology of ignorance are going to have to become fundamental points of conversation for those in charge of desegregation policies as well as anyone who holds the issue close to their heart.

PART ONE: HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF DESEGREGATION IN PULASKI COUNTY

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its unanimous ruling in the case *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, and forever changed the way the nation conceptualized public education.¹⁶ With the stroke of a pen, Chief Justice Earl Warren reversed the notion that “separate but equal” facilities were constitutional and effectively terminated *de jure* segregation of public schools all across the nation.¹⁷ From this point forward, any analysis demonstrating the so-called equity of separate public schools segregated by the state on the sole basis of race became irrelevant; segregated schools, despite their condition, violated black children’s right to the equal protection of the laws guaranteed to them in the Fourteenth Amendment.¹⁸ The reasoning behind the decision was that the segregation of white and black children in public schools was detrimental to black children because the segregation itself “was usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the [black] group.”¹⁹ Writing the majority opinion, Chief Justice Warren stated that “To separate them [black children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely to ever be undone.”²⁰

It is understandable that the court chose to only highlight the negative impact segregation had on black children—the scope of the justices was limited by the case that was brought before them. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* was initiated by a group of black students and their parents who sought an end to the segregated schools that were always separate and never equal.²¹ When the justices rendered their decision, therefore, they were required to focus solely on what it meant for black children to be legally relegated to a separate and secondary status in public education. What is less understandable, however, is why the narrow scope used to analyze the harms of segregation has not been expanded in the fifty-eight years since the *Brown* decision to include how the relegation of white children into a superior status impacts them. Is it unreasonable to think that separating white children from others of similar age and qualifications solely because they are white generates feelings of superiority that affect their hearts and minds in ways that are just as unlikely to ever be undone? Perhaps it is the case that everyone has simply assumed that because the white students were gifted the better facilities, better supplies, and better opportunities that they were solely in the business of winning, but what is the trade-off? What is the cost of superiority?

The cost of superiority, of being educated from birth to assume that the world belongs to those who have white skin, was made abundantly clear during the aftermath of *Brown*, as the attention of the nation was drawn to the disarray unfolding on the lawn of Little Rock Central High School. In May 1955, one year after the initial *Brown* decision, the superintendent of the Little Rock School District (LRSD), Virgil Blossom, announced that the school board would follow an integration plan dubbed the “Blossom Plan.”²² Initially, Blossom intended to begin desegregation at the elementary school level because he assumed that children as young as six would “be the least concerned about the color of the skin of classmates,” yet he quickly discovered that it was the parents of the white elementary school children who were most outspoken against desegregation.²³ With a population of around 100,000 residents, a quarter of whom were African American, Little Rock was Arkansas’s largest school district and included the highest percentage of black students of any district that had previously implemented desegregation plans.²⁴ When Blossom and the Little Rock School Board looked closer at residential zoning for individual schools, they discovered that desegregated elementary schools in the western portions of Little Rock would have only a few black children, if any, while the eastern part of the city would have “as many as 726 Negro students and only fourteen white students in a single school.”²⁵ The board determined that it would be a grave mistake to implement desegregation plans in a school where black children outnumbered white students by a ratio larger than fifty to one. The board ultimately decided on May 24, 1955, that the desegregation process would begin at the high school level, and that the only high school within the district to be desegregated in 1957 would be the all-white Central High School.²⁶

The decision to desegregate Central High School alone elicited instant criticism from working-class white families who felt that there was a blatant class bias within the decision to focus on Central.²⁷ These parents knew that desegregation implementation was planned to begin only once two additional segregated high schools were constructed, the all-black Horace Mann in 1956 and the all-white Hall High School in 1957.²⁸ The neighborhood surrounding Central High School in the mid-1950s featured neighboring enclaves that were either black or white and increasingly working class as upper-class whites moved west into the Pulaski Heights area.²⁹ Therefore, the lower-class white families whose children attended Central High felt that they were being sacrificed for the desegregation cause while the upper-class families in Pulaski Heights, whose children were zoned for Hall High School, were being shielded from the impact of desegregation.³⁰ Despite the criticism, the Blossom Plan remained the working design to desegregate the Little Rock School District in a fashion that was as slow and uncommitted as possible.³¹

Superintendent Blossom made no attempt to conceal the fact that he and the Little Rock School Board members were delaying the implementation of any desegregation plan until they received further instruction from the U.S. Supreme Court.³² In May of 1955, one week after the school board adopted the Blossom Plan, these additional instructions were offered in the court’s *Brown II* decision.

Brown II instructed school boards to make a “prompt and reasonable start” and desegregate “with all deliberate speed.”³³ However, the instructions lacked a definitive deadline for implementation and offered no outline as to what the court considered an acceptable effort to execute the *Brown* decision.³⁴ *Brown II*’s inconclusive stance opened the door for the Little Rock School District to maintain the Blossom Plan and delay desegregation for another two years after the decision (until the segregated Horace Mann High School and Hall High School could be constructed).³⁵

When the Little Rock School Board realized desegregation could no longer be stalled, they had to construct a feasible plan for implementing the Blossom Plan. Assuming that the majority of black students would not choose to leave friends behind or undertake the hassle of transferring schools, one provision of the Blossom Plan was that all transfers of black students into all-white high schools would be strictly voluntary.³⁶ According to Virgil Blossom’s memoir, he developed a system of screening the transfer applications:

In the interests of these [black] children . . . I believe you and the teachers who know them best should determine whether they are mentally and emotionally equipped for this transition.³⁷ Then in your talks with students and parents it should be your purpose to guide those who are not equipped away from participation in the transition program. . . . In this way, the original number of about eighty was reduced to thirty-two.³⁸

Though he claims to have “screened” black applicants for their own best interests, Blossom’s real motive was to talk the students out of participating in desegregation. Blossom proudly illustrates one such effort to dissuade black transfer students when he recounts a conversation he had with two black students who wanted to transfer to Central and play football: “You boys want to play football,’ I told them, ‘but I must explain that if you were on the Central High School team most of our schedule would be canceled because other schools in our conference are not integrated, and would refuse to play us. . . . So you would not only not get to play but you would be depriving others [white students] of a chance to play.”³⁹

There are numerous disconcerting factors in the way that Blossom viewed and prepared for the upcoming desegregation of Central High. Nowhere in his account of the process does he mention the white students who were already enrolled in Central High. The presence of white students in the school, as well as their mental and emotional stability, was automatically assumed. Central High had historically been all-white; therefore, nobody on the school board questioned that white students belonged there. Rather, they reinforced that this school *belonged* to white students. It was precisely this mentality that invited the vast majority of white students (as well as their parents and supporters) to orchestrate the daily persecution of the Little Rock Nine in one of two forms: as active participants or as silent collaborators. The emotional and mental stability of the Little Rock Nine became important, for it takes considerable levels of strength to endure constant acts

of demoralization; but their stability became an issue only after the unchallenged emotional and mental capacities of the white students allowed them to participate, either actively or passively, in the day-to-day affliction of the Nine.

Furthermore, Blossom placed the burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the young black men who wanted to participate in athletics at Central rather than recognizing that racism was the sole root of the dilemma. It was not, after all, the presence of the black boys itself that caused any problems at all; had the two boys joined the team in the absence of racist whites refusing to play a desegregated team, the transition would have been largely unproblematic. As the superintendent of the Little Rock School District, Blossom’s job was to ensure that the interests of all students in the district were considered and protected, not just those of the white students. But Blossom blatantly illustrated his bias towards the interests of white students when he chose to hold the black students accountable for being the targets of discrimination rather than standing up to fellow white people who would discriminate against students in his district. Blossom summed up his assessment of the resulting Central High crisis towards the end of his memoir: “In the course of this transformation, Little Rock had been presented to the world as a symbol of bigotry and racial prejudice. This unenviable public role was entirely undeserved by the great majority of people of the city and was humiliating to those rendered helpless by the vicious pressures of politics and prejudice.”⁴⁰ Not once in his defense of the “great majority of [white] people in the city” does he comment on how undeserved and humiliating it was for the black students in the Little Rock School District who were discouraged from entering Central. Nor does he exhibit remorse towards the students he told to silently and passively accept discrimination so white students would not miss out on the opportunity to participate in athletics.

On January 23, 1956, twenty-seven black students in Little Rock tried to enroll for the second semester at Central High, Little Rock Technical High, Forest Heights Junior High, and Forest Park Elementary School but were refused enrollment by the Little Rock School District Board of Education.⁴¹ On February 9, 1956, just two and a half weeks after this refusal, twelve black parents representing thirty-three black students in the Little Rock School District requested the immediate desegregation of Little Rock public schools in the federal lawsuit *Aaron v. Cooper*.⁴² In August of 1956, U.S. District Court Judge John Miller ruled against the plaintiffs and upheld the Little Rock School District’s plan for gradual desegregation; the ruling was later upheld by the federal appellate court in April 1957.⁴³ While Judge Miller did rule in favor of the Little Rock School District, his ruling did not completely release the Little Rock School Board to its own discretion regarding desegregation implementation. Instead, the court stated that the district could continue with the Blossom Plan but that it would maintain jurisdiction over the case to ensure the school board kept up their end of the agreement to desegregate.⁴⁴

Eventually desegregation in Little Rock could no longer be stalled by federal court cases or the tactics of the Little Rock School Board, and the Blossom Plan was finally implemented during the 1957-1958 school year. It was in

this period that Governor Faubus, meeting the expectations of mass white segregationist sentiment, stepped onto the scene and carried out the most aggressive attack desegregation efforts in Arkansas had yet encountered.⁴⁵

On September 2, 1957, the night before the first day of school, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus announced in a televised address to the state that he had ordered National Guard troops to surround Central High and keep out the black students. Faubus justified his action by claiming, "blood [would] run in the streets" if desegregation occurred.⁴⁶ No black students showed up on the first day of school because they were told by the Little Rock School District to stay away from Central until the matter was resolved by the courts.⁴⁷ On September 3 a resolution was offered when Federal Judge Ronald Davies asserted that the desegregation of Central High would commence the following day.⁴⁸

Waking up the morning of September 4, 1957, Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls might have held varied expectations for how the day before them would unfold. A year before, a federal judge had ordered that a high school in Mansfield, Texas, admit three black students. Had the Little Rock Nine witnessed the chaos that ensued, as media accounts displayed an angry crowd of four hundred thronging the school yard, hanging a black dummy in effigy at the school entrance, and waving signs that read "DEAD COONS ARE THE BEST COONS" and "\$2 A DOZEN FOR NIGGER EARS"?⁴⁹ Or had they heard Governor Faubus claim that gun and knife sales in the state had recently risen sharply and that he had received threats of imminent violence if desegregation proceeded?⁵⁰ One thing was clear, despite threats of harm and a clear lack of support from the governor, school board members, and local segregationists, the Little Rock Nine did expect to attend classes at Central High on September 4. When they arrived on the grounds of Central, however, they realized that Governor Faubus had ignored Judge Davies's ruling and maintained his orders that the National Guard members keep black students out of the school.⁵¹ None of the black students were allowed into the school and fifteen-year-old Elizabeth Eckford, who had not received notification as to where the students would meet in front of Central, was left to navigate the guardsmen and mobs of whites yelling, "Get her! Lynch her!" and "Get a rope and drag her over to this tree" alone.⁵²

The series of events surrounding Elizabeth Eckford's isolation showcased the degree of hatred and anger white segregationists felt. The iconic photos of Elizabeth Eckford sitting alone on a bus bench and walking in front of the group of outraged white protestors illustrate the disdain segregationists held. But this terrifying experience also demonstrates instances of compassion shown towards Elizabeth Eckford by white spectators. As she sat alone crying on the bus bench, a white *New York Times* reporter named Benjamin Fine sat down beside Eckford, patted her shoulder, and told her not to let the mob see her cry.⁵³ Later, a white woman, Grace Lorch, stayed with her on the bench and got onto the bus with her to ensure she

remained safe until she arrived at her mother's school. Mrs. Lorch stated, "(I) thought I would stay with her—after all, she's just a kid."⁵⁴ While these two instances of kindness in no way erase or make amends for the four hundred or more white segregationists who displayed anything but concern for Eckford that day, they do verify that there were white individuals who did not allow a learned sense of superiority to strip them of their humanity.

The Little Rock Nine did not attempt to enter Central High again until Federal Judge Davies ordered Governor Faubus to remove the National Guard troops on September 20.⁵⁵ Faubus conceded to the instructions and left the mob control to the Little Rock Police Department.⁵⁶ Upon removing the Arkansas National Guardsmen, Faubus remarked, "I wouldn't think the parents of the Negro children would want their children in school now with the situation which prevails."⁵⁷ Later, Carlotta Walls's father explained his reasoning for continuing to support his daughter's decision to be part of desegregation: "'Only one thought ever crossed my mind about the whole thing. . . . She had a right to be there.' As a decorated veteran of the Second War War, he believed he had 'fought as hard as anybody else. . . . So I don't see why my child should be barred from a school for which I fought.'"⁵⁸

On September 23 the nine black students entered Central High for the first time, and the number of whites protesting outside the school surpassed one thousand. As the black students were escorted into the school, white students who were already inside jumped out of the windows "to avoid contact with the black students."⁵⁹ The Little Rock Nine remained inside Central for three and a half hours until the Little Rock Police, armed with riot guns and tear gas, realized they could not adequately control the irate mob and removed the black students through a side door.⁶⁰

President Eisenhower's attention had been drawn to the crisis surrounding Central High prior to September 23. In fact, Faubus had assured the president during a meeting on September 14 that he was willing to comply with the orders of the District Court. Therefore, when President Eisenhower learned that the white segregationist mobs were intensifying and Faubus was making no attempt to control the situation, he issued a "cease, desist, and dispersive directive" for Little Rock.⁶¹ On September 24, President Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and sent 1,200 members of the 101st Airborne Division into Little Rock to carry out the desegregation of Central High School.⁶² The Little Rock Nine completed their first full day of school on September 25 under the protection of the soldiers. Members of the 101st Airborne stayed in Little Rock until mid-November, and the federalized Arkansas National Guard maintained a presence at Central for the remainder of the school year.⁶³

David Chappell pointed out, "There were three kinds of white people in the South: extreme segregationists who were willing to fight; middle-roaders who favored segregation but would sooner see it destroyed than take a personal risk to defend it; and the tiny minority who would, with varying degrees of caution, support action to undermine segregation."⁶⁴ Because public schools serve as

a telling microcosm of the larger society, one would expect to experience all three types of white people walking down the halls of Central High. One member of the tiny minority was Elizabeth Huckaby, a vice principal at Central. Huckaby was responsible for obtaining the names of at least seventy students who were later suspended for taking part in the burning of black effigy across the street from Central.⁶⁵ Huckaby also recounted, "As we started the words, 'I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America,' I heard clapping, and I looked from the flag to the mob, there they stood, applauding as if they were at a parade. The irony nearly overcame me, and I choked out the final words, 'indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.'"⁶⁶

Despite a handful of people like Huckaby, the trials confronting the Little Rock Nine did not end once they gained access to Central High School. Day-to-day life inside the walls of Central High greeted the Little Rock Nine with "threatening notes, verbal insults and threats, crowding, bumping, and jostling in the halls."⁶⁷ In fact, it was noted that the new goal of segregationists was to encourage white students to make the lives of the Little Rock Nine so unbearable that they would be compelled to voluntarily withdraw from Central.⁶⁸ One day at lunchtime, Jefferson Thomas was at his locker when he was jumped by two boys from behind. One of the boys delivered a blow to Thomas's head that knocked him out cold. Rather than staying home for fear of another attack, Thomas returned to school the next day.⁶⁹ On another day, Melba Pattillo was spat on, slapped, and then tripped down a flight of stairs. After she picked herself up at the bottom of the stairs, a group of boys chased her back up the stairs.⁷⁰ When Melba tried to report the incident to a school official, she was told that the girl who tripped her was from a "good" family and would never do such a thing. The official then asked Melba what she expected when she decided to come to a place where she knew she wasn't welcome.⁷¹ Though they faced daily hostility and harassment, the nine teenagers realized that too much was at stake for them to quit and none of the Little Rock Nine voluntarily stopped attending Central High School.

