Locating Whiteness in Journalism Pedagogy

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A consistent thread woven through scholarship on diversity and journalism education recommends appending multicultural content onto existing curricula or adding bodies of color to student or faculty ranks in order to improve the way marginalized communities are reported by the news media. Less attention, however, has been paid to studying the ways whiteness manifests in their academic socialization and whether its presence impinges the training of students to reflect the lived realities of communities of color. This essay explores how the teaching of various newsgathering routines and values might be fashioned by whiteness. Data collected using a mixed approach (observations of two journalism classrooms and an ideological critical analysis of traditionally used journalism textbooks), is analyzed through a critical whiteness studies lens, primarily by identifying rhetorical configurations of whiteness, but also by locating boundaries established by a white perspective. Findings indicate that three pedagogical strategies encouraged students to generate news stories delimited by predominantly white experiences and that the pedagogy and material used to teach about racial diversity mirrors many of the subversive discursive strategies whites use to engage conversations about race—individualism, distorted racism, negation, and normativity—essentially obscuring white privilege and sabotaging racial progress. As a result, current journalism pedagogy can be read as impeding racial justice because of the pervasiveness of whiteness in media training leaves a racialized social structure unchallenged.

Keywords: Whiteness; Journalism pedagogy; Race; Racism

A consistent thread throughout scholarship on diversity and journalism education focuses on appending multicultural material onto existing curricula or adding students or faculty of color as solutions to mainstream news media reports about

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marginalized communities (Baldasty, Bramlett-Solomon, Deuze, Liebler, & Sanchez, 2003; Becker, Huh, & Vlad, 2003; Bramlett-Solomon, 1989; Kern-Foxworth & Miller, 1993; Manning-Miller & Dunlap, 2002). Less attention has been paid to studying the ways whiteness—an ideological system that prizes white skin and confers privilege—manifests in the academic socialization of journalism students, impinging their ability to reflect the racial disenfranchisement of communities of color. Mixed methods—including ethnographic observations of journalism classrooms, an effects matrix, and an analysis of textbooks—and a critical whiteness theoretical framework investigating how journalism pedagogy may be fashioned by whiteness, counteracting racially competent news coverage. Findings indicate that three pedagogical strategies encourage students to write news stories delimited by white experiences: what they love, what they know, or stories that align with professional news values. Moreover, the instructional material about racial diversity mirrors four discursive strategies—individualism, distorted racism, negation, and normativity—whites use to engage conversations about race (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) that obscure white privilege, invalidate systemic racism, and uphold white supremacy. Together, these pedagogical and discursive strategies reinscribe whiteness and sabotage racially balanced mainstream news coverage. The following sections review the literature on whiteness in communication, the journalism profession, and in journalism education, all of which ground this study.

Communicating Whiteness

Nakayama and Krizek (1995) uncover six strategies whites use to maintain the universality of whiteness. One strategy strips whiteness of its historical lineage, while another reaffirms "individualism over subjectivity" (p. 301). Tendencies to normalize white culture and identity, advocate a colorblind ideology, and promote meritocratic and individualistic values are also rhetorical maneuvers (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995).

Bonilla-Silva (2003) identifies such tactics as *colorblind racism,* a rhetoric that justifies inequities between whites and people of color "as the outcome of nonracial dynamics" and "exculpate[s] them from any responsibility for the status of People of Color" (p. 2). This *racetalk* (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) averts discomfort for whites appeased by the gains of the post-civil rights era, distorts racism to mean prejudicial attitudes, and negates the endemic aspects of racism, foiling action that might nullify institutional barriers to racial justice.

Communication scholars confronting whiteness (Cooks, 2003; Kennedy, Middleton, & Ratcliffe, 2005; Martin & Davis, 2001; Miller & Harris, 2005; Warren, 2001) have similarly found that students adopt cultural logics that equate racism and prejudice; refute institutional or systemic racism; deny a historical legacy of inequality propagated by racial categories; and invalidate the racialized experiences of students of color. The discourse and reading material from two journalism classrooms were examined for these cultural logics.

