NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Haunting as Historical Thinking:
Learning to Construct Whiteness in History Classrooms

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Field of Learning Sciences

By

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EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

September 2021

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Abstract

How we remember, narrate and teach the past is an inherently political and ethical act. This is especially true when teaching about race and racism within the context of United States history. In this dissertation, I ask: how do young people narrate the durability of racial inequality in the United States? This dissertation unfolds in two parts. In the first part, I do the bulk of my empirical work and draw on observations, interviews, and close reading of texts from my time in high school history classrooms. From this data, I explore how young people used two ideational resources, or tools - the concept of transhistorical whiteness and the rhetorical practice of causal storytelling - to explain the durability of racial inequality throughout United States history. I further explore some of the possibilities and limitations in narrating racial inequality throughout time in this way before focusing on one student's learning trajectory as she became more confident and flexible in her use of those two resources. I argue that through relating the past and the present in these particular ways, young people in the contexts I studied engaged in a form of historical thinking that cannot be neatly described as "presentist" or "disciplinary". Rather, they engaged in what I call "haunting" as a form of a historical thinking, where the past continues to work in the present to reproduce unequal outcomes along racial lines. In the second part, I turn to the speculative in order to tease out the implications of the empirical work presented in the first part. I provide what a call speculative field notes and hypothetical classroom interactions to imagine what the outcomes of a different way of structuring learning environments might be. This sustained focus on an imagined space allows me to pose questions to help guide continued thinking about how to design learning environments that support young people's critical thinking about race and racism, historically, in the present, and into the future. In the concluding chapter, I situate the implications of this work in a larger field of whiteness studies in an effort to help history educators rethink what race talk may look like in history classrooms.

Acknowledgements

Writing this section of the dissertation has been the part I have dreaded most, and as such, it was saved for last. This is not because I did not have ample people to acknowledge; quite the opposite, in fact. I have read so many poetic, moving acknowledgements that whenever I sat down to write my own, I became discouraged and unable to begin. The beauty of a deadline, however, is that the thing you are dreading most *must* get done at some point and it is here that me and this acknowledgement section meet again.

This project would not have been possible without those wonderful people at Great Lakes School who graciously invited me into their worlds. They didn't have to; frankly, if someone had come to me when I was teaching with such a rough sketch of an idea as I had when I first approached Mr. Sumner, I'm not sure I would have let them observe my teaching in the way Mr. Sumner allowed. But he did, and I am forever, truly, grateful. I cannot fully give justice to how much I grew as an educator in the time spent observing you and that students you came into contact with. And to all the students, those mentioned on these pages and those who were not, I thank you. The way in which you wrestled with ideas allowed me to think alongside you in ways I had not imagined when I started this project, and I hope to have represented what you have shared with me faithfully on the pages that follow.

I would have never gotten to the place where I was able to think deeply about teaching and learning had it not been for the mentorship of Greg Jouriles. Although it has been almost ten years since I taught with you, you have been a constant thinking partner throughout my time in graduate school and have always encouraged me to center the complexity that occurs in classrooms. I still remember your advice when I was applying for my first teaching job: "Look for the bright spot in the building; every school has them, and when you find that spot, look closely and see what makes it

work." I have tried to apply that ethos to my research, and I am excited to create my own bright spots in my classrooms in the future.

I started my graduate program with very different ideas about what this final project would look like than what I have shown here. That is certainly because of the mentorship and experiences I have had along the way, guided by professors that encouraged as they challenged. To David Rapp, thank you for giving me the resources for my second year project to play around with ideas in such a way that allowed this dissertation to unfold in the way it did. To Bruce Sherin, thank you for engaging with me early on in my process around questions of cognition; those ideas live on, in varied forms, on the pages that follow. And to the professors in departments not my own, but that still engaged with me on these ideas - particularly, Wendy Espeland and Caitlin Fitz - thank you for letting me into your disciplines and providing me with tools to be confident that I could engage in interdisciplinary work.

I was not only mentored and guided by professors, but also those who were in school with me. Although my entire cohort and those who I worked with in courses deserve a shout out, two individuals in particular will receive special thanks here: Heather McCambly and Jessie Marshall. My thinking has been sharpened by both of you in ways that I cannot fully articulate, and I am truly excited to see what you both do next in your careers and lives, both within and beyond the academy.

As can be said of most dissertation committees, my own committee has seen various iterations of this dissertation and has supported me to create a work that I am proud of. I think writing this paragraph was what held me back from writing this section for so long; words truly cannot express my gratitude for the people here. But I will try. Jolie Matthews, you were the first person I talked to about applying to the Learning Sciences PhD program, and I am confident in saying that I would not be here without your candor and transparency around what it means to engage in PhD work. Furthermore, the way you creatively think about history education and research has been an

inspiration to the work that I do here. Thank you for helping me mess with the boundaries between (pop) culture and history! Shirin, you have guided me as a researcher, a teacher, and generally as a human being, in the time that I have known you. It may seem like a cliché to say that I would not have been able to get through the program without you, so even though that statement is true and applies here, I will alter it slightly: I may have been able to finish this degree, but the manner in which I finished - the extent to which I felt like what I was putting out in the world was both beautiful and something to be grappled with - would have been significantly altered if not for your support and mentorship. Thank you. And finally, to Eva Lam. You understood right away what I was up to in this work, even when I didn't fully understand it myself. To have your steadfast encouragement through all stages of this project – even when I thought I was throwing ideas at the wall to see what would stick – has been one of the greatest gifts I could have ever received. I am so excited that I will continue to have your support as I explore where future drafts of this work takes me.

In an earlier version of this dissertation, I wanted to include a history of my family. I felt like the stories I had heard since I was little were excellent opportunities to explore the richness of Black life in the United States and the myriad responses Black folks have had to racial inequality, something that I advocate should be included in how we teach this history. While the draft I present here does not include a family history, my family can be felt on every one of these pages. To the original historian of the Berry family, Fairbanks Arnold Berry, who recorded his stories for posterity during his 97 years on Earth, thank you. To Willie B. Edmond, who started sharing more of his stories towards the end of his 90 years, thank you. To my aunties (Cece, Pam) who would never let me feel like I was not loved and supported throughout this process, thank you. To my mom, Gwen, and dad, Alton, thank you for encouraging me to apply and never letting me feel like my worth was in any way tied to what happened in graduate school. And to the whole fam: Adia, Uncle Fred, Aunt

Gwen, Robbi, Colby, Graham, AJ, and lil' Cece, thanks for keeping the family group text silly enough to remind me that there's more to life than dissertating.

I'll keep this last acknowledgement short and sweet. To Peter, who was/is chiefly responsible for keeping me well fed, well rested, and, in general, *well*, during this entire process: I love you and I thank you.

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Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview of my argument for this dissertation. Here, I explain the contours of a "haunting" mode of historical thinking as it relates to racial inequality, situate my research within relevant literature, and contrast that modality with other forms of sense-making in history. I describe how each of my findings chapters contributes to explaining haunting. I close by highlighting some of the questions this work poses for the literature and history practitioners, previewing themes I take up again in the conclusion.

Although calls for a national reckoning, truth telling commission, or some other form of public accounting of enslavement and its aftereffects in the United States have been around since its abolition, we are currently living in a moment where education spaces are being positioned as significantly contributing to that work of accounting. Educators are pushing themselves, and are being pushed, to create classrooms that give a fuller picture of how racial inequality has manifested through the history of the United States. In the dissertation that follows, I closely examine how the history of racial inequality was taught in one school context by examining the texts, the rhetorical practices around and within those texts, and the learning trajectories that those texts, positioned as ideational resources, afforded students. I find that the texts and the practices around those texts emphasized a transhistorical, or timeless and spaceless, quality of whiteness that functions as the main driver of racial inequality, particularly black-white inequality. This transhistorical whiteness was both reenforced and expanded upon in the classroom and in the texts the students produced themselves through the rhetorical practice of causal storytelling. The causal stories that were told followed a certain rhetorical pattern which allowed the meaning and the content of the story to be widely legible and quickly credible. Both the concept of transhistorical whiteness and the rhetorical practice of

causal storytelling were then used as ideational resources for one student as they came to embody the learner identity of a witness to the history and present of racial inequality in the US, and I explore the implications of what it meant to this student to be a witness.

My dissertation unfolds in two parts. In the first part, I explore the empirical questions that guided this work. This first part is based on my close analysis of texts and ethnographic work within high school history classrooms. In the second part, I take what I have learned from that empirical work and reimagine what teaching this history could look like. The first part focuses on analyzing texts and the rhetorical practices around those texts, while the second part focuses on the pedagogical mediation that could happen around those texts and more. In juxtaposing these two parts, I am making an argument about how the close attention to texts and the meaning making around those texts has implications for teacher practice. In the first part, I begin with my main research question: How do young people explain the incredible durability of racial inequality[1] in the United States? I answer this question through the lens of haunting: the students in the classroom I observed were able to explain the durability of racial inequality in the United States by seeing the legacy of whiteness – the way in which particular laws, popular media, and behaviors work together to benefit those deemed white – as continuing to operate, or "haunt," the present. I define haunting as a way of viewing the past not merely as structuring or informing the present, but as continuing to actively work in the present (Wright, 2004; Tuck & Ree, 2013; Gordon, 2008). I will show how haunting developed as a mode of historical thinking in the classroom space I observed for more than two years by exploring three related arguments.

[1] I use the term inequality instead of inequity because this is primarily how the discourse in the classroom of interest was framed (which is, at times, a departure from how the discourse in key texts was framed). While inequity implies a sense of injustice, inequality describes a state of affairs that is not equal. Especially in the academy, the phrase "racial inequity" is generally associated with issues of power and privilege. However, I find in this setting that although issues are framed in terms of racial inequalities and not inequities, the emphasis on disparities between racial populations is similar in both discursive framings. For an exploration on disparity discourse and its limits, see Michaels & Reed, 2020.

First, by closely examining student interactions, essays, and the authoritative texts (Matusov, 2007; Matusov and von Duyke, 2009) that they drew on, I look at how whiteness was constructed as a transhistorical characteristic that not only explained examples of past and present oppression against nonwhite people (specifically, Black people), but links the past and the present through the inheritance of whiteness. I argue that transhistorical whiteness works to link past and present by (1) decoupling, or abstracting, whiteness from the material conditions that produced it and the political economy[2] that sustains it in particular time periods and (2) through that decoupling, making whiteness in one time the equivalent of whiteness at all times. Therefore, the whiteness that operates in the present can be said, in this construction, to be the same as whiteness at all times in history. By emphasizing the outcomes of whiteness, which are the disparities between white and nonwhite people in any number of outcomes, the particulars about how, or even why, whiteness continues to be salient falls from view of analysis. While this effective homogenization of whiteness across time and space has the potential to help the students who identify as white see themselves as complicit in benefiting from anti-Blackness (something that will be taken up more fully in the chapter on wit-

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[2] By political economy, I mean the historically situated sets of relations that make a specific action meaningful. By material conditions, I mean the conditions of one's life that determines various outcomes; this could, and often is, connected to one's "class", but a reductive class analysis is not what I am advocating here. Instead, I am suggesting a deep contextualization of historical actors and actions. While some have advocated this approach to absolve past actors of moral judgement, arguing that they were simply "men and women of their times", I argue for a recoupling of political economic analysis to understand the very real constraints individuals navigated, resisted, or transformed in their own times. This is possible through understanding the material conditions of a time period. This does not just mean a macroeconomic understanding of the time period and an individual's position within it, but rather an understanding of the choices people had available to them and why they made the particular choices they did. One recent example of a work that attempts to do just that is from historian Daryl Michael Scott titled "The Scandal of Thirteentherism." In this work, Scott argues that in attempting to fight the evil of mass incarceration, present day activists have "hitch[ed] their cause to the moral opprobrium that already exists against chattel slavery." In other words, activists have made a through line between slavery, the Reconstruction amendments, and the rise of mass incarceration. In so doing, these present-day activists have not wrestled with why activists during the Reconstruction Era would consider the Thirteenth Amendment a triumph. Scott argues that the consequences of this are a denial of "one of black people's greatest triumph in American history – the destruction of chattel slavery." By carefully coupling a rhetorical analysis of the Thirteenth Amendment with a political economic analysis of the options available at the time and an understanding of the material conditions that made the abolition of chattel slavery significant, Scott begins to do the close contextual work that I advocate for here.

nessing as a learner identity), it also limits the anti-racist action of both white and nonwhite students to recognition and denunciation, or calling out, of whiteness when they see it. I demonstrate this through interviews where I have conversations with students around their thoughts and feelings about creating a more equal society.

The second way I develop haunting as a mode of historical thinking is through an examination of the rhetorical practices that developed around key texts and ideas. In the classrooms I observed, transhistorical whiteness operated as the entity or essence that continued to haunt the present moment, and this concept was structured rhetorically in a recognizable pattern of causal storytelling. In the next chapter, I explore how the linking of past and present is structured within the rhetorical form of causal storytelling, which I define as a discursive practice that includes (a) a historical argument that assembles historical events in narrative form, (b) intertextual references that bolster the initial claim, and (c) an explicit conclusion about how the past acts in the present. I argue that through causal storytelling, haunting can be identified as its own mode of historical thinking. Finally, in the concluding empirical chapter, I provide an in-depth case study of one student's trajectory as she moved through her junior year of high school and narrated the durability of racial inequality in the United States. Using the rhetorical theory of bearing witness (Vivian, 2017) along with the frame that ideational resources support the formation of learner identities (Nasir and Cooks, 2009), I show how this student – using as resources the transhistorical whiteness that was constructed in the class and the causal story rhetorical form – developed as a witness to the history and continued presence of racial inequality. As a witness to a history and a present that were shaped by transhistorical whiteness, this student wrestled with what whiteness meant for her personal relationships. Contrary to what some literature that focuses on race and racism in historical inquiry would expect (Wills, 2019), this student was willing to name and condemn white supremacy and even described instances where her desire to condemn caused conflict within her family. However, I

explore some of the consequences of having an anti-racism that is focused on identifying and condemning whiteness, especially a whiteness that is decoupled or abstracted from moments of historical specificity.

In Part II, I depart from the empirical world of Part I and enter the speculative. After demonstrating how haunting works as a mode of historical thinking, I reimagine what it could look like to teach about racial inequality in a way that (1) does not decouple whiteness from historical specificity, (2) does not assume that whiteness in one time period is the equivalent of whiteness at another, and (3) balances the oppression of nonwhites with moments of multiracial solidarity and specific examples of the heterogeneity of responses to Jim Crow and racial discrimination. This last goal of my speculative pedagogy is particularly important, as resistance to oppression can seem futile if presented monolithically. In this reimagination, I focus on reframing one particular time period that was particularly salient in this classroom: the emergence of the Jim Crow system of racial apartheid after a brief period of Reconstruction following the Civil War. This reimagining is meant to both show how a detailed look at student learning and the texts they used as resources in that process can inform teacher practice and serve as a first draft for future lessons I intend to conduct in my own classroom. It is my hope that this foray into storytelling will make clear some of the arguments that I have attempted to make empirically.

Relevant Literature

There are many possible ways to situate sense-making around racial inequality in literature. For this project, the most relevant way to understand how sense-making around racial inequality unfolded in my classroom of interest is with the frame of historical thinking. It has become common knowledge in certain circles that to truly understand present day issues of racial inequality, a person must understand how the United States got to this moment (e.g. Kendi, 2016; The New York Times, 2019). How history gets used – where history can be conceived as both noun and verb, as both tool to en-

gage (as in the case of historical inquiry) and particular events to be evoked – is central to this project of explaining the present through the past. Exploring how history, in both senses, gets deployed in spaces where engaging the past is the main task at hand is important to furthering our understanding of how history functions in our lives.

In order to understand how to teach a more compelling and meaningful history to young people, history education researchers have developed a set of heuristics – sometimes described as approaches to reading texts, while at other times described as a set of core tensions historians confront – to assist history educators in their instruction (Wineburg, 2001; Reisman, 2012; Seixas & Peck, 2004; Nokes, 2011; Van Drie and Van Boxtel, 2008; Mosborg, 2002; Monte-Sano, 2010). The benefit of this heuristic approach, these researchers say, is that these heuristics are content neutral. That is, historians engage in these practices, or confront these questions, *regardless* of the content that they are thinking about (Wineburg, 1998). In some of his seminal work, Wineburg compared two historians' understandings of Abraham Lincoln's relationship to slavery. The first historian was an expert on the Civil War, while the second studied American history, but not the Civil War specifically. Wineburg was especially interested in the reading strategies the second historian deployed; it was the second historian's way of "asking questions, of reserving judgment, of monitoring affective responses and revisiting earlier assessments, his ability to stick with confusion long enough to let an interpretation emerge. It was how he responded in the face of what he didn't know that allowed him, in short, to learn something new" (p. 340) that impressed Wineburg. This way of approaching texts evolved into several heuristics that expert historians–that is, those who are able to reason in a *disciplined* fashion–employ when reading. The heuristics-based approach continues to shape what counts as historical thinking (Lévesque, 2008), and those heuristics have come to define some core set of ideas that are central to the discipline of history and the dominant way history should be taught. This approach, which I call the cognitive tradition of historical thinking research, argues that

"mature historical thought" is based "on our ability to navigate the jagged landscape of history, to traverse the terrain that lies between the poles of familiarity with and distance from the past" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 5). What makes this approach primarily cognitive in nature is that research in this tradition is concerned with developing the right mental structures that can help young people navigate that tension (Wineburg, 2001, pp. 5-6).

A related tradition in history education research is what I call the sociocultural approach. While researchers working in this tradition recognize and even study the cognitive dimensions of historical thinking, they also see historical thinking as socially, culturally, and increasingly politically mediated. Here, researchers examine how the cultural frames that are shaped by present and past social relations mediate the knowledge, skills, and thought processes necessary to engage in the discipline of history. For example, Matthews (2018) examined the online textual meaning making practices of fans of the fantasy series *Game of Thrones.* In her analysis, she found that "[t]extual meaning is crafted somewhere between internal and external forces, how the collective (institutional) describes the content and an individual's own interpretive practices based on her or his personal background and biases" (p. 225). Calling these practices forms of historical poaching, Matthews examined how the contestation of historical narratives in this online community can give us insight into the historical consciousness of our present moment; in other words, discussions about the past, fictionalized or not, tell us much about our present. This is especially true when navigating topics, like racial inequality, that very much permeate the present moment.

This kind of sociocultural analysis of historical thinking has been prominent in curriculum studies work as well (Santiago, 2019; Shear et al, 2015; Conrad, 2019; Au, 2012). These works examine how texts represent and position historical actors and events particularly those dealing with minoritized, marginalized, and oppressed communities. For example, Brown & Brown (2010) conducted a review of K-12 history textbook representations of violence towards Black communities. They

found that "[a]lthough the texts do not render these acts of violence as haphazard occurrences, just happening to befall African Americans, they discuss these acts in ways that ignore, undermine, or misrepresent the larger institutional/structural ties that supported (through actions and/or inactions) and, more important, benefited from, their enactment" (p. 45). Even as the texts Brown and Brown examined gave factually accurate information, the way that information was situated within a narrative made drawing conclusions about how violence happened difficult. The authors go on to argue that these misrepresentations – both of violence towards Black people and Black resistance to that violence – are simultaneously perpetuated by and the result of pedagogical issues around how race and racism are taught. In other words, the sociocultural conditions of the present mediate how the past is represented, taught, and ultimately, learned; the conditions of each time period are inextricably linked. Furthermore, as work in curriculum studies continues to argue, how the past is represented via texts has consequences for how it is then taught and learned.

The final literature base I draw from for this project is not comfortably situated within the history education research field. While some in both of the traditions I cite above may draw from it, the field of collective remembrance is an interdisciplinary intersection of public historians and humanists, communication studies scholars, and even, at times, political scientists. In this tradition, historical inquiry can be thought of as the practices or performances that groups engage in to make the past meaningful to their present-day experiences. This tradition is less concerned with historical inquiry as defined by a discipline and more concerned with historical inquiry as experienced and embodied in specific times and places.

This tradition is relevant to the work that follows because of its emphasis on how the past can be embodied in the present; the insights from this perspective have helped me propose the conceit of haunting that I develop here. Some of the seminal works in this tradition (Anderson, 2006; Hobsbawm, 1983; Werstch, 2002) have emphasized how shared and contested histories are key to

constructing the bonds among and the boundaries between nations and other collectivities. While my unit of analysis is much smaller (a classroom), I still draw on these seminal texts to understand how young people used the histories they were learning as resources for creating bonds between themselves and specific kinds of actors and actions across time. For example, as Brown & Brown (2010) demonstrated, the conditions in the present influence how the past is taught. It is not enough to present "the facts"; researchers and educators must also attune to how those facts are woven together in a narrative. One particularly important place to focus is on how a narrative begins, or its point of origin. The work of Liu & Hilton (2005) on representations of the past emphasized how important origin points are to collective histories, and how origin points give groups who share bonds based on social identity a path of action in the present; the idea of origin points will be especially important in the chapter on causal storytelling as a rhetorical practices. In advocating for the focused study of collective memory (Roediger, III & Wertsch, 2008), scholars working in this tradition are not bound by the ways in which historians or other professionals might engage or study the past, but rather how people make meaning of the past in ways that influence their actions in the present (Lobato, 2006; Everman, 2004; Reyes, 2010; Szpunar & Szupanar, 2016).

While these studies, especially those in the collective remembrance tradition, have helped expand how I consider what historical thinking might look like and do in the world, they do not allow me to see how these patterns of thinking develop within particular contexts. Additionally, while literature that draws both on the cognitive and sociocultural traditions I have outlined above has emphasized the process through which historical inquiry unfolds, I want to re-engage in an often sidelined conversation about the content of what is being thought about. I want to look at how the terms of debate around persistent racial inequality in the United States are framed, paying close attention to the construction of concepts at various levels of interaction (e.g. between students and texts, between students and their teacher in a classroom, and between students and me in one-on-

one settings). My goal in reengaging with content is not to open up debates about the primacy of product over process (or vice versa). Rather, I want to understand how these texts, created outside of the classroom, shape the discourse and practices inside of the classroom by offering up particular constructions of phenomena. There are, of course, particular pedagogical processes that unfold around these texts, and I highlight those where relevant. However, my goal here is to trace how ideas flow in spaces separated by space and time, with the understanding that flowing ideas in one space are not carbon copies of ideas created elsewhere.[3]

Conceptual Framework

As stated previously, one of my goals in this project is to develop a tentative model of how students in this space are thinking about the durability over time of racial inequalities, how they construct that response in discourse, and how this is mediated through interactions over time. Key to developing a tentative model is an understanding of learning, both in what "counts" as learning in this project and how I go about "seeing" learning as it is unfolding in my analysis. Indeed, a central part of my argument here is that students are *learning* to construct whiteness as transhistorical and demonstrate that learning through their growing capacity to tell causal stories. Two primary assertions about learning have guided this work.

First, I see learning as occurring with and through the use of tools (both ideational and material), and therefore, I pay attention to learning as it unfolds through the use of tools (e.g. texts, rhetorical practices) and concepts (e.g. transhistorical whiteness). Primarily, the tools I engage with closely are represented through language, and so ideas about language and its use are closely coupled with how I see learning. Charles Goodwin's (2017) notion of "co-operative action" is key to how I understand language and learning in this dissertation. The term "co-operative action" emphasizes two important points: first, that co-operation, unlike cooperation, means that while activities may be

[3] For an example of this idea of flowing and tracing of ideas, see: Marcus (1998) and Martin (1994).

done jointly, they are not always done amicably. Another way of saying this is that many kinds of actions–fights, slights, and assistance–are done co-operatively. This first insight is key to how I understand language and the movement of ideas across spaces through language. Ideas may be taken up, transformed, built upon, or challenged, but they are not created without co-operation with others. Because I am interested in how ideas, represented through language, flow across space and time, co-operation is key to my analysis. This insight leads me to Goodwin's second important point: individuals perform "specific *operations* (most importantly decomposition and reuse with transformation) on materials provided by another" (p. 6). The point here is that ideas are not shared and taken up wholesale across spaces, and that dynamism is key to how I think about how particular parts of texts are emphasized, reinforced, and complicated in the classroom, while other ideas may be backgrounded and discarded altogether.

Additionally, as Goodwin argued, these operations are "public social practices that human beings pervasively use to construct in concert with each other the actions that make possible, and sustain, their activities and communities" (p. 7). Taken within the context of the classroom I observe, which will be described in more detail in the next chapter on context, I take Goodwin's notion of co-operative action to ask: How do individuals in a private school setting talk about race and racism in ways that may make possible and sustain their community? This question is important and deserves further exploration. Race, like all socially constructed categories, is not a biological fact but a produced reality. Race as we understand it today separates human beings in to categories with the primary purpose of creating unequal material relations (Fields & Fields, 2014). Elite and exclusive spaces, like private schools, by definition, also work to produce unequal relations. Understanding if and how those elite spaces take on particular discourses around race and racism tells us a lot about how discourses function to reproduce or mitigate inequality writ large. If, as I will make more explicit to varying degrees throughout the dissertation, we want to challenge the primacy of elite spaces

altogether, what other ways of talking about race and racism might be more productive towards those ends? Thinking about language and learning through this lens helps me ask both sets of questions; the first will be answered primarily through my empirical work in Part I, while the second will be answered primarily through my speculative work in Part II.

I also draw on the work of Edwin Hutchins (1995) to understand how representations are constructed through the use of various tool use in context. If, as Goodwin's work helps us see, people are doing operations together in ways that make possible and sustain their communities, Hutchins's work helps me articulate what representations of race and racial inequality are made possible within this specific context. Additionally, using the ideas of cognition in context (another way of saying this is cognition that is situated and purposeful), I am able to articulate the component pieces of particular representations of race and racial inequality (e.g. how they are constructed and what those constructions then make possible).

The second major idea about learning that guides this work is that all learning is political. This is obvious in the case of learning how to narrate a particular history of racial inequality in the United States, but I hold that learning is always already political. In alignment with the previously mentioned perspectives on learning, this understanding that learning is inherently political allows me to conceive of and look for "co-operative actions" and representations that serve particular purposes in understanding and imagining the world (Esmonde & Booker, 2017). This concept has affected my analysis in the following two ways. First, it has required me to see the learning that is unfolding in this space not simply as the presence or absence of skills, but as a deeply embodied process. By that, I mean that the students and teachers I interacted with and myself, as a Black educator and researcher in the space, were implicated in particular ways in the narratives that unfolded, and that we all were wrestling with what these narratives meant for the present and future. We all were situated as historical actors, and seeing ourselves in these narratives had real ethical and political implications

for what actions we saw as viable. But seeing learning as politically laden also required me to work to see from the perspective of the people whose stories I share in the pages that follow. Politics is not just about events; it is also about – it *has* to be about – moving people to see, believe, and fight for different worlds. Moving people requires understanding them, and I have attempted, however imperfectly, to truly understand what the students and teachers in this setting were trying to do before evaluating their effectiveness at meeting those stated goals. In practice, this means that I have had multiple conversations with the people who I introduce to you in this setting and have shared with them what I saw, my interpretations, and invited them to provide commentary if they saw it differently. This process has been instrumental to the findings I show here, and you will even see in particular conversations that are represented in this dissertation how people provided additional commentary that shaped my understanding of their own sense-making process.