It is important to understand the thoughts and experiences of the Little Rock Nine to fully comprehend what desegregation and a sense of equality meant not only to the nine teenagers themselves but also to their families, friends, and supporters. But it is also important to note the way that the white students in the school conceptualized what took place during the 1957-1958 school year at Central; what these students remembered and forgot about the crisis "told a story in and of itself."⁷² Beth Roy offers an imperative insight into the perceptions of these white students in interviews she conducted with a group of them years after the crisis took place, when the students were adults with children of their own. Roy remarked that some of the white alumni stated that they were horrified by the way the black students were treated by their classmates, but she also pointed out that the majority "insisted that, as far as student behavior went, the year was peaceful; nobody was harassed, beyond the normal razzing of new students by their peers."⁷³ Roy exposed why such statements were troubling by juxtaposing the memories of the white students with the following:

In contrast, the black students' accounts, as represented in documentaries, published works, and private conversations, are filled with terror and nastiness. People were kicked, tripped, and sprayed with acid. Thumbtacks were left on girls' chairs. Gym clothes disappeared while boys showered. Dynamite sticks were ignited in their path. They were threatened with violence, vilified, and ridiculed. Comparing one person's story to another, I was amazed that people who had sat in the same classes, eaten in the same lunchrooms, graduated in the same ceremony, could nonetheless have lived such different experiences.⁷⁴

What was it about the white students that would elicit such a divergence in perception? Was it that whiteness afforded them the privilege of being able to turn their head and not notice what was actually taking place around them? Or was it that the white students did know exactly what was going on but chose to deny it as a way of avoiding implication for choosing to do nothing to stop the daily harassment of the black students? It is one thing to admit to witnessing what the Little Rock Nine endured and choosing to remain a passive spectator, but it is something else entirely to dismiss the experiences of the black students altogether by asserting nothing happened in the first place. It is essential to recognize, however, that both positions remained available to the white students due to the position of privilege they held simply because they were white.

Additionally, Beth Roy conveyed that, even in retrospect, the interviewees blamed the Little Rock Nine for the chaos that characterized the 1957-1958 school year: "This was our senior year, why are you [the Nine] messing it up?"⁷⁵ The students displayed an array of emotions, from angry and bitter to defiant and aggrieved. They did not understand why "they [the black students] were forced on us [the white students]" or why the black students had "come in and invaded our [the white students'] territory."⁷⁶ In the minds of these white students, the desegregation of Central High became just that—a battle over territory that they had always been told was theirs. Roy found that the dialogue of the white interviewees focused on the ways that "their year, their world, their rights had been violated. They portrayed themselves as non-actors who innocently found themselves swept up by events not of their making."⁷⁷

The idea that Central High School belonged to white students explained why Beth Roy discovered that her interviewees collectively held a greater level of contempt for Minnijean Brown than they did for any of the other eight black students. One of the white alumni tried to explain why she hated Brown so intensely and finally burst out, "She walked the halls as if she belonged there."⁷⁸ Apparently the problem for some of the white students was not that the black students were physically present in the school, so long as they remembered to whom the school actually belonged and that they were there out of the generosity of whites rather than because they had a right to attend Central. The white students characterized Brown as a troublemaker because she refused to "stay in her place" and asserted that, had she done so, there would

not have been any trouble.⁷⁹ Furthermore, the Nine had been told not to retaliate when they were harassed, but “Minnijean was the only one of the black students who would not or could not comply. Often, she stood on her dignity, talking back, taking action.”⁸⁰ But Minnijean never acted without being provoked; she was first suspended for six days in December 1957 for retaliating against white students by dumping a bowl of chili on their heads.⁸¹ She was then expelled after calling Frankie Ann Greg “white trash” after Frankie hit Minnijean with a purse full of locks.⁸² The particular vilification of Minnijean Brown is highly indicative of how white students saw themselves; Brown’s refusal to be subjugated threatened the white students’ feeling of superiority and fostered their intensely negative perception of her.

In June 1958 the District Court granted the Little Rock School Board’s request to suspend their desegregation plan for two and a half years and send all students back to segregated schools.⁸³ The School Board asserted that the desegregation plan should be discontinued because the tensions, turmoil, and chaos that took place in Central High during the 1957-1958 school year disrupted the educational process.⁸⁴ In September 1958 the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling for *Cooper v. Aaron*, upholding the Court of Appeals’ decision to reverse the District Court ruling. Justice Marshall was outraged by the Little Rock School Board’s request and stated, “I don’t know how anybody under the sun could say, that after all those children and those families went through for a year, to tell them: All you have done is gone. You fought for what you considered to be democracy and you lost. And you go back to the segregated schools from which you came. I just don’t believe it.”⁸⁵ The Supreme Court decision reinstated the Little Rock School Board desegregation plan and asserted that the *Brown* decision “can neither be nullified openly and directly by state legislators or state executives or judicial officers, nor nullified indirectly by them through evasive schemes for segregation whether attempted ‘ingeniously or ingenuously.’”⁸⁶

Nevertheless, the *Cooper v. Aaron* decision became irrelevant when Governor Faubus took desegregation implementation out of the hands of the school board by closing the Little Rock public schools to avoid another year of desegregated schooling.⁸⁷ Governor Faubus stated that the schools would remain closed until a public vote was cast to determine how the citizens of Little Rock wanted to deal with desegregation. When the vote was taken, residents of Little Rock voted three to one against desegregation and the schools remained closed for the remainder of the 1958-1959 school year.⁸⁸ Eventually dubbed the “Lost Year of 1958-59,” Faubus’s decision locked 3,665 black and white students out of their high schools.⁸⁹ While some of the displaced students had the option of attending private or parochial schools, not all students were provided with alternative schooling choices and some students’ educations ended with the closing of the high schools.⁹⁰ In May 1959, three segregationist school board members fired forty-four teachers and administrators for being “integrationists.” Realizing the school board members had gone too far, the Little Rock community of business and civic leaders, led by the Women’s Emergency Committee

to Open Our Schools, came together to have the fired faculty and staff reinstated.⁹¹ The united group successfully removed the three segregationist board members and replaced them with three “moderate” members. The composition of the school board finally allowed for a successful vote to reinstate the affected faculty and staff and reopen the high schools. In the fall of 1959 two thousand white students and three black students began their classes at Central High.⁹²

Rather than surrendering to the inevitability of desegregation once the schools reopened, segregationists utilized their apparent defeat as an opportunity to transform their methods of resistance into a more subtle form that resided in school policies and the courts of law. The Little Rock School Board followed the course of other southern officials who also developed ploys to avoid or severely limit desegregation and adopted a “Pupil Placement Law.”⁹³ The Pupil Placement Law allowed school officials to use any or all of sixteen criteria to control which black students were allowed transfer to previously all-white schools and which were denied. While the race of the student was supposedly not one of the sixteen criteria, the “scholastic aptitude, mental energy, psychological qualifications, morals, conduct, health, and personal standards” of the students were points of consideration.⁹⁴ Black leaders were intensely opposed to the screening system because the criteria only applied to black students seeking transfer but, as was the case with Blossom, white students’ right to access was never questioned.⁹⁵

The Pupil Placement Laws were successful in strictly limiting the numbers of black students attending previously all-white schools during the years following 1959. In 1965, however, the board replaced Pupil Placement with the new “Freedom of Choice” plan.⁹⁶ The “Freedom of Choice” plan allowed students who were entering first grade, junior high, or senior high for the first time to express a preference to go to a school of their choice.⁹⁷ While the freedom of choice theoretically meant that black parents could choose to send their children to all-white or majority-white schools, only around 10 percent of black parents subjected their children to the hostile reception black students received at “white” schools.⁹⁸ As a result, freedom of choice meant that the “business as usual” of segregated schooling prevailed in the Little Rock School District.

Though there were attempts to rectify the district’s obvious allegiance to segregated schools in the court of law, in 1966 the appeals court upheld the district’s tactics, “despite the fact that only 621 out of Little Rock’s 7,341 black students were attending majority-white schools.”⁹⁹ Finally in 1970 the U.S. Eighth Circuit of Appeals ruled that both the Pupil Assignment Law and “Freedom of Choice” plan were unconstitutional.¹⁰⁰ The court commanded the Little Rock School District to develop a plan that would result in racial balance among all of the schools.¹⁰¹

In April 1971 the Supreme Court issued its ruling for *Swann v. Mecklenburg County*, stating that the preservation of neighborhood schools was not paramount if such preservation interfered with desegregation attempts within a district. The court held that while all schools in

all communities within a district do not necessarily have to reflect the racial composition of the entire district, the goal of the district must be to desegregate as much as possible.¹⁰² Due to the residential segregation that led to starkly segregated community schools, the plan to achieve the maximum amount of desegregation in this case involved bussing children from one community to a school in a neighboring community. In this same manner, Little Rock's response to the requirements of the 1970 ruling was the implementation of bussing schoolchildren within the entirety of the Little Rock School District starting in the fall of 1973, a practice that led to a drastic shift in the demography of the district itself.¹⁰³

Only a minor amount of demographic changes occurred in Little Rock during the initial decade after the desegregation of Central High.¹⁰⁴ White families remained in the district because, during that decade, the school board implemented pupil placement and "freedom of choice" plans that left most whites largely unaffected by desegregation. The white families who did leave the district during this time were typically affluent white families who were enticed by the promise of "larger homes on larger lots" that the western portions of Little Rock offered.¹⁰⁵ However, when the white families of Little Rock realized that the bussing plan would, for the first time, result in tangible, widespread desegregation gains, they fled the city of Little Rock by the tens of thousands.¹⁰⁶ As Supreme Court Justice Kennedy noted during his expert testimony in the Freeman case, "whites prefer a racial mix of [no more than] 80% white and 20% black, while blacks prefer a 50-50 mix."¹⁰⁷ In response to a perceived breach of the 20 percent tipping point within the public schools, the period of time directly following the implementation of intradistrict bussing in Little Rock was characterized by an increase in private-school development and attendance in Little Rock, a greater number of students enrolled in schools in the suburban areas of Little Rock, and a drastic population increase in areas surrounding Little Rock (such as the towns in Saline and Faulkner Counties).¹⁰⁸

The migration of white families from downtown Little Rock into the newly developed suburban areas of western Little Rock was further aided by the completion of Interstate 630 in September 1985.¹⁰⁹ Interstate 630 was conceptualized as a means to provide the citizens of Little Rock with a quick route to the western sprawl of suburbs and shopping centers in Little Rock, but it provided a double blow for the black citizens of Little Rock. First, it provided ease for affluent white people who fled downtown Little Rock and served as the dividing line of Little Rock into the "white Little Rock north of the freeway, and the black Little Rock to its South."¹¹⁰ Second, the construction itself demolished vital portions of the black sections of downtown Little Rock, including the black business and entertainment center of the city, while planners went out of their way to preserve "white" landmarks.¹¹¹ Once I-630 was completed, there was no stopping white Little Rock citizens from fleeing the city.

Achieving racial balance within Little Rock public schools became impossible as the number of white students enrolled in the Little Rock School District dwindled.¹¹² In fact, because the district did not expand its boundaries westward to reflect the population shift, by 1976 (only

three years after the implementation of bussing), the Little Rock schools contained a majority of black students for the first time in history.¹¹³

PART TWO: WHERE ARE WE NOW AND HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Residential segregation was the most arduous obstacle hindering desegregation progress in the Little Rock School District at the dawn of the 1980s. While residential segregation within the district had long served as a hindrance to the desegregation of its public schools, massive white flight out of the boundaries and jurisdiction of the Little Rock School District altogether manufactured an entirely new set of difficulties. The Little Rock School District decided that the best course of action would be to consolidate all three of the school districts in Pulaski County, and in 1982 the district sued in federal court to merge the North Little Rock School District (NLRSD), Little Rock School District (LRSD), and Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) into one district.¹¹⁴ Two years later, the district court found that the defendants (PCSSD, NLRSD, and the State of Arkansas Board of Education) were guilty of "acting in concert for the purpose of preserving residential segregation."¹¹⁵ As such, United States District Judge Henry Woods ruled in favor of the LRSD, stating that merging the three public school districts was the "only effective attack on segregation in Little Rock's schools."¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the merger was never actualized because in 1985 the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that the district consolidation surpassed the scope of the offenses.¹¹⁷

Though the expansive consolidation attempt by Judge Woods was undone, the district court's declaration that the defendants, including the State of Arkansas, were guilty of working in concert to maintain residential segregation was significant. Combating the impact of white flight on its own merit was largely problematic in courts of law because justices generally did not see the actions of individual persons as being unconstitutional. As Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy stated, "Where resegregation is a product not of state action but of private choices . . . it does not have constitutional implications. It is beyond the authority and beyond the practical ability of the federal courts to try to counteract these kinds of continuous and massive demographic shifts."¹¹⁸ But because the state of Arkansas was deemed responsible for sustaining residential segregation, and by the same measure the continued segregation of public schools, the court found that it could impose stipulations for those in charge of public education in Pulaski County.