Whiteness in the News Media

Whiteness has been discerned in the overrepresentation of whites in the profession, in the viewpoint of journalism practitioners, and in newsgathering routines and practices. In 1968, the Kerner Commission documented that "the media report and write from the standpoint of a White man's world" (p. 366), and since then the news media has warranted this charge. Dyer (2000) stated the media is forged by the "hands of White people . . . while claiming—and sometimes sincerely aiming—to speak for humanity" (p. 541). Gans (1979) found that a preponderance of upper-middle or upper-class journalists renders a patently white perspective to the profession. Similarly, van Dijk (1993) contends that "news is largely produced by White journalists who have grown up with a set of dominant White group norms and values, which tend to define an overall White perspective on news events" (p. 245). Campbell (1995) describes a "racial mythology," which hews reports of Black communities from a distinctly white view of Blacks. Haymes (1995) argues that the media control representations of racial difference, typically by presenting imagery that racializes non-whites while deracializing whites.

Research on college-training affirms that incoming reporters lack the aptitude to write with anything other than a "White bias" and "insensitivity to minorities" (Dickson, 1995, p. 41). Journalism education generally creates "a middle class, professional mentality among young journalists that does not include an appreciation for differences and diversity" (Baldasty et al., 2003, p. 7).

News norms are correspondingly implicated in solidifying whiteness in the mainstream news media. Van Dijk (2005) identified four factors that foment white news production: an over reliance on white elites as sources, a disregard of ethnic groups and organizations, an inaccurate depiction of the menace of racial or ethnic groups, and a dismissal of stories about racism. Moreover, reliance on official record keeping—government documents, logs, files, court dockets, council agendas, and meeting minutes—sustain the "status quo and an epistemology embedded with whiteness" because these records are "tied to ideas of 'reason' and 'objectivity'" (Dolan, 2006, p. 9). Moreover, Dolan (2006) equates the journalistic posture of objectivity with a white identity: purporting invisibility and neutrality when reporting events is tantamount to the unmarked yet privileged vantage that whiteness occupies in society.

Heider (2000) reveals how mundane decision-making by news producers repeatedly highlights the experiences of whites and excludes meaningful coverage of communities of color. The disproportionate coverage results from "years of training and practice, of decades of cultural orientation, and of a well-documented history of systematic and institutionalized neglect" (p. 52), which accentuates the activities of whites, while consigning people of color to festival or crime stories.

Journalists of color likewise reproduce whiteness. A study of Black reporters found that they write from a white viewpoint (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Interviews with a racially mixed group of newspaper reporters revealed that "the hegemony of whiteness

can persist even in a newsroom with a relatively high level of racial diversity" (Pritchard & Stoubely, 2007, p. 232).

This research exposes the correlation between whiteness and journalistic norms, so scholars can

> "race" journalism like we "race" Whites, ... to show how a White identity is embedded throughout journalistic conventions and practices. We need to expose the similarities and interdependence of how "news" is equated with "truth" and "reality" and how whiteness is equated with humanity, reason and objectivity ... (Dolan, 2006, p. 9)

Journalism pedagogy deserves similar scrutiny. Does journalism curriculum propagate whiteness? Do classrooms distort, ignore, or reframe the experiences of oppression even when teaching balanced, fair, or non-biased reporting techniques? Does academic training prevent media practitioners from narrating, writing, or broadcasting racialized experiences? These inquiries hope to catalyze research on diversity and journalism pedagogy, in the hopes of concretizing mediated representations that better embody the complexities of racial marginalization. The subsequent section reviews the literature on race and journalism education, demonstrating how it fails to address the need to dismantle whiteness.

Diversity and Whiteness in Journalism Schools

Researchers writing about journalism education and diversity emphasize that a growing multi-ethnic society necessitates that journalism schools draw from non-white communities to increase the proportion of diverse students. Journalism majors are embarking on their professional careers in a society where nearly 40 percent of its residents are non-white Americans, and many scholars predicate calls for greater inclusivity on these demographics.

For example, Liebler writes that "recent census data" and a "changing demographic" means that inclusivity is central to journalism education (Cohen et al., 2001, p. 15). Ross and Patton (2000) call for journalism educators to prepare their students for a "pluralistic society" where minorities assert economic and political power (p. 25). Baldasty et al. (2003) urge university administrators foster a multicultural environment because journalism students "need a sophisticated sense of the world in which they will work" (p. 8). Others argue that curricula should "help prepare students to understand and relate to a multicultural, multi-ethnic, multiracial, and otherwise diverse society" (Bramlett-Solomon & Liebler, 1999, p. 74). Kern-Foxworth and Miller (1993) encourage journalism educators to prepare for "21st century America—an America unlike the Eurocentric-focused culture we have all experienced until now" (p. 47).