Modes of Historical Thinking

Because of my interest in the discipline of history, and how the past and present relate to each other, I draw on theories of history and historical consciousness to situate one modality of relating past and present – haunting – with other modalities. I describe two that are common in the literature – teleology and presentism – before contrasting those relations between past and present with haunting. The first modality is that of teleological thinking. A teleological mode of historical thinking provides an explanation of phenomena in terms of the purpose they serve rather than of the causes by which they arise. A teleological way of relating past to present may explain or weigh causes of an event by determining the desirability of the outcome. The second modality is that of presentism. A presentist mode of relating past and present has the propensity to assume that the past is like the present, and been described as "a way of thinking that requires little effort and comes quite naturally" (Wineburg, 2001, p. 19). Presentism is often described as the "natural" or undisciplined way of sense making about the past. As some have argued, "we are psychologically conditioned to see unity

between past and present" (Lucas, 2006,p. 39). Those who argue that it is ahistorical to judge past actors based on present day standards of morality often argue against presentism, as an example. What is key here, though, is that both teleological modes and presentist modes see the past as past; in other words, whether we are explaining the past in terms of the events that followed, or judging the past by the standards of the present, teleological modes and presentist modes necessarily make a break between past and present.

This, however, is not the case in a haunting modality. This frame highlights the idea that events in the past continue to shape the present by having established relations and categories that continue to operate in the present by being inherited (through familial/ancestral ties and/or through social categories that are seen as the same across time). In hauntings, past events and relations leave their legacy on the present by actively inserting themselves into a narrative or explanation (Ruin, 2019). This form of thinking is especially popular in literature where, as William Faulkner (1950) once wrote when describing the continued trauma of characters plagued by generational wrongs, "the past is never dead. It's not even past." The idea that a past haunts is used to describe why characters behave in certain ways, even if the motivating event occurred generations ago. It should not come as a surprise that Faulkner wrote those words when trying to grapple with the effects of the United States's "original sin" (Faust, 2020): slavery and the notions of race it created.[4]

This idea that prior events shape later ones is not exclusive to literature. In fact, the idea path dependency (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2004) in historical sociology states something similar. Once a piece of hardware or code has been created and is used for subsequent tasks, it is harder to reshape

[4] I should be clear that this dissertation is not a work of literary criticism, history, or political science. However, in order to make sense of the thinking and learning happening in the classroom, I necessarily had to free myself from strict disciplinary citation patterns and as a result, cite widely where necessary. My point in citing Faulkner's work here is not to argue that he was the only novelist to draw on this theme of haunting – many did and continue to do so – but rather draw attention to the fact that Faulkner's work was intimately interested in dealing with the legacies of slavery and in so doing, deployed haunting imagery. This imagery is useful to understand how students are thinking historically in this space.

that original creation. The future path is dependent on that starting point. There is even a similar idea in political science, defined as historical materialism. In an extremely simplified form, historical materialism argues that history develops not according to ideals but is shaped by the relations that came before. This idea can be summarized in Marx's Eighteenth Brumeire: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past" (2021). While there is some similarity between haunting and a path dependency model or a historical materialist approach, a haunting modality builds on both of these approaches by blurring the boundaries between past and present altogether. A haunting modality has been an increasingly popular way to reckon with a "history that hurts" (Dubey, 2010 p. 788; Hartman, 2004, p. 773). Furthermore, a haunting modality refuses to view the past as complete in order "to show that what seems to have become a matter of history still remains alive in the present" (Dubey, p. 789). Some scholars might see this haunting frame as an antithesis to historical inquiry – and I take very seriously the limitations that this modality affords as a way of understanding the relationship between past and present. However, I examine it here as a prominent mode in which histories around racial inequality are told in a host of different settings.

In this dissertation, I explore three dimensions of haunting. I examine: (1) the concepts that make haunting prevalent in this space, in particular the idea of a timeless and spaceless whiteness; (2) the rhetorical practices that structure hauntings, in particular the causal storytelling that makes haunting a legible and credible modality; and (3) one identity, that of a witness, that the haunting modality allowed at least one student to take up. By exploring these three dimensions of haunting, my goal is to not only highlight how hauntings are constructed, but the implications of this modality of relating past and present.

Methodological approach

While I provide this overview of methods here, I will provide more detail in the next chapter and in each of the subsequent findings chapters on my approach for that specific component. My interest in texts and interactions means that I am looking closely at language. First, I draw on critical discourse analytic methods with my data analysis (van Leeuwen, 2008). It is a common practice in critical discourse analysis to focus more than equal measure on what is not being said than what has been said in texts (whether those texts be produced orally or in written form); this is particularly the case when studying systems of power that gain their power by being invisible. While I certainly take this approach at times, this is not my dominant way of entering into my analysis. That is, I focus most of my attention on what *is* said, and how that is constructed. My reasons for this are threefold. First, I am seeking to understand the creative possibilities of the young people in the classroom on the terms that they set forward with the materials that they were given. This, to me, is a key component of interpretive ethnography – another methodological tradition that I draw from (Marcus, 1986). Second, I believe that the best pedagogy begins with a thorough understanding of where learners are coming from; while looking for what is not being said is a useful exercise – and is one that I take up more directly in the conclusion chapter – I want to ground my exploration of the possible with a clear narrative of what happened. In this way, I am able to make an argument in the speculative chapter about pedagogy that is deeply informed by my analysis of text and interactions. Finally, and perhaps this is both the most obvious point and the most controversial, I *do* believe there are beneficial thinking practices being fostered here, even as I can see the limitations and shortfalls of this approach to understanding history. I believe by sitting in that productive tension, by explaining it and seeing it in its own terms, I can provide a more convincing portrait of what may be possible moving forward.

Additionally, I take a hermeneutic approach to language (Meretoja, 2017).[5] A key analytical assumption in this work is that I cannot just look for the words used. As recent history has shown, words like revolution, solidarity, and anti-racist can be used without continued explanation of what is meant by them or what traditions of revolution, solidarity, and anti-racism the user seeks to further. Rather, I take a hermeneutic approach to understand how framings in one section of the text help elucidate other section of texts. Especially in written works, I come in with an assumption that the author of each text sought to write a cohesive whole and in places where I initially saw contradiction, I work to resolve those contradictions in order to get as close as possible to authorial intent, knowing that this goal is not entirely possible. As an example, if a student described President Barack Obama as being antiracist, I will not in my interpretation of her description, highlight how President Obama's policies, both domestically and internationally, contributed to making life worse for many Black and brown people. Rather, I will look to understand how she is conceiving of antiracism in this description and in other moments of interaction, and how President Obama could be seen, in her conception, as fulfilling these qualities.

I am aware of the instrumental impulse inherent in reading and interpreting texts; I worry that as I describe representations, these representations that may be temporary come across as more stable than they have any right to be. This tension is present in many works of textual analysis. I am concerned that what I present as a moment in a path of a student's sense making or a moment of interpretation may be read as a static representation of who that young person is. As Blommaert (2020) argued,

> …Reading texts as embodying history and historically configured social positions always risks a certain degree of determinism…The stories that make up and define a life can, certainly for a discourse analyst, historian, or biographer but also for a judge in a criminal court and an immigration officer, be given a dimension of linear continuity, consistency, coherence, and 'logic', if you wish, absent from the experiential world of

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[5] Meretoja, H. (2017). The ethics of storytelling: Narrative hermeneutics, history, and the possible. Oxford University Press.

> the narrator whose accounting practices travel through multiple semiotic remediations, including rescaling work–from stories to lives, from moment to history, from individuals to communities. (133)

In education scholarship, one answer to this criticism has been to study processes of emergence, looking closely at moment-to-moment interactions and seeing each interaction as full of potential. I have not focused exclusively on interactions here, so I take this criticism seriously and I know, at times, the representations or models I present here are too static and lifeless. I attempt to guard against that by making clear that the kind of thinking represented here is one among many on display in the classroom and my decision to focus on it and dig deep within it is because it has implications that I do not feel are fully explored in the literature on history education or in practice around racial justice pedagogy. Further, as the relationship between the empirical and speculative sections of this dissertation implies, I see texts as deeply informing the pedagogical. Rather than continuing to distinguish between text as "content" and teacher moves as "pedagogical", I see texts as pedagogical invitations (Segall, 2004). As other have argued, closely "examining texts requires moving from questions such as "What does a text mean?" or even "How does it come to have a meaning?" to the question "What meanings does a text make possible (and impossible) through the invitations for learning that it offers students?"(p. 481). I work, with varying degrees of success, to depict the haunting mode of historical thinking as a dynamic interaction between texts and contexts, unfolding as students make sense of continued racial inequalities within a particular time and place.

Conclusion

In this introduction, I have explained not only how hauntings can be seen as a mode of historical thinking regarding the durability of racial inequality in the United States, but also how that this mode of historical thinking can be situated in the literature. In concluding, I want to highlight why this work matters to our understanding of learning and historical thinking. Looking closely at the haunting modality helps me ask the following questions: Does broad stroke thinking allow young

people to think about systems? Does thinking about systems require some level of decoupling, abstraction or decontextualization? While I do not explicitly address those questions in the first part of this dissertation, I try to explore these questions by reimagining how to support student sense making around persistent racial inequalities. Understanding the complex thinking that young people are engaged in when it comes to thinking about the past and its relationship to the present helps us, as designers of learning environments and educators working along side them, identify some of the limits and some of the opportunities in our pedagogical practice.

One opportunity the haunting modality provides is that the past is made relevant to students, and educators can build on this by centering moments of action so that haunting is coupled with other forms of historical–or even future–thinking, dreaming, and imagination. There are, of course, limitations to the haunting modality that must be taken seriously. At least in this context–that is, a predominantly white, privileged space–decoupling whiteness from the historical time and space made it unclear what concrete actions were necessary to be anti-racist; rather, the primary antiracist work was seen as recognizing and denouncing whiteness, as it was constructed in this classroom, when and wherever they see it. The white that was constructed here, although certainly structural and pervasive, did not relate to the material conditions of inequality and therefore did not challenge the notions of eliteness and exclusivity the school operates within. To close with a metaphor, the goal of these discourses of whiteness was to get different people a seat at the table (e.g. to decrease the racial wealth gap and other disparities, to increase the socioeconomic and racial diversity of the school), not to change the way the table is structured or even the need for the table altogether. As other scholars have made clear, this discourse around race and racism does a brilliant job of, for example, explaining why Black and brown people are disproportionately represented among low-wage jobs, have worse health outcomes that their white peers, or are more likely to be incarcerated; this discourse does not, however, explain why low-wage jobs exist, why we live in a society where health

care can be tied to profit, or how to go about abolishing the carceral state. That latter discourse around race and racial inequality is the one I am interested in furthering and contributing to.

A Note on Context and Methods

In this chapter, I highlight key components about the ethnographic context within which my findings derive. Here, I provide more detail about the school, my relationship to it, and my method of analysis. I also lay out the scope of my findings chapters to be clear about what the data can and cannot tell us.

The Great Lakes School (GLS), where I conducted my research, is a private K-12 school located in the downtown area of a large, Midwestern city. It was founded with a progressive educational philosophy in the tradition of John Dewey. GLS currently serves a student population with parents that are predominantly left of center **who** are predominantly wealthy. Mr. Sumner, the teacher of focus, has on occasion used the term "limousine liberal" to describe the population of the school (Field Note 2-1-2018).While there are certainly students there that do not fit this description, the school has a reputation for catering to wealthy, socially liberal Democrats. At the time of my observations, Mr. Sumner was the chair of the history department. Mr. Sumner, who identified as a white, gay man, made both his racial identity and sexual orientation relevant to his pedagogy in the classroom. He often times spoke about his husband, a black man, and family in the classroom space in demonstrating or elucidating a concept. For example, on February 15, 2019, Mr. Sumner described how in his own conservative, "lily white" town in New England, President Reagan was seen as, at worst, just another Republican. However, he contrasted his experience with his husband's, who grew up in South Carolina in a primarily Black community where, in Mr. Sumner's words, President Reagan represented "the devil."

Mr. Sumner graciously opened his classroom to me in the fall of 2017. I had previous experience working at independent schools and on that basis, I reached out to Mr. Sumner. Our relation-

ship evolved to the point where I, on occasion, taught lessons on subjects that I had particular expertise within. For example, I frequently did a sequence of lessons on the Haitian Revolution for his tenth grade course on revolutions throughout history. I also co-taught lessons with him, such as when we planned a lesson sequence on the Senate confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas and how Anita Hill was received at that time. More importantly, however, I was a frequent member of the classroom community. When students were separated into groups, I generally joined a group and talked with them. I was there before and after class, and when students were preparing for an essay, I often served as another set of eyes and ears for their ideas. Because the schedule in the high school rotated, students generally met for history class four times per week, and I was there, on average, three out of the four days they met from February 2019 through June 2019.

The data I present here comes from two of Mr. Sumner's three junior United States history courses. The first class (Period 1) had 17 students, three who identified as Black, two who identified as Latinx, and twelve who identified as white.[6] The second class (Period 2) had 22 students, five who identified as Black, two who identified as South Asian, and fifteen who identified as white. Given the racial makeup of each of the classrooms, my presence as a Black educator and researcher was notable. This is not because there were not other Black educators, and even researchers, at GLS; there were and Mr. Sumner often worked with and invited Black educators into his classroom. However, my sustained presence, including joining group conversations when they happened during the class period, was a significant departure from how other classes operated.

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[6] I wrestled with when and how to present the racial demographic information of each class period. I felt like I could, and really should, provide so much context as to the contested nature of these terms and identifications that would become a dissertation within a dissertation. For example, although two students in Period 1 identified as Latinx, one of the students traveled by bus to get to school from a part of town that was experiencing extreme gentrification from its historically Mexican community, while the other student who identified as Latinx was the son of a high level executive in a multinational corporation. Those distinctions are significant, and I could provide some context for each of the students that would trouble their racial identifications in ways that I am trying to forward in this dissertation. However, I understand the salience of these categories, and provide them here to give the reader a sense, however limited, of who was in each class.

Additionally, I introduced myself at the beginning each new semester and told students what my research project and questions were prior to asking for consent for their participation. I was aware that my presence in the space, specifically as a Black woman that was interested in how they were making sense of race and racism, influenced the discussion, and where relevant in the chapters that follow, I make clear how I was a part of the conversation. It is also important to note that I positioned myself in the classroom as a learner, not a diversity, equity, and inclusion expert. If I noticed something that Mr. Sumner did not, I would bring it to his attention, but when I joined small groups or interviewed students, I did it from a position of being curious about their own thought processes and not as an evaluation of the rightness of their ideas.

Unit Context

The focal unit for my dissertation was the first unit of the second semester (end of January 2019 to mid-March 2019). This unit began the shift from a focus on chronology, which was how the first semester was organized, to a focus on themes. In this first unit, students were taken through the long Civil Rights Movement, moving from Reconstruction to the present day in order to answer the following question in an essay: "What has been the legacy/history of race in America? We have been focusing primarily on the African-American community within our nation's history. We have studied the history from 1877 through today. In your view, how far have we come? Where are we now? What is left for us (as a nation and individuals) on this path to social and equal justice for all?" Key in this thematic section of the course was the idea of "cultural literacy." Mr. Sumner emphasized this as the historical events and actors that the students needed to know to be informed citizens (which was a philosophy in line with the progressive ethos of the school[7]). While the history of other forms of past and ongoing oppression were addressed in the class (e.g. settler colonialism),

[7] When I use the term "progressive" in this dissertation, I mean it in the sense of the educational philosophy put forward by John Dewey, and other social reformers in the late 19th and early 20th century. In this tradition, progressive education means to learn by doing and the goal is to structure educational experiences in such a way that young people can see themselves as part of an authentic community.

those structures were not tied into the conversation of this unit in any sustained way. With calls for Black and Indigenous solidarity in history education (King, 2019; Tuck and Yang, 2018), this could be seen as a major shortcoming of how Mr. Sumner and his colleagues conceived of enslavement and then taught that history to their students. Recognizing that potential shortcoming, I try to engage with the unit as it was designed and the goals Mr. Sumner and his colleagues had in presenting the information in this way.

Scope of Findings Chapters

The focus of this dissertation is on the idea of haunting, but I do not want to present a narrative that is too linear. Not all of the thinking that happened in the classroom could fall under the definition of haunting as I have presented it. I want to briefly highlight three of the moves that were present in the classroom to both note, from the beginning, that haunting was not the only mode of thinking happening but that it is one that I feel is not described or detailed in the literature. These moves are not mutually exclusive; however, the haunting move is peculiar in that it requires a relationship between past and present that goes beyond the first two and that is why it is the focus of this dissertation. To be clear, these moves that I describe are different than those highlighted in the literature in the introduction chapter. I provide these details not to argue that one mode I saw in the classroom fits neatly with one mode described in the literature, but to contextualize the haunting mode within the range of thinking practices present in these classrooms.

The first modality for historical thinking that I saw in the classroom was the descriptive mode. In this mode, students noted similarities and differences between past and present, and generally gathered evidence to line up how the past is or is not like the present. An example of this might be when **a student noted** that the black-white wealth gap is as big today as it was in 1968. This comparison describes the similarity between past and present, and while the reader can infer that if there is still a gap in wealth among these two populations, and that gap has existed for several

decades, that is negative, the description modality primarily gathers evidence and puts that evidence in a narrative sequence. Therefore, this modality will be seen primarily in the narratives that students construct when they tell causal stories.

The second modality is thinking about the past as a resource for telling us something about the present. This modality is primarily about the frame that a historical argument takes. This modality can be seen in Mr. Sumner's prompt for the unit of interest, or in asking students to think about what a particular writer's words tell us about our own time period. In framing the relationship between past and present as though the past has ready-made lessons for us in the present positions the answer to such questions to create a relationship between past and present that may, under other analytic assumptions, not exist. Regardless, the resource modality of historical thinking positions the past as providing lessons for us in the present, and is especially relevant when thinking about legacies or continuities.

The third modality, and the modality that I develop in this dissertation, is that of haunting. In contrast to the descriptive mode, the haunting mode provides an evaluation, usually a moral or ethical one, about the present through comparison to the past. Additionally, in contrast to the resource mode, the haunting mode goes a step beyond thinking of the past as a resource and instead conceives of the past as continuing to act in the present. We can see this modality at work in Sara's writing. Sara, a young white woman in Mr. Sumner's Period 2 class, wrote in her final essay for the unit of interest "[t]he aforementioned laws and policies range from the over 400 -year enslavement of African-Americans to Jim Crow laws to policies put forth during the War on Drugs, but all shared one thing in common: they sought to create systemic advantages for white people that would endure for generations to come." In creating a through line between past and present (from enslavement, to Jim Crow, to the War on Drugs) based on the systemic advantages white people hold, Sara demonstrated that the past continues to haunt the present through these privileges white people

hold. In other words, whiteness across time continues to haunt in the present. It is that haunting modality that is particularly salient in this space when thinking about racial inequality, and it is the modality I spend the bulk of my time in this dissertation developing. In outlining these modes, I am not trying to create a hierarchy (haunting is more complex than description, for example). Rather, I am trying to make clear that while these categories do overlap at times, the category or mode of thinking that I am most interested in for this dissertation is haunting.

Table 1. Historical thinking modalities relevant to this classroom.

Modality	Description
Descriptive Mode	Noting similarities and differences between past and present (compare and contrast)
Resource Mode	Noting past as a resource for thinking about the present
Haunting Mode	Noting that the past is actively influencing the present

Methods

Throughout this dissertation, I draw from five core data sources: (1) texts that were prominent in the classroom; (2) student-generated texts, primarily in the form of essays; (3) co-constructed data between me and students or me and the instructor; (4) field notes; and (5) transcripts of audio or video recordings of classroom interactions. I will next describe my process of taking that larger corpus of data from each data source to a smaller corpus from which I make the arguments in this dissertation.

Prominent Texts in the Classroom. From my extended time observing Mr. Sumner's classroom, I knew that two texts were cited frequently by students as being important for their understanding of the durability of racial inequality (As I reminder, I had observed Mr. Sumner's class from Fall 2017 through Spring 2019. The data I draw on from this dissertation comes primarily from February through April 2019, but I had seen this unit play out in Spring 2018 as well). Those two texts were: Ta-Nehisi Coates's "The Case for Reparations" and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow.* Students

were only assigned the Introduction from Alexander's text, but had the option to read as much of the book as they wanted.

On my first reading of these texts, I read to get a sense of the overall argument. I asked myself questions like: Where were the authors going in their argument? What was the overall structure? What evidence did they draw upon to reach their conclusions? The goal of this reading was to understand the structure of the texts. On my second reading, I coded for themes, paying attention to where key concepts such as whiteness, blackness, and inequality came up. I made a note of these sections, trying to cast as wide a net as possible. By that, I mean that I did not just code an individual sentence where the descriptor "white" was used (as one example), but rather attended to the context of that sentence, the sentences or even paragraphs proceeding and following that sentence, and how that sentence related to the overall argument of the piece. This second reading is where the practices of hermeneutic reading were most important, as they helped me understand how a piece of the text connected to the whole text.

On my third reading, I focused specifically on the sections where whiteness was relevant. The decision to focus on whiteness as an organizing concept was made because of the conversations that I was simultaneously having with the students in the classroom. Again, I paid attention to language use and structure here to understand *how* whiteness was constructed and how that construction was relevant to the overall argument. Here, I primarily wrote analytic memos to myself to keep track of key ideas that I developed. On my fourth reading, I developed the following codes regarding structure (e.g. *how* was the whiteness concept structured) and themes (e.g. *what* was the whiteness concept doing). Those codes can be found in the table below. On my fifth and final reading, after the codes were more refined, I coded the portions of the text that had been narrowed.

Table 2. Description of codes.

Category	Code	Definition
Thematic Codes	Whiteness as descriptor	When a group of people are described as white in such a way that their whiteness is made salient; must be for a collective of white people and not individual white actors
	Whiteness as explanation	When whiteness helps explain why some event occurred; sometimes implies a larger structure that maintains privi-leges for white people
	Racism/discrimination without an actor	When racism or discrimination are unfolding without refer-ence to specific actors driving that action
	Inequality as a state of nature	When the inequality (primarily in the form of racism) is de-scribed as being the way human beings operate
	Inequality described in terms of (dis)parity	When the discrepancy between blacks and whites are made salient by citing a numerical difference
Storytelling Structure Codes	Argument: Enthymeme/Claim	Thesis statement that is based on some reason, either explicitly articulated through the narrative that follows or left implicit
	Argument: Narrative	Weaving of data points, interpretation
	Intertextuality	Citations, references, and similar structures and patterns of themes, transitive chains of authority and/or legitimation
	Past-Present Connections	Moments where past and present are linked
	Present-Future or Past-Future Connections	Moments where the future (e.g. future action, future rela-tions, future outcomes) are predicted

Student Generated Texts and Co-Constructed Data. Once I had a tentative code book in place, I applied these codes to the student essays I had consent to analyze and the co-constructed data (pri-marily in the form of interviews) with students and Mr. Sumner. All student essays are included in Appendix A.

Field Notes and Audio/Video Recording Transcripts. I limited my initial analysis of field notes to those that were taken in Spring 2019, as those were the students that I wanted to focus on for this project. As I took my field notes, I conducted "big bucket" coding to get a sense of what was un-folding in the classroom (examples of those codes include upper school wide practices, various defi-

nitions of progressive that emerged in the classroom, and notations of what got positioned as problematic). As my research questions unfolded, I began to go back and recode my field notes according to the following two big buckets: (1) moments where negative depictions of white people were salient and (2) moments where inequalities were naturalized or made to seem inevitable. I then separated these moments based on if they happened during the focal unit or outside of the focal unit and created a visual to see who was involved in these moments. I paid particularly close attention to the moments that happened early on in the focal unit, moments that seemed to shift an understanding or involved some contestation among students and Mr. Sumner, and moments where applications to ideas outside of the history they were learning. Once I identified these moments, I went to the audio and/or video recordings that I had to understand what was being said and how. In this dissertation, I primarily use these moments to contextualize or complicate comments made in interviews or in essays. In each chapter, I will explain in more detail my process of analysis, or how I made sense of the data that was selected using the above methods.

Once I had all of these various moments coded, I started to chart them out in a visual to understand where they were showing up and which moments that were coded should be explored further. From the thematic codes listed in Table 2, I developed the idea of transhistorical whiteness. For example, I noted that I coded excerpts of text with the *whiteness as explanation* code most from the Coates and Alexander texts, as well as some student essays and moments of interaction that happened later in the focal unit and the school year. I decided to look closer at this code, and realized that when the authoritative texts and the student texts were using whiteness to explain an event, they did it through describing a *white backlash* to nonwhite social, political, or economic progress, or through the idea of a *white inheritance* (that is, white people had privileges across generations that they were attempting to protect). I added these subcodes to the larger code of whiteness as explanation, and in getting more specificity about how whiteness was working, rhetorically, I developed the idea

of transhistorical whiteness.

The idea that these moments of explanation were happening in writing or in later interactions was something I was able to see only through looking at the storytelling structure codes in relationship to the thematic codes. I noticed that when students used the causal storytelling structure, specifically when they were asked to or able to make past-present connections, I was more likely to code their language within the *whiteness as explanation* category. For example, of the 53 times I coded a student interview or essay as being within the *whiteness as explanation* category, nearly 75% (n = 39) of those instances were cross coded with moments where they were making a specific *argument* about *past-present connections*. In contrast, the *whiteness as descriptor* and the *racism without an explicit actor* codes were clustered more towards the beginning of the focal unit or in moments of interaction where students were not asked to make a specific argument. While I will draw out more of the nuances of these categories in each of the empirical chapters, I want to be clear that my process of coding lead me to see patterns, but my analysis did not begin or end with a coding scheme. Rather, I used the codes to help me identify moments that seemed significant or important for further inquiry. What I present here is the result of coding, interpretive and methodological memos, and close reading.

Based on the data I have presented, it should be clearer that I am (1) not arguing that the haunting modality was the only way students were making sense of racial inequality over time nor (2) that all students walked away with the same understanding as the students I highlight here. Instead, I argue that these students and this modality provide an interesting and important complication of how sense-making around race and racism unfolds in history classrooms, particularly those that are predominantly white.

RHETORICAL AFTERLIVES OF WHITENESS: CONSTRUCTING TRANSHISTORICAL WHITENESS ACROSS SPACES

In this chapter, I describe the process of how a particular construction of whiteness – one that was both timeless and spaceless – flowed from authoritative texts to classroom interactions and student artifacts. I trace how this construction, which I call transhistorical whiteness, operated within each space. I pay close attention to how transhistorical whiteness was (a) decoupled, or abstracted, from moments of historical specificity, becoming a psychological and structural phenomenon based on protecting a privilege all white people shared in equally and (b) constructed as being the same essence across time. This transhistorical whiteness was, in this classroom, what continued to haunt in the present day; that is, it is this whiteness that continues to shape the present moment and explains continued racial inequality.

Due in large part to the organizing efforts of activists pushing for increased representation of minoritized populations in the United States and the requirement of Ethnic Studies curricula in K-12 contexts, history education (both in practice and in research) has had to reckon with what it means to teach about the past during moments of present-day injustices. The research question I take up in this chapter is intimately tied to those very conversations. Here, I ask: In narrating the durability of racial inequality in the United States, what concepts are emphasized in this classroom context and how? In articulating such a question, I want to understand not only what ideas about the durability of racism are made available in this classroom context, but also how those concepts are then taken up, even altered, and the impact that act of construction has on the narrations students tell in this space.