In 1989 the three public school districts in Pulaski County and the State of Arkansas Board of Education reached an agreement referred to as the "1989 Settlement Agreement." The terms of the settlement were designed as an attempt to resolve the constitutional violations committed by the defendants in the original lawsuit filed by the LRSD. First, the court required that the boundaries of both the LRSD and PCSSD be altered to create a student ratio in the Little Rock School District that was around 60 percent black and 40 percent white.¹¹⁹ Then, each district was mandated to adjust its intradistrict school attendance

zones to ensure that each school “reasonably reflect[ed] the racial composition of the district with a variance of plus or minus twenty-five percent.”¹²⁰ Finally, the districts had to offer remedial programs in any elementary school that was either all black or nearly all black, with the cost of the program being covered by the state.¹²¹ The state made its last payment for compensatory or remedial educational programs on January 1, 1999; the total paid to the three districts for these programs was \$129,750,000.¹²²

In addition to the regulations and expectations presented by the court, the 1989 Settlement Agreement also attempted to rectify residential segregation by offering monetary incentives as an impetus for the districts to encourage both intradistrict and interdistrict voluntary “majority-to-minority” student transfers. The Little Rock School District and North Little Rock School District were considered majority black districts while the Pulaski County Special School District was considered a majority white district. Under the majority-to-minority (M-to-M) plan, a student could transfer from a school where he or she was a member of a majority race to a school where he or she would be a member of the minority race, even if that meant transferring to an entirely different district. In other words, a black student could decide to transfer to a PCSSD school and a “non-black” student could transfer to a school in either the LRSD or NLRSD.¹²³ The court declared that the state was required to pay the entire cost of transporting any student who decided to take part in an M-to-M interdistrict transfer, as well as provide a financial incentive to both the sending and receiving districts for each transferring student.¹²⁴

While the settlement provided ample reason for the district to encourage voluntary interdistrict majority-to-minority transfers, it also had to establish a method for persuading students, particularly white students, to voluntarily transfer to a school where they knew they would be the racial minority. Consequently, the court allowed for the establishment of a limited number of magnet schools and obliged the state to pay one-half of what it cost to educate magnet students in addition to the regular payment of state aid to a student’s zoned district.¹²⁵ The Magnet Stipulation formed four interdistrict magnet schools (Booker, Carver, Gibbs, and Williams), one middle school (Mann), and one high school (Parkview).¹²⁶ Each of the magnet schools was designed to boast a curriculum that, in addition to the general educational requirements, included specialized educational pursuits such as language or arts that were not available at typical public schools. The strict 50 percent requirement instituted by the court reinforced that the ultimate purpose of the magnet schools was the advancement of desegregation gains in Pulaski County public schools; this requirement stated that a stipulation magnet school must always retain a student population that is between 50 and 55 percent black.¹²⁷

The Little Rock School District was completely released from court supervision and declared unitary in 2007, which means that the court found that the district had complied with all of the intradistrict desegregation obligations it had placed on the district.¹²⁸ However, the LRSD’s status as unitary does not mean that there are not continuing areas of concern within the district. According to the Little Rock

School District’s Revised Desegregation and Education Plan, a school is considered “truly desegregated” when it demonstrates a student population that is between 40 and 60 percent black.¹²⁹ The number of truly desegregated schools in the LRSD peaked during the 2000-2001 school year but has steadily declined in the years following, from seventeen schools during the 2000-2001 school year to twelve schools in the 2008-2009 school year and, as of October 1, 2009, only ten truly desegregated schools.¹³⁰ Six of those truly desegregated schools were stipulation magnets who are required to maintain a student body that is between 50 and 55 percent black. In addition to the six magnets, Dodd Elementary (54 percent black), Pulaski Heights Elementary (45 percent black), Pulaski Heights Middle (51 percent black), and Central High School (55 percent black) are considered truly desegregated.¹³¹

At the same time the number of truly desegregated schools in the Little Rock School District is shrinking, the number of schools facing substantial concentrations of high-poverty students is steadily increasing. A high-poverty school is defined as a school whose student enrollment contains 70 percent or more students who are considered economically disadvantaged.¹³² During the 2009-2010 school year, 70 percent of all students in the Little Rock School District were economically disadvantaged and there were thirty-four high-poverty schools in the district. In seventeen of the schools that are considered high-poverty, 90 percent or more of the students were considered economically disadvantaged.¹³³

The situation within the Little Rock School District does not appear to be improving with time. In fact, there has been a steady reversal of the advancements that the district achieved over the past decade and LRSD schools are being left in increasingly dire positions. Despite a laundry list of seemingly genuine attempts to foster successful desegregation, including incentive payments made by the state to the districts and magnet schools designed to promote voluntary M-to-M transfers, the Little Rock School District fails to provide substantial displays of widespread desegregation and has even entered a period of resegregation. Resegregation in Little Rock is not unique; in fact, it reflects a larger pattern of nationwide resegregation that has been aided by courts stepping out of desegregation legislation and terminating desegregation orders.¹³⁴

Droves of white students continue to flee majority-minority school districts in one of two ways: the students and their families either pack up and move out of Pulaski County completely to avoid M-to-M measures or the students begin attending majority-white private schools.¹³⁵ In the majority-white Northwest portions of Little Rock, only 3 percent of youth ages 0-17 lived in poverty in 2000; this number increased to 41 percent for youth living in the majority-black Central and Midtown portions of Little Rock.¹³⁶ The amplified concentration of poverty in neighborhoods that are majority-minority merely increases the exodus because white students are most likely to avoid attending school with poor black schoolchildren.¹³⁷ Comparing the demographics of Little Rock as a whole with the student population of the Little Rock School District implies that white flight out of the

city of Little Rock cannot account for why LRSD is majority black. Since 1959, the student enrollment of the five high schools in LRSD has increased by only five hundred students, though the population of Little Rock has steadily increased over the past fifty years. In 2009 the racial breakdown of the city of Little Rock was 55 percent white and 40 percent black, yet the Little Rock School District student population was 68 percent black.¹³⁸ These results indicate that white students in Little Rock have found educational alternatives to public school, mainly in the form of private schools. In reality, only 61 percent of the white children living in Little Rock report attending public school, whereas 98 percent of black children report attending public school.¹³⁹ Irving Spitzberg, a Lost Year classmate, describes why an increase in privatized education is problematic, especially for the students that remain in public school:

It is worrisome that today in most cities across the country, all families are not a part of the public school system. Decisions made without a stake in the life of the common community can lead to ones that are not rational and in which we lose the moral crunch. Today's parents are simply not invested. If today the governor closed the public high schools in Little Rock, I am afraid that the public reaction might be a yawn and an "oh isn't that too bad?" And, that is a very sad situation indeed.¹⁴⁰

While the reasons for attending private school are unique to the individual and incredibly varied, Robert Fairlie's research discovered that there was some evidence to suggest that there was a "higher level of white flight among white [respondents] who were less opposed to making racist comments than other whites."¹⁴¹ Other research by Conlon and Kimenyl suggests that the explanations of white flight away from poor black families can include "'irrational prejudice,' 'characteristics of poor black students which white parents fear or dislike,' and 'poor management of schools with poor black students, either because of the attitudes of administrators, or greater political passivity of low-income parents.'"¹⁴²

A report issued in April 2011 found that a significant portion of the money paid to each of the three districts was being misappropriated rather than being used towards desegregation purposes.¹⁴³ For example, the fiscal investigation found that from 2006-2011, only \$61.5 million of the total \$105.6 million the state paid for desegregation funds to PCSSD was applied towards its intended purpose. Officials in the North Little Rock School District went on to admit that desegregation funding was used to cover general district expenses that surpassed their budgets.¹⁴⁴ Though the financial records of the Little Rock School District were not available when the initial investigation took place, the LRSD has blamed the state for its inability to cover general educational expenses. For instance, the district claims to pay an average of \$646 per student for transportation costs, but notes that the state only pays the district \$286 per student, leaving the LRSD to figure out how to offset the difference.¹⁴⁵ The Little Rock School District goes on to assert that, unless it finds another source of revenue to balance out the state's failure to fully fund the district, LRSD will have to redirect money that is budgeted for teacher

salaries, classroom supplies, and other basic educational costs to cover the transportation tab.¹⁴⁶

While the state remains unsuccessful in properly funding all of the public school districts in Pulaski County, there has been a simultaneous push to phase out the state's responsibility for making desegregation payments altogether. In May 2011, United States District Court Judge Brian Miller released the state of Arkansas from its obligation to pay any and all desegregation costs in NLRSD, LRSD, or PCSSD, except for those associated with M-to-M transfers.¹⁴⁷ Judge Miller's ruling was problematic for two reasons: first, his reasoning was devoid of a clear understanding of what the 1989 Settlement Agreement terms even said and, second, he took it upon himself to end the payments without the formal request of any party involved or any factual basis for his decision.¹⁴⁸ Judge Miller maintained that he ended the payments because the payment system created "an absurd outcome in which the districts are rewarded with extra money from the state if they fail to comply with their desegregation plans and they face having their funds cut by the state if they act in good faith and comply."¹⁴⁹ But those who drafted the 1989 Settlement Agreement did so with the expectation that the three districts involved would eventually all achieve a unitary status;¹⁵⁰ thus, the agreement clearly states, "The settlement of the State's liability, while contingent on the district court's approval, is not contingent upon court approval of any District's plan or a *finding of unitary status for a District*."¹⁵¹ Even a careful reading of the terms of the settlement would have conveyed to Judge Miller that his reasoning was inaccurate. The appeals court reversed Judge Miller's decision to end the desegregation payments.

While the state did not petition the district court to end the desegregation funding in May 2011, it has not hidden its desire to move towards an "orderly phase-out" of desegregation payments.¹⁵² Those who support ending the state's financial obligation to the districts point out that the desegregation money comes directly from the state treasury rather than the public school fund that is used to provide aid to all 244 Arkansas school districts. If the desegregation payments ended, the money that was previously paid to only the three school districts in Pulaski County could become part of the larger public school fund and be distributed among all districts.¹⁵³ On the other hand, the Little Rock School District claims that not receiving its desegregation payments would prove catastrophic because it would force the LRSD to cut \$38 million from its yearly operating budget.¹⁵⁴ The Little Rock School District already faces financial hardship because the state does not provide enough funding for the transportation of its students; cutting an additional 10 percent of the district's total budget will undoubtedly result in an even grimmer educational atmosphere for LRSD's 25,000 students.¹⁵⁵ Though a spokesperson for Attorney General Dustin McDaniel stated in February 2012 that the state had not decided whether it would file a formal request to end desegregation payments, a request was nevertheless filed by the end of March.¹⁵⁶

One of the two arguments the appeals court used to overturn Judge Miller's decision to release the state from

desegregation payments was that Miller provided no evidence that the state of Arkansas has remained in good faith and complied with the consent decree in a substantial manner.¹⁵⁷ If Miller had investigated the actions of the state, he would have uncovered its continuous history of disregard for desegregation compliance. As a matter of fact, in May 2010 the Little Rock School Board filed a motion of seventy-three exhibits that illustrated the violations of the 1989 Settlement Agreement by the state of Arkansas and the State Board of Education.¹⁵⁸ This “Motion to Enforce the 1989 Settlement” stated that the Arkansas State Board of Education violated the settlement by allowing the interdistrict transfer of Pulaski County students under the Arkansas School Choice Act and by failing to develop compensatory education programs that would successfully reduce the “racial achievement disparity” among schools in the districts.¹⁵⁹ Yet the principal grievance the Little Rock School District presented against the Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board) was its authorization of “uncontrolled interdistrict movement of students in Pulaski County by its *unconditional* approval of open-enrollment public charter schools in Pulaski County.”¹⁶⁰

According to the Arkansas Charter Schools Act of 1999, the State Board maintains the authority to approve open-enrollment charter schools with or without the addition of mandatory stipulations.¹⁶¹ An open-enrollment charter school is defined as “a public school that is operated by nonprofit or government entities based on a ‘charter’—an initial five-year contract between the State Board and the operating entity. It is called open-enrollment because the school can enroll students from any public school district in the state.”¹⁶² The State Board approved its first open-enrollment charter school in March of 2000 and has since approved ten additional open-enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County.¹⁶³ Charter schools nationwide have a reputation for being far more racially and economically segregated than the basic public school and the charter schools in Pulaski County offer no exception.¹⁶⁴ During the 2009-2010 school year, Dreamland Academy had 91 percent black and 92 percent economically disadvantaged students, Covenant Keepers had 84 percent black and 84 percent economically disadvantaged, and Little Rock Prep had 91 percent black and 86 percent economically disadvantaged students.¹⁶⁵ Dreamland Academy, Covenant Keepers, and Little Rock Prep were designed within the boundaries of the LRSD to target high-poverty students who are all racially and economically identifiable as black and high-poverty. These three schools are considered “no-excuses” magnet schools, which are a nationwide phenomenon intended to show that high-poverty schools can, in fact, be successful.¹⁶⁶

The remaining charter schools that exist on the other end of the spectrum are considered “magnet” charters and are identifiable as white and middle class.¹⁶⁷ In the 2009-2010 school year, Academics Plus had 12 percent black and 25 percent economically disadvantaged students, LISA Academy had 29 percent black and 24 percent economically disadvantaged students, ESTEM had 28 percent black and 32 percent economically disadvantaged students, and LISA NLR had 33 percent black and 26 percent economically disadvantaged students.¹⁶⁸

One provision of the 1999 Charter Schools Act is that the State Board is prohibited from approving a public charter school whose existence would in any way impede or interrupt the desegregation efforts of the public school districts in the state.¹⁶⁹ Yet charter schools in Pulaski County violate both of the main goals of the 1989 Settlement Agreement—furthering the extent of desegregation among public schools in Pulaski County and reducing the number of “racially-identifiable, black, high-poverty schools”—and the State Board has never taken any action to hold the schools accountable and has continued to renew their charters.¹⁷⁰

Not only do charter schools not maintain appropriate desegregation numbers on an individual basis, charter initiators and the State Board have worked harmoniously to create a climate that makes it increasingly difficult for the Little Rock School District to sustain its desegregation gains. The state has previously recognized that, particularly for economically disadvantaged students, access to school transportation is necessary to provide students with an equal opportunity to attain a suitable education.¹⁷¹ In 2003, around 9 percent of households in Little Rock did not own a vehicle, and 80 percent of those without a vehicle lived in one of five majority-black areas of Little Rock.¹⁷² Yet the State Board of Education has not required that open-enrollment charter schools seeking approval provide transportation, even schools such as LISA Academy in North Little Rock that are not located within the walking distance of any residential area.¹⁷³ Especially for “magnet” charter schools that are located in predominantly white neighborhoods, a lack of transportation has been cited as the most frequent reason prospective low-income black students withdraw from the schools.¹⁷⁴

By not providing feasible transportation for any of its students, open-enrollment charter schools ensure that their facilities are essentially inaccessible to low-income black students, while they readily recruit “[already] high-achieving, middle-class white students” that would otherwise likely attend a Stipulation Magnet school.¹⁷⁵ Thus, the open-enrollment charters ultimately disadvantage low-income black students in the Little Rock School District two-fold: they restrict entrance into the charters themselves and hinder these students from gaining the benefits of attending Stipulation Magnets. According to the 1989 Settlement Agreement, Stipulation Magnets must retain a non-negotiable student population that is no more than 50–55 percent black. Because far more black students are interested in attending magnet schools, the portion of the student population that is reserved for black students fills up rapidly; however, once the limit is met, additional black students may be admitted only when paired with a non-black student so the ratio is maintained. This arrangement means that a magnet can simultaneously have a massive waiting list of students seeking admission and open seats within the magnet itself if there are no non-black students seeking admission. As of October 1, 2010, there were 363 empty seats in LRSD magnets, yet the schools have a waiting list of 3,028 students, 2,658 of whom are black.¹⁷⁶

To remedy the stark racial imbalance charter schools in Pulaski County exhibit, both the Little Rock School

District and certain charter schools have suggested the implementation of a weighted entrance lottery that mirrors the Stipulation Magnet policy. Yet the State Board has asserted time and time again that, according to Arkansas Code Ann. § 6-23-306, weighted lotteries can only be implemented to remedy an existing racial discrepancy that violates Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Federal Education Amendments of 1972, the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a court order, or a federal or state law demanding desegregation. A weighted lottery cannot, therefore, be put in place in the initial stages of enrollment because, at that point, the racial composition of the student body is based on mere speculation.¹⁷⁷

It is curious that the state claims that the student population can only be speculated, despite a school's location in an all-white portion of West Little Rock and failure to provide transportation. Additionally, there is not a single existing charter school that can be classified as "truly desegregated." But even if the state continues to assert that it cannot predict the racial composition of a proposed charter, there is no excuse for why the State Board also fails to implement a weighted lottery when renewing the charter of a school that *has never* exhibited appropriate levels of desegregation.¹⁷⁸ The State Board's inaction violates the court decree in *Cooper* which states, "State support of segregated schools through any arrangement, management, funds or property cannot be squared with the command of the Fourteenth Amendment that no State shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."¹⁷⁹