The demographic make-up of journalism students garners comparable attention. The annual demographic surveys of the field show lamentable progress. In 2009, of the 200,000-plus undergraduates enrolled in journalism and mass communication departments nationwide, 68 percent identified as white (Becker, Vlad, Tucker, &

Pelton, 2006), the lowest percentage since 1989 (it has held steady at 70 percent for the past 20 years). Less than 10 percent of journalism professors nationwide are educators of color (de Uriarte, 2005). Anchoring these reports is the concern that because the majority of future media practitioners are white and have been trained by white professors, they will arrive at news outlets ill-equipped to properly report on non-majoritarian groups unless exposure to differently colored bodies has specifically prepared them otherwise. Unfortunately, accentuating an additive approach leaves existing training practices intact, faultily relying on bodies of color to assuage the current disproportion and critique of white-dominant news. De Uriarte pointed to this misguided conflation in newsroom sites:

> Newsrooms moved toward the millennium assuming they could just find and add minorities without experiencing discomforting cultural change. They did not expect the need to adjust the cultural lens through which reporters, editors and news directors saw the world…. Many press integration advocates believe that simply by hiring minorities, the press would be assured a representative account of the nation's experiences, opinions and perspectives—and that those would fit easily within the traditional mainstream view of accuracy. (2005, p. 11)

The compulsion supporting the integration of classrooms mirrors this same misguided approach, and conflates bodies of color with the solution for improved news coverage for those groups (de Uriarte, 2004, 2005; Glasser, 1992). By not concurrently dismantling the ways whiteness is already reinscribed in mainstream journalism training, the socialization of journalism students—white or non-white— persists as inadequate training for reporting the experiences of communities of color. According to the Poynter Institute, nearly 90 percent of journalists have a college degree, with half of those degrees from journalism or communication departments. In addition, nearly 85 percent of entry-level journalists come from journalism schools (Hoffman, 1991), giving considerable import to what pedagogical practices are used to address issues of race in those educational settings. Although integration remains vital to the transformation of the journalism profession and education, this project begins to expose the ways whiteness shores up the curriculum and pedagogical choices instructors' use to teach students to write news stories.

Methods

Twenty-five hours of ethnographic observation (a dozen class periods) in both an introduction and intermediate news writing course, observations of teacher–student consultations, as well as an analysis of a widely used textbook, *Reporting for the media* (2005) by Fred Fedler, John R. Bender, Lucinda Davenport, and Michael Drager, and a chapter from *Working with hords: A Handbook for media writers and editors* (2006) by Brian S. Brooks, James L. Pinson, and Jean Gaddy Wilson comprised the multiple methods for this study.

The classrooms were sites of cultural production that are socially constructed through language (Giroux, 2005). Despite intricately laid lesson plans, teachers

constantly adapt pedagogy and construct their interactions "moment-by-moment, day-by-day"— inimitable interactions that accumulate in unpredictable and non-replicable ways—most of which can be observed through conversations and particular behaviors (Frank & Uy, 2004, p. 270). These singular moments were captured in field notes about the socialization process experienced by future media practitioners. In one course, students must earn a C or better in order to move through a proscribed series of core courses, demarcating it a pivotal site for study. The second course was only observed during the single class session designated for multicultural and diversity training.

Both classrooms were predominately white and taught by a white instructor. One female identified herself as Vietnamese-American, one male indicated he was a bi-racial Japanese and white American, while another appeared Asian, but did not self-identify during my observations. Another male indicated his native country was Mexico. The remaining students all appeared white, but never named themselves as so. This reflects the tendency for whiteness to remain unmarked and the resistance of whites to racially label (Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Martin & Krizek, 1996).

From my field notes, I extracted the directives regarding newsworthiness. I also concentrated on the discourse of diversity and the ways the instructor and students talked about race. I then examined whether the rhetorical strategies of whiteness uncovered by Nakayama and Krizek (1995) and Bonilla-Silva (2003) manifested itself in either the pedagogy or curriculum.