One way in particular that concepts of racism get organized is through the idea of whiteness. This idea became increasingly important in this particular classroom context, as the texts the students and teacher drew upon highlighted whiteness as the motivating factor in explaining durable racial disparities. In history education, there is a tendency to both see and critique a particular construction of whiteness (and the actions of racism it produces) in terms of individual hatred or bigotry (Wills, 2019). This view of whiteness makes the phenomenon an issue for particular white people to confront and ameliorate. However, there has been much work highlighting the limits of such a view of whiteness in favor of a construction of the concept that is linked both to power and privilege (Shange, 2019; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 1991; Ahmed, 2007; as counterpoints to these framings of whiteness, see Fields, 2001; Johnson, 2019); often times, these perspectives are described as providing a systemic or structural view of racism. The benefits, this train of thought argues, of a systemic or structural view of whiteness is that it can be described not only in individual or even group behaviors, but in laws (Harris, 1993), policies (Sleeter, 2017), and even organizational practices (Lippard, Carter, & Embrick, 2020). In short, whiteness, when constructed as a systemic or structural phenomenon, makes whiteness not only the problem of white people, but an organizing feature of life (in the United States and beyond) that all people must confront. Whiteness, to use a metaphor, has seeped into everyday life much like oil seeps into waters far beyond the initial site of an oil spill (Gates, 2019).

Scholars have been interested for some time in how racial inequalities continue to reproduce themselves even in an era of supposed racial liberalism. One of the most prominent ideas (prior to the election of Donald Trump and the reemergence of outright white supremacist rhetoric in public discourse) was that of colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). In describing this new racism, Bonilla-Silva explains how color-blind approaches to preserving the racial order has four dominant frames: (1) abstract liberalism; (2) naturalization; (3) cultural racism; and (4) minimization of racism (p. 26).

Each of these frames helps people, especially white people, filter events that help explain away persistent racial inequalities and hide the fact of dominance or white supremacy; as Bonilla-Silva argued, "together these frames form an impregnable yet elastic wall that barricades whites from the United States' racial reality" (p. 47). While individual students in the classrooms I observed may have espoused views that upheld the idea of color-blind racism Bonilla-Silva described here, I argue that a different construction that was intimately concerned with the persistence of whiteness was the dominant view of racism in this classroom; it was present in the authoritative texts and flowed through classroom interactions and student artifacts as well.

While this view of whiteness has been articulated to help individuals conceptualize what many see as an abstraction with concrete consequences, few in history education research (and beyond it) have focused on if and how these views of whiteness help people make sense of racism. There has been a dearth of literature that closely examines actual people, including the white people who benefit from this system, use texts to construct an understanding of whiteness. In other words, our literature has very few examples of how people come to understand whiteness structurally, how that view may or may not overlap with psychologized notions of whiteness, or what the particular affordances and limitations of this view of whiteness may be. With the idea that certain texts were authoritative in the classroom, I demonstrate how young people constructed a transhistorical whiteness through using those texts. The process of using those texts created what I call the rhetorical afterlives of whiteness: practices that take shape across spaces of rhetorically producing a specific understanding of what whiteness has meant across time and means at present.

Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I draw primarily on two concepts to understand how ideas between disparate locations are first constructed and then circulated. In the next chapter on causal storytelling, I will focus more specifically on how students in this class drew on these authoritative texts to create their own

arguments by looking closely at intertextual practices. However, right now, I want to pay close attention to the construction of ideas – in this case, a particular idea of whiteness – in authoritative texts, classroom interactions, and student texts in the forms of essays and interviews.

In his work on the relationship between Secretary of State Colin Powell and the media in creating a narrative that motivated the invasion of Iraq in 2003, rhetorician John Oddo (2014) argued that scholarship on the invasion should not only examine Powell's now infamous speech to the United Nations claiming evidence of "weapons of mass destruction." Instead, in order to understand how and why that speech was effective at that particular moment, rhetoricians would have to examine the "rhetorical life" of that speech: that is, "the development and reproduction of this speech in mainstream news narratives–as it was first *precontextualized* in journalistic previews and later *recontextualized* in subsequent reports" (p. 3). This idea of examining the rhetorical life of an idea is particularly salient for this chapter, as it helps me provide a context for the particular constructions of whiteness that were unfolding in the classroom. Understanding that these ideas did not just emerge in the vacuum of the classroom, I show how this construction of whiteness was precontextualized in classroom discussions and introductions of key readings, contextualized in authoritative texts, and also recontextualized in student essays and individual interviews. It is this movement from precontextualization to recontextualization that describes the flow of ideas I am interested in here.

The idea that I posit here around "rhetorical afterlives" is meant to distinguish from Oddo's "rhetorical life" in the following ways. First, because Oddo analyzed the more polished utterances of professional newscasters and a state official, the idea that there was a single "rhetorical life" of that speech could more easily argued. However, in my analysis, I am looking at multiple texts, multiple sense-makings around those texts, and a long, messy trajectory of how the ideas presented within those texts continued to move within the classroom. The idea of "rhetorical afterlives" rather than "rhetorical life" allows me to privilege that multiplicity of sense making. Whereas Oddo is interested

in the precontextualization of an event, the event itself, and the recontextualization of that event, I am interested in those moments as well as the continued (re)contextualization of ideas that unfolds in classroom discourse.

Relatedly, the idea of rhetorical afterlives functions on two levels in this chapter. First, the young people I highlight here were encountering key texts and continuing to make sense of the idea of whiteness that was constructed within them over time. Second, within that idea of whiteness, many of the young people were coming to see that the period of enslavement had afterlives in the present; that is, they were relating past to present in a particular way. Both of these ideas of after-lives worked together. In other words, when I use the phrase "rhetorical afterlives", I am both interested in how students came to understand these texts in the moment they did *and* how these texts are concerned with understanding the afterlife of chattel slavery in the United States, particularly as it relates to Black people. The process of encountering a text and the content of what the text offers are both important when discussing the rhetorical afterlife of whiteness as it unfolded in this classroom.

The second concept that guides this work is that of authoritative texts, which is drawn from the work of Bakhtin (1981) on authoritative discourse; this discourse is meant to be taken on its face and, as a result of its supposed truth, beauty, or rightness, the need for additional, contradictory discourses is backgrounded. According to Bakhtin, authoritative discourse is unquestioned and sacrosanct. Two texts in particular took on an authoritative position in the classroom: Ta-Nehisi Coates's "The Case for Reparations" and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow.* Both texts were required reading for students, and, unlike other texts that were assigned as background reading, both of these texts were discussed as texts in the classroom. That is, the authors themselves became as important as their arguments. The authors were positioned not only credible but thought leaders to be respected and repeated. For example, of the 36 moments of student citational practices I coded, 22 were

references to either Coates's or Alexander's work and all were positive representations of them and their arguments (e.g. "esteemed journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates" or "prominent civil rights attorney Michelle Alexander."). Additionally, students spent an entire lesson in unpacking Coates's article, and Alexander's text came back into the class several days in a row. The positioning of these authors and their work in this classroom helped establish them as a part of an authoritative discourse on racial inequality and, as such, their constructions of whiteness carried particular weight in the classroom.

Analytic Method

While the concepts of precontextualization and recontextualization helped me make sense of how ideas lived on and moved across various spaces, I had to develop a way of looking at the data to see this movement. In this section, I answer the question: How did I look for the rhetorical afterlives of whiteness? First, I began by analyzing the authoritative texts to understand how they constructed whiteness using critical discourse analysis methods such as collectivization and passivation (van Leeuwen, 2008). It is important to note that I took a hermeneutical approach (Meretoja, 2017) to both authoritative texts and student texts, meaning that I aimed to read part of the text in line with the entire text. Therefore, I was not looking so much for contradictions within the texts or inconsistencies, but rather wanted to understand, to the extent possible, that the author of the text was making a cohesive statement. Then, I moved to study how students (in class, in essays, and in interviews) constructed whiteness, using similar approaches to text and language as I did with Coates's and Alexander's work. I also attended to how these texts and ideas were positioned in the class by me or Mr. Sumner.

As I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, I noted not only that students constructed whiteness in similar ways to the authoritative texts, but also how they went about the act of constructing. Next, I compared across the two sets of texts the instances where the authoritative texts and the students were being explicit about how the past continues to act in the present and were

making conclusions or claims about what that continued action means. In other words, I used the storytelling structure codes to help me understand the work thematic codes were doing at specific moments within texts. Specifically, I looked at the relationship between the codes *whiteness as explanation* and *past-present connections* to develop the idea of transhistorical whiteness. I found that in those instances where the past continued to act in the present, students and the authoritative texts they drew upon were constructing the concept of transhistorical whiteness. Transhistorical whiteness allowed students and the texts they drew upon to tell a story about why racial inequalities persist that made whiteness the driving force of those inequalities. This transhistorical whiteness could be found in the rhetoric that shaped laws and behaviors, and it passes through time in an unchanged form that is inherited by subsequent generations of white people.

Findings

Following the approach laid out in the previous sections, I find that transhistorical whiteness functioned through two related rhetorical processes. First, there is the decoupling of whiteness from moments of historical specificity; at times, individuals even identified an origin point where whiteness was created and noted that it operates independently from the conditions that created it. Decoupling here means to make the presence of racial inequality separate from the functioning of the economy, centers of political power, and/or the relationship between those two. Most of the students and the authoritative texts they drew upon would argue that white people have not always existed as we know them today; that is, individuals who in one time and place were considered white might be today, an vice versa (Haney López, 1996). However, they would also argue that while the conditions that created whiteness at a specific time and place no longer exist, the whiteness that was created in the past has taken on a life of its own, so that the conditions of its creation are no longer relevant to the continued presence of whiteness. Second, and relatedly, there is the unchanging nature of whiteness, where whiteness operating at one point is the equivalent of whiteness operating at

all points. I first discuss decoupling as it was deployed rhetorically in authoritative texts and in student work, and then I move to the unchanging nature of whiteness. In following this sequence, I show how this construction of whiteness unfolded in authoritative texts, sometimes precontextualized by how the texts were positioned in class, and then (re)contextualized by students over time.

Throughout this chapter, I make clear what I feel are the limitations of this approach of constructing whiteness. This approach does not recognize the changing nature of what whiteness meant in specific contexts. Instead, whiteness is a ready-made concept to explain existing racial disparities. Not only does this approach simplify the actual historical record, it makes it less clear what possible solutions could be to existing racial injustices since whiteness has existed and will continue to exist to oppress nonwhite people. I make this point clearest in the final section, where I examine a case study of one student's rhetorical practices in constructing transhistorical whiteness. In so doing, an approach that makes transhistorical whiteness the ready-made explanatory factor in existing racial inequalities does not acknowledge how real people at different moments in history had different approaches to fighting racial inequality in their own time. If, for example, Black actors during Reconstruction, during the period of racial apartheid in the South, and during the Civil Rights Movement disagreed over the best ways to combat racial inequality, and even disagreed over what the role of whiteness was in perpetuating that inequality, our historical analysis of those time periods must be at least as complex as the analysis of the actors in that time.

Decoupling: How whiteness gets abstracted from time and space

While there may exist an "origin point" or a particular historical moment where whiteness was defined by material conditions (e.g. whiteness made one exempt from race-based slavery), it now exists outside of those material conditions. In other words, although most of these texts, authoritative or student generated, would acknowledge that whiteness was created at a specific moment to do a specific thing (establish race-based enslavement), they also argue that it *continues* to operate outside of

those material and historical conditions through an ontological difference among those who can be called white and the privileges that they accrue as a result. In this section, I first narrate this process of decoupling as it unfolded in authoritative texts before transitioning to narrate how this process unfolded in student texts and in interactions that occurred in the classroom.

Authoritative texts. These texts demonstrate how the privileges we commonly think of as related to whiteness were created at a specific point in order to divide the multiracial laboring classes before the United States existed. This argument particularly relies on how poor and working class white people continued to favor racial privilege instead of class solidarity. The authoritative texts emphasize that while this class of white people did not necessarily gain much materially from their whiteness – except at its inception point, where poor and working class whites benefitted from a race-based system of enslavement– they maintained their position above an undifferentiated black population (first during a period of enslavement, then during Jim Crow, and finally, during the "law and order" period that targeted black and brown populations in urban areas). By showing how with each reiteration whiteness need not and often did not produce tangible benefits for poor and working class white folks, outside of a tenuous position in a racialized hierarchy, the authorial texts rhetorically "decouple" whiteness from the material conditions that birthed the concept. They continue to abstract whiteness from moments of historical specificity by emphasizing the continued maintenance of a racial order.

This process of decoupling was key to how Michelle Alexander constructed **the** continued re-entrenchment of racial hierarchy throughout United States history in her text, *The New Jim Crow*. In her telling, whiteness was established to create a divide between the laboring classes that produced wealth in a burgeoning capitalist economy. The key moment of inception of whiteness here is Bacon's rebellion, a plan

> in 1675 to seize Native American lands in order to acquire more property for himself and others and nullify the threat of Indian raids. When the planter elite in Virginia refused to

> provide militia support for his scheme, Bacon retaliated, leading an attack on the elite, their homes, and their property. He openly condemned the rich for their oppression of the poor and inspired an alliance of white and black bond laborers, as wells as slaves, who demanded an end to their servitude. (Alexander, 24)

Although the Rebellion was eventually quelled through "force and false promises of amnesty" (Alexander, 24), Alexander writes that "the events in Jamestown were alarming to the planter elite, who were deeply fearful of the multiracial alliance of bond workers and slaves" (p. 24-25). Driven by this desire to maintain their superior status and economic position, the planters engaged in what Alexander described as a "racial bribe":

> Deliberately and strategically, the planter class extended special privileges to poor whites in an effort to drive a wedge between them and black slaves. White settlers were allowed greater access to Native American lands, white servants were allowed to police slaves through slave patrols and militias, and barriers were created so that free labor would not be placed in competition with slave labor. These measures effectively eliminated the risk of future alliances between black slaves and poor whites. Poor whites suddenly had a direct, personal stake in the existence of a race-based system of slavery. Their own plight had not improved by much, but at least they were not slaves (Alexander, 24-25).

Origin points serve myriad functions, as I will explore in more detail in the chapter on causal storytelling. Here, the origin point of whiteness serves the purpose of controlling the laboring classes, both black and white. Planters, synonymous with whites in this telling, created a system through "bribing" laboring whites to be allies with them when they had reason to not be. This original bribe, for Alexander, sets up the conditions for this dynamic to repeat itself in establishing new racial caste systems. As will be explored later in this chapter, key to this telling is that the whiteness that was created through this initial racial bribe is recognizable, and often times presented as identical, to the whiteness that exists in the moment of the telling; this recognizability between whiteness is what allows the racial caste system to be (re)born. Alexander accomplishes this construction of an origin point by collectivizing white people; that is, the racial bribe made distinctions among people who could be called white anathema both at the time of the creation of whiteness and in our present day understandings of how whiteness was created. The collectivization of white people here also re-

quired the passivation of black people and the backgrounding of the complex and multifaceted Indigenous responses to this moment; whiteness became, in this telling, powerful enough to unite heterogenous collectivities and oppress, and silence, all who might resist. Specifically, black people, at this particular moment, had little recourse to resist this creation of whiteness and due to their position in the social and economic hierarchy, these actions were *done to them*. This pattern of collectivizing white people and passivizing black people is a key way transhistorical whiteness is constructed rhetorically (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Throughout Alexander's chapter, this collectivization of white people and the passivization of nonwhite actors happened seven times. I coded these moments using the idea of *white backlash*, a subcode of the *whiteness as explanation* category. As a reminder, the purpose of Alexander's writing in this chapter was to provide a framework for understanding the continued (re)birth of a racial caste system, even after a previous caste system had been seemingly abolished. As such, the backlash concept was particularly salient here, as it helped her establish a pattern of behavior to explain continued racial inequality at two key moments: (1) after the Civil War and (2) after the major civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Elsewhere in her book, the tone of the text shifts and those other chapters deserve close attention as well. Given, though, that this chapter is the chapter that most explicitly draws on historical events and that this chapter was the one chapter of the text that was required reading, it is the chapter I follow most closely. Furthermore, as it is the chapter where she establishes the idea of mass incarceration being akin to the racial apartheid system of the Jim Crow era – that is, it is the chapter where she establishes the thesis of her book – looking closely at how the white backlash concept functions, rhetorically, to explain events across time is significant.

Understanding how whiteness is created rhetorically here is only part of how decoupling is achieved; for whiteness to be relevant today, the concept has to have continued relevance throughout the narration. In other words, whiteness must be maintained as a salient category of description

in multiple time periods in order to tell the reader something meaningful about the present day. For Alexander, whiteness is maintained through appealing to poor and working class whites, who have received some benefits from their whiteness, allowing elites to pander to their "racism and vulnerability" (p. 22) to create a new racial caste perpetually throughout United States history. Alexander writes that this pandering follows a particular pattern. In moments where the existing racial hierarchy is in question, those "most committed to racial hierarchy search for new means to achieve their goals within the rules of the game as currently defined" (21). She continued:

> It is during this period of uncertainty that the backlash intensifies and a new form of racialized social control begins to take hold. The adoption of the new system of control is never inevitable, but to date it has never been avoided. The most ardent proponents of racial hierarchy has consistently succeeded in implementing new racial caste systems by triggering a collapse of resistance across the political spectrum. This feat has been achieved largely by appealing to the racism and vulnerability of lower-class whites, a group of people who are understandable eager to ensure that they never find themselves trapped at the bottom of the American hierarchy The emergence of each new system of control may seem sudden, but history shows that the seeds are planted long before each new institution begins to grow. (Alexander, 21-22)

While the times may change, Alexander argues, the need for racialized social control remains constant. Key to driving this change is to "trigger a collapse of resistance across the political spectrum"; in other words, while a kind of provisional coalition is created that produces something that begins to look like progress, the force of a racial hierarchy begins to take hold again. The particulars may be different, as Alexander goes on to argue in the rest of this chapter, but the outcome is strikingly similar. The way this provisional coalition has consistently been broken down is, according to Alexander, an appeal to the "racism and vulnerability of lower-class whites."

What Alexander makes clear is that lower-class whites do not gain much materially from the status quo; a multiracial working class coalition antagonistic to capital would greatly benefit them more than any maintenance of a racial hierarchy. However, as Alexander tells it, the appeals to racism continued to be "a powerful wedge" in working class organizing through the 20th century. Writing about the moment after the passage of Civil Rights legislation in the mid to late 1960s,

Alexander refers again to the pattern of re-entrenchment of racial hierarchy: "Just as race had been used at the turn of the century by Southern elites to rupture class solidarity at the bottom of the income ladder, race as a national issue had broken up the Democratic New Deal 'bottom-up' coalition–a coalition dependent on substantial support from all voters, white and black, at or below the median income." (Alexander, 47) For Alexander, whiteness had, once again, become the salient way for lower-class whites to understand themselves politically, even at the expense of a liberal coalition that was supposed to improve their material conditions while maintaining the capitalist order. In this way, the whiteness that is constructed here is decoupled from both the specificity of time and place, in addition to the need to produce any material benefits for those who might call themselves white.

In Ta-Nehisi Coates's "The Case for Reparations", a similar version of whiteness is constructed as well, and particular emphasis is placed on the lengths lower-class whites would go to protect this particular identity. Whiteness, especially among this class, was protected at all costs, politically where possible, but violently if necessary. Looking specifically at Chicago housing policy in the mid-20th century, Coates argues that "[g]overnmental embrace of segregation was driven by the virulent racism of Chicago's white citizens. White neighborhoods vulnerable to black encroachment formed block associations for the sole purpose of enforcing segregation. They lobbied fellow whites not to sell. They lobbied those blacks who did manage to buy to sell back" (Coates, 190). Whiteness did not only operate in the private interactions between white and nonwhite people; instead, as Coates argues in his case for reparations, whiteness was a matter of policy. The government sanctioned whiteness, and when the government's protection of whiteness was not possible, Coates argues, white people resorted to violence to protect their position. Coates cites a specific example of such violence lead by a group of white people in Englewood.

> In 1949, a group of Englewood Catholics formed block associations intended to 'keep up the neighborhood.' Translation: Keep black people out. And when civic engagement was not enough, when government failed, when private banks could not longer hold the

> line, Chicago turned to an old tool in the American repertoire–racial violence (Coates, 190).

Coates engages in a similar process of collectivizing whites ("Chicago" here is used as short hand for all of white Chicago) and passivizing blacks. Black people are "kept out" when mentioned at all in this passage; the actions that are of note are being done *to* blacks by racist whites. Whiteness as an organizing concept that explained the development of systems (race-based enslavement) became, rhetorically, decoupled from that particular historical moment and the material conditions that made whiteness relevant in that moment.

While in the example above, Coates made a specific argument about segregation in Chicago, that example is used to illustrate a larger point about whiteness in United States history writ large. Chicago is a lens through which to understand United States history across time. Coates rearticulated this point at the end of his article when he wrote, "Chicago, like the country at large, embraced policies that placed black America's most energetic, ambitious, and thrifty countrymen beyond the pale of society and marked them as rightful targets for legal theft" (Coates, 2014) and

> [T]he early American economy was built on slave labor…And this destruction did not end with slavery. Discriminatory laws joined the equal burden of citizenship to unequal distribution of its bounty. These laws reached their apex in the mid-20th century, when the federal government—through housing policies—engineered the wealth gap, which remains with us to this day. When we think of white supremacy, we picture Colored Only signs, but we should picture pirate flags.

The close analysis of specific families Coates engaged in throughout this article is meant to be abstracted to a larger argument about Black families and their relationship to the US project. That decoupling of whiteness from space and time has had tremendous effect. Coates's article is still cited as a primary conduit through which the reparations debate became reintroduced in mainstream discourse (Taylor and Reed, 2019); this work has even received major journalism and historical awards (Devitt, 2020; *Universities and Slavery: Bound by History*, 2017) and inspired major plot points on a critically acclaimed television series (King, 2019). Explaining the entirety of nonwhite, specifically

Black, history in the United States through this case study of Chicago is one way that to structure an argument that the whiteness that created red lines and fueled violence at this moment has a long history and a continued presence in our lives.

Furthermore, whiteness continued to be decoupled from material conditions in these texts as lower-class white people in particular continued to act to preserve a racial hierarchy in which their material conditions were not necessarily improved, but a racial status quo was maintained. I next turn to how the decoupling of whiteness from moments of historical specificity that were present in the authoritative texts were taken up, first in classroom interactions and then in student essays.

Interaction in class. Taking these authoritative texts as an important context, we can now look at some of the interactions that happened between students, their teacher, these texts and the ideas that were presented therein. The primary mode of discussing whiteness in the class was though the lens of racial violence, where white people brutalized nonwhite (usually black) people primarily as a result of fear of losing their place within the existing racial hierarchy. Similar to the authoritative texts, notice how collectivization functions to create a unified, white aggressor and passivation functions to construct Black people that are constantly, and solely, responding to these aggressions.

On February 11, 2019, Mr. Sumner's class focused on the early court cases during the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) of the 1950s and 1960s. Prior to this discussion, the class had been studying Reconstruction, the formation of and resistance to Jim Crow, and the local, grassroots movements that would eventually lead to important legislation. Mr. Sumner called this study the long civil rights movement, and attempted to give students a more contextualized view of how the legislation that is typically associated with the CRM came to be (Interview, 11-21-2019). During this class, the students read some excerpts of texts on Brown v. Board (1954), and spent the beginning of the class looking at how, as Mr. Sumner explained, some governors shut down public schools rather than enforce the ruling. In the rest of the class, the students looked at Keys v. Carolina (1955) and Browder v. Gayle (1955), two significant rulings that desegregated public buses. When describing the impact of these rulings, Mr. Sumner again concluded

that "Even though we have these two court cases, we still have governors that refuse to enforce the law." These court cases were then used as background for the main thrust of the lesson: the murder of Emmett Till (1955). Mr. Sumner played a clip from a documentary, "A Time for Justice" to discuss the specifics of Till's murder as a way to describe how white southerners were responding to movements to integrate via the courts. Several students had heard this particular story before (students who had been at this school in eighth grade also learned about this event, and those who had taken freshmen electives on protest movements were also familiar), but for those who had not, Mr. Sumner provided the context of how, in his words, "courageous" Mamie Till, Emmett's mother, was in broadcasting his funeral to the public. After the clip was over, Mr. Sumner informed the class that although there was a trial for Emmett Till's murderers, they were found not guilty. He stated that the reason for this was that it was an all-white jury. Music from the hallway began playing, signaling that the class was over and students have five minutes to get to the next period. As students were packing up their materials, Mr. Sumner gave some notices about homework that was due the next day (Excerpt from Field Note, 2-11-2019).

This episode in the class had three parts, although the primary focus for the "decoupling" move is evidenced in the third part. First, Mr. Sumner established the context that was relevant: cases of integration via court rulings and legal challenges, paying particular attention to the loop holes and general hesitation that white southerners demonstrated to these moments of integration. Next, Mr. Sumner described this as the context for Emmett Till's murder: an environment where white people were finding legal ways to skirt integration. As was articulated in the authoritative texts, the violence of Emmett Till's murder was the further move to enforce the status quo, when civic engagement and pressure on government was not enough. Finally, Mr. Sumner explained why Emmett's murderers were able to get away with such a violent action: they could depend on an all white jury to see society from their vantage point. Although seemingly an insignificant comment before the class ended, Mr. Sumner's remark was able to link the whiteness that Emmett's murderers were

enforcing with the whiteness that the all-white jury performed in finding those men not guilty. In other words, Mr. Sumner's collectivization of white actors was salient here.

At this point in the class, neither authoritative text has been introduced, but the construction of whiteness present in those texts was already being made recognizable by Mr. Sumner's positioning. Here, the texts that students would engage with were already being precontextualized, and made more persuasive by this precontextualization. As we will see in the student essays below, students took up further elements of the authoritative texts. In particular, students emphasized the racial violence perpetrated by white people afraid of losing their position to decouple whiteness from its historical and material foundations. More-so than in the authoritative texts, whiteness came to be, in this classroom, a psychological, social, and political set of privileges that white people, especially the most economically vulnerable white people, protected.

Student essays. Over the eight student essays I collected,[8] white people were described as violent (six essays had this description), fearful (three), and as protecting privilege (seven) most often. Although student essays did tend to describe whiteness as having served a material purpose in the past, the move to decouple whiteness by invoking the special or specific racism of working class or poor whites was less clear in these student essays when compared to the authoritative texts. For example, only one student essay specifically qualified whiteness in terms of working class vulnerability. Overwhelmingly, whiteness was not given any kind of class qualification most of the time it was used. Given that whiteness was overwhelmingly described in terms of protecting privilege, I argue that the un-classed nature of whiteness could primarily serve the function of making whiteness a cross-class phenomenon. This cross-class recontextualization of the transhistorical whiteness concept was a key point of differentiation as the concept flowed through these classrooms. I explore how students

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[8] There were 39 students across the two classrooms I observed from February 2019 to June 2019. Of the students who consented to be a part of the research, eight students agreed to let me work with their essays. Those eight essays represent 20.5% (8/39) of the essays across classrooms. Those eight essays can be found in the Appendix.

constructed whiteness in their essays in ways that both draw upon and complicate the decoupling happening in authoritative texts.

Sam, a self-identified white student in the class, emphasized how white fear mobilized white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. While the specific sequence of events that Sam presents here might be at odds with the historical record that the authoritative texts provide, Sam emphasized how "law and order" rhetoric was seen as a way to drum up white voters, specifically in the South, by appealing to racism. Notice how Sam's use of collectivization makes white people a unified group (e.g. "white fear", "white voters") working in tandem to maintain a racial hierarchy that placed African Americans at the bottom.

> Even before Little Rock 9 we could see white fear of black people as a threat to their status but also safety. It was this assumption that was the driving force behind the death of Emmett Till, two years before Little Rock 9. The 14 year old was accused of offending a white woman in a store and because of the political rhetoric of 'law and order' which generated and mobilized white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement, the boy was lynched. The underlying rhetoric of law and order along with the emergence of the southern strategy to increase Republican political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against African Americans, were becoming more and more disguised.