The impact of open-enrollment charter schools is already being exhibited within the Little Rock School District. Three new open-enrollment charter schools opened during the 2008-2009 school year; that same year, the LRSD lost a total of 816 students (410 were white) and the number of open seats in magnet schools increased by 105.¹⁸⁰ Even if the Little Rock School District's appeal to the State Board succeeds and no additional charter schools are approved, the number of students attending open-enrollment charters in Pulaski County will be 5,442 by the 2012-2013 school year, a number that accounts for 10 percent of all public school students in Pulaski County.¹⁸¹ The Little Rock School District summed up the impact in its motion to the court to stall the approval of additional charter schools, "It's hurting our desegregation ability in both magnet and M-to-M schools. We're getting greater and greater concentrations of low-achieving students in the Little Rock School District, with greater concentrations of poverty and less money to educate those kids. That's the impact."¹⁸²

From 2009 to 2012, the Little Rock School District student population was 68 percent black and 70 percent economically disadvantaged.¹⁸³ Educating children in the midst of concentrated poverty presents unique challenges: "mountains of research suggest that the reason high-poverty schools fail so often is that economic segregation drives failure: it congregates children with the smallest dreams, the parents who are the most pressed, and burnt out teachers who often cannot get hired elsewhere."¹⁸⁴ In addition to these hardships, children who grow up

in low-income families disproportionately face social instability, parents with low levels of education, commonly undiagnosed depression and anxiety, and unmet basic needs.¹⁸⁵ While poverty is certainly not a phenomenon that is isolated within the black community, evidence does suggest that poverty markedly impacts black communities and that schools that exhibit concentrations of economically disadvantaged students are typically majority black or brown.¹⁸⁶ In 2000, around 6 percent of white children living within the city of Little Rock lived in poverty, while approximately 35 percent of African-American children lived in poverty.¹⁸⁷ Schools that demonstrate higher levels of racial and economic desegregation have substantially smaller racial achievement gaps because black children reap the benefits guaranteed to their white counterparts: better-trained, more-experienced teachers, access to better library resources and laboratory equipment, a wider range of Advanced Placement courses for students who plan on attending college, and a better variety of extracurricular activities.¹⁸⁸ Given the documented benefits of racially and economically desegregating public schools and the State Board's past failure to remedy the educational achievement gap between black and white students, the board's continued compliance in the approval of open-enrollment charter schools is wholly negligent.¹⁸⁹

In his seventh year on the Supreme Court, Justice Marshall declared,

We deal here with the rights of all of our children, whatever their race, to an equal start in life. . . . Those children who have been denied that right in the past deserve better than to see fences thrown up to deny them that right in the future. Our nation, I fear, will be ill-served by the Court's refusal to remedy separate and unequal education, for unless our children begin to learn together, there is little hope that our people will ever learn to live together.¹⁹⁰

Whether or not the state is explicitly liable for the construction of each of these metaphorical "fences," the State Board and Arkansas Department of Education cannot prove a record of "good faith compliance with the [1989] consent decree."¹⁹¹ Despite the evidence that the state has not remained compliant with the spirit of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, it nevertheless formally requested release from the settlement payments (approximately \$70 million to the three districts) in March 2012.¹⁹² The Little Rock School District has warned that the impact of ending the desegregation payments would be catastrophic, since the lack of funding would not simply excuse the district from providing long-distance transportation for M-to-M students or operating its magnet schools.¹⁹³ Even Governor Mike Beebe, who voted for the 1989 settlement agreement in the General Assembly, supports the push to release the state from its fiscal obligation to the three districts.¹⁹⁴

Wendy Parker, a professor at Wake Forest University, stated: "I think courts have gotten exhausted with it [desegregation litigation]. . . . I don't think they're stopping because they've been successful. I think they're stopping because they feel it's time to move onto other issues."¹⁹⁵

Had all parties remained compliant with the intent of the 1989 Settlement Agreement over the past twenty years or even once indicated a desire to end desegregation for its own sake, the current push to quit now would be somewhat understandable; however, because it is clear that compliance has been inconsistent and unenforced, the state's request for release demonstrates retreat from a plan before it was ever seriously attempted.

PART THREE: WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

It is tempting to write off public school desegregation in Pulaski County as a lost cause when \$1 billion in settlement payments, the creation of specialized magnet schools, the implementation of majority-to-minority programs, countless forms of litigation, and court-ordered monitoring of the public school districts cannot produce substantial desegregation gains.¹⁹⁶ Then again, the obstacles facing considerable desegregation advances lie in the execution of the programs as well as certain aspects of the programs themselves. The policies generally have been conducted independently of the true intent of the *Brown* ruling. The parties involved have been so wrapped up in avoiding financial obligation or accountability and in quarreling over strict versus loose interpretations of settlement language that they have become detached from the moral and ethical implications of the *Brown* decision.¹⁹⁷ The principle of desegregation is rooted in justice and equality rather than quotas and district payments; thus, surrender is unacceptable. As Justice Marshall pointed out, "Desegregation is not and was never expected to be an easy task. . . . Racial attitudes ingrained in our Nation's childhood and adolescence are not quickly thrown aside in its middle years. But . . . the inconvenience of some cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the rights of others."¹⁹⁸

The practice of segregation was fashioned after a racist system that designated white people as superior to black people; therefore, desegregation embodies the destruction of the ideals that bolster systematic racism.¹⁹⁹ Desegregation in Pulaski County has failed thus far because the officials overseeing its fulfillment have carried out a tradition of dodging social responsibility. Because desegregation cannot be properly understood outside the social context that produces it, policy discussions that exclude even a mention of the role of whiteness will be unsuccessful. To remedy their failures, officials will have to explore whiteness as a social construct and determine how it impacts not only society as a whole but also their personal, individual lives.

THE EVOLUTION OF RACISM

Racism during the 1957 Central High Crisis was not hard to identify. The feelings were overtly and unapologetically written all over the faces of the white segregationists who crowded the streets surrounding the school. The acts of racism were clearly visible and could not be easily dismissed by assertions that its targets were simply "playing the race card" or "reading too much into the situation."²⁰⁰ But in the years since 1957, the expression of racism has changed in fundamental ways.²⁰¹ Racism has become far more insidious and institutionalized, leading to increased invisibility from the majority of white Americans. However, the recognition that racism has fundamentally changed

since the 1950s does not imply that overt racism somehow ceases to exist in day-to-day life. Instead of replacing overt racism, covert racism acts in concert with more blatant forms of racism. When Beth Roy interviewed white citizens of Little Rock who attended Central High during the crisis, she found that "white racist attitudes continue unabated, their forms and codes have changed since the fifties, but not their intensity. If we are to make change happen, we must account for that tenacity, for it goes beyond poor education or bad character."²⁰²

RACISM AS AN INSTITUTION

Racism is able to exhibit unchanged intensity and impact in spite of its transformation because the ideology that serves as the core of racism remains untouched. Racism is constructed on the basis that white people are inherently superior to black people, and whether this assertion is expressed by legally sanctioning segregation or by automatically (and sometimes unconsciously) tracking white students into college-prep courses and black students into remedial classes, this message remains the same. In the United States, individuals are socialized from birth to believe that white people deserve to be looked upon more favorably, listened to more intently, and are assumed to be more honorable than black people. As the antiracist activist Tim Wise points out, white individuals enjoy an unquestioned sense of legitimacy and the feeling that "wherever you are, it's taken for granted that you must deserve to be there."²⁰³ Finally, philosopher George Yancy asserts that whiteness is seen as the norm and the epitome of "beauty, order, innocence, purity, restraint, and nobility."²⁰⁴ According to the philosopher bell hooks, it is senseless to expect successful racial integration as long as the white supremacist system endures.²⁰⁵ Because the messages people receive about assigned superiority or inferiority form their perceptions of reality, the practice of excluding black children from educational spaces and opportunities afforded to whites cannot be undone without also modifying the dominant culture's insistence that blackness and black people are inferior.²⁰⁶

THERE IS NO PLACE CALLED INNOCENCE: SOCIAL POSITION DEMANDING RESPONSIBILITY²⁰⁷

Social position requires a level of social responsibility that is independent from direct involvement. According to Beverly Tatum, the pervasiveness of white supremacist messages in the country act as a smog that has been released into the air. While the inhabitants of the affected neighborhood might not have had any direct involvement in causing the smog or even know that the situation exists, the smog still fills their lungs and they are affected by its presence.²⁰⁸ In the same manner, white Americans have a responsibility for deconstructing white supremacy even though they did not choose to be socialized in a racist culture. It is important to understand the distinction between a feeling of white guilt and a feeling of social responsibility because one is white. There is no need to feel guilt for the *construction* of the white supremacist system because "guilt is what you feel for what you've *done*."²⁰⁹ Instead, the responsibility of white people is to recognize the social climate for what it is and act to deconstruct racism at every turn. Because the main tenet of white supremacy is that all white people

are privileged solely by virtue of being white, there are no white people who escape accountability.²¹⁰

The idea that a white person is responsible for fixing a problem she did not create and is accountable merely because she was born white can be disconcerting. Yet the reality of the situation is that the responsibility is necessitated *only because* regardless of individual intent, desire, or merit, white people are advantaged and black people are disadvantaged in the current racial hierarchy. The facticity of this inescapable situation divides white people into one of two categories: those who reinforce systematic racism and those who challenge it.²¹¹ It is not only white people who are responsible for disrupting racism—indeed, it is advantageous for black people to combat racism whenever possible—but white people do have a greater responsibility to take part because their socially privileged position offers them access to the social institutions that need to be changed.²¹² As Beverly Tatum points out, “to whom much is given, much is required.”²¹³

WHITE IGNORANCE

The main problem facing the termination of systematic racism is that far too often white people hide behind the cloak of privilege and fail to even recognize the existence of racism in everyday life. After all, “you can’t solve a problem if you refuse to acknowledge that it exists.”²¹⁴ Given the stark, blatant racial gap that has persisted throughout the nation for decades, maintaining ignorance of the racialized social system requires active participation. As Tim Wise states, “the only way that one can be completely ignorant of the racial truth in the United States, whether in the sixties or today, is to make the deliberate choice to think about something else, to turn away, to close one’s ears, shut one’s eyes, and bury one’s head in the proverbial sand.”²¹⁵

Barbara Applebaum defines white culpable ignorance as “a white refusal to know what one ought to know because to know would implicate one in the perpetuation of systematic injustice.”²¹⁶ Instead, white people who take part in culpable ignorance bolster the system of racism by “agreeing to misinterpret the world.”²¹⁷ The manifestation of privilege in the construction of white ignorance is indicative of the power that heightened social position wields. Not only can white people choose not to see, hear, or acknowledge something that stares them in the face, they can also not know and believe that they *do* have a realistic perception of the world surrounding them.²¹⁸ White people are allowed to continue believing their perspectives are accurate because white ignorance is maintained collectively through the epistemology of ignorance. An *epistemology of ignorance* is a “systematically supported, socially induced pattern of (mis)understanding the world that is connected to and works to sustain systematic oppression and privilege.”²¹⁹ In other words, there is a “culturally sanctioned discourse of evasion that protects the interests of the privileged and their moral composure.”²²⁰

Furthermore, the devices used to actively maintain ignorance indicate privilege: “Among the types of discursive strategies that Hytten and Warren discuss are: remaining silent, evading questions, resorting to the rhetoric of ignoring color, focusing on progress, victim

blaming and focusing on culture rather than race.”²²¹ In the film *The Color of Fear*, Victor Lewis asserts that “part of what it means to be white is never having to admit that to be white means something different than to be a person of color.”²²² White people are given the authority to ignore and discount the perspectives of black people and are rewarded with social acceptance for their participation.²²³ Moreover, the denial of the reality of black people “allows the dominant perspective to become *perspectivism* . . . or the elevation of the majority viewpoint to the status of unquestioned and unquestionable truth.”²²⁴

White ignorance does not absolve white people from their social responsibility to deconstruct systematic racism, though it does function to obfuscate the consequences linked to the perpetuation of such a system.²²⁵ In a sense, whiteness becomes a state of self-delusion and the eschewing of responsibility as long as one remains in a state of not seeing, hearing, or asking.²²⁶ But silence and inaction, even inaction produced by willful ignorance, can only function to preserve the system of racial inequality. Most white people cringe at the thought of being called a racist, much less openly admitting that they are, indeed, racist. What one must ask herself, though, is whether she is more implicated by accepting that she is a racist and working to ameliorate her participation, or by continuing to deny her participation and keep aiding a racist system that advantages them at the expense of black people.

SPECIFIC FORMS OF RACISM

Once white people understand that it is entirely within their best interests to dismantle the system of racial inequality, the task becomes to determine the level at which they participate in the reproduction of the system. A true understanding of one’s own culpability requires an understanding that racism can assume different forms.

Overt racism is when an individual’s prejudiced attitudes are backed by power of a larger racist social system. Having one’s own prejudice backed by the power of society’s hierarchal inequality leads to true injustice. Thus, the term racist can only be applied to white people. bell hooks explains why black people can be prejudiced but not considered racist: “The prejudicial feelings some blacks may express about whites are in no way linked to a system of domination that affords us any power to coercively control the lives and well-beings of white folks.”²²⁷ Racism’s ability to oppress and impact the lives of black people is rooted in the power differential of the racist institution, it is “prejudice plus power.”²²⁸

But white people must be careful to refrain from feeling morally superior to those whites who are overt in their racism because such feelings can impede the reality that all whites are implicated in the system of continued racial inequality.²²⁹ Judith Lichtenberg stresses that racism has less to do with what is “in people’s heads” and more to do with what “happens in the world.”²³⁰ Her point is that the systematic nature of racism impacts black people on a level that is more expansive than individual overt racism could ever hope to achieve. It is comforting for white people to believe that racism is a problem of the past as long as they themselves do not cognitively experience

negative feelings towards black people, but the cost of comfort is white ignorance and the perpetuation of systematic racism.²³¹ Additionally, it is hard for a white person to avoid implication when she considers, "who cares if your intentions are good if they reinforce or permit social discrimination and deprivation?"²³² The second a white person is privileged for being white, she becomes individually and socially responsible for racism because she has participated in and benefitted from a system that disadvantages black people.

IMPLICIT BIAS

It is dangerous for white people to refuse responsibility for their social positions because tests continually indicate that even individuals who believe they are fair and unbiased contain internal prejudices. In one such study, subjects received a phone call from an individual who said his car had just broken down, he had just spent his last dime making that wrong call, and he needed someone to call a tow truck for him. Young white subjects who described themselves as liberal and racially well-intentioned were six times more likely to hang up on callers who sounded black than callers who sounded white.²³³ In another study of white college students, respondents were told to evaluate black and white people as either good or bad. The subjects consistently rated both black people and white people positively. However, when the task was changed to rating black and white people on a continuum of goodness, researchers found that the white students consistently rated white people better than black people. For example, black people were not rated as more lazy than white people, but white people were scored as more ambitious than black people. The conclusion was that white people presumed the biased belief that "Blacks are not worse, but Whites are better."²³⁴ Although it might not be intentional, when these internal assumptions manifest in the real world, there is a tangible, deleterious impact on black people.