The reading material was subjected to the same critical whiteness lens. The introductory course used *Reporting for the media* (Fedler et al., 2005), a widely used textbook in journalism schools and departments nationwide, as noted by the Monument Information Resource (Faculty Online, u.d.), a database that ranks textbooks according to sales data. Over 160 faculty members reported using this text during the spring 2006 semester. Moreover this textbook is one of "five of the most widely used modern textbooks" (Mindich, 1998, p. 8).

I examined the text for the norms buttressing newsworthiness, teasing out how they were linked to whiteness. The chapter assigned for the diversity unit in the intermediate reporting course, entitled "Sexism, tacism, and other 'isms,'" from *Working with words* (Brooks et al., 2006), was inspected for evidence of *racetalk* Bonilla-Silva (2003).

Because most undergraduates read 25,000 to 30,000 pages of textbooks, they warrant scrutiny for how they transmit and maintain sense-making about race (Apple, 1988; Mirando 2001). Mirando (1998) argues that textbooks are key to understanding the nature of journalism education. Assessing the discourse of inclusion and multiculturalism in textbooks highlights whether dominant assumptions of race are dismantled or recirculated through the use of *racetalk*.

Most analysis of communication classrooms stem from self-reflexive or auto-ethnographic accounts by a teacher/scholar conducting a course that focuses on race or whiteness (Cooks, 2003; Kennedy et al., 2005; Martin & Davis, 2001; Miller & Harris, 2005; Warren, 2001), but few are the result of third-party observations, like this study. In addition, weaving textbook material and classroom discourse differs

from previous studies that center student reflections or responses to discussions of whiteness. It hails Dolan's (2006) call to "race" journalism by interrogating journalism training as a site for reproducing whiteness. Lastly, my positionality as a Chicana offers an alternative lens from which to analyze white students' and teachers' discourse.

Analysis

Whiteness manifested in the two classroom sites through both pedagogical and discursive strategies. In the introductory news writing site, whiteness expressed itself in three pedagogical approaches, two of which were predicated on a white lived experience, and the third echoes the critiques of whiteness in the news media. In the intermediate class, the contours of whiteness emerged through four rhetorical strategies (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995): a strong commitment to individualism, a distorted sense of racism, a negation of the legacies of racism, and the normativity of a white identity. Examples of how these are shared below.

Three strategies for newsworthiness. After grouping suggested story topics, I generated an effects matrix, Table 1: Raced Paths to News Coverage. This revealed pedagogical approaches with white racial undertones that potentially immobilize racially inclusive coverage because they each foster homogeneous news coverage by delimiting story ideas to the immediate experiences and realities of predominantly white students. For instance, the "What you know" approach urges students to generate story ideas out of current interests, work or recreational affiliations, or relationships. A second strand—the "What you love" tactic—encourages students to pursue stories that resound with subject matter they are emotionally invested in. Both of these recommendations pivot on the life experiences of predominantly white college students, reinscribing that perspective. Lastly, the traditional news values set out by the textbook comprise the third pedagogical tack: attributes that have been critiqued because they are cast though a Western, Eurocentric, male perspective (Dolan, 2006; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Heider, 2000; Poindexter, Smith, & Heider, 2003; van Dijk, 1993, 2005). Together, the three tactics often condense news content to a finite range of experiences that excludes or maligns communities of color. The following paragraphs flesh out the itemized lists in the table.

   The "What you know" strategy largely transpired from teacher encouragement. Half of the class proposed ideas based on things they were associated with. One student planned to write about how global warming might affect the skiing industry of her hometown. One student intended to write about his father-in-law's Coast Guard experience, guarding ports from terrorist activity. A student athlete planned to write about the experience of juggling academics and sports. A girl on a local snowboarding team was going to write about an upcoming tournament. One student was going to interview a friend who manufactured bio-fuel. Another proposed a story about a chocolate shop owned and operated by his cousin. For those few