The fear of a loss of status and safety motivated violence in Sam's analysis of events. Like Alexander and Coates, Sam emphasized how white racism maintained the racial hierarchy in ways that may have looked different than they did during the 19th and early 20th century, but the rhetoric of 'law and order' still maintained the same racial status quo. Whiteness here is decoupled from that initial historical moment of its instantiation–that is, whiteness here has already been created as a meaningful organizing concept–but its decoupling from material conditions is less clear. In this passage, Sam is describing white fear in terms of a loss of status and potential safety, but elsewhere in her essay, Sam describes the threat of economic competition from black people as driving white fear. The degree to which status here, and economic competition elsewhere, relate clearly to material conditions of lower-class whites is far from obvious. However, the collectivization that Sam deploys here to

make "white fear" and "white voters" uniform and unified in their actions, rather than classed subsets of a racial group, does suggest that the specific material conditions of particular white people was less relevant than a collective maintenance of a racial hierarchy in which all white people participated.

Particularly relevant to how whiteness was maintained over time was citing as evidence particular rhetorical appeals to all white people. Sam referenced this when describing 'law and order' political rhetoric as being integral to a southern strategy that appealed to racism; she was not the only student to emphasize rhetoric as being instrumental to maintaining a racial status quo, an important move that continued to decouple whiteness from the political economy of a specific place and time. In her essay, Lulu, another white student in the class, emphasized how "tough on crime" rhetoric was a way for politicians to mask racism. By specifically looking at the super-predator trope, Lulu described how white Americans supported increases in crime spending which would lead, she eventually concludes, to the birth of mass incarceration. Lulu argued in her essay that the purpose of this rhetoric was to "continue white supremacy and racial inequality", of which white people, as a collective, benefitted from.

> From the 1950s onward, since the majority of eligible voters were white due to discriminatory laws, campaigning politicians realized that the only way to win an election was to be extremely tough on crime, which really was just masked racism. These politicians are responsible for perpetuating the idea of the dangerous, violent, black male super-predator. The updated version of the super-predator, whose portrayal is strikingly similar to the portrayal of Jim Crow, was overrepresented in media in an attempt to instill fear in white Americans to gain their approval on harsher crime crackdowns. The idea of the super-predator does not exclusively exist within white communities, but also within the criminal justice system.

Lulu continued, in a later section of her essay, that "[t]he call for law and order by white Americans was not made in order to protect citizens, but rather, in order to ensure the continuation of white supremacy and racial inequality." As Lulu's excerpts suggest, whiteness as an organizing concept need not accrue any material benefits for those who subscribed to it, although it certainly had mater-

ial consequences for those who were on the receiving end of the policies it promoted and the violence it wrought. Instead, the representations that crystallized through its rhetoric were enough to drive psychological consequences, such as fear, that maintained the racial status quo. Decoupled from historical specificity, whiteness was made most relevant in the rhetoric and representations it created of nonwhite people and the privileges those representations accrued to those considered white. Although this process of decoupling did not happen in a uniform way across texts and interactions, it remains striking how whiteness was consistently conceived as benefitting, to some degree, all people who could identify as white, regardless of their material status. In the authoritative texts, whiteness was especially useful to keep poor and working class whites in solidarity with upperclass white people. While the class machinations were less clear in the interaction highlighted here and in the student essays, the desire for *all* whites to protect – even to the point of violence – whatever privilege they received through whiteness was present throughout.

Unchanging: How whiteness became the essence that remained over time

The move to decouple whiteness rhetorically from specific historical moments was aided by the move to make whiteness an unchanging force throughout time. Separated from the particulars of time and place, whiteness was represented in both authoritative and student texts as a force that has remained unchanged over more than 400 years. That is, what white people were protecting in the 17th century, was what they are protecting in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, and is what they will continue to protect in the 21st century. This essence of whiteness is what links past and present; it is what is inherited and passed down between generations of white people and what, some authors and students concluded, will be protected into the future. While the particulars of this force are ambiguous in the constructions across these texts, those who deployed this form of whiteness used the presence of continuing racial inequalities (e.g. disparities between whites and nonwhites) as a sign that this form of whiteness was indeed at work.

Authoritative texts. In making his argument for race-based reparations, Coates creates a whiteness that has been operating since the foundation of the United States and specifically indicts other kinds of class-based struggles as inadequate to address the "ancient brutality" of white supremacy. In Coates's explanation of the inadequacies of affirmative action to combat racial inequality–a part of his larger goal of advocating for reparations–he begins by stating that "[s]ome black people always will be twice as good. But they generally find white predation to be thrice as fast" (196). Situating this pattern as a part of an ever present cycle–as "always" available–allows Coates to further describe this dynamic of racial inequality as an "ancient brutality". The point that Coates makes here is that affirmative action did not go far enough to address this ancient brutality because "America was built on the preferential treatment of white people–395 years of it. Vaguely endorsing a cuddly, feel-good diversity does very little to redress this." In this telling from Coates, whiteness, and the white supremacy that enforces it, has a long, consistent history of being the primary way life in the United States was (and is) organized. Going a step further than Alexander's assertion that lower-class whites rejected multiracial class-based organizing in favor of solidarity with upper-class whites, Coates argues here that class-based policies to ameliorate inequality in the present do not fully acknowledge the ever-present specter of whiteness. Coates goes on to suggest that white people on the left of the political spectrum have a hard time acknowledging this reality, and that they are "loath to invoke white supremacy as an explanation for anything." Instead, they would rather substitute "a broad class struggle for an anti-racist struggle, hop[ing] to assemble a coalition by changing the subject." It is this ignorance of the fact that the United States was "erected on a foundation of white supremacy" that attempts to "cover the sin of national plunder with the sin of national lying" (Coates 196-198). It is that foundation of white supremacy that continues to permeate into the present, and in that sweep of time, the whiteness of 395 years ago continues to operate in the present.

There are, of course, powerful reasons to connect past and present that go beyond rhetoric. In historicizing the present and showing how where we are now is not by accident, but rather, the result of specific (in)actions, both Coates's and Alexander's texts are providing readers with useful tools for making sense of the world they find themselves in. And students in this class found that having access to those powerful arguments gave them more confidence in being able to speak on present day injustices, something that I explore in more depth at the end of this chapter and beyond. My point in calling attention to the unchanging nature of the whiteness that is constructed in these authoritative texts is not to argue that there are not reasons to draw connections, and even through lines, between past and present; rather, I am interested in how young people make sense of that through line and how that through line both illuminates and obscures particularities about the past, present, and future.

In addition to making the argument that whiteness has been around since the foundation of the United States, Coates goes on to argue that we, in the present day, continue to be haunted by that initial formation of whiteness. He uses the imagery of debt to make an analogical comparison to a system of white supremacy in the United States. Because debt requires that what is paid back be the same as what was charged (that is, a person pays back debt in the same form of how they accrued that debt), the idea that the whiteness that was operating centuries ago continues to operate in the present is further solidified through that analogy. In the following passage, notice how Coates rhetorically constructs oppression of black people as a continuation of enslavement, creating a through line of durable inequality.

> Having been enslaved for 250 years, black people were not left to their own devices. They were terrorized. In the Deep South, a second slavery ruled. In the North, legislatures, mayors, civic associations, banks, and citizens all colluded to pin black people into ghettos, where they were overcrowded, overcharged, and undereducated. Businesses discriminated against them, awarding them the worst jobs and the worst wages. Police brutalized them in the streets. And the notion that black lives, black bodies, and black wealth were rightful targets remained deeply rooted in the broader society. Now we have half-stepped away from our long centuries of despoilment,

> promising, 'Never again.' But still we are haunted. It is as though we have run up a credit card bill and, having pledged to charge no more, remain befuddled that the balance does not disappear. The effects of that balance, interest accruing daily, are all around us. (Coates, 178)

Through the "second slavery" of Jim Crow in the South, and the government-sanctioned discriminatory lending, stifled employment opportunities, and unequal funding in black neighborhoods in the North, the effects of whiteness–that is, the maintenance of the racial hierarchy of slavery–continued to be felt long after slavery was legally abolished. The whiteness that maintained the slave economy continued, and for Coates, continues, to target "black lives, black bodies, and black wealth."

Coates's case for reparations was not the only authoritative text to rhetorically construct whiteness as unchanging since its inception. In her text, Alexander makes an argument across time to argue that the resistance to racialized social control at various moments in US history–in particular, the 1890s and the 1990s–was thwarted by the same system that continued to appeal to poor and working class whites. As she has established in decoupling whiteness from any specific historical moment, what appealed to poor and working class whites was whiteness, which ensured that they kept their position above African Americans along a racial hierarchy. In the excerpt below, notice how Alexander juxtaposes two distinct moments in time, each with their own unique historical specificities, as achieving similar goals of racial social control. Much like Coates's analogical reasoning to debts, this juxtaposition serves to representationally freeze whiteness so that whiteness at one moment can be seen to be the same whiteness operating at any and all moments.

> In the early 1990s, resistance to the emergence of a new system of racialized social control collapsed across the political spectrum. A century earlier, a similar political dynamic resulted in the birth of Jim Crow. In the 1890s, Populists buckled under the political pressure created by the Redeemers, who had successfully appealed to poor and working-class whites by proposing overtly racist and increasingly absurd Jim Crow laws. Now, a new racial caste system–mass incarceration–was taking hold, as politicians of every stripe competed with each other to win the votes of poor and working-class whites, whose economic status was precarious at best, and who felt threatened by racial reforms. As had happened before, former allies of African

> Americans–as much as conservatives–adopted a political strategy that required them to prove how 'tough' they could be on 'them,' the dark-skinned pariahs (Alexander, 56).

Whether it be Populists in 1890 or Third-Way Democrats in the 1990s,[9] whiteness dominated each movement so that both white friends and foes of African Americans worked to maintain the racial status quo. Through the imagery of debts that are accrued on an ancient brutality, the authoritative texts constructed an image of whiteness that meant that the whiteness that was formed in the past is the same whiteness that continues to operate today. In each time period that it operates within, whiteness functions to perpetuate a system of racialized social control. In the next section, I show how two student texts built on the authoritative texts to similarly construct whiteness as unchanging across time.

Student texts. I found the idea that whiteness was unchanging across time most frequently in the subcode of *white inheritance*; I coded 28 instances of this specific code across student interviews and essays and this idea was present in six of the eight students I spoke to or whose essays I read closely. Jordan, an African American student, demonstrated a unique uptake of the rhetorical construction of whiteness present in the authoritative texts. In Jordan's essay, she described a sweep of history where "many white people" created organizations to diminish and repeal black progress during Reconstruction and after the election of President Obama. She then used this comparison across time to create a generality or rule about how whiteness works: "When the country accomplishes something, many people stop working to improve the country." In the excerpt below, notice how Jordan

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[9] For historical context, the difference between these two political movements should be noted. While Third-Way Democrats sought a way to reconcile Left-wing and Right-wing politics to build a coalition which signaled a distinctive rightward shift in the Democratic Party, Populists of the 1890s who organized themselves as "middle of the road" party advocates were attempting to eschew corporate politics of both Northern Republicans and Southern Democrats. Being "middle of the road" was not to concede to either party since both were controlled by corporate interests; rather, being "middle of the road" was to take a stand against a financial system that did not benefit most Americans. The political situations between the two time periods were drastically different. Furthermore, populists in southern states, like Texas, Georgia, and South Carolina, were often violently targeted, sometimes fatally, for their resistance to Southern Democrat power. This does not mean that populism, writ large, was an oasis of racial equality, but that conditions at the time were much more complicated than this excerpt allows. For more detail, see: Goodwyn, 1978; Fields, 1982.

juxtaposes two distinct time periods to rhetorically construct whiteness at one time period as equivalent to whiteness at another, even though the time periods are separated by over a century.

> However, historically, the periods of times that should have lead to the most social progression also lead to a sharp increase in the boldness of people who stand against that social progression. During Reconstruction, as black people were gaining more access to public office and introducing policies and programs that would greatly improve the lives of black Americans, many white people were creating and gaining support for white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan. After Obama was elected, there was a similar rise in public support for white supremacist groups and the next president was a man who ran on a racist platform. When the country accomplishes something, many people stop working to improve the country. They remove the troops and they start saying that racism is over, but that allows opposition to grow stronger and make large gains that reverse the hard work that has been done.

Jordan's sentence about the amassing of support for white supremacist organizations during Reconstruction is followed by a sentence detailing a "similar rise in public support for white supremacist groups" after the election of Obama. As Jordan would describe to me in a later interview, this was a history that she felt she was living and I see in her connecting the white supremacist rhetoric of Donald Trump to the rhetoric of Reconstruction-era Democrats as a way to understand a presidency that was deeply unnerving for many. I also see, in connecting events that were separated by over a century, a sense that the whiteness that was operating during Reconstruction is the same whiteness that elected Donald Trump. The similar support of white supremacist groups across time leads Jordan to conclude that when "they remove the troops and they start saying racism is over", gains for black Americans are most vulnerable to a recapitulation to whiteness.[10]

Whereas Jordan used juxtaposition, similar to Alexander, to make whiteness unchanging across time, Lulu used the language of legacies to connect past and present. Much like Coates's analogies to debt, the legacy of whiteness that functioned and continues to function to exclude black

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[10] In the world of literary criticism, this juxtaposition of large swaths of time has been noted in speculative fiction by Black authors who engage in the haunting modality, such as Octavia Butler, Ishmael Reed, David Bradley, Phyllis Alesia Perry, and Toni Morrison, among others (for a more detailed exploration of haunting in literature, see: Dubey, 2010. This juxtaposition of time is often framed through the device of time travel. For an interesting examination of the pedagogical potential of time travel fiction in history education, see Matthews (2021).

people from the benefits of American life. She called this the "discriminatory legacy" of Reconstruction, specifically linking that time period to the present day through the language of legacies. The language of legacies allowed Lulu to make an argument where the injustices of one time period are directly felt in the injustices of our own, and they are connected though "racist policies and practices that have disabled black Americans" from full participation in this system. As Lulu and others have argued, these racist policies and practices are examples of whiteness at work.

> This system disabled blacks from obtaining a mortgage and excluded them from a fundamental part of American freedom--homeownership. The legacy of this exclusion is very present today in terms of economic disparity between white and black households. In *The Case for Reparations*, Coates details the Pew Research Center's estimation that, "white households are worth roughly 20 times as much as black households...only 15 percent of whites have zero or negative wealth, more than a third of blacks do." The economic disparity between black and white Americans is rooted in racist policies and practices that have disabled black Americans from remotely equal fiscal independence. The black socioeconomic exclusion from freedom the government created is proof of the discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction in the United States.

Specifically drawing on Coates's examples, Lulu used the language of legacies–specifically the legacy of whiteness and the discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction–to make the past relevant and active in the present. These legacies can be seen in the disparities between white families and black families in the aggregate.

To more fully demonstrate the afterlives of this particular construction of whiteness that was presented in the authoritative texts, I next provide a case study of one student working with and complicating the rhetorical moves of decoupling whiteness and presenting it as unchanging. In presenting this abbreviated case study, my goal is to show that the view of whiteness presented in the authoritative texts was compelling enough to be salient in the student's text and interviews. However, the student did not simply regurgitate the ideas in the authoritative texts; rather, he was able to creatively assemble the historical events present in the texts to reach conclusions that may go beyond what the authors of those authoritative texts may have intended.

Duncan: A short story of "set ups", "turning points", and skepticism about the future

Duncan, an African American student, had a long history at GLS. Duncan's older brothers and sisters had attended GLS, and at least two of them had also had Mr. Sumner as a teacher for United States history. The rapport between Mr. Sumner and Duncan was friendly, and although Mr. Sumner was not Duncan's advisor, Mr. Sumner had a close relationship with Duncan's family. In one of our interviews, Duncan spoke highly of what he had learned in Mr. Sumner's class (Interview, 10-30-2019). Starting first with Duncan's essay, I present a close and sustained examination of Duncan's construction of whiteness. While what Duncan produced here is similar in structure to other students in the class, there are slight differences in his implications of what this whiteness meant. This examination allows me to present a short case of what this specific rhetorical construction of whiteness privileged in thinking about the future for Duncan.

In his writing, Duncan presented a clear patterning of history, much like the patterns of history Alexander and Coates presented in their authoritative texts. In Duncan's narrative telling, United States history from the end of the Civil War to the 2016 election has been comprised of a series of "set ups" and "turning points" that have maintained racial inequality. Duncan was able to create continuity between over 150 years of history by emphasizing the unchanging nature of black oppression at the hands of white people. Similar to the authoritative texts, Duncan described how particular rhetorical forms were persuasive to lower and middle class white people. By making whiteness relevant in the same way after its creation to enforce race-based slavery, Duncan abstracted whiteness from a specific time and place, looked at unequal outcomes between white and blacks, and concluded that whiteness was relevant in all times and places equally. In the excerpt that follows, Duncan describes a particular "turning point" in this long history by describing how the War on Drugs developed, and pays close attention to how specific anti-black rhetoric was persuasive to lower and middle class white people. Notice how whiteness becomes a psychological force based on hatred in Duncan's construction.

> Nixon's successor Ronald Reagan furthered the cause aggressively, bringing in the concept of a "welfare queen" a very poor black woman who took advantage of the system in place for her. Persona's like these fostered more hate for the black community particularly amongst lower and middle class white people who felt as though black people were being rewarded for their lack of work. Because of the hatred that had been cultivated, the war on drugs progressively received more public backing, and the tactics being used were allowed to be more aggressive.

In Duncan's telling, much like the authoritative texts that were central in the classroom, less financially well-off white people were most susceptible to racist rhetoric and appeals for white solidarity. However, Duncan built on those authoritative texts as well by making the psychological components of whiteness more central in his narrative. While other students described the psychological components of whiteness in terms of protecting privileges, Duncan described it in this passage as an accumulation of hatred. Some researchers have talked about this move to psychologize racism as a move to individualize racist actions, making those actions more interpersonal than systemic (see Wills, 2019). However, I believe the work that Duncan and his classmates do to construct whiteness to be slightly different than making racism about individual white people. Instead, Duncan is constructing whiteness as a phenomenon or force that actively structures the lives of black people in ways that go far beyond individual bad actors. In other words, I do not believe that a move to psychologize racism is automatically a move to individualize racism. This nuance can be seen prominently in how Duncan concludes his essay.

As Duncan concluded his essay, he looked toward the future and argued that since these "set ups" continued to work against black people the road to "true freedom" was far from certain, and could not merely be guaranteed by individual white people behaving better. Duncan saw this racial hierarchy as being a key component to the "legacy of America that right when it looks like black people are making serious progress, the white people in power do something to punch back." Duncan read the history he had learned as suggesting that "the set ups [of black people] won't stop happening" and "the country will be stuck in this vicious cycle for years to come." While there is cer-

tainly a psychological component to Duncan's read of this history, in that white people (and particularly white people in power) are pathologically bound to "punch back" against any sign of black progress, the patterning of the history is most significant. The "vicious cycle" is one where some crack in the racial hierarchy leads, inevitably in Duncan's narrative, to a reorganization of white power. Much like Alexander's and Coates's texts, Duncan's essay constructs whiteness as being ever present in the past and likely to be sustained in the future. Because whiteness is constructed outside of specific historical moments, the conditions that made appeals to white solidarity appealing for a particular subset of that group in a particular moment are unclear; as a result, whiteness is a specter that hovers over every sign of racial equality, ready to re-instate a racial hierarchy.

This construction of whiteness was not only present in Duncan's essay, but was also there when Duncan talked about this history. In one of the interviews that I conducted with Duncan, he further recontextualized his essay by stating how whiteness was a part of human nature for white individuals. In the excerpt below, I had just asked Duncan about an idea I thought was prominent in his classroom – that of a white backlash to nonwhite social, political, or economic progress – and wanted to get his thoughts on it.

> **Duncan**: That's like what I wrote my essay on. Yeah. I do think that. It explains pretty much everything, in why everything is the way it is now, and why everything went the way it did in the past. Because, like I said, people don't like giving up their power. And there had been very strong transitions, and those transitions have not been met well. There's always been some supporters response, whether it's been active or through the voting polls, essentially. There's always some sort of response to the shifts in power, to the potential shifts in power because they never get to the point where they could get. They never reach the summit. They're always stopped somewhere. Even if you've had these really high ideals of what racial equality could look like, there was always some sort of, I don't know exactly the right word to describe it. A roadblock-
> **Allena**:-A roadblock, or an obstacle, or something that was limiting that progress actually happening.
> **Duncan**: Yeah. It's kind of trying to turn around, people end up carrying it around. It's like a roller coaster, where you reach that point that's blocked off because in the design how, if you would keep going, you'd be falling off. And so the roller coaster stops, and then starts going back the other direction, hurdling in the other direction.

In Duncan's telling, even "high ideals of what racial equality could look like" were no match for the force of whiteness that functioned as an ever-present roadblock to progress for black people. In contrast to individualizing accounts of racism, Duncan's description of how racial inequality was reproduced was supernatural, working outside of the actions of any particular person, for good or ill. In a powerful move of decoupling whiteness from particular times and places, Duncan built on the authoritative texts to make whiteness spaceless and timeless, and ultimately outside of human control.

In this same interview, Duncan continued to explain how white people operate in the world, but expanded this operation to make predictions about how they would operate in the future. He concluded by emphasizing how much white people benefit from racism and that they would not be willing to give up these benefits.

> **Allena**: And it seems to me, and again tell me if I'm not getting this right, but what you're saying causes that white backlash, is just not wanting to give up power.
> **Duncan**: Yeah, being tied up with power.
> **Allena**: Do you think anything else causes that, or is that the big thing for you?
> **Duncan**: I think, yeah, the entitlement to power is most certainly the biggest thing, and also like even if it's not an entitlement, just want, a will to assured their place, their children's place, et cetera. It might be subconsciously seeing how they've treated black people, and knowing that that's not how they want their lives to unfold. That's not how they want their children to be treated, and that's not the world that they want to be raising people in.
> **Allena:** So, do you think that there's a fear then?
> **Duncan**: Yeah, I think-
> **Allena**: If they're not in power, that's when that happens?
> **Duncan**: Yeah, it's for sure a fear. I do think that it's a panic response, it usually works, but I do think it's a panic response. They're scrambling…it is a scramble to figure out how to reclaim what they feel is theirs.
> **Allena**: Interesting. So this is kind of a pessimistic question, potentially, but do you think that'll ever change?
> **Duncan**: I think that it would take so much. I don't think they can change completely.
> **Allena:** Yeah. And when you're saying they, who do you mean by that?
> **Duncan:** I mean white people.
> **Allena:** Okay. Generally or specific kinds?
> **Duncan:** I mean, for the most part, generally, because they just obviously, like I said, there've been different methods, but they follow the same patterns. So I don't think that there's ever going to be a world where, because I think that a lot of people make the false assumption that everybody in the country thinks that racism is a negative if they don't enjoy racism and stuff like that…I feel like if you look at them, I've been realizing how people

> keep arguing on the basis that if you confront racism, it'll change. There are people who will do everything in their power to uphold racism because they know how much they benefit from it.
> **Allena:** Interesting.
> **Duncan:** And they'd rather live seeing themselves as superior, as opposed to living in world where they don't have as many privileges as black people.

Here, Duncan provides a prediction for what will likely happen in the future concerning racial inequality. He has already articulated how important he sees a "white backlash" to non-white, particularly black, racial progress being. While there may be some moves to individualize the white backlash when Duncan talked about specific families wanting to ensure certain privileges and access to power, Duncan does return to the idea that whiteness functions as a superstructure that organizes white people's actions, even outside of their own control when he suggests that "I don't think they [white people] can change completely." Confronting racism, for Duncan here, is not an effective strategy because racism benefits white people; the racial status quo is powerfully set and operates outside of human control, even as individual people may work to uphold that status quo as well. While there may be slight equivocations on how this force actually functions, Duncan is clear and consistent from essay to interview that the chances of achieving true racial progress and freedom for black people is unlikely due to the force of whiteness.

Discussion and Conclusion

As I have shown through the previous examples, the decoupling of whiteness from specific historical moments, along with the unchanging nature of whiteness, allowed students, their teacher, and the authoritative texts they relied upon to construct whiteness as a transhistorical phenomenon. That is, the whiteness that was created at a specific point in the past continues to drive the racial inequality that we see today because it is the inheritance of white people in the present. Unmoored by space or time, whiteness, as a concept, is free to move in the present as the essential attribute of white people that continues to drive racial inequality. However, there were some important distinctions between how authoritative texts constructed whiteness and how students then drew upon those texts to

(re)contextualize that concept. That is, there were multiple and heterogenous rhetorical afterlives of whiteness in the classroom I observed.

Rather than simply regurgitate what the texts suggested, students in the classroom engaged in creative assembly of history to construct their own version of transhistorical whiteness; this was heavily influenced by the authoritative texts, but was not a simple carbon copy of those constructions. In other words, the rhetorical afterlives of whiteness as a concept in this classroom was not linear or predictable, but was still greatly indebted to the authoritative texts they drew upon. Whereas the authoritative texts emphasized the white solidarity between lower class whites and upper class whites, the idea of class as a whole was not as prevalent in student constructions. Rather, students emphasized the psychological factors of fear and hatred as motivating racist actions to protect the privileges of whiteness. These psychological forces did not preclude students from identifying whiteness in a structural or systemic way. Instead, they often described a particular relationship between rhetoric found in law and policies and the effects that rhetoric had on the collective emotions of white people.[11] Across the texts, however, there was a great deal of emphasis on the appeal of racist rhetoric to white people.

Seeing whiteness in this way has distinct possibilities and limitations, as was demonstrated in some of the excerpts presented above. One of the greatest possibilities is that history is seen by students as relevant to the present and usable. Rather than learning about whiteness as a phenomenon tethered to a particular time and place that may or may not be relevant to this moment, seeing whiteness as having a long legacy makes the past important to this moment. This is particularly clear in a conversation that I had with Lulu. In one of her interviews, she described learning history in

[11] This finding is particularly interesting, in light of intellectual histories that describe why and how an individualistic or psychological basis for racism became prominent (see Gordon, 2015) at the expense of more social structural or political economic approaches to understanding racism. In constructing whiteness in this way, the students and the texts they drew upon seem to be combining a psychological approach with a social structural approach to understanding racism. That is, whiteness was both the particular white privilege individuals hold and was embodied or upheld through social relations shaped by laws and rhetoric.

this way as being able to connect threads that were once so complicated to her as to seem hopelessly unknowable.

> **Lulu:** But I feel... that I can understand the connections between things outside of my... like, direct line of vision now...which gives me... the confidence to not only speak about issues that I'm passionate about, which- (laughs) there are a lot. Um, but also... like, dissect them and question even the things that I'm taught and... dissect my own experiences. And now that I feel that I've had- I have this basis of knowledge, like-I- I... It sounds cheesy but I kind of feel like, there- like, there are no limits now.
> **Allena**: Right.
> **Lulu:** Like, I can-really take that anywhere and it's just so... it's so exciting to me
> **Allena:** Yeah!
> **Lulu:** ... to know now, like-... I can understand... these topics that are so complicated and I do think that since- I don't know if this really gets back to your question, but I do think that that sense of... wanting to understand so much more than I can immediately see and wanting to be involved and engaged, I think that's always been in me, but I don't think I've... felt the confidence in- with my own knowledge connected to my feelings-to explain them.

As a white student, Lulu, through constructing this transhistorical whiteness, was able to "dissect" her own experiences in ways that allowed her to feel a sense of possibility. Although, as she stated elsewhere in her interview, this sometimes lead her to conclude that the stories she had been told were not true, it gave her a sense that she could do something different in the future. This, however, was just one response to learning this history. In the chapter on bearing witness, I will demonstrate how one white student, Sara, came to see herself as implicated in this history and took a more active stand in what white people could do as a result of this history.