All white people in the current society are conditioned to buy into the superiority complex that states that white people are better than black people. This socialization has led to the establishment of internalized stereotypes about specific groups, including black people. Stereotypes are considered automatic processes that one can react to without critical analysis, self-reflection, or even the realization that it is happening; in other words, they are knee-jerk reactions to situations.²³⁵ Denying that one's beliefs and perceptions have been affected by this socialization only allows the person to continue exhibiting bias unchecked. Patricia Devine contends that "non-prejudiced responses take intention, attention, and effort."²³⁶ The first action of intention, attention, and effort is to be incessantly honest and self-reflecting. The second action, which facilitates self-reflection, is to form relationships with people who are not white.²³⁷

THE IMPACT OF RACISM

For those who choose to recognize the pervasiveness of racism in everyday life, it is not difficult to imagine why the continuation of the racist social system disadvantages black people; racism strips black people of legitimacy, respect, equal opportunity, and human recognition.²³⁸ Nor is it even difficult to understand why a widespread system

of inequality is problematic for society at large: a system that creates "haves" and "have-nots" will ultimately pit the two groups against one another and create societies that are largely untrusting, unfriendly, fearful, and violent places to inhabit.²³⁹ Additionally, society as a whole suffers from the loss of human potential and lowered productivity that results from both systematic and individual racism.²⁴⁰

However, collective white ignorance is reproduced, in part, because most white people do not readily recognize the impact racism has on *their* daily lives. The Central High School Crisis in 1957 functions as an evident indicator of racism's influence. The privileged and entitled mindset that is instilled in white people throughout their lives becomes problematic in white lives in general because it inhibits one's capacity to see the world accurately.²⁴¹ For the white people who formed mobs on the lawn of Central High, the cost of their entitlement was a loss of humanity that culminated in their ability (as adults) to terrify, spit on, and threaten to lynch schoolchildren not even old enough to drive. Thus, one cost of privilege is an acquired inability to experience the feelings or perspectives of people viewed as different.²⁴² According to Tim Wise, "racism, even if it is not your own, but merely circulates in the air, *changes* you, allows you to think things and feel things that make you less than you were meant to be. It steals that part of our humanity that is the most precious: the part that allows us to see the image of God (however defined or conceptualized) and the goodness of creation in all humankind."²⁴³ Because white people are unable to see past racial barriers, they are cut off from those they see as different and forfeit the opportunity for growth that often accompanies relationships that surpass boundaries.²⁴⁴ When white students are cut off from black students because of segregated schooling, they are denied the opportunity to learn how to interact across racial bounds and their potential social growth is stunted. Thus, white people should become devoted to eradicating the system of racial injustice because the system as it currently functions disadvantages everyone.

DECONSTRUCTING WHITENESS

Though self-reflection is the best remedy for combating stereotypes, it is by no means the only avenue for undoing systematic racism. One of the best ways to undo whiteness is to resist the idea that whiteness is normative. White people are socialized to believe that white thoughts and ideas are supreme, and they have a tendency to treat the experience of white individuals as *the* human experience as such. The inclination to disregard the daily experiences of black people is made stronger when white individuals are secluded in their whiteness. When a person's daily interactions are devoid of people who are not white, there is not even the opportunity to gain a new perspective.

REACHING BEYOND THE WHITE PICKET PRIVACY FENCE

It is through interaction with people who are not white that the fallacious nature of whiteness' hidden assumptions is uncovered.²⁴⁵ In the realm of academia, expanding the scope of whiteness includes altering the canon to include literature produced by black people as well as ensuring that the educational material presented in textbooks is not

told from a strictly white perspective.²⁴⁶ For example, when history books present issues such as slavery or Jim Crow, how much information is presented and in what manner? Whose voices are presented in the retelling of historical events and whose perspectives are excluded?

George Yancy's concept of turning classrooms into "unsafe spaces" can be applied, in one way or another, to any classroom at any level of education. An intellectual space can be termed safe when it is devoid of the critical questioning that often disturbs the minds of students who have been socialized their entire lives to afford credibility only to whiteness or maleness, for example. However, the term safe space becomes ironic when one considers the cost of not having one's mind shaken up: there is an intellectual stasis that occurs, where students are stripped of the opportunity to develop "radical imaginations" that allow them to imagine new possibilities and participate in critical dialogue.²⁴⁷ That being said, the task of making a classroom unsafe is not fulfilled by simply lining the classroom library with a smattering of literature by black authors or female authors. Instead, the charge becomes asking the students to determine why certain voices are disturbingly absent and why they themselves are normally complicit with such absence.²⁴⁸ There is a level of risk involved for both teachers and students in calling out the normativity of whiteness in the classroom. Students risk the uneasy, uncomfortable feeling of realizing that everything they have previously been taught by family, former educators, and mass media has made them content with a system that is fundamentally unjust for anyone who is not white. Because questioning can create a troubling situation for students, teachers risk students rebelling by closing their ears and burying their heads further in the sand. But despite the risk, creating the possibility for critical dialogue among students is better than the "safety" of a silence that will absolutely keep unfair power structures intact. bell hooks describes the challenges and rewards in the following:

Oftentimes intellectual work compels confrontation with harsh realities. It may remind us that domination and oppression continue to shape the lives of everyone, especially Black people and people of color. Such work not only draws us closer to the suffering, it makes us suffer. Moving through this pain to work with ideas that may serve as a catalyst for the transformation of our consciousness, our lives, and that of others is an ecstatic and joyous process. When intellectual work emerges from a concern with radical social and political change, it brings us into greater solidarity and community. It is fundamentally life-enhancing.²⁴⁹

TELLING THE TRUTH AND MAKING TROUBLEMAKING ALLIES

Dismantling whiteness is difficult because it requires white people who have worked so hard to remain blissfully ignorant to switch gears and become painfully honest. White people who see themselves as good, decent people living in a just society must accept that the society they actively

support is incredibly unjust and far from a meritocracy.²⁵⁰ Victor Lewis, a black man featured in the documentary *The Color of Fear*, draws on his own experiences to explain why "our [white people's] goodness has never been sufficient":

By white supremacy, I don't mean Neo-Nazis and I don't mean Klan, because I'm terrified of those on an interpersonal level but institutionally, not that much; because most of the lethal, toxic, deadly racism that black people experience doesn't come from them, it comes from moral, fair-minded people who believe they are lovers of justice—those who experience their selves as decent and nice folk.²⁵¹

White people who risk honesty and the disruption of self that accompanies critical analyses of whiteness become what Yancy calls "troublemaking allies," a term used to describe those who "refuse to make a pact with mediocrity."²⁵² The individuals are troublemaking because admitting that they have received a lifetime of "unearned power and privilege" troubles their own self-identification.²⁵³ The disclosure of honesty by white troublemakers, with all of its rawness and vulnerability, also allows for a level of trust that forms alliances across racial boundaries. Yancy explains that the word ally comes from the word *alligare*, meaning "to bind to"; therefore, white troublemaking allies bind to black people in a way that is "open, honest, transparent, and full of self-disclosure."²⁵⁴ This openness works for both black and white allies; it allows for an authentic experience of the self within our shared communities.

ACCOMPLISHING DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENCE

James Baldwin pointed out that "not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."²⁵⁵ Talking about racism is a precursor to deconstructing systematic racism. As such, white troublemaking allies must learn how to effectively communicate with black people and deal with the revelations that will no doubt accompany successful discourse. White people do not need to learn *how* to talk, per se, but must instead learn to speak of race incessantly. Among white people, it is generally taboo to speak of race or racial issues publicly. In fact, bringing up matters of race is one of the quickest ways to be deemed a racist in all-white circles. As a result, dialogue is successfully suppressed and it becomes a challenge for white people to learn to speak fearlessly about race and say what needs to be said.²⁵⁶ The element of fearlessness enters the picture when, for instance, a troublemaking ally is among friends who all happen to be white and one member of the group tells a racist joke. The individual can remain silent, laugh along, or call the joke out as racist. Two of the three options open to the troublemaking ally do not involve a risk of social alienation or mockery for "being too uptight" or "not being able to take a joke," but only the option that involves whites standing up to other whites and making them accountable holds the potential for real social change.²⁵⁷ White allies have to break the silence that marks injustice as normative and begin talking about racism with white and black people alike; they can forge open and meaningful

discussions at their homes, schools, places of worship, workplaces, or community groups.²⁵⁸ Though “talk may not be all we need...the more we talk to each other across all the lines of difference that separate us, the harder it is to sustain those negative stereotypes that inhibit full understanding.”²⁵⁹

LISTENING

White people must learn to talk, but even more importantly they must learn how to listen more than they talk.²⁶⁰ One of the costs of privilege is the mindset that only white perspectives and white opinions possess merit and that white people know best, no matter the topic. But as long as white people regard the thoughts of black people as trivial and dismissible rather than paramount, meaningful listening cannot take place. Listening requires vulnerability, where the white person is “open to the possibility that [she] might be shown to be wrong and that someone else’s reasons might be better than [her] own.”²⁶¹ White listeners have to recognize that, in addition to white people *not* knowing everything, the perspectives of black people provide the only hope of truly understanding what a system of racial injustice means for individuals who are not deemed privileged. With this in mind, the views of black people should be regarded as crucial and white people should be willing to have their ideologies profoundly changed by the insight they are given.²⁶²

FALTERING AS A SITE OF REDEMPTIVE POSSIBILITY²⁶³

Taking part in dialogue across difference requires a white person to escape the confines of all-white circles and seek new social encounters that are not defined by predictable social transactions and instead “challenge and complicate the white self.”²⁶⁴ While learning to navigate diverse settings in a way that disrupts systematic racism, white people often falter, say the wrong things, and fall back into white supremacist forms of thought that display what Dr. George Yancy calls “ambush moments.”²⁶⁵ It can be incredibly embarrassing or disheartening for a white troublemaking ally to realize she has been ambushed, for it shows that even while she has committed to resisting white supremacist systems, she is not immune from occasionally bolstering the very system she wants to eradicate.²⁶⁶ Yancy ensures that rather than dwelling on the failure of being ambushed, a white troublemaking ally should see the encounter as an opportunity for growth. When dealt with honestly, ambush moments can serve as teaching moments by giving white allies a firsthand glimpse into the insidious nature of whiteness and how deeply rooted its impact has been on all white people, even those who desire the dismantling of whiteness.²⁶⁷ In the end, white troublemaking allies devoted to ending systematic racism must recognize that “resistance takes work, it takes practice, and it helps to have as much support as possible. We shouldn’t be ashamed of the times we fall short, but resolve to develop strategies that make resistance easier and more likely to succeed.”²⁶⁸

MAINTAINING REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Ambush moments function as a reminder for white troublemaking allies that there is no such thing as a

point of “anti-racist arrival” where subconscious racist presuppositions are wholly mastered and one’s participation in systematic racism ceases to exist. By recognizing that efforts of resistance can vanish in “a moment of weakness, a moment of anger, a moment of insecurity, or a moment of fear,” white allies remain aware that maintaining resistance in their lives requires constant choice.²⁶⁹ White troublemaking allies should conceptualize their fight against racism as a continuous project that will be filled with “tensions, contradictions, and ambushes.”²⁷⁰ George Yancy highlights that even if an individual could attain a position where she is in no way personally contributing to systematic racism, the system as it is set up would still recognize her as privileged and the maintained preferential treatment she would receive serves as continued implication.²⁷¹ The best position a white person could hope to achieve is that of what Yancy calls an “anti-racist racist.”²⁷² But as Tim Wise posits, “maybe our redemption comes from the struggle itself. Maybe it is in the effort, the striving for equality and freedom, that we become human.”²⁷³

While they undergo the recurrent resistance process, white troublemaking allies cannot forget why they decided to become an ally in the first place. White people deciding to work towards undoing systematic racism cannot do so in an attempt to “save” black people from racism. Black people have been fighting racism for centuries and do not need to be saved by any other group, especially white people. Thus, a white person’s individual decision to *join* that fight has to be done because she recognizes the impact racism has had in her own life.²⁷⁴ In other words, “fight racism because racism is an evil to which [you] would rather not contribute. It is a sickness in the [white] community” that white people have to tackle.²⁷⁵

ULTIMATELY MAKING A DECISION

The agency required to end systematic racism allows for only two positions: collaborators or active resisters. Each person ends up in one of those two categories, regardless of the individual choices they make. White people who decide it is easier to fake white ignorance than face reality become collaborators because their complacency in the persistence of the racist system allows it to thrive.²⁷⁶ Active forms of agency are well understood—an individual actively commits to antiracism and consciously works to undo its manifestation within the sphere of her everyday life.²⁷⁷ The problem is that the role of the collaborator is typically glossed over and not regarded as a conscious decision. Collaboration feeds on silence and is sustained by those who, for whatever reason, avert their gazes, turn their heads, and refuse to recognize or challenge racism.²⁷⁸ Collaborators unquestionably retain a role in the preservation of systematic racism—they sustain the social climate that allows wrongdoing to go unquestioned.²⁷⁹ Beth Roy explains that “[taking] the risk of declaring oneself in a divided society is not easy. But if those white Americans who do not wish to condone racism do not take that risk, change will not happen.”²⁸⁰ The impact of silent collaboration speaks just as loudly as active resistance when dealing with a system of racial injustice and white Americans end up declaring themselves in either one group or another regardless. Thus, the only question that remains is whether white people will choose to support

justice and fairness instead of a system that is designed to suppress the perspectives, opportunities, and dreams of black people.

BRINGING DESEGREGATION BACK INTO FOCUS

Understanding white supremacy places the struggle for desegregation in a new light. Segregating white children into all-white academic enclaves is the antithesis of disrupting systematic racism because white children are denied the opportunity to learn at an early age how to nurture dialogue across racial difference. Furthermore, white children who are raised and educated in all-white settings still experience race within their isolation and, considering the white supremacist messages they receive from birth, the isolation only acts to further reinforce negative stereotypes about black people.²⁸¹

Because a contingency of deconstructing systematic racism is that the normativity of whiteness has to be undone by forging relationships and creating dialogue across racial lines, ensuring that black children and white children are educated alongside one another is an ideal starting point. In fact, a study conducted as part of the Harvard Civil Rights Project in 2000 concluded that white and black students who were educated in an integrated setting had learned to study and work together and felt more comfortable discussing even controversial race issues with one another.²⁸² In the 1958 case of *Cooper v. Aaron*, Thurgood Marshall declared to the justices that “education is not the teaching of the three R’s. Education is the teaching of the overall citizenship, to learn to live together with fellow citizens.”²⁸³ Just like individuals, the educational institution has the power to act as a collaborator or resister to systematic racism. Considering the cost of the system—the way that it instills hatred, polarizes groups, and ultimately makes society less harmonious—it seems utterly irresponsible for an educational system to continue to collaborate with systematic racism by inhibiting public school desegregation.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

While the importance of desegregation becomes emphasized by an understanding of systematic racism, the knowledge that its success or failure is tied to a system of institutionalized racism is cumbersome. Especially when a person begins to recognize the pervasiveness of racism in everyday life or the highly politicized nature of public schooling, the actions of individuals can appear futile. But getting caught up in feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness causes stagnation and downplays the importance of troublemaking allies. Regardless of age, income, gender, or sexual orientation, every person has a sphere of influence where he maintains some level of control. It is within these spheres that antiracist actions can foster extensive influence, even if the sphere only includes one’s intimate circle of family and friends.²⁸⁴ In the realm of desegregation, there are a number of specific activities individuals and/or institutions can implement to guarantee its success.