Table 1 Raced Paths to News Coverage

Pedagogical strategies	Sources	Enactment	Effect	Meaning
What you know	**Professor**	• What do friends talk about? • What are issues at work? • Are neighbors interesting? • What clubs do you belong to?	*Homogeneity*	• Stories tied to inner network of relationships • Stories located in immediate geographic neighborhoods • A homogenous set of relationships validates only certain experiences as newsworthy
	Student	• "It is good that you are an athlete—you already know it so you can write about it better" • Since I have competed in the state science fair, I can best write about it		
	Textbook	• Own experiences • Events attended • Ask people you know for ideas		
What you love	**Professor**	• What are you passionate about? • What articles, magazines, do you read?	*Homogeneity*	• Individual tastes determine newsworthiness • Passion—not reason, or social responsibility—determine newsworthiness
	Student	• Write what interests you • Do what you feel passionate about • What would you like to learn more about?		
	Textbook	• Personal likes and dislikes • Story you love to repeat to friends		
Traditional News Values	**Professor**	• How does this story answer the 'so what' question? • Why should the reader / audience care about that? • What is your theme—adversity? Coping? Beating odds?	*Homogeneity*	• Fosters event driven rather than issue-focused news • Creates isolated moments that lack continuity or connection • Use of expert sources excludes those not in positions of power • Minority segments of the population

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Pedagogical strategies	Sources	Enactment	Effect	Meaning
	Student	• Current event—just read it in the paper • Conflict—Trolley Square and baseball stadium • Locally based—either affecting campus or city population		excluded when issues do not impact the larger community • Issues relevant to marginalized groups only covered as a crisis or conflict • Good news is considered propaganda while conflict drives newsworthiness • Limited to scope of personal experiences
	Textbook	• Timeliness: current news reported before it happens, ahead of competitors • Impact: the more people affected, the better • Prominence: celebrity status of parties • Proximity: close to home—make it local • Singularity: deviations from normal • Conflict: tensions between newsworthy individuals, organizations • Other: humor, catastrophes, events		

students without a topic, the professor used a PowerPoint presentation with the bullets *friends*, *work*, *family*, *clubs*, and *classes* as starting points for brainstorming ideas. Student feedback also reaffirmed topics that materialized from one's immediate realities. In addition, the textbook noted that journalists often turn inward for story ideas, inspired by events taking place in their lives (Fedler et al., 2005, p. 135).

In contrast, one female student pitched an idea about the generational conflicts in her Asian-American family that divides teens with a U.S.-based experience from elders, like her grandparents, who remember living in Vietnam. She argued this piece would appeal to other Asian-Americans experiencing this diasporic disconnect, as well as to teens in general who feel "their parents just don't understand them." Although this story would generate diverse news coverage, a white female discouraged pursuit of this story because, "I don't know anything about the Vietnam War, and I don't care about it." Here, the sense-making of "What you know" operates in competing ways. A potential "editor" determined newsworthiness of this story idea based on her own realm of experience, ultimately superseding the heritage and knowledge of the reporter. The class recommended not pursuing this story.

This approach consigns the range of story ideas to a sphere of relationships and experiences hinged on homogeneity, validating only certain experiences as

newsworthy. Because journalism students are mainly white, the pedagogical strategy of writing "What you know" means writing about white friends, colleagues, or family, and experiences framed by whiteness. On the surface, this prodding is not overtly racist; rather, it speaks to a legacy that impedes news coverage of life experiences beyond the dominant group's.

A similar critique can be made of the tactic "What you love," which surfaced when students encouraged classmates unsure of a topic to pursue. *Pick what you are passionate about and write about it*, they suggested. *Do what interests you*, was another rejoinder. *Which would you like to learn about?* students asked before making a recommendation. When helping a student decide between a story on campus parking issues or the lack of a baseball field for the campus team, the class suggested the student focus on which one interested her more, rather than assess the timeliness of the construction of a new parking garage or the novelty of a championship team that did not have a field to play on. The instructor similarly advocated this, presenting a slide that read—*What are you passionate about*?—and mentioning that students should look to the books or magazines they read as starting points for story ideas. The textbook likewise recommended students examine personal likes and dislikes, or stories they like to repeat, as story ideas.

Filtering story ideas through emotional channels curtails an array of possibilities. The impulsion is to assure students they are capable of determining news content, yet it nearly ensures that those traditionally employed in the media industry—almost 80 percent white—will not venture very far to do the job of reporting because they are more likely to be impassioned about matters that have emotional weight for them. Expectedly, these topics will sway towards issues that reinforce white privilege, entitlement and supremacy. This commonsense pedagogical approach thus fails to include the experiences of increasingly large communities of color.