The possibilities of this approach are powerful, as are the limitations. If whiteness is unchanging across time, it is difficult to see what actions (if any) could change what Duncan had called a "vicious cycle". Furthermore, there is little space to see resistance by black actors (and to whatever extent other non-white voices are included in the curriculum, such as Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism) as having any meaningful impact on history. At the end of Duncan's interview, he described being unclear about what non-white people could do to change the outcome he saw as most likely in the future. While he was clear that whiteness is an issue for white people to finally tackle, it was unclear what role nonwhite people could have in this future.

Allena: You talked a lot about systems and structures and everything, and I wonder... It's kind of like an imagining moment. Could you imagine a different way of structuring society, where there wasn't this kind of white superiority or feeling of white superiority? Do you think that there could be a different way of structuring society?
Duncan: I think there could be a different way, but yeah, my first instinct is telling me that you have to wipe everything clean first. I don't think that you can maybe restructure after, following the way that things have been for a while. I think that there are ways to improve, in getting more black people of power, getting more black people in control of this company, this company, et cetera. So eventually, ideally, people will become more normalized for generations growing up. But at the same time, I do think parents can quite easily tell their kids this sucks. This is unacceptable. And obviously, it's up to when they grow up, they will be able to develop their own opinions. So ideally, if they see more black people in power, then their faith will hold strong against their racist parents, et cetera. And then there will become more people who are anti-racist, and will allow change to happen. But I don't think that that can ever happen in full.
Allena: Ever?
Duncan: Ever is obviously a really long time.
Allena: For all of time, Duncan.
Duncan: I do think it can happen, eventually. But I don't think that it could happen in a 5, or 15, or 20 year, however long. Obviously, it's not the form of evolution where it takes millions and millions of years, but I think-It'd be close to that.
Allena: Close to it, not quite, but close.
Duncan: So we're putting it in 20 to 2 million years time frame (laughs)

Outside of “wiping everything clean”, the possibility that Duncan had for the future was based on black people being in positions of power; the example that Duncan gave was black people holding more corporate power. These representations of black people would, over time, become normalized so that younger generations of white people could have a strong “faith” to hold against their racist family members. However, Duncan concluded, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that this would take a very long time and was, ultimately, doubtful if it could ever happen fully.

Additionally, the images of whiteness that were constructed in this transhistorical view were all encompassing; there was little for nonwhite people to do beyond react to whatever new oppression was thrown at them. This is a core challenge I have identified with constructing whiteness in this way. It is a totalizing discourse in that whiteness, in an essential and unchanging form, drives the history of racial oppression. A question that arises from this analysis, then, is how to talk about racial inequality without advancing a discourse that not only essentializes oppression across time but

also, however inadvertently, the oppressed. For example, although not one of my main codes, I did code for moments where students wrote or emphasized in interviews Black agentive action. While I coded at least one moment of Black action in six of the eight essays, for a total of ten moments, these moments were fleeting in comparison to whiteness as an explanation (53 moments coded across student texts). Constructing whiteness as timeless and unchanging, decoupled from particular historical moments to achieve particular material outcomes, has consequences for how young people view what is possible in the future and for that reason, these constructions – as they unfold in the texts educators draw on, the conversations that unfold in class, and the works that students produce – must be taken seriously, in all of their complexity.

CAUSAL STORYTELLING: CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT ACROSS PAST AND PRESENT

In this chapter, I examine the rhetorical practices that shaped how transhistorical whiteness was made legible and credible as a driving force of racial inequality across time. In this classroom, students and Mr. Sumner engaged in what I call causal storytelling – a recognizable patterning of discursive moves – to explain the durability of racial inequality. The structure of causal stories [(1) a historical argument composed of a claim and a narrative that wove pieces of evidence together, (2) intertextual citations that bolstered claims, and (3) past-present connections] worked together to create a sense that the past continued to operate, unmediated, in the present.

In the previous chapter, my goal was to demonstrate how transhistorical whiteness, the force that continues to haunt in the present through persistent racial inequalities, was constructed and flowed across authoritative texts, classroom interactions and conversations, and student essays. In this chapter, my aim is to show how transhistorical whiteness was made legible (recognizable) and credible (believable) through rhetorical practices. In other words, by inserting this construction of whiteness within a recognizable and repeatable framework, it was more easily transferable across settings. In this chapter, I ask: how do young people creatively assemble history to link the past to present when narrating the durability of racial inequality in the United States? I find that in creating causal stories, the template of which can be found in authoritative texts, but which the young people I observed built upon in unexpected ways, the idea that whiteness continues to act unmediated in the present is made rhetorically recognizable. That is, whiteness was made relevant through the consistent recognition of racial disparities across time and, through causal stories, whiteness haunts the present day. Causal stories create explanatory models that link the past to the present, and the act of causal story-

telling positions the storyteller as providing some kind of insight into the present moment. Although not unique to the domain of history, the need to link past and present does provide a kind of historicity or historical focus to causal storytelling that, at least in the texts I study, makes for interesting assemblages of historical events.

As was alluded to in the previous chapter on constructing transhistorical whiteness, the ability to identify and narrate the history of racial oppression in the United States depends in large part on locating a point of origin in the historical record. This process of finding a "starting point" or origin serves multiple purposes in storytelling, as origins serve multiple purposes in storytelling. Some scholars emphasize the distinction between origin points, which are seen to have an otherworldly quality, and beginnings, which are rooted in historical space and time. For example, literature and postcolonial scholar Edward Said argued that

> …beginnings are first and important but not always evident, that beginning is basically an activity which ultimately implies return and repetition rather than simple linear accomplishment, that beginning and beginning-again are historical whereas origins are divine, that a beginning not only creates but is its own method because it has intention (1985, xvii).

For Said, beginnings, rather than origins, are rooted in the secular and corporeal world, whereas origins exist in the spiritual world. I use the idea of origins here, though, because when it comes to the history and the continuation of racial inequality, the boundaries between the secular and the spiritual tend to slip, as the construct of haunting makes clear. This slippage is productive, insofar as it helps me leave unresolved, for the moment, the layers of meaning unfolding in this space.

Locating an origin point in a story serves political and ethical purposes; its location is meant to foreground some aspects of the world at the expense of others. The study of the political purposes of origin stories is not a new one, as political scientist Joanne Wright makes clear. Looking at examples of origin stories from the Judeo-Christian creation myths to the myth of the metals from Plato's *Republic*, Wright argues that "Political beginnings, the beginnings of politics and power, are

elusive to us: we are unlikely to arrive at a truth about how things got to be as they are" (2004, p. 7). And yet, we continue to tell these stories. Wright highlights several possibilities as to why. Beginnings, she argues (and, unlike Said, she does not differentiate between beginnings and origins), "set the course for what is to follow; [they] carve out an identity for those who see their experiences reflected in myth" (ibid). Most importantly, origin stories "serve a heuristic purpose" designed to both support the exploration of problems and questions deemed "fundamental" while also being "infused with, and driven by, power" (p. 8). In this process, Wright sees origin stories as intimately interested in essentialism, or the process of getting to the essence of a problem, culture, or collectivity: "…the political origins discourse assumes that origins contain essential and indispensable data from which political solutions are [molded]" (p. 9). In other words, for an origin to be deemed relevant for the moment of its retelling, it needs to contain some essential truth that helps the teller and the listener to make sense of their present moment. In the case of my classroom of interest, the essence **that** was transmuted across time was whiteness and the work it had done over time to perpetuate racial inequality. These features of origin stories lead Wright to conclude that "the desire to *know* origins constitutes only part of the fascination with the subject; this desire to *know* is, in fact, overshadowed by the desire to *make political use* of origins. The impetus to 'uncover' the origins of politics and power is never dissociated from the politics of the present" (p. 11, *emphasis in original*). Similar to how the work of knowing the past cannot be disentangled from the tensions of the present (Brown & Brown, 2010; Matthews, 2018), the impetus in telling such stories is tied to the politics surrounding the moment of its telling.

The origins imperative is not only present in political projects that mean to uphold the status quo; as Hemming (2011) and Nash (2019) demonstrate, origin discourses are present in corrective and radical projects as well. Looking at the storytelling practices of primarily Western feminist scholars and departments in the modern university, Hemming identified dominant narrative tropes

around how scholars narrate the development of feminist theory. This identification lead Hemming to argue that no retelling of the development of feminist theory is neutral: "They [the stories] position their teller as a heroine of the past, present, and future of Western feminist theory. To dispute where we have ended up in the present is to dispute not only a given account of feminist theory, but also its proper subject" (p. 5). How the story is assembled makes a claim about who or what is the focus of political change; for example, the assemblage also makes claims about who should or should not lead that change and who gets to decide. In her work, Nash looks specifically at the kind of feminist storytelling that centers or attempts to center Black feminisms. In particular, Nash examines how intersectionality has circulated as the prominent contribution of Black feminisms and how this storytelling around intersectionality works to create, as the primary contribution of Black feminists to feminist theory, a return to a "true" understanding of intersectionality. Nash eschews this kind of storytelling and, instead, imagines what other ways of feeling black feminist, other ways of being black feminist and doing black feminist labor (pp. 58, 115) that negate the confines of the storytelling that has emerged around intersectionality. By examining, and eventually rejecting, how feminist storytelling positions Black feminisms as owning the concept of intersectionality, Nash invites a new way for Black feminists to engage with that concept. In both Hemming's and Nash's work, then, origin stories work to create particular political subjects that serve particular ends, even within work that seeks to disrupt oppressive logics.

Therefore, origin stories represent a particular kind of causal storytelling in that they provide the teller (and the listener that agrees with the framing) a way to explain how society arrived at a particular moment through an explanatory narrative.[12] Unlike how others in the literature (e.g. Stone, 1989) described causal storytelling as primarily a way to understand how particular kinds of policy

[12] This is particularly true when academic discussions around race and racism intersect with policy or legal decisions. In fact, the so-called "origins debate" in understanding race and racism has been noted in historiographical trends in the study of enslavement for quite some time (Vaughan, 1989).

interventions come to be seen as feasible, I instead focus on how a sense of causality – that is, how one event leads to another – is fostered in causal storytelling, regardless of if the storyteller can articulate an intervention to "solve" the issue or not. While the literature I have cited has been interested in explaining the political purposes of explanatory storytelling, it has not engaged deeply with how history and historical events are assembled within these stories. That is, the fact that history is used is important, but this use of history is not usually seen as a historical argument in and of itself. Perhaps that is because this kind of storytelling is not disciplinary in the strict sense of the word; that is, this kind of storytelling is necessarily interested in the political concerns of the present-day, not only in fidelity to a historical record. Nevertheless, I believe that thinking of origin stories as telling us something about how people are making sense of history will give the field insight into historical thinking and learning as it unfolds in people's everyday practices. In this next section, I explore how history education researchers have conceptualized the political terrain of linking past to present through narratives. Furthermore, I posit how situating causal storytelling as a particular form of historical argumentation can open the field of history education to seeing everyday encounters with the past as meaningful to historical sense making.

Historical argumentation through abstract thinking

While those who have been most interested in the political consequences of causal storytelling have engaged with how a political subject is constructed vis-a-vis storytelling, those in history education who are interested in how young people use history to make sense of the present have thought primarily in terms of how young people develop a historical consciousness. For example, in Carretero's (2019; Lopez, Carretero, and Rodríguez-Moneo, 2015) work on historical narratives and power, he has focused primarily on how young people assemble historical events that have particular political consequences. He argues that in order

> …to teach a student the reasons for a present-day political problem and to contribute to the advancement of her historical consciousness three issues are really necessary: (1) to improve

> her understanding of social and political concepts in the sense of making them more abstract and complex, (2) to introduce a historical perspective showing a meaningful relation between past events and present issues, and (3) to make sense of an historical explanation in the form of narrative. That is, to historicize the situation considering its origins, causes, and consequences…It is important to remember that historical concepts and problems require a considerable amount of abstract thinking and cannot just be based on a direct perception of social events (p. 78).

Key, then, in Carretero's understanding of how historical consciousness develops in terms of relating past and present is the role of abstract thinking. Because causal stories are interested in connected past and present, usually by connecting a truth or idea that is relevant in both times and places, there is necessarily a degree of abstraction necessary in causal storytelling.

Through their ability to abstract concepts from one time and make them relevant to another, I argue that causal stories support the development of a particular form of historical consciousness. As the relevant literature has shown, causal stories – through their use of origins or beginnings, their use of abstractions that are necessary to link past and present, and their interest in highlighting political dimensions of the present – can be powerful rhetorical forms to assist in learning. Before I show how causal stories worked in the classroom context, I will first highlight some of the concepts key for my analysis.

Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I distinguish between stories and narratives. One way to think about the distinction is as an issue of scale. Stories are, in my analysis, larger than narratives; stories encompass multiple narratives and, as I will make clear in the findings section, because narratives are a part of a historical argument, a causal story encompasses multiple narratives within it. However, more importantly, is the issue of function. The purpose of a narrative is to organize details and, in the case of historical argument, narratives weave together pieces of historical evidence. While there are multiple purposes and functions of stories (see Bruner, 2002 and Kim, 2016 as examples), there are three functions that I am concerned with here. First, I am interested in the ability of stories to enable an experience

of connecting people to events they would not otherwise experience, due to historical, spatial, or ideological constraints. This is key in telling a causal story that takes as central events from the past. Second, I am interested in the ability of stories to create possible or imagined worlds through the connections they make available. This is key in telling a causal story that implies certain (im)possibilities for the future. Finally, I am interested in the ability of stories to implicate or involve both storyteller and story listener in a personal way (Kim, 2016, p. 12). While this function is not taken up directly in this chapter – I focus instead on how the story is structured – it is important for me to highlight that the following chapter on witnessing is intimately connected with the idea that stories involve the listener and teller personally.

In addition to the distinction between stories and narratives I offered above, two additional concepts are important for my analysis: chronotopic - or space/time – relationships and causality. These stories constitute a particular chronotopic relation (Goebel & Manns, 2020) between past and present. A chronotope is how specific time and space relations are represented in language and key to a causal story is how the past continues to operate in the present (e.g. how it continues to haunt). This haunting relation is constructed through the causal stories I present here by demonstrating how a past moment is not only the same as the present moment when describing the durability of racial inequality in the United States, but that the same force that lead to a similar outcome in the past continues to operate in the present. Additionally, the "causal" nature of the stories I highlight here is important. As I described when discussing "origin stories", the explanatory quality of the stories is key to their being considered causal. I do not use the word causal in a positivistic way, but I consider the kind of everyday causality that people use to understand and make sense of their world. The latter type of causality can be seen in the kind of explainer journalism made popular by mainstream media publications like *Vox*, *The Washington Post*'s Wonkblog, and *The New York Time's*'s "The Upshot" (Pippenger, 2015; Madrigal, 2014). It is the causality that helps a person, not necessarily an

expert, answer 'why' when moving throughout their world. Key to explanatory journalism is providing context for an event happening in the news, trying to give the reader a sense for *why* a news item is significant or *how* an event emerged. While Mr. Sumner did not use the language of explanatory journalism to describe his purposes in the classroom, the goals of the form can be seen as similar to the goals Mr. Sumner had for his own class.

For example, each day in class, one student was asked to come up to the front of the classroom and explain three news stories; one that was related to the United States, one that was related to some place outside of the United States, and one that was related to the unit being discussed. The students were specifically tasked with explaining why the story mattered to the class. After one such delivery of the news, Mr. Sumner reiterated his desire for students to develop a "cultural literacy" regarding why things happened by describing someone who, the class could agree, had no such literacy: Donald J. Trump. The student delivering the news explained a tweet of Trump's disparaging then presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren by citing the Trail of Tears, the imperialist removal of Indigenous peoples West from their homelands in the Southeast of the United States. Mr. Sumner called Andrew Jackson, the President responsible for the removal, "one of Trump's favorite Presidents" and implored the class that a close study of history was important, lest they become as ignorant as Trump. Mr. Sumner concluded his aside by stating that, "No matter your politics, we can all agree that Trump is no student of history" (Field Note, 2-11-2019).

Finally, Mr. Sumner saw, particularly for students at GLS, that a part of them having a strong cultural literacy was for them to understand their privileges. Inspired by Peggy McIntosh's seminal work on white privilege, Mr. Sumner stated that "in order to be someone who is culturally literate, they understand our history, they understand conflict, they understand racism, they understand sexism" (Interview, 11-21-2019). Understanding, and being able to explain, these systems was key to how Mr. Sumner organized his classroom and moments of causal storytelling were a key rhetorical

practice that students could engage in to demonstrate their understanding. Therefore, the concept of causality that I use is focused on the growing capacity of students to connect "now", the moment where they were either interviewed or writing, to "then", the moment(s) preceding their own. Stories, narratives, chronotopic relations, and causality all provide core conceptual framings in how I conducted my analysis.

Methods

Taking my field notes, audio and video recording, and interview transcripts, I highlighted moments where the past was juxtaposed to the present (N = 142). I took a wide sample of instances first, and then winnowed down to the moments where past forces seemed to be operating in the present in how the two times were juxtaposed (n = 36; for a description of storytelling structure codes, see Chapter I).[13] For those moments, I identified the structures of how that past was made to act on the present rhetorically using a key assumption of systemic functional linguistics (Coffin, 2009; Jewitt, Bezemer, O'Halloran, 2016): the function of language, what it does and how it does it, is central to understanding language. By starting with the social context within which this language is used, I was then able to see both how this language acts on and is acted upon by that social context. For example, in the context of causal storytelling, I am interested in *how* history is assembled and the *impact* that assemblage has on those in the social context. So, when I worked through a student essay, I looked at the language the student wrote and the interactions the student had that I was privy to leading up to that moment, in addition to how the student moved throughout the rest of the year in Mr. Sumner's class. In this way, the words in the essays were understood within the larger context of

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[13] Of those 142 storytelling codes, approximately 76% (n = 108) were coded as arguments, 25% (n = 36) were moments where past-present connections were made, 23% (n = 33) were moments of intertextuality, and 10% (n = 14) were instances where the storyteller made future connections or predictions. An individual excerpt could be coded as multiple elements of a storytelling code (the elements were not mutually exclusive), hence why the percentages add to more than 100.

the student's experience in the class, similar to how a single sentence within their essays were understood in relationship to the ideas leading up to it and following it.

Findings

Before I delve into the findings that help elucidate the structure of causal stories as they unfolded in this setting, I want to draw attention to where causal stories emerged in my data. In my analysis, I found causal stories primarily in written work and in one-on-one interviews. In fact, across all essays and three student interviews (out of twelve), I found at least one causal story. While there could be many reasons for the prevalence of causal storytelling in written form and in an interview setting, as opposed to the moment-to-moment interaction of the classroom, I posit three working hypotheses based on the function of causal storytelling in this setting.

First, a causal story functioned by providing an explanation that linked multiple events together across historical time and space. While there could be space for this kind of rhetorical practice in the classroom interactions, each individual class period was generally focused on looking closely at one or two events that were situated in a particular historical context. How that particular piece presented in one class period fit into the larger story arc was something that was demonstrated summatively, in the form of an essay or a one-on-one interview, which were done after the unit of interest. Second, because causal stories work by providing cohesive explanations, the storyteller must have a substantial amount of time to forward their own explanation. In the space of moment-to-moment interactions in this classroom, no one student could hold the floor, so to speak, for long enough to provide a compelling causal story. In other words, students may have advanced pieces of a causal story (a claim, for instance, or a past-present connection); however, causal stories that were constructed in essay writing or in one-on-one interviews consistently had the following three components: (1) a historical argument, (2) moments of intertextuality, and (3) past-present connections.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the kinds of questions that students were asked to answer in their essays and in their interviews also required them to make claims and back it up with evidence, something that happened, at times, in the classroom interaction but not always in a sustained way for the reasons I stated above. In the students essays, they were asked to answer the following prompt:

> What has been the legacy/history of race in America? We have been focusing primarily on the African-American community within our nation's history. We have studied the history from 1877 through today. In your view, how far have we come? Where are we now? What is left for us (as a nation and individuals) on this path to social and equal justice for all?

Such a prompt explicitly asked the students to make connections and explain a legacy, which made the use of a causal storytelling form more likely. In one-on-one interviews with students, I often asked them to engage in a process of sense making over time as well. While it is important and significant to think about the kinds of questions students were asked to answer, and I include those questions when they are relevant to provide context, it is all the more interesting that students' responses usually followed this causal storytelling form. The ubiquity of the form in responses could be interpreted as being too commonplace to be considered a finding; however, I interpret the ubiquity of the causal story form as evidence that this form held relevance for students to think historically in terms of haunting.

Components of Causal Stories

There are three primary components of causal stories in this context: (1) historical argument, which includes a claim and a narrative, (2) intertextuality, or moments where multiple voices were used to bolster a particular interpretation, and (3) past-present connections. I will describe each of these components in detail before providing two cases of students' causal storytelling.

<u>Historical Argument.</u> The presence of an historical argument in causal storytelling is what makes this rhetorical form an interesting case of disciplinary practices. Of course, this is not to say that making an argument that involves historical events is the same as historical inquiry (see, as an exam-

ple, the disciplinary response to the Trump administration's 1776 Commission report; that report uses historical events but would not be called historical inquiry by most historians ("AHA Condemns Report of Advisory 1776 Commission", January 20, 2021). However, there has been an increasing acceptance by historians to new methods and modalities of inquiry into the past. Additionally, **even** institutions that have upheld more traditional modes of historical inquiry have also recognized the need for a historical argument in a rhetorical practice that does not neatly align with prior disciplinary practices (see, as examples, Ta-Nehisi Coates's keynote speakership at a Harvard history conference detailing the relationship between universities and slavery, March 3, 2017; Saidiya Hartman's 2020 American Historical Association prize; and recent MacArthur Foundation grant winners in history that provide new methods and narrative structures for engaging the past). Causal storytelling is one example of such a practice. The claim need not come before the narrative, but it is what gives the narrative cohesion. Like most historical claims, the claims in causal stories are based on an interpretation of particular pieces of evidence. In the causal stories highlighted here, the evidence that is presented is focused on the legacy of Reconstruction and the so-called "race relations" that followed. As Voss, Wiley, and Sandak (1999) have argued, claims function as enthymemes, meaning they are arguments based on two or more propositions. In everyday conversation, some of the propositions may be suppressed or left implicit. In historical argumentation, however, the propositions must be made explicit; that is, there is nothing "obvious" about a historical argument. Rather, the argument must be proven through, as I will demonstrate, data and evidence that is interwoven through a narrative. In the following claim, for example, Lulu argued that the legacy of Reconstruction could be seen in the 13th amendment, one of the prominent Reconstruction Era amendments that the students studied in the class. Notice how the claim is constructed here; the 13th amendment allowed for the substitution of race-based slavery to other forms of race-based discrimination.

> The racist and discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction in America is evident through the substitution the 13th amendment introduced, along with the opportunities it created

> for racist policies and practices to disproportionately discriminate against people of color, specifically black Americans. Although the 13th amendment was intended to create racial equality, it merely created an opportunity for a social, economic, and legal rebirth of slavery in modern America. Laws that explicitly segregate and discriminate against blacks have been replaced by a "colorblind" legal and social rhetoric, which is just as (if not more) dangerous.

Lulu's claim about the 13th amendment not only described what the 13th amendment did but also the implications of what it did. In her first sentence, Lulu claimed that the 13th amendment substituted race-based slavery for continued race-based discrimination. She further develop**ed** this claim in the following sentences, arguing that "colorblind" rhetoric has continued race-based inequalities. She concluded her claim by stating that this colorblind rhetoric may be even more dangerous, presumably because it is less obviously race-based. Unlike enthymematic statements in everyday interaction, the propositions of Lulu's claim had to be developed to function as the first part of a historical argument.

However, claims do not work on their own. They are generally followed or preceded by a narrative that weaves together data points and the storytellers interpretation of those data points. A narrative is constructed in such a way that it might be convincing to others within a given discourse community. For historians, narratives are usually judged based on coherence, completeness, chronology, contextualization, and causality (Leinhardt, Stainton, Virji, and Odoroff, 1994). Because the students in the classroom were not writing for a historical audience, but for an audience of one – Mr. Sumner, their teacher – the judgement of their narratives was primarily based on coherence; could the students make an argument, based on evidence, that was clear and convincing? The following example of narrative comes from Rachel's essay. In it, she describes how Black activists worked to push the government to recognize and ultimately end the first Jim Crow system. Notice how, in her narrative, Rachel drew upon the words of Fannie Lou Hamer, spoken in 1955, to link together events separated in time like the Voting Rights Act (1965), the passage of the 24th amendment (1964), the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-1956), and the Little Rock Nine (1954). Through-

out this 10 years of activism, the narrative that Rachel wove was held together by the quote that champions the idea of Black power.

> Groups of activists such as SNCC, the NAACP and the SCLC began to organize sit-ins, protests and other modes of civil disobedience to get their voice heard and fight against the Jim Crow laws that had been put in place. Without the people who put their life on the line during the movements, it is unlikely that political steps such as the Voting Rights Act, the 24th Amendment or many supreme court decisions would have gone the way they had. The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Little Rock Nine were just some of the important social displays that activists put on during this time, all of which proved a different yet equally important point about the importance of integration and equal rights. Fannie Lou Hamer, a black democratic activist and leader once said, "We have to build our own power...The question for black people is not, when is the white man going to give us our rights, just remember when he gets ready he will take it right back. We have to take for ourselves."(Hamer, 1955). Despite the intense push for integration from much of the black community, there were people who simultaneously believed that it would be better not to integrate and enforced Black Nationalism, such as Malcolm X of the Nation of Islam.

Rachel's claim that organizing among Black people is a key component of understanding this history is substantiated through a narrative that interweaves evidence (SNCC, the Voting Rights Act, activist and organizer Fannie Lou Hamer) to substantiate that claim. Rachel's narrative concluded with an acknowledgement that not all members of the Black community desired integration. Read in light of her quote regarding Black power from Hamer, the concluding sentences could be read as describing another facet of Black power championed by a certain set of Black nationalist thinkers. Regardless, the narrative here weaves together actions and events across a decade of the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century, primarily by drawing creatively on Hamer's quotation.

Intertextuality. Intertextuality refers to the citations, references, similar structures and patterns of themes, transitive chains of authority (Oddo, 2014) and legitimation (van Leeuwen, 2008) used in a causal story generally to bolster an argument. Transitive chains of authority refers to how a rhetor might give herself more authority by drawing on or citing the authority of another. In Oddo's work, these transitive chains showed up when journalists uncritically repeated claims given to them by the White House regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction leading up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

By using the authority of the President, journalists made their claims equally authorial. These transitive chains of authority are also present in causal stories, where the storyteller selectively cites those who are seen by their audience as having legitimacy in the subject at hand. Again, those claims are incorporated into the story uncritically and serve to provide more weight to the storytellers explanation. These transitive chains are key to making a causal story credible, and are therefore closely tied to rhetorical forms of legitimation. While van Leeuwen discusses multiple forms of legitimation that happen through discourse, I am primarily interested in those forms of legitimation that authorize the claims being made or evidence being used by referencing an authority (van Leeuwen, 2007). In the following excerpt, taken from Victoria's essay, we can see her explain how the War on Drugs was a continuation of the forms of racial hierarchy present at different moments in the United States. This racial hierarchy was the result of appeals to racist white people. Notice the work that Victoria did in her prose to precontextualize the quotes she used, offering a flattering portrayal of her source before she interwove the quote.