1. Send kids to racially mixed public schools

It seems like an excessively obvious solution but it is one that actually works. White parents should value diversity

and make the racial composition of a prospective school a priority when deciding where their children will attend. If the public school to which a white student is zoned for is majority-white, parents living in Pulaski County can decide to opt for a stipulation magnet school that will be racially diverse.

2. Increase the number of black teachers and administrators in schools

It is advantageous for black students to be given models of success who are also black, but in a society where white students are socialized to believe that black people are only criminals or welfare-recipients, it is also beneficial for white students to be given these models of success.²⁸⁵ Statewide, only 9 percent of educators are black.²⁸⁶ There should be an active push to encourage black college students to pursue degrees in teaching or administration, including financial incentives.

3. Reinvest in public education

Those who do not have school-age children or who cannot send their kids to public schools for one reason or another can find other ways of reinvesting in public schools in their neighborhoods. The individuals can volunteer time or funding, be active at school board meetings, or organize community-wide service projects to improve the school atmosphere. The most important aspect of reinvesting in public schools is that the reinvestment takes place. It is not advantageous for anyone when involved parents flee the “failing” public school system and take their concern and resources with them. If a school is so deplorable that a white parent would never consider sending his or her child there, why would the individual passively allow the school to continue being unacceptable simply because his or her child can attend elsewhere? Society as a whole benefits when each individual is provided with an adequate and equal education (as well as the opportunity to later use that education to pursue a career). Public education is by no means perfect, but it “remains the ‘one best system’ . . . it is the only system that turns no child away, regardless of race, status, language, or need. For this reason, public schools are perhaps the only institution that is positioned to play a role in addressing the effects of poverty and social marginalization and furthering the goal of equity.”²⁸⁷ White allies must support public education.

4. Re-evaluate the impact of government infrastructure projects

At the beginning of 2012, the Arkansas Department of Transportation began a five-year, multi-million dollar project to widen Interstate-40 to six lanes (three heading east and three heading west).²⁸⁸ It is no secret that the purpose of the project is to make commuting easier for (mainly white) individuals who work in Little Rock but live in the majority-white city of Conway.²⁸⁹ While there is undoubtedly a need for the expansion to accommodate the high volume of traffic, the individuals in charge of the decision must consider the impact of making it easier for more people to work in Little Rock but live in all-white towns. Rather than spending millions of dollars on the interstate expansion, the money could be spent to reinvest in the deteriorating neighborhoods of downtown Little Rock.²⁹⁰

5. Redefine the way desegregation is measured in Pulaski County

The way that desegregation is conceptualized has to be fundamentally altered to account for the presence of white students. Focusing only on how many black students are present (by counting students as either black or non-black) is becoming increasingly problematic as the Latino populations in Central Arkansas rise. Because Latino students are counted as non-black, a school can be considered truly desegregated but also be all-minority. As the number of Latino students in the public schools continues to rise, the current system would indicate false improvement in the Little Rock Public Schools (i.e., more “truly desegregated” schools) instead of illuminating that systematic racism continues to be enforced through the creation of majority-minority schools.

6. End racially coded language

On an individual level, white troublemaking allies can end racist coded language. For example, oftentimes schools are designated as either “good” schools or “bad” schools and nearly everyone understands what these designations suggest: bad schools are majority-minority schools while good schools are all white schools.²⁹¹ Neighborhoods are similarly broken down into the good/bad dichotomy based on race. White allies cannot use racially coded language themselves or allow others to do the same without pointing out why they are racist.

7. End academic stereotypes and tracking

Within schools there exists the stereotype that academic excellence is for white students only and black students are academically inferior.²⁹² It is not only the students that perpetuate the stereotypes by, for example, saying black students who excel in school are “acting white”; the teachers and counselors also play a role in its maintenance. Teachers and counselors encourage students into specific educational tracks: college-bound or not. Students who are identified as college-bound are encouraged to take Advanced Placement courses that can gain them college credit and look impressive on college applications. The problem arises when white students are disproportionately tracked as being college-bound and black students are low-tracked time and time again. In fact, black students are not only disproportionately tracked as *not* going to college, they are, irrespective of their actual ability, tracked into remedial academic courses.²⁹³ The overrepresentation of black students in remedial classes sacrifices their potential and impacts not only the way white students view black students (as academically inferior) but also the way that black students perceive themselves.²⁹⁴ “When they [students] see Black students overrepresented on the basketball team but underrepresented in Advanced Placement courses . . . they get a clear sense about the meaning of race.”²⁹⁵

To end tracking and other forms of segregation *within* a school building, educators should make sure that students do not participate in self-segregation. Assigned seating in classrooms or lunchrooms and teacher-assigned project groups work well to ameliorate self-segregating.²⁹⁶ Educators can also maintain an account of how many white and minority students are represented in both honors and

remedial courses and address the gross disproportions. Finally, students of all races should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities that are designed to showcase the various talents of students: this means that black students should not just be recruited for sports, but also band, drama, debate team, art, shop, and similar activities.²⁹⁷

8. Diversify curriculums

Though some advancements have been made in recent years, most curriculums around the country “remain top heavy with white folks’ narratives, with a smattering of ‘others’ thrown in, but more as an add-on than as a central part of the nation’s collective story.”²⁹⁸ To overwhelm curriculum with the perspectives of white people suggests that only the perspectives of white people are valid. Instead, educators should include literature written by and about people who are not white (and are not male, or heterosexual, or wealthy) to provide students with a more accurate depiction of the society they inhabit.

In addition to diversifying the curriculum, teachers have a responsibility to educate their students on why certain groups of people are underrepresented. Where is inequity visible and what does its existence in 2012 indicate about a given nation, state, or neighborhood? Students should be encouraged to take part in critical dialogue and be taught to develop the skills needed to spot injustice where it exists.²⁹⁹ Once students have learned to spot injustice, they should also be given the tools to respond to what they discover appropriately.³⁰⁰

9. Train educators in race awareness

Recently there has been an insistence that teachers should be above recognizing color among their students (being “colorblind”) or speaking about racial differences in the classroom (being “colormute”). But not allowing teachers to recognize racial differences in their classrooms silences them and takes away the self-reflection necessary to uncover the biases that lead to tracking.³⁰¹ If teachers are not supposed to think about race, how are they supposed to voice concerns about the severe underrepresentation of black students and overrepresentation of white students in Advanced Placement courses? Furthermore, if teachers are not supposed to think or talk about race, how can they ensure that the curriculum is diverse and that all of their students are represented in the educational material?

Rather than encouraging teachers to discount race, college students seeking a degree in education should be required to take a course that deals with the social disparities, including race, that exist and are often played out within a classroom. Additionally, educators should be required to attend periodic mandatory continuing education classes throughout their careers that would provide teachers the skills needed to successfully manage a diverse classroom atmosphere. If teachers are expected to encourage critical race discussions with their students, they have to be provided the tools to do so effectively.

CONCLUSION

Today the vast majority of white people will readily concede that what happened during the crisis at Central

High School, what the nine black students had to endure, was unconscionable. The problem is that this condemning assertion tends to lie nestled safely in a past that requires no obligation of recompense. The legacy of the Little Rock Nine is a living history whose requirements are as extant as they are demanding; to think otherwise detracts from the spirit of what the crisis at Central High School actually revolved around. Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrence Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls fought for access to a space that previously epitomized white hegemony. By refusing to bow down to the privileged idea that white people had the right to determine who should be allowed access into a public space and who should be excluded, the Nine exercised resistance against the social system of white privilege.

Too often throughout the history of desegregation of public schools in Pulaski County, the spirit of desegregation has gotten lost—it gets lost within a refusal to understand the current ramifications of “historical” events, from strict interpretations of legal settlements, as millions of dollars in desegregation payments are allocated to various bodies, and in the workings of a state Board of Education that exhibits more politics and less dedication to desegregation. This is the real shame. To lose sight of what is actually being fought for does a disservice to the displays of courage and hard work and sacrifice on the parts of those who do understand the spirit of desegregation. Dr. Terrence Roberts said,

My choice to join this group of nine was an act of bearing witness to the sacrifices of all those who have spilled their blood in the ongoing fight for equal rights in this country. My acceptance of the baton they passed along is my testimony to future generations who must finish the work started by the ancestors we share in common.

Dr. Roberts’s testimony is as pertinent today as it has ever been. Over the past few months alone, the state has sought to end desegregation payments, the school districts have been accused of misusing desegregation funds, the board of education has continued to approve open-enrollment charter schools, and even the small desegregation gains of the past continue to reverse. It is time for white people to bear witness to the legacy of Dr. Roberts and the legacies of countless other people of color forgotten to history. While many people of color continue the fight for equal rights, they have already exhibited their dedication and conviction for the entire world to see and, as such, have paved the way for future generations to continue the fight against the system of white privilege.

White people can pay tribute to the courageous acts of people of color by bearing witness to the pervasiveness of whiteness in an institutionally racist society. To do so, they must critically assess the blatant normativity of whiteness that runs rampant in all aspects of society and work to undo the manifestation of this normativity in everyday life. Simultaneously, they must turn that critical eye inward with an honest dedication to uncovering the ways that being privileged has impacted their own views of the world, especially in relation to those “others” who inhabit it.

By framing the struggle for desegregation within the context of a larger social structure rather than approaching desegregation as an isolated entity, institutionalized racism can offer explanations to both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation. Combating structural racism on the personal and public level by disrupting white normativity is the only hope Little Rock has for true desegregation gains. Though the road to racial equality may seem uphill, it has long been paved by the courageous efforts of those who have come before, including the Little Rock Nine. It is time for a new generation, enlivened by the struggle for racial justice, to pick up the torch and commit to fight for the better tomorrow all of our children deserve.

NOTES

1. Throughout this paper I use the term “desegregation” rather than “integration” because “to integrate” speaks to the combining of parts into a larger whole. It is brought about by the formation of relationships between students across racial boundaries, rather than the limited application of desegregation (which speaks to making sure that, within the school building, children of different races are simply present). Before integration can even become a possibility, true desegregation must be tackled.
2. Jay Barth, “White Flight,” *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, May 26, 2011, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=4917>.
3. Ibid.
4. David Koon, “Wilber Mills’ Wall: I-630, Little Rock and 25 Years in a Divided City,” *Arkansas Times Online*, January 26, 2011, <http://www.arktimes.com/arkansas/wilburs-wall/Content?oid=1520954>.
5. Baker Kurrus, “Baker’s Dozen: Baker Kurrus Assesses 12 Years in the ‘Belly of the Beast’—On Board of the Little Rock School District,” *The Arkansas Times*, November 11, 2010, 13.
6. “Motion to Enforce 1989 Settlement Agreement,” *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Online*, March 31, 2010, 6, <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2010/mar/31/motion-enforce-1989-ir-desegregation-settlement/>.
7. “Legislators Look for End to Pulaski County Desegregation Case,” *Arkansas Senate*, August 29, 2009, http://www.arkansas.gov/senate/newsroom/index.php?do:newsDetail=1&news_id=179.
8. Kurrus, “Baker’s Dozen,” 13.
9. “Motion to Enforce,” 10-11.
10. Ibid.
11. “Reports Detail School Districts’ Deseg Spending,” *Arkansas Online*, April 21, 2011, <http://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2011/apr/21/reports-detail-school-districts-deseg-spending/>.
12. “Legislators Look for End to Pulaski County Desegregation Case.”
13. *De jure* segregation refers to legally sanctioned separation based on race.
14. “Motion to Enforce,” 61.
15. Jonathan Kozol, *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2005), 10.
16. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). *Justia U.S. Supreme Court Center*, December 9, 1952, <http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/347/483/case.html>.
17. Richard Kluger. *Simple Justice: The History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America’s Struggle for Equality* (New York: Knopf, 1976), 754.
18. *Brown v. Board*. The Fourteenth Amendment states that no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, or deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection under the laws.

19. *Brown v. Board.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. Plaintiffs were represented by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense Fund, Inc., a group that was distinct from, yet associated with, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
22. Sondra Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year: What Happened When Little Rock Closed Its Public Schools* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2009), xx–xxvii.
23. Virgil Blossom, *It Has Happened Here* (New York: Harper, 1959), 15–16.
24. John A Kirk, "Not Quite Black and White: School Desegregation in Arkansas, 1954–1966," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (Autumn 2011): 235.
25. Blossom, *It Has Happened Here*, 16.
26. Johanna Miller Lewis and Laura A. Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education in Arkansas" (manuscript, National Park Service, 2005), 21–22.
27. David L. Chappell, *Inside Agitators: White Southerners in the Civil Rights Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 99.
28. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
29. Beth Roy, *Bitters in the Honey: Tales of Hope and Disappointment across Divides of Race and Time* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 2.
30. Michael Pierce, "Historians of the Central High Crisis and Little Rock's Working-Class Whites: A Review Essay," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 471; Lewis and Miller, *Desegregation in Public Education*, 21–22.
31. Peter Irons, *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision* (New York: Viking, 2002), 181.
32. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxii.
33. Kirk, "School Desegregation in Arkansas," 226.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
36. Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, 98.
37. Though Blossom mentions this in his memoir, none of the Little Rock Nine remember taking part in an application process or personally meeting with Superintendent Blossom. Instead, they assert, they signed a list at Dunbar at the end of the 1956–1957 school year to attend school at Central High and ended up being the group who actually showed up when school began in the fall of 1957.
38. Blossom, *It Has Happened Here*, 20.
39. *Ibid.*, 21.
40. *Ibid.*, 175.
41. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Anthony J. Badger, "The White Reaction to Brown: Arkansas, the Southern Manifesto, and Massive Resistance," in *Understanding the Little Rock Crisis*, eds. Elizabeth Jacoway and C. Fred Williams (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 85.
46. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 181.
47. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
48. "Central High Crisis Timeline," National Park Service, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.
49. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 179.
50. Lewis and Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education," 23
51. *Ibid.*, 24.
52. "Central High Crisis Timeline"; Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 181.
53. "Central High Crisis Timeline."
54. *Ibid.*
55. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 182.
56. "Central High Crisis Timeline."
57. *Ibid.*
58. John A. Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line: Black Activism in Little Rock, Arkansas, 1940–1970* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002), 111.
59. "Central High Crisis Timeline."
60. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
61. *Ibid.*
62. Federalizing the National Guard meant that the troops were removed from Governor Faubus's authority. Lewis and Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education," 25.
63. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
64. Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, xxiv.
65. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
66. "Central High Crisis Timeline."
67. Kirk, *Redefining the Color Line*, 120.
68. *Ibid.*
69. *Ibid.*, 121.
70. Melba Pattillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High School* (New York: Pocket Books, 1994), 169.
71. *Ibid.*, 169.
72. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 169.
73. *Ibid.*, 143.
74. *Ibid.*, 144.
75. *Ibid.*, 143.
76. *Ibid.*, 144–15.
77. *Ibid.*, 145.
78. *bid.*, 179.
79. *Ibid.*, 176.
80. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 159.
81. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xx–xxvii.
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Cooper v. Aaron*, 358 U.S. 1 (1958). *Justia U.S. Supreme Court Center*, September 11, 1958, <http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/358/1/case.html>.
84. *Ibid.*
85. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 185–86.
86. *Cooper v. Aaron*.
87. Faubus was able to take such action by utilizing a newly passed state law that give him the authority to close the schools.
88. Lewis and Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education," 25.
89. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, xii.
90. *Ibid.*, 112, 131.
91. The Women's Emergency Committee to Open Our Schools was an organization made up of white women who were dedicated to the preservation of public education. Chappell, *Inside Agitators*, xxii.
92. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 186.
93. *Ibid.*, 189.
94. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 162–63.