The final path towards news stories is landscaped by the news values outlined in the journalism textbook and rooted in industry standards. These include timeliness, proximity, impact, prominence, singularity, conflict / controversy, and emotional appeal (Fedler, 2005). Existing research reveals the interconnections of whiteness and these codified conventions so I will not rehash those arguments. Of importance is acknowledging how the curriculum valorizes these seven tenets and how they reinscribe whiteness. Instructor-driven presentations reiterated these seven items. The professor also prompted students to answer the "so what question" or "why should the reader care?" about story proposals with these tenets.

When students utilized these seven news values to justify story ideas, it affirmed that these news values do not enhance journalists' ability to integrate communities of color any better, however, since this inclusion has to center around conflict—such as crime or crisis. For example, one male student proposed writing about a local tragedy where a member of an ethnically diverse community shot and killed several citizens and then himself at an area shopping center. The students considered the story viable because it was current, timely, and involved conflict. The story gained its currency because, as the professor stated, "if it bleeds it leads," without problematizing this cliché. If ethnic communities are written about only in times of crises, how does

racially inclusive coverage improve? What other value system outside of a white majoritarian ideology could shepherd in stories about refugee communities, immigrant families, non-English speaking individuals, racially diverse students, or undocumented laborers into mainstream content in ways that desist from otherizing or dehumanizing them?

Together, these three pedagogical strategies elide racially inclusive news coverage while authenticating whiteness and normalizing exclusion. The cultural logics supporting the socialization of future media practitioners do not encourage students to investigate stories out of their element. This omission results without the odium associated with racism, however it perpetuates an incomplete representation of a diverse society, favoring a certain group of people and encumbering others. This study reveals the way journalism pedagogy cements whiteness as the yardstick for newsworthiness, uniquely illuminating why the media underreports disenfranchised communities.

A second component of this study also discovered discursive strategies that stall racially enriched news coverage. By examining the text in the chapter, "Sexism, racism, and other 'isms'" and the accompanying exercises, lecture, film and discussion that explicitly addressed diversity, four recurrent themes emerged that paralleled the colorblind *racetalk* of whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2003): (1) *individualism*, which purports that all people are equally capable of oppressing and surmounting obstacles; (2) *distorted racism*, which conflates racism with prejudice and color-blindness; (3) *negation*, which minimizes historical legacies of racialization and discrimination and denies structural racism; and (4) *normativity*, which reaffirms white identity as the norm. I illuminate each category with specific examples below.

Individualism. The instructor's opening exercise asked students to willfully "stereo-type." On the projected computer screen, she typed the word "Blacks" and encouraged students to call out words or phrases characterizing this group. *Poor, ebonics, thugs, rap, low education, bling, big lips,* and *athletic* were offered. The instructor moved to "Asian," and students suggested *smart, genius, geeky, mini-marts, accented English,* and *martial arts.* "Latino" followed, as did the descriptors *dirty, thick accents, field workers, maids, illegal, sombrero,* and *family-oriented.* Lastly, "white" was posted and the class responded with *SUVs, soccer moms, materialistic, spoiled, America, clean,* and *Christian.* This exercise created identically weighted attributes for each group, symbolically erasing the power differentials between whites and people of color, obscuring a racialized social hierarchy, and implying that by refraining from using problematic terms, society can rid itself of racial tensions. The underlying message is that negligence could cause one to be inadvertently labeled a racist, an intolerable offense for whites, reducing racism to individual prejudice rather than systemic obstacles.

Distorted racism. Racism was distorted in two other ways. First, the textbook-conflated racism and prejudice when it claimed, "Individuals from any racial or ethnic group can be racist." Second, racism was treated as a relic of the past. The professor implied this when she discussed her research of the Black press during the

early 1900s, a time period marked by "horrible racism" perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) through brutal beatings, lynchings, and murders. Equating racism with the KKK further establishes racism as overt, irrational, or extremist individual acts with no contemporary systemic manifestations.

Bonilla-Silva (2003) writes that the differing conceptions of racism held by whites and people of color limit their ability to communicate about it. For whites, racism means prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. For people of color, racism denotes the systemic oppression against racially minoritized groups and the advantages afforded to the white dominant group in institutions (Tatum, 1997). The normalization of these privileges allows whites to be insentient to their complicity in perpetuating racism. People of color lack this advantage and, while they can be biased, they cannot act in racist ways. Restricting racism to discriminatory feelings or actions from the past protects white interests and precludes media coverage from denouncing white privilege.