> Esteemed writer Michelle Alexander argues that the War on Drugs "offered whites opposed to racial reform an... opportunity to express their hostility toward... black progress." (Alexander 54) Police would use "consent" searches to target individuals that might be in possession of illegal drugs. Officers could walk up an individual and ask if they can be searched for drugs and most of the time, the individual would agree out of fear. When speaking about the Fourth Amendment and drug searches in the 1980s, author Michelle Alexander writes about how the Court "acknowledged that... use of consent searches by the police depends on... ignorance (powerlessness)... of those... targeted." (Alexander 66) Police would also use minor traffic violations to stop motorists that they suspected of carrying drugs and even if there were no traffic violations, the Court deemed it legal for officers to do this since it wasn't their place to determine what the police thought was wrong.

First, Victoria labeled her source an "esteemed writer", a form of moral legitimation that positions Alexander as not only a knowledgeable source but one that is respected. Further, Victoria prefaced Alexander's next quote by pointing to Alexander's own historical research (that is, Alexander has consulted both the Fourth Amendment and records of drug searches in the 1980s). In the context of a historical argument, this type of research makes Alexander an authority on the topic, and Victo-

ria has, by quoting her, used a form of authorized legitimation to make her own claim. These forms of legitimation create, both within individual narratives and over the course of a story, transitive chains of authority where the storyteller (in this case, Victoria) positions herself as similarly authoritative through invoking the authority of the intertextual reference.

Past-Present Connections. Last, but certainly not least, of the components that make up a causal story is the creation of past-present connections; indeed, these connections form the foundation of what makes causal storytelling interesting as a facet of the haunting modality of historical thinking. In these moments, students rhetorically linked past and present in ways that sometimes had implications for the future. As I explored in the preceding chapter, past and present were often times linked through the concept of transhistorical whiteness, but this was not always the case. There **was** some room for variation here, related to what the point of origin is for the causal story. There were certainly moments where, as described in the introduction, the links between past and present were primarily descriptive or were used for illustrative purposes only. However, the links between past and present that I describe here are those that evoked the past in such a way that it was still at work in the present. This past-present relation can be seen as a specific kind of chronotopic relation (Goebel and Manns, 2020) that made possible specific kinds of chronotopic identities (Perrino and Kohler, 2020). Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of a chronotope as a specific spatial and temporal location, I argue that causal stories, through rhetorically making the past still present constitute a specific relationship of time and space. In the next chapter, I will detail the witness identity that this spatiotemporal relation made possible.

Take, as an example, the following excerpt from Lulu's essay. Here, Lulu argued that the label of "super predator" that was made famous in the 1990s through the passage of the Clinton crime bill actually has roots further in the past. Notice how Lulu connected past and present through the concept of the "super predator."

> The default "super-predator" identity for black men in the United States has remained the same from slavery, through Reconstruction, until today, with only minor cultural adjustments.The original super-predator gained fame during the Reconstruction era as Jim Crow; an unintelligent black man who was either a violent rapist or murderer, or a helpless and useless individual. The rebranding and rebirth of this stereotype began in the 1950s, through the racist social and political call for "law and order" during white Southern opposition to the Civil Rights Movement.

In her essay, Lulu connected the Reconstruction-era "Jim Crow" figure that served as the eponymous caricature for the Jim Crow South. By connecting past and present through the use of the racist "super predator" trope, Lulu was then able to conclude, later in her essay, that "[t]he unjust legacy of Reconstruction in the United States is demonstrated through the societal and legal reformation of the Jim Crow inspired super-predator." Rhetorically, Lulu connected past and present by reading the "super predator" figure back through time. The unique spatiotemporal configuration that inspired the super-predator trope in the 1990s could no longer be seen as unique, as the trope had roots more than100 years earlier. This removal of spatiotemporal uniqueness – another way to say this is that Lulu was abstracting the super predator trope from the 1990s in order to use that idea to understand a phenomenon from the 1890s – is key to how past-present connections operate in causal stories. While not a necessary component of causal stories, the above components (historical argumentation, intertextuality, and past-present connections) sometimes worked together to construct predictions about what will need to happen in the future. Not all students made predictions about the future in their causal storytelling, but when those predictions were made – as was briefly highlighted in Duncan's case in the previous chapter, and will be taken up more fully in the case of Sara in the following chapter – the causal story served as a resource for drawing conclusions about the future.

Causal Storytelling in Action: The cases of Sam and Jordan

In the following section, I detail how two students – Sam and Jordan – engaged in causal storytelling in their essays and in one-on-one interviews. Sam and Jordan are interesting comparative examples

of causal storytelling because both essays were about average, in the classrooms I observed, in how they were graded (A- and B+ respectively). Although both students constructed their causal stories in unique ways, their assessment of what their stories meant for the future were strikingly similar: both called for a reckoning with the past in the present. Furthermore, I was able to engage in additional conversations with both Sam and Jordan about what this history meant to them in the present. Their explanations about what this history meant for their lives, however, differed considerably. The tension between constructing unique stories, with different personal implications, all while having similar predictions or paths for the future will be explored in the discussion section below.

Jordan transferred to GLS in ninth grade. She identified as Black, and saw the most striking differences between GLS and her previous schools in terms of GLS's focus on "values" and "themes" that made the material relevant to students' lives (Interview, 4-19-2019). One theme that Jordan identified as being important in her study of US history was who and what the United States was for and who and what the United States could be. Jordan articulated that "It [the United States] was supposed to be for white Europeans from Northwest Europe.Um, and, over time, that's changed a lot. Um, it stopped being just north ... Northwest Europe, and it started being all of Europe (laughs)." As we continued talking, Jordan continued to assess the present moment and its relationship to this point of origin she identified: "Um, and, right now, it's kind of t- ... I don't even want to say it's terrible. It's not great. A lot is going on. And it's not pretty. But there is also, within it, small places of hope and happiness that give me hope for what it could be. And I think ... I think, eventually, after ... I don't think we're close yet, but, eventually, it could become a place where people genuinely do feel free and not just Northwestern Europeans." Jordan was cautiously optimistic about what could happen in the United States as it related to racial equality because she saw "small pockets of hope" that inspired her. Even as Jordan appreciated the approach to history, especially in the year I met her, she noted that discussions about race were sometimes hard "'cause all my other

classmates are white, and, like, this is just a schoo- ... this is, to some extent, just a school thing for them, but it's not to me" (Interview, 4-19-2019). She noted that this semester, which she had with Mr. Sumner, was better than the previous semester where she was only one of two kids of color in the class; she did not have Mr. Sumner the previous semester.

In the following excerpts that began Jordan's essay, she noted that the present–at the time of her writing, 2019–was significant because is marked the 400th anniversary of when an enslaved person was brought to the Jamestown Settlement of what would come to be known as Virginia. Jordan noted this anniversary when she delivered the news prior to writing her essay, stating that it was important to mark this anniversary, especially given the public outcry over instances of politicians in black face (including Governor Northam, of Virginia, Field Note 2-11-2019). Jordan was not alone in marking this occasion, as "The 1619 Project" from *The New York Times* would create a glossy spread and website later in that same year (The New York Times, *The 1619 Project*). In these excerpts, notice how Jordan described a moment where race-based slavery was not in effect but then shifted at critical moments: first, with Bacon's Rebellion, which "birthed" race and next, with the outlawing of race-based slavery and the "birthing" of race-based segregation. This brief narrative then allowed Jordan to claim that "after slavery was outlawed, segregation came as a way to continue to hold white people [above] black people."

> 2019 marks the 400 year anniversary of when the first enslaved person was brought to Jamestown. At that time, both white and black people worked as indentured servants. When Bacon's Rebellion happened, the upper class white people decided that the best way to prevent future resistance from indentured servants was to create a system that divided them into two unequal groups. It worked. Race in America was born. Until 1865, that system was used to enforce slavery, and as time went on, the country became more and more dependent on unpaid labor as the center of the economy. Though it has been over 150 years since slavery was legally abolished, the aftereffects are still very much present in our nation's history through to today.

In Jordan's claims, primarily about the origin point of whiteness and the racism it engendered, she articulated the following propositions: (1) there was a time when race-based discrimination did not

exist, (2) with Bacon's Rebellion, white people in power decided to ally themselves with lower-class white people, thus creating a system of racial hierarchy in the United States, and (3) we, as a country, are still dealing with the aftereffects of that birthing through the births of other forms of racial control. Her essay would go on to make what is implicit in those propositions explicit.

As Jordan continued her causal story about the legacy of enslavement in the United States, she quoted from various sources, including the authoritative text from Coates ("The Case for Reparations") and the Netflix documentary *13th.* As she used quotes, notice how these quotes functioned as a part of her own speech. Rather than introducing the author of the quote in a way that set them a part from herself (usually by invoking their authority to speak on the matter), Jordan gave parenthetical citations or brief asides to the original work and then moved to her interpretation of these texts. Even so, Jordan connected various pieces of history through her narrative that described how (1) segregation lead to underfunding of Black communities and (2) rhetoric was, and continues to be, mobilized to keep these patterns of social control in place.

> With segregation, with the isolation of the injured and the robbed, comes the concentration of disadvantage (Coates, 2016). Schools, hospitals, and entire neighborhoods that were for black people were underfunded and not maintained as well as their white counterparts. With limited education, corrupt government programs, unfair laws for housing, and a plethora of other disadvantages, it was nearly impossible for black people to make significant economic improvement. There was a cycle where black people were not given the resources that they needed and then could not improve upon their environments, which often left their children in a similar situation. The only way to remove themselves from the cycle required support from government or a large amount of money, neither of which were readily available for black people. Even now, 65 years post Brown v Board of Education, where "separate but equal" was deemed unconstitutional, black and white people are still facing the consequences of the segregation. Schools in predominantly black and latinx communities are still underfunded, black neighborhoods do not receive the same level of attention and resources that white ones do, and black neighborhoods have lower income rates (but higher crime rates) than white neighborhoods.

Jordan's narrative and intertextual references, however subtle, described a legacy of racial social control through the continued underfunding of Black and brown communities (primarily represented through schools and neighborhoods) when compared to white communities, and the resurgence of

a rhetoric that encourages violence against dissenters of the social order, especially Black dissenters. This narrative helped Jordan link past and present and ultimately make conclusions about what was possible for the future. Elsewhere in her essay, Jordan used evidence from the Netflix document *13th* to juxtapose a speech by Donald Trump to speeches made during the War on Drugs era and the Civil Rights Movement to show that "the same violence enacted on protesters and the same rhetoric used in speeches" was present across all three time periods. That explicit juxtaposition, made legitimate through reference to popular and well-respected media, was key to how intertextuality functions in causal storytelling for Jordan.

At the end of Jordan's causal story, she described a moment of tension between what people are becoming "more aware of" and how, historically, these moments have lead to increased resistance to people who want to work against that social progression. Notice how Jordan explicitly linked past and present by juxtaposing the short-term gains of Black Americans during Reconstruction and the violence they faced after the dissolution of Reconstruction to the elections of President Obama and the subsequent election of Trump. "Right now," Jordan begins in her final paragraph,

> we are becoming more aware of the ways that racism is built into our society. We have more access to fight these things and politicians are rebranding themselves as people who are fighting to fix those injustices. Right now, it seems like there is potential for a great amount of change to happen. However, historically, the periods of times that should have lead to the most social progression also lead to a sharp increase in the boldness of people who stand against that social progression. During Reconstruction, as black people were gaining more access to public office and introducing policies and programs that would greatly improve the lives of black Americans, many white people were creating and gaining support for white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan. After Obama was elected, there was a similar rise in public support for white supremacist groups and the next president was a man who ran on a racist platform.

Jordan's assessment for the future was that "consistent work" was necessary; unlike at other moments where people claimed that "racism was over", the United States must not look away from its history and should continue to reckon with the legacy of racism that Jordan had articulated throughout her causal story.

Sam and Jordan had different relationships to this history and constructed their causal stories differently; what is striking to note, however, is how their connections between past, present, and future work resonate with each other. Sam had attended GLS her entire schooling life. Sam identified as white and considered attending GLS for as long as she had a "privilege" (Interview, 5-1-2019). When we spoke, Sam said that before her junior year–the year where I met her–she wasn't much interested in history. "I mean, it's important to learn about," Sam mused, "but it's already happened, there is nothing I can do about it. And I want to like, look into the future and change things." However, a shift happened for Sam in her junior year. "But I think this year, with, um, U.S. history, it's like, it's everywhere around me," Sam continued. "And I never was able to see that and make that switch. So, I think that there wasn't anything that didn't seem like it was important, because everything, every unit that we've learned about, has had like an important, important influence on society today." In her junior year, a year where she had Mr. Sumner as her teacher, she began to see history as more relevant to her life, even going so far as seeing it everywhere around her in the present. The presence or felt nature of history was something that Sam carried into her essay, and she used causal storytelling to demonstrate how the past was still present regarding racial inequality.

In her causal story answering the essay prompt ("What has been the legacy/history of race in America?"), Sam made several claims about institutional racism and the role of harmful rhetoric in perpetuating anti-black sentiments. At the beginning of her essay, Sam wrote that "the end of reconstruction didn't suddenly equalize whites and blacks because of newly enforced legalized segregation and the emergence of the doctrine "separate but equal." As other students had argued, the race-based enslavement prevalent prior to the Civil War was reborn through race-based discrimination and segregation. This claim was echoed in Sam's conclusion, where she argued that "people-especially white people-want to live in the history where they had superiority right as they came out of the womb" and that the continued oppression of black people was a way to "eliminate competitors

for the positions they want to hold." Similar to Jordan, Sam made claims about how the end of race-based slavery did not immediately guarantee racial equality because, after Reconstruction, race-based segregation emerged. Similar, too, to Jordan, Sam put the onus for this continued system of racial control on white people who "want to live in the history where they had superiority right as they came out of the womb." Rather than work or "compete" for their positions in society, these white people continue to debase Black people through "antiblack rhetoric."

The narratives that Sam drew on to substantiate these claims were grounded in her reading of key legal and political texts. Her interpretations of these texts, based in large part on her understanding of authoritative texts, helped weave data points so that legal and political texts helped initiate further antiblack sentiments among the population that became further ingrained over time. Sam cited the Plessy v Ferguson verdict as key to upholding, and eventually spreading, legalized segregation through Jim Crow laws. Sam went a step further in her narrative to connect these rulings and laws to specific actions, stating that "[t]he legalized segregation of the Jim Crow laws also encouraged whites to act violently and disrespectfully towards blacks." Supporting her earlier claim that the "separate but equal" doctrine was a continuation of oppression that began with the enslavement of black individuals, Sam wove a narrative that connected specific legislation to violent actions taken by white people. In her narrative, however, black people did resist these actions, most notably through organizations like the NAACP and attempting to integrate segregated schools; however, those attempts "to oppose Jim Crow laws such as the Little Rock 9 attempt at integrating schools, proved the extent to which white people would go to preserve white supremacy." Black resistance, in Sam's narrative, showed the strength of white supremacy. Much like Jordan, Sam drew on key authorities, like Michelle Alexander, to legitimate these claims, citing Alexander's own research to substantiate her ideas.

> In her book, The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander states that "Nixon's successful presidential election campaign could point the way toward... the building of a new

> Republican majority, if Republicans continued to campaign primarily on the basis of racial issues, using coded antiblack rhetoric" (Michelle Alexander, 44-45). In the book, H.R. Haldeman also says that he recalls Nixon emphasizing the fact that "you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to." (H.R. Haldeman, 44). Such antiblack language portrayed blacks as outcasts and isolated beings to be "dealt with".

Using political and legal texts as her core piece of evidence, Sam articulated that antiblack images and rhetoric were "ingrained" in white people's minds. To prove this point, unlike Jordan, Sam introduced her secondary sources in ways that set them a part from her own language. Additionally, while Sam highlighted the disparities between Black and white communities historically, the main legacy that she emphasized in her causal story was the antiblack rhetoric that continues to be based down throughout history.

The ingraining of this antiblack rhetoric was the concept through which Sam connected past and present. Again, Sam primarily demonstrated how this rhetoric was ingrained by looking to laws. "The laws normalized the oppression of blacks," Sam wrote, "and implemented it into American culture which has been hard for many Americans to grow out of and see as unjust because it is just a part of their everyday culture." The "everyday" quality of antiblack oppression, connecting hundreds of years of history, made it difficult for many white Americans to see this oppression operating at all. What's more, Sam highlighted how government officials would further stoke this antiblack rhetoric for political gain, which helped "fuel racism, oppression, and fear of blacks amongst white citizens, and also helped to preserve vestiges of racism in America and stall effort to combat it." This connection between past and present helped Sam make predictions or claims about what would need to happen in the future. For Sam, people in the United States needed to take a "progressive step forward", or else "continue to live in a racially oppressive, unequal society all because of our country's dark history of unjust slavery and our failure to unite and reconcile it." While Sam emphasized the continued prominence of antiblack rhetoric in American culture, specifically among politicians and white citizens, her understanding of the future was similar to Jordan's. That is, the United

States and its citizens will continue to be haunted by the legacy of slavery until we decide to "reconcile" that history with our present.

First, in making sense of causal storytelling as a powerful rhetorical practice, it is important to note that there is a tension between Sam narrating that this history was everywhere around her and Jordan articulating that her classmates don't live this history. In our first interview, Sam stated that the reason that she found U.S. history to be the most interesting was because it was everywhere around her, but even as a white person of privilege, she did not implicate herself in her understanding of this history in ways that Jordan articulated in her interview. For example, in our second interview Sam stated that she continued to work to get outside of her bubble, but the reasons for doing this were connected to trying to understand things she had not directly experienced. This is important to note because, as she articulated in her causal story, antiblack rhetoric among white people *is* a legacy of this history. For Jordan, she articulated that she had direct experience with this history or legacy. Therefore, it is important for me to note that telling a convincing causal story does not, especially for white students, lead to the learner identity of a witness (which I detail in the following chapter); rather, causal storytelling *can* serve as an important rhetorical resource for getting to that point. However, as I will detail more in the following chapter, there are both possibilities and limitations in seeing oneself as a witness in the ways that identity emerged in this space.

Secondly, there is a difference in how Sam and Jordan went about constructing causal stories. The concept that Sam highlighted that linked past and present was the prevalence of antiblack rhetoric, whereas Jordan highlighted the continued struggle against racial inequality. Furthermore, Jordan spent less time introducing the quotes she used from other sources than Sam. Of the six direct quotes Sam had in her essay, five had an introduction; none of Jordan's three direct quotes were introduced. In other words, how each student created transitive chains of authority is distinct. This could be a stylistic difference, just being a personal preference with how to integrate other voices

into a narrative. Another way to interpret this could be signs of more or less disciplinarily sophisticated historical writing. Giving more attribution to an author, taking into account their perspective and biases, is a hallmark feature of historical writing. However, since none of the other essays included in this sample discounted or questioned the sources used – that is, secondary sources, especially the authoritative texts mentioned, were seen and cited as knowledgeable – I think there may be another way to interpret the distinction among the cases in terms of intertextuality. In light of the interviews, another way to think about this could be through Jordan's comment about students living through this history. Jordan identified herself as having a personal connection to this history in a way that her classmates did not and her statements and citational practices could be read as her using the texts in ways that bolstered her own experiences.

While I do not believe there is one "right" way to read this difference, I do believe the second point offers up some interesting questions regarding how to frame this history, especially for the Black students in elite spaces wrestling with racial inequality. If this story isn't particularly new to them, do educators in elite, overwhelmingly white spaces have a responsibility to offer new frames? Elsewhere in her interview, Jordan detailed that one of her favorite things she learned in history happened in her sophomore year when she learned about the Haitian Revolution.[14] She was also in Mr. Sumner's class at the time, and she stated that she "just really liked seeing it [the Haitian Revolution]. And part of it is 'cause I'm black, and I thought, "Wow, this is really amazing." And it's so different to what we learn about in regards to slavery in America. So, um, I li- I liked that." (Interview, 4-19-2019). Jordan highlighted that what she appreciated about learning the history of the Haitian Revolution was the point of difference this event served to US slavery. In contrast to a history she felt she lived, the Haitian Revolution offered a different perspective regarding responses to enslave-

[14] As a point of disclosure, this was during my first year observing Mr. Sumner's history classroom and because of my own interests in the Haitian Revolution, I ran the class period during one of the days that Jordan described in 2018.

ment. While it is only speculative at this point, there may be consequences, structurally, for teaching historical arguments that too neatly fall into recognizable frames. This issue of framing will be increasingly important in the following chapters.

Finally, there is a striking similarity between the causal stories presented here: both students discussed, however briefly, that the path forward was a racial reckoning with the racist legacy of slavery and how it permeates present-day society. Confronting the legacy, much like confronting a ghost, requires an acknowledgement that it exists in the first place. The students both recognized the possibilities in this approach: unlike other moments in history where people in power have decided that racism is over, acknowledging the problem is, in the popular imagination, the first step to dealing with it. However, there are also limitations to this approach, especially in how the problem is framed. As argued in the previous chapter on transhistorical whiteness, constructing the problem as an essential feature of a racialized identity can make it difficult to see how people could change, and have changed, at different historical moments and under different material conditions and with different social relations. Furthermore, as I think this chapter as highlighted, the main problem with making a racial reckoning the primary political action in confronting this history is that a reckoning in and of itself does not support people in imagining beyond the moment of present harm. Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore has articulated this sentiment when describing prison abolition work; abolition is not just about the absence of prisons but about the presence of life-affirming institutions. To use that duality of absence and presence in this context, a racial reckoning is primarily constructed as the absence of this legacy; but what is present? That question is, I wonder, more difficult to answer when thinking historically through the lens of haunting, and I explore those difficulties in more detail in the chapter that follows.

Embodying the identity of a witness: Learning to think transhistorically about whiteness

In this chapter, I trace how one student, Sara, developed a position towards the history and continued presence of racial inequality in the United States that can be described as a rhetorical "witness." Using the ideational resources of transhistorical whiteness and causal storytelling, Sara, over time, grew in her capacity to see herself and her relations as implicated in racial inequalities and wrestled with what that meant for her moving forward. As a witness, her primary action in ameliorating racial inequalities was to identify when and where whiteness was operating, even as it was operating in her own behavior, and to condemn that whiteness. I explore the possibilities and limitations of developing the learner identity of a witness in the ways that Sara did here.

A key interest in learning sciences is understanding the shifts that young people experience in learning environments. This research has generally focused on how the environment or the design of the environment makes particular tools available for young people to creatively draw upon (Calabrese Barton, et al, 2013; Leander, 2002; Lam and Smirnov, 2017). In Chapter II and III, I have highlighted two resources–transhistorical whiteness, as an orienting concept, and causal storytelling, as a rhetorical form–that were present in the classrooms I observed; admittedly, I have spent less time describing how they emerged and more time describing how they functioned. In this chapter, I ask the question: what learning trajectories does the rhetorical form of causal storytelling and the concept of transhistorical whiteness make available for young people when learning about the durability of racial inequality in the United States?" In so asking, I focus on how one student took these re-

sources up and, over time, developed an identity with response to this history that I explore through the idea of witnessing.

Research on learner identities has rightfully emphasized how learning settings provide resources–material, ideational, and relational–for creating practice-linked identities (Nasir and Cooks, 2009; Shaw, Fields, and Kafai, 2019; Moya, 2017; Lo, 2017). These works have made clear that coming to see oneself as a part of a discipline is a practice that is socioculturally mediated. I take this view of socioculturally mediation in another direction that I believe complements the work mentioned above on practice-linked identities. I look at how the ideational resources of transhistorical whiteness (as a powerful concept that crosses specific space and times) and causal storytelling (as a rhetorical practice) provide one student with the space to engage in witnessing the history and continued presence of racial inequality in the United States. Using a mix of interaction and discourse analysis, I focus on how this student, Sara, came to identify herself rhetorically as a witness to this history.

Conceptual framework

How does one identify themselves rhetorically as a witness to events they could not have possibly been present at? This question, and versions of it, guide work emerging at the intersection of communication studies, public memory studies, and public history. Scholars working in these fields examine how individuals and collectives make sense of events that have defined group history, where the group can be categorized as ethnic, national, racial, and/or linguistic collectives. I take one concept of commonplace witnessing in this tradition to ground my analysis in this chapter. Developed by rhetorician Bradford Vivian, the notion of commonplace witnessing is the idea that witnessing is ubiquitous as a rhetorical practice and is, in fact, emblematic of how people engage in acts of public memory. This is in contrast to the notion of the moral witness or the impossible witness to trauma, most commonly identified as a survivor's memoir (e.g. Holocaust accounts from Elie Wiesel and

Primo Levi, documentation from the Truth and Reconciliation proceedings in post-apartheid South Africa).

Vivian argues that "the rhetorical forms by which members of [a] community speak as witnesses are idiomatic, customary, and even popular – in a word, commonplace" (p. 6). Witnessing is "an adaptable rhetorical practice, consisting of customary persuasive forms and techniques, disseminated through diverse mediums of communication in order to advance a variety of civic and humanitarian goals" (p. 9). As Vivian continues, witnessing, as a rhetorical practice, has certain tropes that allow one to assume the position of an authentic witness, regardless of if one actually experienced the events in question. Vivian identifies five themes of witnessing: invention, regret, authenticity, habituation, and impossibility. For the purposes of this chapter, regret and habituation are key to Sara's learning trajectory.[15]

Regret, as Vivian conceives of it, emphasizes the value of history's lessons without grounding the rhetoric in material action or redistribution. Sara struggled with moments of regret as she continued on her learning trajectory, generally emphasizing her lack of action. Vivian (2012) examined President George W Bush's expressions of regret regarding the transatlantic slave trade as a key example where "the rhetoric…exhorts citizens to dutifully remember the lessons of historical atrocities as a paramount civic duty while eschewing the question of how affected citizens might be em-

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[15] The other three themes - invention, authenticity, and impossibility - are interesting in their own right and may become relevant in different contexts. For example, the trope of authenticity – being able to say or perform the part of one who knows from bodily experience – is a key thematic component of witnessing. Vivian shows how even those who were *not* literal witnesses, demonstrated through the example of the fraudulent account of Benjamin Wilkomirski who claimed to be a child survivor of the Holocaust, can claim the mantle of a witness through particular rhetorical tropes. The themes of invention and impossibility – the ideas that one is not naturally, or inherently a witness, but becomes one based on the conditions of specific places and time and that witnessing the past is both rhetorically commonplace but also impossible because those who could speak from the position of a witness are no longer physically present to do so – are undoubtedly important, but they are likely more relevant in contexts where the rhetor is self-consciously acting as witness. I use the idea of commonplace witnessing here to talk about Sara's learning trajectory, and make no claims that Sara would call herself a witness. Rather, the concept of commonplace witnessing allows me to make sense of her learning trajectory and the possibilities and limits therein.

powered to pursue practical entailments of those lessons through sustained political activity" (p. 9). The rhetoric of regret asks people to reckon with the past, not necessarily to grapple with the present or how, through political activity, conditions might shift. In using Vivian's notion of regret to understand Sara's learning trajectory, I argue that the way the problem of enduring racial inequality was framed – that is, through transhistorical whiteness – made regret a key rhetorical act. Because transhistorical whiteness was already abstracted from historical specificity, the relationship between enduring racial inequality and political action was often backgrounded in favor of personal denouncements of ever present whiteness.