95. Ibid.
96. Lewis and Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education," 26.
97. Ibid.
98. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 762.
99. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 171.
100. Ibid.
101. Lewis and Miller, "Desegregation in Public Education," 34.
102. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 763.
103. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 171.
104. Barth, "White Flight."
105. Ibid.
106. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 760-61.
107. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 276-77.
108. Barth, "White Flight"; Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 171; Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 197.
109. Koon, "Wilber Mills' Wall."
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. Robert W. Fairlie and Alexandra M. Resch, "Is There 'White Flight' into Private Schools? Evidence from the National Educational Longitudinal Survey," 2000.
113. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 171.
114. Ibid.
115. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas," *Arkansas Online*, May 25, 2011, http://media.arkansasonline.com/news/documents/2011/05/25/8th_Circuit.pdf.
116. Barth, "White Flight."
117. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
118. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 276-77.
119. "Motion to Enforce in LRSD deseg. Case," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Online*, March 30, 2010, 6, <http://www.arkansasonline.com/documents/2010/mar/30/motion-enforce-lrsd-deseg-case/>.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid., 6.
122. Ibid., 3.
123. Ibid., 6.
124. Ibid., 7.
125. Ibid., 6.
126. While Central High School was not made a Stipulation Magnet as part of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, its curriculum does boast a magnet component that is also used to draw students from throughout Pulaski County.
127. "Motion to Enforce," 7.
128. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
129. Ibid.
130. "Motion to Enforce," 64-65.
131. Ibid.
132. Ibid., 60.
133. Ibid.
134. Erica Frankenberg and Chungmei Lee, "Race in American Public Schools: Rapidly Resegregating School Districts," *The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University*, August 1, 2002, 4, <http://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/race-in-american-public-schools-rapidly-resegregating-school-districts>.
135. Merchant, "Little Rock Desegregation Plans"; Fairlie and Resch, "Is There 'White Flight,'" 20.
136. "Little Rock's Youth: Demographics, Indicators, and Areas of the City," *New Futures for Youth*, November 5, 2003, <http://www.littlerock.org/Documents/Pdf/CityManager/Little%20Rock%20Youth%20Demographics%20Indicators%20Areas.pdf>.
137. Fairlie and Resch, "Is There 'White Flight,'" 20.
138. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 172.
139. "Racial Attitudes in Pulaski County: Focus on Education," UALR Institute of Government, March 2007, <http://ualr.edu/race-ethnicity/files/2007/09/2007-Racial-Attitudes-Survey-Report.pdf>.
140. Gordy, *Finding the Lost Year*, 172-73.
141. Fairlie and Resch, "Is There 'White Flight,'" 19.
142. Ibid., 2.
143. "Reports Detail School Districts' Deseg Spending."
144. Ibid.
145. "Little Rock School District Seeks to Re-Open Desegregation Case and Add Transportation Costs to State's Tab," *Arkansas Senate*, May 25, 2010, http://www.arkansas.gov/senate/newsroom/index.php?do:newsDetail=1&news_id=229.
146. Ibid.
147. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
148. "Appeals Court: Arkansas Can't Stop Desegregation Funds," *Fox 16 News*, December 29, 2011, <http://www.fox16.com/story/d/story/appeals-court-ark-cant-stop-desegregation-funds/17396/rS6wNgAd7kyd2kwnTxXq3g>.
149. Ibid.
150. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
151. "Motion to Enforce," 17.
152. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
153. "[LRSD] Seeks to Re-Open Desegregation Case."
154. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
155. Ibid.
156. "Appeals Court: Arkansas Can't Stop Desegregation Funds."
157. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
158. Ibid.
159. "Motion to Enforce," 2-3.
160. Ibid., 2, 10-11.
161. Ibid., 18-19.
162. Ibid. 18.
163. Ibid., 20.
164. Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, 225; "Motion to Enforce," 56.
165. Ibid., 57.
166. Ibid., 58.
167. Ibid., 57.
168. Ibid., 61.
169. Ibid., 19-20.
170. Ibid., 26, 28, 59.
171. Ibid., 27.
172. "Little Rock's Youth," 8.
173. "Motion to Enforce," 33.
174. Ibid., 26, 31.
175. Ibid., 21, 31, 36-37.
176. Ibid., 31, 62.

177. Ibid., 28, 34, 37.
178. Ibid., 28.
179. Cooper v. Aaron.
180. Ibid., 62.
181. Ibid., 56.
182. The Little Rock School District has less money to educate the kids it retains because, for each student who would have attended a magnet school had there not been a charter school available, the district loses an incentive payment. "Motion to Enforce," 45, 49.
183. Ibid., 61.
184. Ibid., 57. It is important to note that simply because a parent is "pressed" does not mean he or she is uninterested in or devalues the child's education.
185. Ronald L. Akers and Christine S. Sellers, *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2009), 178; Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, 54; Pedro A. Noguera, *The Trouble with Black Boys . . . and Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 21.
186. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 293; Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, 20.
187. "Little Rock's Youth," 2.
188. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 341.
189. "Motion to Enforce," 9.
190. Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 766-67.
191. "Little Rock School District vs. State of Arkansas."
192. "Legislators Look for End to Pulaski County Desegregation Case."
193. Merchant, "Little Rock Desegregation Plans to go Back to Court."
194. Ibid.
195. Ibid.
196. "Legislators Look for End to Pulaski County Desegregation Case."
197. Jonathan Kozol, *Save Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1992), 4.
198. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 245; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 773.
199. The white supremacist system in the United States does not only disadvantage black people but burdens any individual who is not white. This section emphasizes a black/white dichotomy to mirror the desegregation dialogue that has taken place in central Arkansas over the past 60+ years, but this stylistic distinction does not seek to imply that deconstructing whiteness is not as equally important for other racial minority groups. Nor does the focus of the paper seek to gloss over the presence of individuals who do not fit "neatly" into the black/white dichotomy because they occupy both identities simultaneously. Rather, the point is that the white supremacist social system should be critically analyzed because it affects everyone.
200. Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*, iv.
201. Shelon Hackney, "Little Rock and the Promise of America," *Understanding the Little Rock Crisis*, eds. Elizabeth Jacoway and C. Fred Williams (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 23.
202. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 10.
203. Tim Wise, *White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son* (Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2008), xi, 49.
204. George Yancy, "Introduction," *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2008), xxii.
205. bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 10.
206. Beverly Daniel Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?": *And Other Conversations about Race* (Basic Books, 1997), 94.
207. Phrase taken from a quote by George Yancy's article "Whiteness as Ambush": "Because white racism is so incredibly rooted in the fabric of white America, there is no place called innocence."
208. Tatum, "Why are all the Black Kids," 95.
209. Tim Wise, *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equality* (San Francisco, CA: City Light Books, 2010), 194.
210. The statement that all white people are privileged by the white supremacist system does not imply that all white people benefit in similar or comparable ways. Within the racialized social system there are other hierarchies such as class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, etc., that also dictate how much privilege a person is afforded. However, all demographics being similar, white individuals are privileged over black individuals.
211. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 6-7; Robert Birt, "Blackness and the Quest for Authenticity," *White on White/Black on Back*, ed. George Yancy (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 267.
212. David, a white man featured in the documentary *The Color of Fear*, demonstrated why it might be difficult for white people, especially low-income whites who struggle financially, to recognize their position of privilege: "You tell me being white is special but I'm not feeling special, and I've never felt special because I was white." But economic privilege and racial privilege are not equivalent measures, and just because some white families are not shielded from economic hardship does not mean that they do not reap other benefits of being white.
213. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 12.
214. Wise, *White Like Me*, 63.
215. Ibid., xi.
216. Barbara Applebaum, "White Ignorance and the Denials of Complicity: On the Possibility of Doing Philosophy in Good Faith," *The Center Must Not Hold: White Women Philosophers on the Whiteness of Philosophy*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2010), 1.
217. Ibid., 5.
218. Wise, *White Like Me*, 62; Applebaum, "White Ignorance," 2.
219. Ibid., 4-5.
220. Ibid., 11.
221. The "rhetoric of ignoring color" is also known as "post-racial liberalism" or "colorblind racism." Colorblind racism has been used by both liberals and conservatives and operates when people assert that they "do not see color" and that race is an insignificant indicator of the past. See Applebaum, "White Ignorance," 11.
222. *The Color of Fear*, directed by Lee Mun Wah (1994; StirFryProductions), DVD.
223. Applebaum, "White Ignorance," 4-5.
224. Wise, *White Like Me*, 60.
225. Applebaum, "White Ignorance," 4-5.
226. Robert Birt, "Blackness and the Quest for Authenticity," *White on White/Black on Back*, ed. George Yancy (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 267.
227. hooks, *Black Looks*, 15.
228. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 7, 10.
229. Yancy, "Introduction," xvii.
230. Judith Lichtenberg, "Racism in the Head, Racism in the World," *Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: The Big Questions*, eds. Naomi Zach, Laurie Shrage, and Crispin Sartwell (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 43.
231. Ibid., 44.
232. Ibid.

233. Ibid.
234. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 119.
235. Wise, *Colorblind*, 159.
236. Ibid., 166.
237. Ibid., 158.
238. Richard Wilkinson, *The Impact of Inequality: How to Make Sick Societies Healthier* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 151.
239. Ibid., 36.
240. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 200.
241. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 11; Wise, *White Like Me*, 155.
242. George Yancy, "Whiteness as Ambush and the Transformative Power of Vigilance," *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2008), 228.
243. Wise, *White Like Me*, 159.
244. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 200.
245. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 15.
246. Alison Bailey, "On Intersectionality," in *The Center Must Not Hold: White Women Philosophers on the Whiteness of Philosophy*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2010), 59.
247. George Yancy, "Loving Wisdom and the Effort to Make Philosophy 'Unsafe,'" *Epistemologies Humanities Journal* (March 11, 2011): 3.
248. Ibid., 2.
249. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom* (New York, Routledge, 1994), 164.
250. Lichtenberg, "Racism in the Head," 43; Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 9; Wise, *White Like Me*, 64.
251. Mun Wah, *The Color of Fear*.
252. Yancy, "Loving Wisdom," 3.
253. George Yancy, "Introduction: Troublemaking Allies," *The Center Must Not Hold: White Women Philosophers on the Whiteness of Philosophy*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2010), xvi.
254. Ibid., xvi, xx.
255. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," xix.
256. Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*, 240.
257. Wise, *White Like Me*, 75.
258. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 193.
259. Hackney, "Little Rock and the Promise of America," 26.
260. Wise, *White Like Me*, 120.
261. Applebaum, "White Ignorance," 16.
262. Ibid., 14.
263. The term "redemptive possibility" was taken from Yancy's article, "Whiteness as Ambush."
264. Yancy, *Whiteness as Ambush*, 234.
265. Yancy, "Troublemaking Allies," xviii; George Yancy, "Whiteness as Ambush," 234.
266. Yancy, "Troublemaking Allies," xii.
267. Yancy, "Whiteness as Ambush," 240-41.
268. Wise, *White Like Me*, 103.
269. Ibid., 160.
270. Yancy, "Whiteness as Ambush," 232-33.
271. Yancy, "Introduction," xvii.
272. Ibid.
273. Wise, *White Like Me*, 175.
274. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 194.
275. Wise, *White Like Me*, 126.
276. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 9.
277. Molefi Kete Asante, "Blackness as an Ethical Trope," *White on White/Black on Black*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2005), 210; George Yancy, "The Agential Black Body: Resisting the Black Imago in the White Imaginary," *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham, MD: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2008), 111.
278. Wise, *White Like Me*, 129.
279. Roy, *Bitters in the Honey*, 384.
280. Ibid.
281. Wise, *White Like Me*, viii.
282. Irons, *Jim Crow's Children*, 341.
283. Ibid., 341-42.
284. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 204.
285. Ibid., 65.
286. "Appeals Court."
287. Noguera, *The Trouble with Black Boys*, xxvii.
288. Lindsey Tugman, "I-40 Between Conway, Little Rock to be Expanded," *Today's THV* online, January 31, 2012, <http://archive.thv11.com/news/article/193408/2/I-40-expansion-project-begins-in-central-Arkansas>.
289. Ibid.
290. However, the purpose of reinvestment cannot turn into gentrification.
291. Koon, "Wilber Mills' Wall."
292. Noguera, *The Trouble with Black Boys*, 10.
293. Wise, *White Like Me*, 19.
294. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 56.
295. Noguera, *The Trouble with Black Boys*, 13.
296. Ibid., 14.
297. Ibid.
298. Wise, *White Like Me*, 19.
299. Tatum, "Why Are All the Black Kids," 47.
300. Ibid., 49.
301. Wise, *Colorblind*, 112.

BOOK REVIEWS

Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect

George Yancy and Maria G. Davidson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2014). 239 pages. ISBN 978-0-415-83669-2.

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"To see' a body of color in the capacity of professor/teacher is 'to know' a priori about that body. . . . We are seen as 'inferior,' as intellectually 'inadequate,' marked as pseudo-scholars" (1). So begins George Yancy in the critical and essential *Exploring Race in Predominantly White*

Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect, co-edited with Maria del Guadalupe Davidson. Faculty of color in this volume respond to the grinding systematic racism and othering that happens as a matter of course in academia. What does it mean to be a person of color at the front of a white majority classroom? On a white majority campus? In a white-majority college governance structure? What is the lived experience? What are the survival tactics? Because there must be survival tactics. The fundamental question of *Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect* is how do faculty of color teach anti-racism, create safe and supportive spaces for students of color, while maintaining sanity and longevity? The answers to this question make this book essential reading as a companion on the journey of de-centering whiteness and as a clarion call to end white supremacy.

This brilliant collection took me back to a graduate school debate in 1996. I, a white female graduate student, was in a class called "The Color Line," discussing Ann duCille's prescient 1994 article, "The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies." DuCille names how scholars of color, in particular, must be "walking exemplars of ethnicity and race" (79). She goes on to note how "it seems to me that this is particularly true for black women scholars on white college campuses where they experience both a hypervisibility and a superisolation by virtue of their racial and gender difference" (79). Ann duCille's piece is also on the mind of Kathy Glass, one of the contributors in *Exploring Race in Predominantly White Classrooms: Scholars of Color Reflect*, as she notes duCille's claim that whiteness must be analyzed as an "invented structure" (55). Yet how can whiteness be analyzed as "invented" when, as duCille describes, race is the "property only of the non-white" (55). DuCille captures the racism experienced by faculty of color in the academy while also noting that faculty of color seem to be the ones left to solve it, a fact that Glass and all the contributors lament. DuCille wrote this piece twenty years ago. In reading Yancy and Davidson's volume, I was struck by how depressingly little has changed in academia.

I also recalled how the duCille piece prompted a fight in a white-majority classroom. One white female student argued that she was concerned about entering African-American Studies as a white woman. Another white male student said she needed to get over her naïve identity politics and her bourgeois fretting. This intra-racial debate turned into such a blow up that the professor deployed conflict resolution tactics. This classroom experience—the volatility of race, the high stakes—is right at the surface for the faculty members in this volume. The question of who gets to talk and when and where is still very much alive and not a relic of an identity-politics past. But there's a crucial difference in my grad school scenario: the white male professor could navigate the classroom fury without a cost to his career, stature, or health. This is not so true for this volume's contributors. Reflecting back, we ought to have gone more "meta," critiquing the white space that was taken up in the fight, highlighting Ann duCille's voice, and interrogating the reality that academia is never exempt from being racialized. In fact, academia is frequently ground zero on race, as this volume asserts.