Negation. Negating the legacy of racism is another propensity that occurred in three different ways. As mentioned, this habitually occurs when racism is described as a historical artifact. But it is also evident in the incongruous discourse about the contemporary conditions for marginalized groups as commensurately improving, yet marred by growing instances of discrimination. Furthermore, simplistic solutions to disparities between racial groups signify a repudiation of racism as institutional and power as contestable.

The chapter on diversity often indicated that racism no longer exists. For example, "Women and members of racial, ethnic and immigrant groups continue to move from the sidelines to the headlines…These facts make obsolete traditional assumptions that males of European descent should be considered more important than other" (Brooks et al., 2006, p. 278). Three other passages signaled an end to the days of racial inequality: "Language reflects a history of inequality" (p. 280); "The history of inequality in Western culture has led to language stressing White men as the standard, considering others as substandard" (p. 285); and "In Western civilizations, society for centuries dismissed women and children of all races and men of color as peripheral…" (Brooks et al., 2006, p. 279). By negating the contemporariness of racial inequalities, the text deflects discussions of the continual residual effects of a white supremacist ideology.

Accounts of better circumstances for marginalized communities suggest disempowered communities now reap benefits afforded to whites in society. For example, the introductory section discussed the "new" reality of present day, where power has shifted into the hands of minorities or women. Four phrases and sentences reference this: "…in a world that is globalizing, power shifts constantly" (p. 274); "Because power shifts to 'outsiders'" (p. 279); "As women fill college classrooms and professional jobs, they accrue power" (p. 279); and "As 'minorities' become a larger proportion of U.S. society—and the majority in many communities—they also amass power" (p. 279). Other passages note the increases in the achievements of various marginalized groups: "Many Blacks are middle-class, which runs counter to

journalistic reports placing Blacks in poverty" (p. 287); "Unprecedented numbers [of women and members of racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups] reshape the labor force, higher education, and public life" (p. 278); "Women make 80% of consumer decisions and own 40% of all U.S. business" (p. 278); and "Racial/ethnic and immigrant groups are the new entrepreneurs and the future of international business" (p. 278). The recurring litany indicates that oppressed groups demand and receive equity, as illustrated by the following two statements: "They demand that their unique voices be heard" (p. 279); and people "throughout the world demand full citizenship, authority, and viable economic power" (p. 280). These statements reinforce the majoritarian discourse that the playing field has been leveled and that policies redressing inequities are obsolete. They conceal institutional racism by lauding these triumphs as proof that racialized obstacles no longer exist for disempowered groups.

However, alongside these passages are indications of continued racism. For example, these passages contend: "Hate speech has grown" (p. 279); "racial bias in U.S. crime reporting is increasing, not decreasing" (p. 286); "sources for stories today still are mainly male, mainly pale" (p. 286); and "those outside the power framework are portrayed as villains without human characteristics attributed by default to White" (p. 282). These statements imply a stagnant state of racial affairs.

These discordant messages throughout the textbook can be understood as a fissure in the dominant white ideology. It naïvely assumes when disenfranchised individuals achieve financial success, they single-handedly disrupt underlying racist structures. Not only is this impracticable, but it is also expedient because it leaves those structures intact and the status quo unchallenged. Journalists, as purveyors of reality, should be able to understand and articulate the racially stratified infrastructure of society.

Lastly, the recommendation to rid "media messages of sexism, racism, and other 'isms'" by reporting accurately (p. 279), upholds an uncomplicated view of racial hierarchies and ideologies. The primary tool offered by the text is a glossary of over 200 controversial terms journalists should avoid, suggesting alternatives, definitions, and explanations instead. It seems improbable that a reference guide can untangle centuries-old racial hierarchies and begin the overdue task of problematizing white privilege. In particular, this unsophisticated resolution fails to challenge how newsgathering routines annihilate, silence, misrepresent, or exclude certain groups while preserving and benefitting others.