However, as I argued in Chapter II and will continue to argue here, the framing of the issue of enduring racial inequality as the result of transhistorical whiteness does not have an obvious material action coupled with it; in fact, transhistorical whiteness has been explicitly decoupled from the material world and abstracted from particular spaces and times through causal storytelling, making material action all the more challenging to find when using the framework that concept provides. Habituation, as Vivian describes it, is the process of evoking an event through returning to a specific site (e.g. the 9/11 memorial in New York City); I extend Vivian's argument here by seeing how habituation works through repetition of certain rhetorical forms (e.g. "Never Again" in response to the Holocaust). The rhetorical form of causal storytelling provides the basis for habituation for Sara, allowing her to return to a recognizable patterning of events and ideas to make sense of both the present and the past. Witnessing, or the capacity to bear witness, is an identity that one can embody through discursive forms. I argue that Sara came to embody the identity of a witness through her increasing fluency with the language of transhistorical whiteness and her growing capacity to tell causal stories. She moved from constructing racism without an actor to naming and identifying whiteness as the driver for continued racial inequality in the United States. Furthermore, she came to implicate herself and her relations in that narrative.

A recurring theme throughout this dissertation has been the relationship between past and present, and another key concept that grounds my work in this chapter allows me to make sense of how Sara makes sense of herself in relationship to various space-time contexts. I use the notion of chronotopic identity to understand how Sara accomplishes this work. As mentioned in Chapter III, a chronotope is a specific space-time context that is made meaningful through discourse. Chronotopes afford specific identities that make sense given their context. For example, in a literary narrative, the identity of the "prodigal child" who returns home after a sojourn makes sense when particular spatiotemporal conditions are met. Extending the idea of the chronotope to real-time interaction, I argue that a specific chronotopic identity - in this case, the identity of the rhetorical witness – emerges through particular narrative practices (Perrino and Kohler, 2020). Much like other learner identities, the identity of the rhetorical witness emerges through drawing upon resources; in this chapter, I focus on the ideational resources that supported Sara along her learning trajectory.

Methods

Being at GLS for the length of time I was there, I came across multiple students who developed their own learning trajectories that would be useful or interesting to explore. However, throughout my time at GLS, I developed a relationship with Sara where we could talk about race and how she navigated what she was learning with her life. It was through informal conversations that we had before and after her class with Mr. Sumner that I thought Sara's learning trajectory would be an illustrative case in understanding how young people, specifically young white people, make sense of the history of racial inequality in the United States. I use the case study format here (Yin, 2009) because it allows me to provide an in-depth exploration of how one student used the resources described in Chapters II and III; I explore the possibilities and tensions represented in her learning trajectory. I specifically follow Sara because our conversations reached a place of vulnerability and honesty that is not often depicted in research about race and history, especially not from students who identify as

white. In looking closely at Sara's learning here, it is my goal to honor the complexity of her process and provide educators a close look at the possibilities and limitations of these particular ideational resources in this context.

In tracing Sara's learning trajectory, I first identified the moments in my field notes or audio and visual transcripts where I either sat with Sara in a small group or where Sara contributed to the whole class discussion. I then plotted these moments across time, noting both the number of times Sara contributed and how she contributed. When I got a sense of Sara's participation throughout the course of the class, I took note of the following kinds of moments: (1) moments where a new idea was introduced, either by Sara or a new idea that Sara explicitly responded to; (2) moments where Sara extended an idea offered up by Mr. Sumner or another student into a new context, or where another student extended an idea offered up by Sara; (3) moments where Sara contradicted or complicated an idea offered up by Mr. Sumner or another student, or where another student contradicted or complicated an idea offered up by Sara; and (4) moments where Sara offered up a personal narrative in connection to the content. Using these moments of interaction as a guide, I looked to Sara's essay for this unit and our one-on-one conversations. Although we had four formal interviews across during and after my time in Mr. Sumner's classroom, we had many informal conversations before and after class which were recorded in my field notes where relevant. The moments that I highlight in the case study represent what I identified as significant shifts in how Sara positioned herself to this history or how she conceptualized this history.

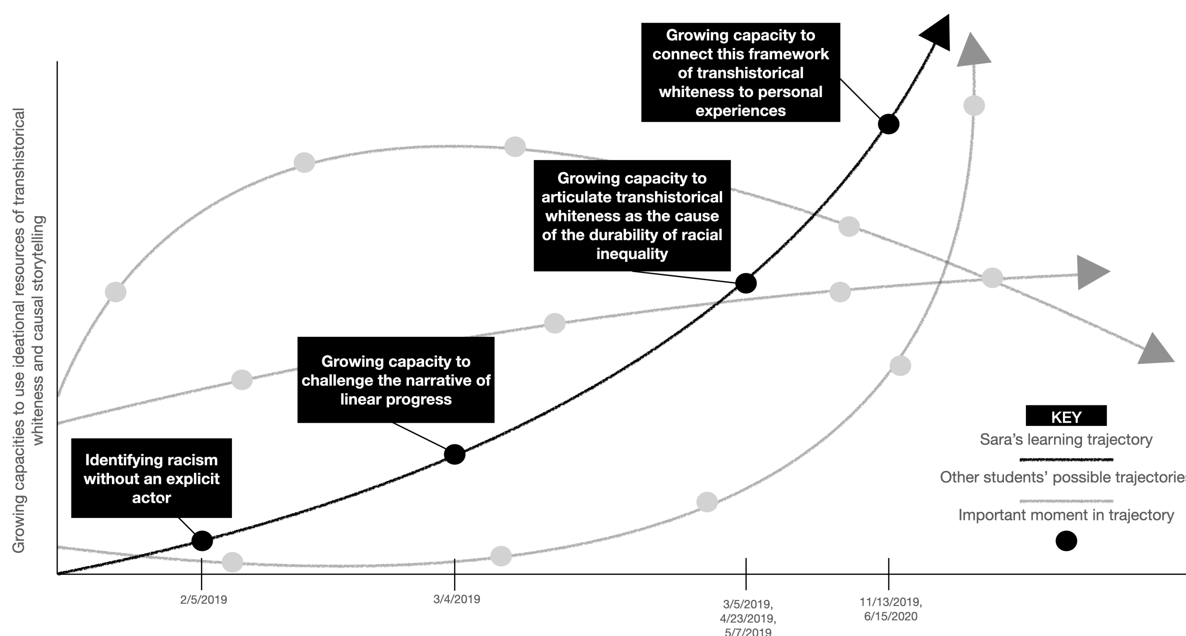
Findings

In the following sections, I will highlight how Sara moved from identifying racism without an explicit actor to naming the actors and benefactors of racism, including implicating herself in the story of whiteness she told. In her learning trajectory, Sara was able to use the concept of transhistorical whiteness and the rhetorical form of causal storytelling to engage in the rhetorical practice of bear-

ing witness to the past. Through regret (articulated in how Sara wrestled with the concept of transhistorical whiteness and what it meant for her personal experiences) and habituation (articulated through repeated causal storytelling connecting past and present), Sara developed a relationship to this history where she was a witness to the history and continued presence of racial inequality in the United States. My goal in emphasizing how these growing capacities developed over time – how they emerged – is to show how one student developed a witness identity with relationship to this history, and not to suggest that all students would or should follow this same trajectory.

Figure 1. An interpretation of Sara's learning trajectory as she came to embody the learner identity of a witness to racial inequality

In this visual, Sara's learning trajectory is represented by the black line. As she grows in her capacity to use the ideational resources of transhistorical whiteness (as a powerful concept) and causal storytelling (as a rhetorical practice), she came to embody the learner identity of a witness. There were key moments in Sara's learning trajectory where she demonstrated her growing capacity, moving from identifying a general racism being at play to connecting the specific concept of transhistorical whiteness to her own experiences. The other lines represented in this visual are hypothetical learning trajectories for other students in the class. Not all students started where Sara started and not all students ended up where she did.



Identifying racism without an explicit actor

Early on in the year when I first met Sara (February 5, 2019), Mr. Sumner asked the students in his class to analyze letters from Black migrants from the South to industrial cores in the Midwest, North, and West during the period known as "The Great Migration." These excerpts, most of which were published in the Black periodical, *The Chicago Defender,* were read by students and then discussed in small groups. The following brief exchange between Sara and Mr. Sumner occurred during the whole class share out, after students had the opportunity to talk with each other about what they had read and explore the guiding questions. As was the typical pattern in whole class share outs, Mr. Sumner asked for several students to share out and called on them in succession without much commentary. After this particular interaction, Mr. Sumner gave a brief anecdote about how The Palmer House in downtown Chicago was (in)famous for paying the train fare for Black workers to come to the city to work before describing the homework for the night. This interaction was notable in that it is one of the first public statements Sara made in the focal unit. Furthermore, in this interaction, notice how Sara constructed racism without naming a specific actor, something that was reiterated in other student responses.

> **Mr. Sumner**: Um, so, uh ... what are these folks a- what are they asking for? What are they looking for, first of all? What are they looking for in these letters, what are they ... yeah?
> **Sara**: Um, a lot of them have this idea that there was less racism in the north.
> **Mr. Sumner**: Yeah
> **Sara**: And, like, there was still plenty of racism, but it was less obvious. Um, and less, like, so ... they were looking for, like, freedom from racism.

In this brief interaction, Sara, with some encouragement from Mr. Sumner, reads the primary source texts as though the writers believed there was less racism in the North. While it may be important to highlight that both Mr. Sumner and Sara take the primary sources at face value – that is, there is no further discussion of why migrants seeking jobs to escape violent conditions might paint the place they want to end up in favorable terms, regardless of if they believed that – it is equally important,

for discussing Sara's learning trajectory that she does not name an actor that is racist. Racism exists in a disembodied way in Sara's brief account; it is, in other words, conceived of as a generally bad thing, but the specifics about why it is bad or how it works to produce bad outcomes are left implicit in this exchange. As the course continued, however, Sara would come to be more explicit in naming the actors (and benefactors) of racism.

Challenging the Narrative of Linear Progress: Regression from the Reparations Debate

In the following excerpt, which occurred March 4, 2019, I was leading a class-wide discussion on the article "The Case for Reparations."[16] I followed much the same pattern as Mr. Sumner did in his class, giving students time to talk to each other before we discussed as a whole class. You will notice, however, that I provided more commentary on student responses than Mr. Sumner did. Prior to this brief interaction, I had engaged several other students to help explain Coates's argument, looking closely at his statement that "the concentration of melanin" in a neighborhood was correlated to the "concentration of poverty." In our exchange, the students and I fleshed out how this sentence helped Coates articulate his argument for reparations based on active governmental disinvestment in Black communities. In the following interaction, note how Sara draws on the text to make parallels across time. Although relatively brief, I see Sara creating a causal story here by (1) creating an argument about how moments of progress lead to moments of regression, (2) citing the text to support her argument and (3) making comparisons across time.

> **Allena**: Does anyone else have any takeaways? Oh, I didn't see your hand.
> **Sara**: Okay, I just thought it was interesting that um, the very first part of section three, um, he discusses a case in 1783 where a, a free woman was granted reparations by the state of Massachusetts, um and that he says, his exact quote is that um, "at the time black people in America had endured more than 150 years of enslavement and the idea that they might be owed something in return, was if not the national consensus, at least not outrageous." And um, the idea that the country's stance on reparations sort of, regressing from what it was before slavery. Although it takes place over a larger amount

[16] Because of some commitments Mr. Sumner had as a result of his role as department chair, I stepped in to lead this discussion instead of having the substitute lead it. Mr. Sumner asked me to do this, and because I knew the students and was interested in this material, I agreed.

> of time, I thought it was kind of interesting how it, it sort of parallels like, the deterioration of the civil rights movement into the war on drugs and the beginning of, like, mass incarceration. And so like, regression in, in both of those.
> **Allena**: And what's really important about that point is that there was a time when reparations wasn't a crazy suggestion.
> **Sara**: Yeah, I didn't realize that.

Sara was particularly interested in the idea that the country had "regressed" from a moment where reparations was possible to a moment where, in Coates's telling, the case for reparations had to be made at personal risk of sounding unrealistic. Sara made parallels to another example of regression, much like Duncan's "vicious cycles" highlighted in Chapter II, that happened after the major legislation of the Civil Rights Movement was passed. After this interaction, I posed the question to the class about other instances where the United States government has given groups financial reparations for harm done and we (the class and myself) discuss the similarities and differences of those moments, along with the political possibility (and desirability) of reparations to Black Americans. I did not return to the temporal parallel that Sara constructed regarding similar instances of regression across time. In our interaction, Sara drew upon the core text to construct the past as a time where reparations were possible, in particular instances and contrasted that moment to the present, which she constructed as a time where reparations seem politically impossible. Sara then concluded that, through this parallel of past and present, there had been similar moments of "regression" across time. As literature in history education has argued, complicating the idea that the present is automatically more progressive than the past – or challenging "grand narratives" of progress – is key to developing a more textured understanding of the past (Stanely, 2006, Ch. 3; Carretero & van Alphen, 2014). Although Sara hasn't yet named who benefits from this parallel regression, articulating that there is a parallel is a resource for Sara in the essay she wrote the following day to work with. In fact, in the excerpts I show from that essay in the next section, Sara used these parallels across time to argue that moves to deny resources to Black Americans were moves that "sought to create systemic advantages for white people."

Growing capacity to articulate transhistorical whiteness as the cause of the durability of racial inequality

The day after our discussion on Coates (March 5, 2019), Sara and her classmates wrote their culminating essay about the legacy of Reconstruction in the United States. Throughout this dissertation, I have shared examples of other students use of transhistorical whiteness as the cause of continued racial inequality in the United States. In showing excerpts from Sara's essay, my goal is to highlight how her growing capacity to name whiteness as the primary cause of racial inequality took shape in this essay. Contrasted with where she began in this unit, this naming of whiteness as an explanatory force in US history was a significant shift from naming racism without an actor. Sara, much like her classmates, used causal storytelling to rhetorically situate the concept of whiteness within their essays. In the excerpts that follow, notice the pattern that Sara sets up rhetorically. Akin to Duncan's (Chapter II) claim that history repeated itself through various moments of "set up" for Black people, Sara described here moments of continuing Black resistance, however futile, to white racism. The causal story format was a resource here for Sara to habitually return to the issue of transhistorical whiteness.

Sara began her essay by highlighting that laws and policies that ranged "over [the] 400-year enslavement of African Americans" had a common feature: "they sought to create systemic advantages for white people that would endure for generations to come." The privilege that white people inhabit have today has a long history for Sara, and it is these privileges that are the primary legacy of Reconstruction. Sara's claim connects past and present, and her narrative goes on to substantiate that claim. Sara did highlight some periods where black people were able to make gains, materially and politically, particularly by moving out of the South during the Great Migration, but she found that "black people continued to be victimized by racism throughout the entire United States." One particular example of this came through white responses to the 1954 *Brown v Board of Education* case. Sara highlighted that in response to this ruling, white people instigated "race riots, lynchings, bomb-

ings, and other acts of violence [that] continued to be committed against black communities across the country–not just in the South, as is the common American perception." She also cited Coates's case for reparations and the "discrimination in the housing system" that black people encountered throughout the country as evidence of the common white response to hold onto advantages.

Much like other students in her class, Sara referenced black organizing in response to these forms of discrimination, and foregrounded black grassroots organizing as being the driver of the major Civil Rights legislation of the mid to late 1960s. But that organizing was not enough and "immediately following its [the Civil Rights Movement] collapse, a shift occurred from blatant, obvious acts of racial charged violence to subtle, coded racism embedded in laws and policies." Here, Sara drew on Alexander and that the War on Drugs as "a hallmark of the 'new Jim Crow' era, an era in which the explicit racism and white supremacy of the Ku Klux Klan and other organizations loses popularity, replaced by laws lacking any mention of race, but whose enforcement indicates that a racial hierarchy is still clearly in place in the United States." The use of Alexander and Coates as authoritative texts here is indicative of the causal storytelling format that was powerfully deployed in this classroom. After situating transhistorical whiteness as the main antagonist to racial progress in her causal story, Sara concluded her essay with a grim prediction for the future: "…it is highly unlikely that any sort of radical change will be enacted in the near future which uproots the systems of race-based advantage in American society." In spite of that unlikelihood, Sara implored

> ordinary citizens [to] do their part by consciously addressing racial biases which exist in day-to-day life and speaking out against racist institutional practices and policies—much like participants in the Civil Rights Movement did. There is no way to eradicate the deeply ingrained racism in the United States completely without enacting major legislative change, but if a conscientious American public carries its weight, it may eventually guide such change in our country's systems.

Here, I notice the seeds of an idea that Sara continued to develop and wrestle with: how should white people respond to a system that they, according to her understanding of transhistorical whiteness, benefit from?

Sara’s articulation of whiteness, as embodied in white people, as the driver of racial inequality continued as the class progressed. Outside of the focal unit, during the shorter unit on immigration in the United States (April 23, 2019), Sara gave a public statement during one of the whole class share outs that articulated, much like her essay, how she saw whiteness, as embodied in white people, as the causal force behind continued racial inequality. In this exchange, Sara and another student referenced a film they watched by a Chinese-American artist about her experiences growing up in San Francisco’s Chinatown. Through her reflection, the filmmaker also explored the history of this particular Chinatown. Most notable in the section the students watched was the fire of 1906 that destroyed the original Chinatown that had to be rebuilt. This act of rebuilding led to interesting reflections by Sara and her classmates.

> **Mr. Sumner**: K, so what's your um... what's your takeaway, from uh, from this history? In terms of, like, understanding the Chinese-American experience. Like, what's... what significant, yeah? **Christian**: ‘Suppose you could never trust that anything is as it seems, because-
> **Mr. Sumner:** Yeah
> **Christian**: When you look at Chinatown, she [the narrator] said that some of the architecture there wasn't even seen in China at the time.
> **Mr. Sumner**: Right
> **Christian**: Some stuff isn't even authentic and it's easy to, sort of, like, perpetuate stereotypes or get things wrong in your head, if you don't pay attention.
> **Mr. Sumner**: Yeah, absolutely. The pagoda architecture is what we a- we tend to traditionally see, you know, when we visit Chinatown in a sense. It's almost like, uh, it's Americanized or Disneyized in a sense, these, these Chinatowns. Anyone else? Yeah, Sara?
> **Sara:** I mean, just to build on what people were saying, like, that the, that white architects sort of exploited what Americans perceived as the traditional Chinese culture but it wasn't actually…
> **Mr. Sumner**: Yeah
> **Sara**: Sort of, for the entertainment of white people for, like, tourism in America.

Christian, an African American young man in the space, put forward a new idea: t the Chinatown’s that we see today were not entirely created for Chinese immigrants, aesthetically; rather, the architecture was meant to mark the area as distinct. Sara extended this thread by arguing that this was exploitation on the part of white architects for white America. Here, I notice that Sara has become

more explicit in her naming of transhistorical whiteness as the source of exploitation publicly, not only in her personal essay.

When Sara and I sat down for our first formal interview (5-7-2019), we spoke a lot about how her understanding of race, and whiteness in particular, developed through conversations that she had both in English and in History classes. In this first excerpt, notice how Sara explained how her understanding of how race developed (she used the language of "invented" when describing a particular origin point for whiteness) allowed her to make sense of present day acts of racism.

> **Allena**: Got it, and do you think your experience unpacking like how race was invented helped you make sense of what unfolded afterwards, or do you think that-
> **Sara**: Yeah.
> **Allena:** They were two separate kind of conversations?
> **Sara:** Yeah, yeah I think, I think it's given me sort of a better understanding of, even in the present, like why, why people behave, think, speak a certain way. Um, and how that changes as you move throughout the spaces you're present in. Um, and so yeah I think, I also think it helps explain like it has helped explain, um, like certain things we're learning in history. For example, um, we talked about slavery in history class-And then in English we talked about the physical enslavement- of black people- And the enslavement of white consciousness. In like thinking that they are the superior race- And so, um, I think, I think the understanding that latter part is very important.
> **Allena:** The white consciousness part?
> **Sara:** Yeah.
> **Allena:** Why do you think that's so important? I'm curious.
> **Sara:** Because it's not an inherent fact-
> **Allena:** Mm-hmm
> **Sara:** That the white race is the superior race and I, I, people know that obviously. Like, like we were taught that in history, but the enslavement of consciousness bit I think represents that white people convinced themselves, and convinced maybe even some people of color as well that they were the superior race. And I think that that gets overlooked because-
> **Allena:** Right.
> **Sara:** Like because it's so hard to, but like that, I guess I would say that that sort of ties the past to the present because I think a lot of white people today, especially white people at GLS who like... Maybe not especially white people at GLS, but I think a lot of white people today- Look at themselves and they think like "I'm not racist, all races are equal," but then they like, I think what Dr. Battalora[17] says that, like every white person thinks like racist thoughts. And not, not intentionally just inadvertently.
> **Allena:** It's, it's everywhere around us [crosstalk]
> **Sara:** Right, right. Because-
> **Allena:** Like it's hard not to- mm-hmm

[17] Dr. Jackie Battalora, author of *Birth of a White Nation*, came to GLS to speak and Sara drew from her talk to describe whiteness.

> **Sara:** And so the enslavement of consciousness explains that completely.
> **Allena:** Got it. Okay.
> **Sara:** Um, because then people are like "I'm not racist, but why did I just think that?" And so the enslavement of consciousness it, the historical enslavement of consciousness that is still present today-Helps explain that.

In this exchange, Sara articulated how she was able to use the resource of transhistorical whiteness (represented through what Sara called the continued enslavement of consciousness that is inherited by white people) to help explain the presence of racist thinking happening in the present. Key to the idea of whiteness that Sara constructed was the feelings or beliefs of superiority that white people "inadvertently" have about people of color; their inability to see themselves clearly is what Sara, and some of the resources she cited, called "the enslavement of white consciousness." Drawing on a theme from Chapter II, Sara's construction of whiteness here is not purely psychological or purely social; rather, the whiteness here is both a social phenomenon, in that it happens across a large swath of people who consider themselves to be white, and simultaneously psychological, in that it shows up in the thoughts of white people in the present day. Later on in our interview, Sara continued exploring this concept by emphasizing how the thinking present in the "enslavement of consciousness" became "engrained" in laws and popular rhetoric; again, a creative assemblage of psychologized views of racism and structural or systemic views of racism. From March through May, then, I noted Sara's growing fluency in both naming and explaining whiteness as a primary, if not the primary, factor in durable racial inequalities in the present. And while Sara articulated that people at GLS engaged in racist thinking, it was only in our subsequent interviews that Sara was able to articulate her own wrestling with her inheritance of whiteness.

Connecting the framework of whiteness to personal experiences

In **an** interview on November 13, 2019, Sara and I continued to discuss how students at GLS talked about race, both as a historical and a present-day phenomenon. Consistent with where I was in my own process of analysis, I posited to her that students located the main problem of racism as being

an "old white man" problem; this was based on an initial round of analytic memos from my observations. At the time of this interview, my initial coding and reading of the literature suggested that white students would work especially hard to distance themselves from being complicit in systems of oppression. But notice how Sara pushed back on my articulation of how students at GLS were understanding racism. Additionally, notice how Sara transitioned to describing her own familial interactions when talking about racism. Here, we can also see how regret - described by Vivian as a rhetoric where the past can be acknowledged, but not politically wrestled with in the present – begins to color her own experience when Sara reflected on her decision to not intervene in moments with anti-racist commentary.

> **Allena**: So, I think that's a super interesting thing. I also wonder, too, if you think it's [racism] a, a generational thing? Because there's, like, this old part in the old white man concept. And I wonder, do you think young white people are doing it better? Or do you... Like, what, what do you think about, like, that generational difference, potentially?
> **Sara:** Do I think young white people are doing it better?
> **Allena**: Being anti-racist a little more actively.
> **Sara**: Um, not really.
> **Allena**: Okay.
> **Sara:** I mean, I think it's, it's real-... Like, I think of, like, my own family and it's really easy for me to be, like... When, like, when my... Like, when older family members make, like, um, comments-... where I'm like, "That's racist," or like-"That is, like, very prejudice. That's, like, not okay-um, I think it's very easy for younger white people to be like, "Oh, well, like, you know, they're old school," or like-"It's just how they were raised." Um, but like I said, like, not making those comments doesn't mean that you're working against racism. So like, maybe, like, in supporting movements like Black Lives Matter, like, white people are, are... Younger white people are working, um, more against racism than older white people, but I still feel... Like, I think obviously there's still a lot of room for improvement. Like, even, like, with me, like, I'm... I know that, like, when my... Like, when I hear, like, comments like that, I'm, like, usually afraid to interject, just because, like, I've tried before, like, at the dinner table, and it's, like, not pretty.
> **Allena:** It's hard.
> **Sara:** Yeah.
> **Allena:** It's hard.
> **Sara:** And then my dad's like, he was like... He, like, starts arguing with me and I'm, like... It's like, like, I... Neither of us... Like, we both refuse to, like, see the other person's point. So, like, obviously that argument's not going to go anywhere. I call it a hamster wheel, because you don't [get anywhere, you just] spin around and around and around-
> **Allena:** Yep.
> **Sara:** .. and you don't get anywhere.

In pushing back against by hypothesis that students attempted to distance themselves from whiteness by locating racism in the figure of the "old white man," Sara drew from her own experiences of being a young white person and the difficulties she faced in interjecting in moments where what she perceived as racist commentary was taking place. Here, I see Sara engaging in the rhetoric of regret, acknowledging that it is difficult to have a productive argument with family members because there is a refusal to see another person's perspective. The need for improvement that Sara expressed was an instance of her regret at past times when she has not interjected, or when she has interjected and she and family members have gone down a "hamster wheel" of argumentation. As our conversation continued, Sara and I explored how the environment she finds herself in shapes her decision to interject. The excerpt below immediately followed the excerpt above.

> **Allena:** Yeah. No, and it's really difficult, which makes me wonder, and this is not on my list of questions, um, and if it's, like, a hard question to ask, we can just move on, um, but it makes me wonder if there are certain situations where it's easier to do anti-racist things. Like, one place where it's really hard is, like, the Thanksgiving table (laughs). Like, it's really hard to-
> **Sara:** Yeah.
> **Allena**:… do, like, things to support anti-racist actions at that table. Are there places where it's potentially easier to do it? Like, how does the environment shape-
> **Sara:** How does, um-
> **Allena**: … what your stance is going to be?
> **Sara**: I mean, if you know you have support-… it's a lot easier. Like, me and my sister going in is, like, way easier than just me going in on my own.
> **Allena**: Yep, tag-teaming.
> **Sara:**Yeah, me... Like, if you have friends who you know, like... Not even friends, if you... If there are people in your presence who, like, you know agree with you-it's a lot easier, obviously.Um, yeah, and I would say, like, like, lower... Like, yeah, so like, I just think fewer eyes on you and, like-I think... I can't speak for myself, but I know for other people, like, fewer, like, enemies to make. Like, you know, if, if someone is, like, in a room with a bunch of, like, white people that they don't know if they agree, like, and they do something anti-racist-... like, it's like the whole thing about not wanting to lose your white friends.
> **Allena:**… so why do you think, like, the white friends piece is, like, so important?
> **Sara:** I mean, probably it's kind of cyclical, right? Because like, historically white people have had the power and, like, I, I think there's probably a sub- subconscious fear of, like, relinquishing that power.

Here, **I** see Sara not only articulating her own need for improvement in taking anti-racist stances, but also how she connects her actions to the effects of transhistorical whiteness. The idea of "not want-

ing to lose your white friends" through anti-racist interjections because "historically white people have had the power" is Sara's explanation for why it's easier for her to have her sister at the dinner table with her, rather than going it alone. The idea that whiteness continues to dictate who acts and how they act is salient here. Returning to the concept of regret, I pause to ask here: Is Sara taking a stand against other white people potentially a way to ameliorate past wrongs? One way to interpret her statements here is that taking a personal stand can lead others to take personal stands. And if the problem of enduring racial inequality is located in white people's protection of their privileges – as it is in the frame of transhistorical whiteness – taking a stand and confronting other white people may very well be a political action. In this interpretation, the rhetoric of regret concept becomes a less useful lens through which to understand Sara's learning trajectory here. However, as I argued early on, this way of framing the problem of racial inequality primarily argues for a correction of disparities in the existing social order, not necessarily a shift in how social relations are ordered. In other words, Sara's standing up to other white people when she sees or hears what she perceives to be whiteness as work likely takes courage and resolve, but that action is based on a view of the issue that is inherently limited.