Tactics for dismantling whiteness are at the forefront of this volume. To begin the collection, George Yancy uses the powerful, frequently cited term to "tarry" or "to lose one's way" (a term that often appears in his work) for the urgent need for white students to be disoriented, uncomfortable, and "unsutured," by discovering white privilege and history (13). Un-sutured is a term that he has begun to use as not only a condition for self-discovery but a site where whites need to dwell, to remain with the pain, the shock of self-discovery. Yancy specifically puts "whiteness in crisis" and suggests that most scholars of color who teach race do exactly that (12). The number of stories describing white student response to this crisis is testament to that fact. White students unsurprisingly occupy a white identity development spectrum: from those gaining profound self-knowledge and actualization, humility, and an anti-racist consciousness to those who resist race till the bitter end and long for a "color blind" society that never existed. Jo-Anne Lee, in "Teaching White Settler Subjects Antiracist Feminisms," notes how even white students who have an "oppositional consciousness" long for racial "innocence" that makes whiteness good again (65, 70). Clarence Sholé Johnson, in "Pedagogical Contours of Race and Racism," corroborates this white longing by explaining what happens when white students share personal stories about racist family members. Though white students use these stories to provide "comic relief" by claiming outside exception to their own supposedly enlightened consciousness, white students must be reminded that "they themselves subscribe to and participate in White Supremacy without their knowledge and deliberate consent" (85). Even when white students recognize these privileges, few have what A. Todd Franklin, in "A Letter to My Kinfolk on the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Emancipation," calls "antiracist resolve" (99). Franklin bemoans the shift in consciousness that happens which leads to nothing. White students go through a consciousness-raising only to slip back into slumber.

Students of color inhabit predominantly white spaces, well, uncomfortably. Kirsten T. Edwards says in the title of her piece, "'The Whiteness is Thick': Predominantly White Classrooms, Student of Color Voice, and Freirian Hopes," that when teaching in "thick whiteness" she has had to assess when she becomes the voice of race challenge or when students of color occupy that space. There's a difference in white student response depending on who is speaking (21). Edwards notes the shift in consciousness when students of color talk peer to peer with white students versus when the faculty member of color speaks from the front of the room. Still, the ideal and real clash happens when no one wants students of color to carry that burden. Joe Watkins describes, in "Teaching Indigenous Classes in Non-Indigenous Classrooms," how subtle the cues are among professors and students of color in mixed and white-majority classrooms: "The non-Indian students will generally be more open about questioning ideas and controversial points, while, in general, the American Indian students will listen quietly, either nodding in agreement or casting their eyes downward with slight shakes of the head to indicate disagreement" (204). Watkins discusses how some of these indigenous norms and ways of being clash with "Western academic expectations" and how challenging

it is to run a classroom in this context (205). Straight up, this is Olympic-level pedagogy. Throughout this volume, faculty of color take it as a norm that they manage multiple signals, levels of discourse, and identities in a single room. The fact that this takes consummate teaching ability is just not acknowledged.

The toll that this anti-racist facilitation work takes on professors of color is also not marked, as all authors assert. "Scholars of color experience a disequilibrium that no tenure case is likely to consider as a condition that affects one's productivity," notes Zeus Leonardo in "Unveiling Whiteness in Higher Education: Scholars of Color and Double Consciousness" (131). Karsonya Wise Whitehead tells us that "in the days up to the end of the semester, I am always nervous about my evaluations," in her piece, "Metacognitive RACLaGE Reflection: A Black Professor's Journey to Use the Master's Tools to Dismantle His House" (136). Whitehead goes on to note the range of external responses to her as a black female professor: students ignoring her appropriate appellation, Dr., asking her to smile more, asserting that she seemed too angry. These racist objectifications show up in student evaluations. As Antonia Randolph notes in "This Bridge Called My Body: Talking Race through Embodying Difference," "my body is unavoidably part of my pedagogy" (32). Indeed, Benita Bunjun remarks further that "those that are oppressed must show and demonstrate signs of happiness and gratefulness, and, hence, those that do not may be perceived as negative, angry, hostile, and unhappy" (155). Bunjun, in "The Racialized Feminist Killjoy in White Academia: Contesting White Entitlement," takes up Sara Ahmed's "feminist killjoy" to discuss how scholars of color are blamed for white student unhappiness. Nana Osei-Kofi, in "Race In(Out)side the Classroom: On Pedagogy and the Politics of Collegiality," discusses how some of her students, rather than being unhappy, become radicalized and then get labeled as "troublemakers" when they appear in other faculty member's classes and do intersectional analysis. Osei-Kofi is then, in turn, blamed and the "work of faculty of color is delegitimized in the academy" (164). More disturbing but not surprising is the range of other faculty, as Osei-Kofi states, who discourage students from taking her classes and tell students not to be associated with anti-oppressive efforts. These obstructionist faculty use "students as pawns to delegitimize critical thinking" (164). Yet, despite the intensity of these struggles, Osei-Kofi persists, "we must believe in the possibility of change" and the classroom is one place of hope (170).

It is clear that many of the most effective learning strategies involve contemplating on, writing about, and asking fundamental questions related to identity, ones most faculty are leery to engage. Dyan Watson, in "Staying in the Conversation," assigns students a "climate case study" of first their own institution and then the secondary school in which they are placed as student teachers: "Who does your University serve? What is your evidence? Over the next week, collect data to answer this question. Look at the art on the walls, names of professors, accessibility, etc. Record this data and be prepared to discuss it in class" (45). In this simple exercise, Watson provides powerful examples of growing critical awareness which is a start, simply a start. But students often need something more

to even have a conversation about race in the first place. Arnold Farr argues for using "preemptive forgiveness" in his essay, "Racialized Consciousness and Learned Ignorance: Trying to Help White People Understand" (106). While acknowledging that people of color rightly don't need to forgive so much, he claims that giving language to forgiveness before the conversations on race begin makes those conversations actually candid. By contrast, Clevis Headley, in "On Why Race Matters: Teaching the Relevance of the Semantics and Ontology of Race," claims that "my antidote to color blindness—a cognitive condition that ultimately mutates into cognitive disorientation—is to promote racial literacy; that is the critical ability to read and interpret the world through the category of race" (115). He argues that teaching a philosophical history of race as a category is essential to undoing mythologies about race that whites, in particular, perpetuate. But Meta G. Carstarphen and Sanjukta Mukherjee both discuss how adding other intersectional categories of analysis presents a layer of intellectual challenge that often sends students over the edge—in this case integrating the concept of "nation" as a category renders some students incapable of linking their identities and practices to "others." The entire volume strategizes challenges such as these and asks how to create the most transformative pedagogy possible.

A surprising collective effect of this volume is how hopeful it reads. And we need hope. The persistent hope of faculty of color who put themselves out, every day, at a high cost is humbling and motivating. This is a vocational text in that faculty clearly feel called, however secular or sacred that call, to grind down the gears of racism and to do it in their corner of the world, their corner of the university. We all need to heed and be challenged by that fact because if we're not actively undoing racism as these scholars are then we're failing. This volume reminds us that we cannot fail and that this struggle belongs to all of us. There is no more urgent reading than that.

Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being

M. Shawn Copeland (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009). 176 pages. ISBN 978-0-800662745.

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M. Shawn Copeland's *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* makes a case for the profound theological value of flesh. As Katie Geneva Cannon and Anthony B. Pinn suggest in the forward, the main question that motivates the text is what happens to theology when "the body is placed at the centre of inquiry" (ix). Specifically, Copeland is interested in what sort of theological insights can be achieved through a close examination of the "historical perception and treatment of Black women's bodies" (ix). Copeland justifies her turn to black women's bodies as the center of her theological investigation by drawing a parallel between the bodily suffering of Jesus and that of black women, claiming that they both expose "the human capacity for inhumanity

and the divine capacity for love" (1). It becomes clear by the close of the introduction that what Copeland is calling for is the explicit recognition of the solidarity between the suffering of black women's bodies during both slavery and its aftermath and the suffering of the body of Jesus under Roman imperialism. This solidarity, she comes to argue, should be understood to be an expression of the mystical body of Christ—the body of Christ as it is understood in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

In light of the mystical body of Christ, Copeland opens the book by framing the human body as both a divine revelation and a basic human sacrament (8). She explains that this anthropological orientation rests on three main theological assumptions: that human beings are created in the likeness of God (*imago dei*), that they are unique in the cosmos, and that they are made for communion with God and other creatures (24). This sort of turn to the particular is not new to theological anthropology, specifically within the framework of liberation theology. Liberation theologians such as James Cone and Gustavo Gutierrez have long reminded us of Jesus's solidarity with the poor, oppressed, and marginalized. Copeland's purpose is to extend the reach of this conversation to include issues specific to female embodiment, gender, and sexuality. Two important ways in which she does this vis-à-vis black women's bodies are 1) through an examination of Jesus's gender performance and embodied spirituality and 2) through the representation of his broken body in the Eucharist.

Looking first at Jesus's gender performance, Copeland rightly points out that if we are going to take theological anthropology seriously it must be grounded, at least in part, in the body of Jesus, which serves as a medium for the revelation of God in creation. As such, she admonishes those who do not acknowledge Jesus's sex and gender (both fundamental aspects of embodiment), saying, "To refuse to speak about his sex and gender far too often leaves us unable to speak well and compassionately about sex, about gender, about sexuality, and especially, about homosexuality" (62). Given that her overarching aim is to draw a connection between black women and Jesus by way of the body, the question then becomes: What can Jesus's body tell us about the body of black women and vice versa?

She begins by stating rather directly (and perhaps obviously) that "[Jesus of Nazareth] was a male body, he had the genitals of a male human being" (62). Yet she also acknowledges that this does not imply that Jesus took up this male identity in a normative way. Rather, she argues that there are at least three ways in which Jesus's appropriation of masculinity is actually subversive. First, Copeland strongly states, "Jesus performed masculinity in ways that opposed patriarchal expressions of maleness through coercive power, control, and exploitation of 'other' bodies, exclusion, and violence" (63). In other words, though a man, Jesus did not level this identity as a tool of domination in a culture that would have expected him to do so (regardless of his marginal political status). His willingness to engage in intimate exchange with a wide array of people pushed the limits of traditional familial bonds and disrupted the patriarchal power structure.

Second and more pointedly, Copeland argues that not only does Jesus reject the normative model of masculinity, but he also seems to actively take on physical roles understood to be "feminine" in so far as they are nurturing and bodily. She reminds us that "[Jesus] nurtured men and women with word and touch, bread and wine, and water and fish" (63). This allusion to food also ties in with her assertion that Jesus promoted an embodied spirituality (later I will turn to the Eucharist as an instantiation of this). In Copeland's words, "Jesus had and has an eros for others; he gave his body, his very self, to and for others, to and for the Other. Jesus lived out and lived out of a fully embodied spirituality, an eros" (65). Third, she promotes "inscribing a queer mark on the flesh of Christ" (78). While she does not go so far as to say that Jesus himself had a queer identity, she does claim that interpreting Jesus's body as marked for the reasons given above has a certain theological value in that it "heals the anthropological impoverishment of homosexual bodies" (78). Said differently, the queering of Jesus's body and the recognition of his non-normative gender performance may create an opening to heal some of the damage done by racism, sexism, and homophobia.

In my discussion of Copeland's work so far, I have not yet made clear what this has to do with the bodies of black women in particular, or why starting with the experience of black women would grant us greater theological insight. But this is because we have to turn to the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross, his bodily suffering. Indeed, she claims that a turn to the suffering and death of Jesus will promote a re-remembering of the impact of slavery: "The suffering and death of Jesus of Nazareth rebuke our national amnesia, our forgetfulness of enslaved bodies, our indifference to living black bodies" (3). Slavery, she argues, aimed to desecrate black bodies in the way the cross aimed to desecrate the body of Jesus. And, yet, it is by placing the bodies of black women alongside the broken and crucified body of Jesus that there can be hope for a resacralization of the black female body. This is linked to the healing power of the Eucharist. She says, "[black women's] suffering, like the suffering of Jesus, anticipates an enfleshment of freedom and life to which Eucharist is linked ineluctably. The Eucharist, then, is a countersign to the devaluation and violence directed toward the black body" (124). I now turn to Copeland's treatment of the mystical body of Christ in the Eucharist.

Copeland points out that at the most basic level the Eucharist commemorates the meal that Jesus had with his disciples prior to his crucifixion. Yet as a Catholic theologian she also makes it clear that the Eucharist denotes the very real presence of Christ transubstantiated in the sacrament—the bodily presence that we incorporate into ourselves. Such physical communion can be a lens through which we can revalue the bodies which have been broken through the process of slavery, particularly those of women. She says, "Eucharistic solidarity orients us to the cross of the lynched Jesus of Nazareth, where we grasp the enormity of suffering, affliction, and oppression as well as apprehend our complicity in our suffering, affliction, and oppression of others" (128). More simply, the renewal that is offered at the Eucharistic table revalues the bodies of not just Christ but of those who have suffered like Christ. She states:

Eucharistic solidarity teaches us to imagine, to hope for, and to create new possibilities. Because that solidarity enfolds us, rather than refuse “others,” we responded in acts of Self-sacrifice—committing ourselves to the long labor of creation, to the enfleshment of freedom. (128)

She concludes this reflection saying that by placing the suffering of black women alongside the suffering of the crucified Jesus, room to imagine new possibilities is opened—ones that honor the enfleshed freedom of all people.

Enfleshing Freedom contributes significantly to the body of work within liberation theology that takes seriously the connection between Jesus and the marginalized. What this work does specifically is to highlight the value of the flesh and the profound theological implications that come from focusing on the body as an important aspect of the revelation. It begins with the historical person of Jesus, pointing out several ways in which his particular appropriation of masculinity can be queered to the extent that it provides meaningful insight into the embodied experiences of women of color (and vice versa). It then moves to the mystical body of Christ as it is understood in Catholic Eucharistic theology in order to demonstrate how these bodies can be restored, resignified, and resacralized.

Through these reflections, Copeland brings to the fore many important questions regarding embodiment and the sacred. Her discussion of Jesus’s oppositional appropriation of masculinity is particularly compelling in that it grants priority to female embodiment in its particularity. While this is useful in combating the intersection of racism, sexism, and homophobia, there is room for future work that focuses on more specific ways in which this connection between Christological and female embodiment is valuable for its own sake. Indeed, it seems that stronger lines can be drawn between the nurturing body of Jesus and the maternal body, for example. There is a theological precedent for this within medieval mystical theology, for example, that could have very interesting implications when mapped on to the specific experiences of black women. In this vein, it would also be worthwhile to draw more explicit connections between the maternal body and the Eucharist. Copeland compellingly mentions that Jesus’s body vis-à-vis the Eucharist can be understood to be nurturing, but it would be worth further pursuing the various ways in which this self-sacrificing nurturing—this literal giving of the body to another in the form of nourishment—impacts the ways in which women understand their own bodies in relationship to others and to God.

Enfleshing Freedom contributes significantly to theological anthropology by opening a space for a serious engagement with the flesh. I look forward to future work by Copeland and others that extends this trajectory of embodiment theory within liberation theology.

CONTRIBUTORS

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