A last simplistic solution to the multifaceted problem of institutional racism comes from a video shown in class that critiques the stereotypical coverage of local news broadcasts that criminalized Blacks while depicting whites positively. The conclusion insinuated that the main problem for the skewed reflection was the lack of diversity in the newsroom. Again, the problem and solution were reduced to individual bodies rather than recognizing the institutional factors at play: overwhelmingly white decision-makers; lack of access for people of color to higher education; and news practices that overwhelmingly reproduce only white actualities. Disturbingly, when discussing diversifying newsroom staffs, one student characterized these efforts as

reverse racism, discounting the legacy of exclusion in educational institutions and assuming equal footing for all members of society. Together, these various discursive strategies refute the manifestation of endemic and systemic racism, precluding media coverage that would account for its presence.

Normativity. A reliance on a white identity as the benchmark for human experience was reiterated repeatedly. For instance, both the aforementioned video and the instructor encourages students to "choose sources that don't look like you," assuming a white positionality as the norm. In another instance, the class discussed an article by an African-American reporter who expressed frustration with being characterized by white peers as "articulate." When a white student challenged the argument that the word, "articulate" insulted the author, the instructor emphasized that the take-away-point from the reading was "that if you wouldn't say or write it about a white person, then you shouldn't say or write it to a person of color." In addition, a student from Mexico disclosed how often he was asked, "where he was from," noting, "you would never ask a white person where they were from," to a classroom nodding in agreement. Checklists woven throughout the chapter also remind journalists to substitute "a White male" in order to gauge word choices. For instance, to test for bias in sentences referring to ethnic minorities or women, a bulleted point indicates, "Ask—would my wording be the same if my subject were an affluent man?" (p. 285). Together, these rhetorical moves normalize whites as unmarked touchstones of the human experience, prop up the universality of whiteness, and render racial and gender groups as "other."

In addition, discussions of whites as a racial group were missing from the text. All references to racial and ethnic groups excluded whites from the mix (p. 282). References to the "White man as a standard" (p. 285) and the "White power framework" (p. 282) were missed opportunities to complicate whiteness as a stronghold fortifying racism, instead treating these allusions as a naturalized starting point when constructing journalistic reports.

The unchallenged white supremacy in the curriculum and pedagogy designed to teach diversity aligns with Bonilla-Silva's argument that modern rhetorical strategies used by whites to talk about race perpetuate a white supremacist racial hierarchy. However, the inclusion of a section on diversity in the academic training interdicts the charge that the curriculum is biased. Nonetheless, the rhetorical strategies observed on the single day devoted to discussing diversity in the intermediate communication course, coupled with the hours of observation in the introductory news writing course and the analysis of a textbook employed in journalism courses across the country, reveals how whiteness is embedded within journalism pedagogy, inhibiting media practitioners in producing racially balanced and accurate news coverage.

A Reinscription of Whiteness

In conclusion, my analysis of two journalism classrooms and their accompanying curriculum, texts, and discourse, indicates that simply increasing the amount of

diversity content and representation, without interrogating other forms of whiteness, may not produce journalism content that counters white-dominance. The three pedagogical strategies used to stimulate news story possibilities restricted news-worthiness to predominantly white experiences, while the academic training about racial diversity replicates at least four discursive strategies used by whites to deflect conversations about race away from white privilege (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). As a result, current journalism pedagogy may be understood as perpetuating whiteness and promulgating a worldview that excludes the perspective of racially disenfranchised communities—even when students of color are enrolled in the classroom. As it stands now, journalism pedagogy precludes future journalism practitioners from unlearning white privileged assumptions and perceptions of race, racism, and diversity. Specifically, existing journalism curriculum leaves a white racial identity uninterrogated and refrains from conceptualizing whiteness as an ideological system imbued with power, rendering journalists' efforts to "reflect reality" of subaltern racial or ethnic communities deficient.

This project starts in the spaces where instructors and students make sense of newsgathering routines, reporting skills, news principles, and media values, revealing the ways future media practitioners might enact them in the field. It also attempts to broaden conversations about diversity in journalism education beyond multi-cultural content or bodies of color, to the predominance of whiteness in pedagogy. Hopefully, these observations inspire journalism educators to challenge the innocuous ways whiteness functions in their existing pedagogical strategies and engage in a greater reflexivity, critique, and reimagining of a white identity, even if this causes a discomfort avoided by the additive approach. Perhaps this work will encourage media educators to formulate teaching strategies that eventually lead to the production of news articles that are more salient representations of the impact of the historical legacy and continued presence of racial inequality and White supremacy on racially minoritized communities.

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