In our final interview on June 15, 2020, Sara and I talked about how her understanding of racism was helping her make sense of that moment, where a global pandemic around coronavirus had exposed enduring racial inequalities in health care and, at the same time, the police killing of George Floyd of Minneapolis, Minnesota had sparked a nation-wide uprising calling to dismantle police departments. In the exchange that follows, notice how Sara drew on the resource of causal storytelling (making past present connections especially) to articulate why what happened in Minneapolis happened.

> **Allena:** Yeah. And I was just curious because it's just one of those takes that I've been seeing in different networks talking about how racism shows up in different ways. So, racism doesn't just show up in police brutality, but it also shows up in the disproportionate effect that COVID has had on Black communities.

Sara: That, I have definitely seen.
Allena: But that's kind of the connection that I was seeing when people are making a connection between the two [the idea that there were two pandemics in Black America that were being exposed]
Sara: I just think this is a moment that definitely reveals how our society has terribly mistreated Black people for 400 years. I guess I've been watching videos trying to explain the current moment. And people say, no, the Civil Rights Act was the past in 1965. But the way it was explained in one of these videos was like, basically, if you deprive Black people rights for 400 years, it's like having a running race and the white people start, and then 400 years later, you let Black people start, and then you're like, okay, now it's fair. This is a meritocracy. But really, it's not because one group has a 400-year headstart.

In this short excerpt, Sara reiterates the time dimension of this legacy, connecting past and present through a "400-year head start" **that** white people have had. Notably, one consequence I see in Sara's explanation of disconnecting whiteness from material conditions and particular historical moments is that the race that white and black people are running becomes a part of the background, and not something shaped by specific human relations. In other words, the goal becomes getting white and black people to run the race in an equivalent fashion, to say nothing of changing the terms of the race or to determine that a race is not the best way for humans, regardless of racial background, to relate to each other and their environments. Related to the interpretations above regarding the limitations of how the problem of racial inequality is framed, I note that Sara's metaphor of a race, similar to her tentative conclusion that standing up to other white people is a difficult, and thereby important, antiracist action for white people to take, is one consequence of the resources she used to make sense of racial inequality. Regardless, the idea that whiteness has continued to operate over 400 years to create racially unequal outcomes is clear in Sara's description of events.

In the next excerpt from that same interview, I asked Sara to think about her own **positionality** and what it could mean to be actively anti-racist from **her** position. Notice how Sara articulated the tension between declarations of anti-racism on social media and being anti-racist in daily life.

Allena: I guess I was just wanting to know a little bit more about your thinking about this particular moment. And speaking from the positionality of a young white person making

sense of this moment, what are you seeing as far as steps that white folks are taking to be actively anti-racist?

Sara: I will tell you that there's a lot of posting going on, which I have very mixed opinions about.

Allena: Yeah?

Sara: Yeah because a lot of it feels very performative. I hope that these white people care in their daily lives about the catastrophic effects of racism on Black people in the United States. But none of these people have ever posted anything about it until now. Maybe I'm biased because I'm just not a poster in general.

Allena: Neither am I.

Sara: I really, really appreciate the fact that people are now paying attention. But I guess I would post something if I found it particularly relevant or important. But it feels to me like the people in my circles are all sharing the same thing, so it's like 30 people I follow share the same thing. And I'm like, okay, I already saw it the first 29 times. I don't see proof of these people being anti-racist in their daily lives. And now it just feels like they're screaming at me and telling me what to do from Instagram. And maybe that's not fair, because the education is so important. But, I think that, again, maybe it's just my nature as a non-poster, but I think that it is perfectly valid and in some ways even better to do that kind of work independently without feeling the need for external validation and needing to tell all of your followers, hey look, I'm still woke. Because right now, my Instagram feed feels like a competition for which white girl that I'm following can be the most woke. I don't know.

Allena: Yeah. This is something that a lot of people are talking, and myself included, about what is the anti-racist stance? How do you be an effective ally? And so, this is something that I think a lot of people are trying to work through in real-time.

Sara: Yeah. I don't know. I really appreciate the information. And I've definitely gleaned a lot even just reading Instagram posts. Making sure they're accurate, first, obviously. But reading posts and watching videos has definitely taught me a lot. I like reading the news, but I think that's a large part of how my generation consumes information is through social media. But I'm still trying as a white person to figure out my place in this-

Allena: In these conversations.

Sara: Right, in these conversations. And I know that the worst thing to do is stay silent. I think that it's better to try and speak up and make a mistake than just to say nothing at all because you're scared to. But I don't know where the line is between helpful sharing and virtue-signaling with your posts..

Allena: And I think in line with that, I think that line is being negotiated and re-negotiated all the time. I don't think that line is a static line.

As I noted earlier, constructing whiteness as the primary driver for continued racial inequality could lead young people to denouncing and calling out whiteness as their primary anti-racist activity. Even in Sara's own learning trajectory, the actions that she cited – speaking out when family members said something problematic – continued this logic of denouncing, calling out, and speaking to other white people as the primary anti-racist activity of white people. Sara pointed out here, though, the

limits of this approach when it happens in an online space; however, Sara still struggled to articulate what antiracism in daily life could look like.

In this final excerpt from that interview, Sara articulated why she found understanding this history to be so important and what educators should know when trying to teach this history. Notice how she articulated the importance of a framework in making sense of various pieces of history. The framework that Sara most used, as the above examples have shown, was that of transhistorical whiteness which she argued for through causal storytelling. Both of these ideational resources were significant in Sara's learning trajectory.

> **Allena**: So, I guess reflecting on your own experience, learning this history of racism and white supremacy in the United States, is there anything that you think is important for educators to know? That you would like to share with educators?
> **Sara:** That I think is important for educators to know? Interesting. For educators to teach?
> **Allena**: It could be to teach. Something that might have been impactful for you to learn. Or it could be just reflecting on your own experience. What's important for an adult to know about a young person trying to make sense of this history?
> **Sara:** I don't know ... I would say that the most important tool you can give a student is a framework. I don't know how helpful that is. But I don't think stuffing a student's brain with as much history as possible in a short period of time is as important as giving them a framework. And then sort of as things come up, they are able to dissect them. And I'm still struggling to dissect what's going on. I think everyone is. But at least, I sort of know where to start because I learned the tools. So, I did learn a lot of history. I'm not saying I didn't or trying to discredit that. But I think that a bunch of facts are way less important to learn than the overall why or the overall theme.
> **Allena:** Yeah, that's super, super important. Because if I can try and put this in my own words to see if I'm understanding, it sounds like you're saying that what's important to really center in your teaching is a way of seeing how this history unfolds rather than giving the specific dates and facts of when it unfolded. But the way of organizing it.
> **Sara:** Yeah. That's the genesis of progressive education, right? It's not what to think, it's how to think. So, I think that I did learn history, yes. But I also learned how and why things are happening right now.

In this exchange, Sara still found the framework she learned in her courses important and still connected this framework to helping her understand "why things are happening right now." This connection between past and present, and how the past is still with us, is key to the historical thinking modality of haunting.

In this chapter, I have shown how Sara developed the learner identity of a witness to racial inequality in the United States by rhetorically constructing whiteness as a transhistorical phenomenon that is still active in the present, and position that concept within causal stories. Key to the identity of a witness, however, is that Sara grew in her capacity to see herself as a part of this story. In particular, through habitually returning to the rhetorical form of causal storytelling and the construct of transhistorical whiteness, Sara created an emotional resonance with this history that implicated herself, her actions, and her relations. While she may not know specifically what to do, she sees herself as needing to do something. That is one of the key ideas of education; moving young people to see what they are learning as relevant to their lives.

While there are some profound possibilities for Sara, and other students, in engaging with history in this way, there are also some tensions that are present in Sara's learning trajectory. Specifically, I wonder what kinds of actions do the resources of causal storytelling and transhistorical witnessing offer Sara? I used Vivan's concept of regret to explore how Sara's construction of the problem of racial inequality, located in a transhistorical whiteness that operated across time and space, made moving beyond recognition of past wrongs or inactions difficult. There's a need to confront racism and whiteness whenever she sees it, even among her family, but on the whole, being "anti-racist in daily life" is vague and primarily about ameliorating the 400-year head start white people have in their lives. The context of that "head start" are left unexplored because, in developing transhistorical whiteness as the meaningful driver of continued racial inequality, historical context is less important than rhetorical outcome. Another way of saying this is that if black people continue to be disproportionality negatively positioned in society, and white people continue to be disproportionality positively positioned in society, the primary explanation for this outcome is the continued presence of whiteness. Instead of questioning the systems that produce inequalities writ large (even *within* racial groups), the disproportionality *between* these two racial groups becomes the only evidence

that must be engaged. The tensions of witnessing in this way lead me to the question that will begin Part II: How might coupling the concept of whiteness with the political economy in which it operates create an understanding of anti-racism that moves beyond white people denouncing whiteness?

Reimagining the Narratives around Transhistorical Whiteness: A Speculation in Four Parts

In this chapter, I take the lessons learned from Part I to reimagine pedagogical moves that offer up different concepts than transhistorical whiteness as the driver of enduring racial inequality. I make the following claim about the relationship between close and sustained textual analysis and teacher practices: a deep examination of texts and sense making around texts can attune educators to the need to create more layered and nuanced ways of engaging texts in classrooms. Rather than advocating finding the one perfect text, I suggest educators work to complicate what popular discourses around racism say about the past through how they introduce and work with texts alongside young people. I offer three possibilities here. In contrast to describing racial characteristics or behaviors as unchanging, teachers could (1) actively work to break down race essentialism; (2) actively model what it means to challenge or complicate texts; and (3) couple rhetorical analyses, which were primary in this classroom through analyses of language in law, speeches, and letters, with a contextual analysis of the political economy that made the law, speeches, and letters meaningful in their own time. Through creating speculative field notes and vignettes (Erickson, 2012), I reimagine how particular aspects of this history might be taught and analyze the possibilities for educators and students.

Although the need for having rich, meaningful conversations about racial injustice in all classrooms has been prevalent since compulsory education emerged as policy in the United States, recent events have made this work evermore urgent. Continued protests against police brutality, conflicts, some-

times violent, over the removal and meaning of historical statues and the insurrection of January 6, 2021 have lead many educators, especially within the discipline of history, to ask how their work can have an impact in the here and now. While some history educators have emphasized the need for facts over fake news in their classrooms (Journell, 2019) or even the broader struggles of reasoning in a world dominated by social media (McGrew, Ortega, Breakstone, & Wineburg, 2017), others have become increasingly aware of how all acts of education are politically and ethically imbued (Politics of Learning Writing Collective, 2017). However, even in those spaces that willingly engage with the politics of history education, particularly around subjects of race, one of the most common pedagogical approaches has been to tell histories that have been marginalized and/or to name the injustices that have happened in the United States head on, as was the case in Mr. Sumner's classroom. The desire to name injustices and ongoing oppressions in particular has consequences for what young people see as possible in the future, and in this chapter, I put forward a series of thought experiments around pedagogical practice that might help educators both teach this content truthfully, effectively, and with an eye towards making connections to the present that help young people take actions in helping fight for and build a just present and future.

In particular, I ask educators (myself included) to find ways to (1) complicate authoritative texts by teaching historiography, the study of how historical arguments and narratives change over time, (2) couple rhetorical analyses, which were prominent in the classroom I studied, with an understanding of political economy, and (3) challenge race essentialism. To demonstrate some sketches of what that might look like, I take some liberties here and diverge from how most dissertations generally proceed. Up until this point, I have made an argument based on evidence I have interpreted from my observations of interactions, texts, and interviews. Now, I extend that argument to create speculative data – that is, data that I did not observe, but that I created – about what might be possible for educators *if* we take the implications of this work up in our practice. The relationship be-

tween texts and pedagogy deserves further exploration here. Texts do not present unmediated content, but rather, present pedagogical invitations in and of themselves (Segall, 2014); furthermore, "teachers' pedagogies do not initiate the pedagogical act but add further pedagogical layers to those already present in such texts" (p. 479). In other words, the analysis that I have engaged in throughout Part I was not just an analysis of decontextualized texts, but rather a close examination of the pedagogical invitations those texts offered and how those invitations were, primarily, reinforced in this classroom. Therefore, in this upcoming speculative section, I take seriously how texts, as pedagogical tools but also as pedagogical invitations, can be differently mediated through a teacher's additional pedagogical layers. Through these vignettes, I put forward a vision of history education that both challenges the primacy of transhistorical whiteness as the way to understand racial inequalities in the present and supports young people to tell more nuanced causal stories by creating a more layered relationship between past and present. These speculations are based on my own experiences as a high school history teacher, as well as my observations of how history classrooms operate. That being said, there will certainly be limitations in what I can dream up here, but I hope that these speculations might be useful in thinking about possibilities for pedagogical practice.

Field Note Excerpt 1: Expanding across themes to create a multifaceted view of the post-Civil War South

After immersing myself as a participant observer in Ms. Brown's third period U.S. history classroom for several months, I have started to identify a rhythm of how things work. Students come into class, find a seat at a table with their friends, and chat for a little bit, either with Ms. Brown or each other. She is an avid basketball fan, so during the season, students are asking her about the latest game and sharing insights about players and teams. Yesterday, Ms. Brown introduced their unit on the long Civil Rights Movement (CRM), moving from the end of Reconstruction through the present day. All the sections of U.S. history in this school follow the same scope and sequence, so Ms. Brown is working within an established curriculum. However, she is also trying some new things out this year.

For one, she decided that she wanted to contextualize the post-Reconstruction era a bit more. In previous years, she had been frustrated that in taking this thematic approach to history, students did not see how events that were covered under different "themes" – for example, the populist movement post-Civil War and Reconstruction – were overlapping moments in history. So, working with limited time, Ms. Brown was experimenting with a few lessons here and there, trying to provide a more complex (and more historically accurate) picture of this period of upheaval that would eventually lead to the Plessy v. Ferguson Supreme Court decision of 1896, making "separate but equal" federal, as well as local, law.

Students were assigned to read an excerpt from Lawrence Goodwyn's Democratic Promise, a seminal text on the populist movement. The pages students were assigned to read were about the attempts to build a multiracial farmers movement that could challenge corporate power that dictated so much of farm life, regardless of race. These movements were not prominent in every state where populist fervor was present, but there were distinct and sizable efforts at building a multiracial farmers movement in several former states of the confederacy, including Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina. In these pages, Goodwyn also highlighted the difficulties of building such a movement. Trying to organize a multiracial movement in the shadow of the Civil War was difficult, in the South especially. This was not simply because white supremacy reigned here, but also because, as Barbara Fields and C Vann Woodward have argued, the white supremacy of the South was about "which whites would be supreme." Democratic Party leadership, the Party of the Confederacy, won elections not only by appealing to white privilege shared by farmers and capitalists alike, but also by crushing any opposition through (1) restricting access to loans during a national recession the likes of which no farmer had yet seen, (2) intimidating political opponents, both Republican and Populist, and (3) when all else failed, using violence to ensure that voters would not, or could not, show up to the polls.

After getting some of the main points of the Goodwyn reading on the board, Ms. Brown projected an excerpt from Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow. In this paragraph, Alexander talked about the birth of Jim Crow in the South. After giving students time to read, Ms. Brown asked the students to discuss the following question in small groups, after taking a moment to jot down some ideas on their own: "If Michelle Alexander and Lawrence

Goodwyn were in a room together talking about the period after Reconstruction and before the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, where would they agree with each other? Where would they disagree? What questions would you have for them?" Ms. Brown spent a few moments answering clarifying questions and making sure each group knew what they needed to do, and then joined in conversations as she walked around the classroom.

There were several things Ms. Brown began to do in this class period that might be of interest to educators. First, she presented texts to her students in ways that complicated how they would be used. Instead of seeing texts as presenting history in an unmediated way, or as presenting a simple ideological comparison of texts (as is the case when a teacher might present a "two sides" argument and uses texts to represent each side), Ms. Brown showed how different individuals, both committed to telling a story that draws on history, reached different conclusions based on the assumptions they made in their analysis. In this way, Ms. Brown was able to model how to complicate the authority of texts and highlight the role of interpretation in historical analysis.

Ms. Brown also structured this lesson to support students in challenging race essentialism while not romanticizing the difficulties of multiracial organizing in the post-Civil War South. She was able to recognize the fact that some people, white and black, would attempt to create a multiracial movement, however flawed, years after the bloodiest fight in U.S. history says something about both how whiteness operated and how non-white resistance, particularly black resistance to oppression, was operationalized. It was not utopic, in the sense that these individuals were exceptional or that they got it right; instead, it was based on the realization that working class solidarity required multiracial solidarity. It was a difficult balance to strike, but in starting this unit in this way, Ms. Brown hoped to encourage her students to think about the barriers and possibilities of this kind of organizing across time. When Ms. Brown and I met to discuss how she felt this lesson went, we talked about what she thought when well and I suggested some ideas for future iterations. For example, I encouraged Ms. Brown to continue to explore the multiple layers of this time period by

continuing to highlight the various black responses to Reconstruction-era politics (such as the buds of Pan-Africanism that were also developing at this time, providing more context to the racial self-help ideology advocated by the likes of Booker T. Washington and R.R.Moton, others of the Tuskegee Institute).

Later on in the week, Ms. Brown would compare the kind of organizing, based on shared working class identity and antagonism to the corporate political party system that was emerging in the wake of the Civil War to the organizing done that lead to the Plessy v. Ferguson decision. Here, students learned why this case was so important for both the mainly black Citizens Council of New Orleans and the white philanthropists who funded their court cases, most famously Albion Tourgée. The goals of both groups was to strike down the segregationist transportation laws. This was no simple matter, however, and Ms. Brown worked to show both the difficulties here and how this legislation could pass a mere thirteen years after Civil Rights law was championed.[18]

Interaction 1: Introducing new voices to the conversation

"Alright, class, that's the bell. Can you take out your notes from last night's reading on Sutton Griggs while I handle attendance? Questions for discussion are on the board." So began Ms. Brown's third period U.S. History class, much in the usual way: Ms. Brown, logging in the mandatory attendance to the office while the students got settled down,

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[18] The difficulty of organizing around these segregation transportation laws was that they were very differentially enforced in Louisiana, the state where Plessy v Ferguson would eventually emerge. Lighter skinned black New Orleanians, like L.A. Martinet, found that they could move throughout the city with little harassment, and initially, the Citizens Council wanted to provide a test case with someone of darker complexion, as those individuals were experiencing the brunt of the harassment. They even found railway companies to be willing co-participants in providing a test case, as the companies found that it was difficult to enforce the segregationist laws and that it was expensive to do so. One railroad company was a willing participant in the first test case, and likely a willing participant in the second, even going so far as to stage an altercation by placing a white person in the all-white car to object to the presence of a black passenger. Tourgée, though, insisted on highlighting the ironies of a law that would discriminate against someone who did not even *look* black, presumably to make his case that a "nearly white" man was being denied property rights (which were, to Tourgée, the "reputation of being white"). There was difficulty in this approach, however. The first test case of Daniel Desdunes was made null when the Louisiana Supreme Court said that the Jim Crow law was "unconstitutional insofar as it applied to interstate passengers." Because Dedunes was holding a ticket to Mobile, Alabama, he won his case on a technicality, but the constitutionality of intrastate Jim Crow transportation laws was still unresolved. It is at this point that Homer Adolph Plessy enters the scene.

took out their notes, and looked at the agenda for the class for that day written on the white board. The opening question for today's class was a relatively simple one: What do you think of Sutton E Griggs? How does his story, Imperium in Imperio, *help us understand this tumultuous period between Reconstruction and the emergence of Jim Crow? Sutton E Griggs was a figure that most students hadn't encountered prior to the reading assignment, and his eclectic career gave students plenty of fodder for discussion.*

"I can't believe someone thought it would be a good idea to create a whole separate state just for black people," Kaylee said, pulling out her notebook and turning to her friend, Gabi. Gabi shook her head emphatically, adding, "I'm not really sure what to make of him. Like, that idea feels like something out of a movie, right?"

"Yeah! That's weird, isn't it?" Kaylee mused. Another classmate sitting at their table, Pam, chimed in. "It's sort of weird, but can you imagine what the US would be like today if these ideas had worked? Like, an entire state just for black people. Especially at the time, it might not have been a bad idea."

Ms. Brown overheard some of the conversation happening at this table, as it was right next to her computer in the back of the classroom where she took attendance; she decided to build on it before opening the floor for other comments.

"Start wrapping up your last ideas!" Ms. Brown stated, giving the class a warning that they were about to transition to the first activity of the class period.

"OK, cool, I heard a lot of interesting talk. One thing I want to highlight before I hear from more of you is a little bit of our sequence here. We are beginning to talk about the long civil rights movement, a period where individuals and groups were interested in challenging racial inequality in the United States from the period of enslavement all the way to the present. We have read a little bit about the attempts of some populists to create an interracial agrarian working-class movement, and we have read a little bit about the interracial organizing that lead to the court case Plessy v. Ferguson. Today, we are looking at one lesser known figure, Sutton E Griggs, and how his approach to combatting racial inequality might help us figure out some things about this time period. He's an interesting figure because he doesn't neatly "fit" into some of the narratives we have in our textbook about black activists at this time. So if

you think he is weird, or you don't know what to make of him, that's a great place for us to start. Any body want to share what they talked about?"

Sutton E. Griggs was a fascinating character for the students to grapple with, primarily because he was a prolific writer with ideas that are often not talked about in mainstream society today. Few if any students would have been familiar with him, and his introduction into the classroom community helped disrupt the binary that students often face when studying this period and Black history. Too often, students engage in debates where W.E.B. Du Bois represents one side of Black thought, and Booker T. Washington represents the other. While these two influential thinkers should be studied, to argue that they represented the entirety of Black approaches to Jim Crow is not only preposterous, it is insulting to the myriad individuals who lived at the time. Introducing Griggs was Ms. Brown's way of intentionally disrupting that binary. The following field note excerpt continues on from that same class period.

Field Note Excerpt 2: Helping students engage in political economic analysis of a time period

The students had lots of ideas to share about the idea for a separate black state that Griggs presented in his most famous novel, Imperium in Imperio. *In this novel, two black characters are working with a secret organization to create a black "nation within a nation" in the state of Texas. While both characters agree that such a place is necessary for blacks in the United States, they disagree on their vision for how to achieve that. One character wants to overthrow the current state government, while the other wants to mobilize people within the state to achieve a vote in their favor. In the end, one character betrays the other and the plan is not successful.*

Due to time constraints, the students were unable to read the novel itself, but, with the help of Ms. Brown, they got enough of a sense of the context within which Griggs wrote, what movements he was responding to, and what he may have been trying to achieve in writing such a piece. Contrary to what many of the students thought, the idea of a separate black state was not as strange as they anticipated. Griggs's characters represented the beginning of a kind of black nationalism, where separate black institutions were seen as necessary to combat the racial apartheid of the

Jim Crow South and the government-sanctioned discrimination of the North. Unlike Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, which most students had heard about, this strain of thinking was most interested in militant opposition to racial discrimination in society, but did not feel it necessary to appeal or appease the sensibilities of white philanthropists to achieve material success. Much like the strains of black capitalism, or even Marcus Garvey's UNIA that would follow it, this kind of black nationalism was based on a kind of racial self help that was decidedly by and for black people.

After leading the class through a short participatory lecture that contextualized many of the ideas in the reading, Ms. Brown asked the students to create a chart and work together in table groups to compare across the readings they had done that week. The chart looked something like this.

How did various individuals respond to the collapse of Reconstruction?[19]

	Populist Movement	Plessy v Ferguson Campaign	Imperium in Imperio (Griggs, 1899)
What was this organization's or person's goal?			
Was this organization/ person (prior to 1900) all black, all white, or multiracial?			

[19] It should be noted here that Ms. Brown highlighted that the populist movement was only responding to the collapse of Reconstruction in so far as it rejected the consolidation of Democratic Party power. That is, the populism of this time does not neatly fit into a "cause-effect" formula where the collapse of Reconstruction *caused* the emergence of populism. However, in an attempt to show how various people responded to the upheaval of this time, Ms. Brown included populism here.

How did this organization or person attempt to confront race-based discrimination and/or economic oppression?			

Working in table groups, students synthesized across their readings to create a comparison document for how various groups responded to the collapse of Reconstruction and tried to resist the consolidation of Democratic Party power in the South. The goal of this activity is to highlight the variety of responses to the emergence of Jim Crow. One response, embodied by some populists, socialists, and others aligned with farmers, was based on a critique of the two-party system and the corporate power that supported antidemocratic systems. Another response, embodied by the agitators who supported challenging the transportation law in New Orleans, was based on lobbying and pressure group organizing, not striking. Both options (1) and (2) had space for multiracial, especially between black and white, organizing (although they were by no means without issues). However, option (1) was based on a positional antagonism to the established order and option (2) was based on a more elite demand for equal rights and representation. Option (3), embodied by Sutton E Griggs, is a bit more nebulous because he was working within and outside of options (1) and (2), and also advocated, in his writing, a third option that was an early form of nationalism or separatism. His most famous novel envisioned a separate black state in the United States, based in Texas. The ambiguity of Griggs's perspective primarily comes from the fact that he was not clear on the best means to achieve that vision, or what purposes a separate black state would serve (i.e. was it to so that blacks could be incorporated more fully into the US project outside of the racism of whites? or was it so that blacks could work outside of the US project? At times, both options seemed available to Griggs).

Students had about 15 minutes to look through their notes, consult each other, and have conversations about how to fill in their organizers. Ms. Brown continued to circulate around the room, asking students probing questions and directing students to key texts if they were stuck. Because the class was coming to an end, Ms. Brown made an

announcement that whatever they didn't finish in their groups would be homework and that they should come to class tomorrow ready to discuss their ideas.

When Ms. Brown and I reflected on this class period, she was pleased with how students were engaging with the variety of responses to Jim Crow. Rather than thinking that integration was the only option proposed by so-called progressives, and segregation was the only option proposed by regressive racists, the students started thinking about the terms of integration and segregation; that is, integration for what and who gets to decide how? As the wing of the populist movement amenable to multiracial organizing showed, integration into a corporate two-party system was beyond the pale for many working class people, and they attempted to fight it. And as the narratives from Griggs novel demonstrated, segregation was sometimes proposed by Black people who not only did not want to be integrated into the United States, but who did not think it was ever possible to get the rights they deserved. During our reflection, Ms. Brown noticed that she could have emphasized how Griggs's own childhood in Texas on the border between multiple cultures and nations (i.e. Indigenous peoples, the self-emancipated Black folks who had escaped there, and tejanos) influenced his idea to write Texas as a separate state for Black people and the complicated politics of land ownership that would have entailed.

In this final vignette, I describe how Ms. Brown structured one of her final classes in this unit to help students synthesize across the various lessons they had.

Interaction 2: Supporting students to make textured connections across time

"OK, so we are trying to synthesize across all of these moments in history we have spent the last month examining," Ms. Brown began, after class had officially started. "I asked you the question, 'How can we make sense of continued racial inequality in the United States? What, in your view of this history, is driving that?"

The students had some time to think about the question, as it was not only the opening question of the class, but also the homework assignment for the night before. They spent some time comparing answers and responses in table groups all before Ms. Brown opened up class.

"Who's gonna start us off?" Ms. Brown posed.

There were a couple of moments of silence, but then Frankie started talking.

"Well, I don't know, it sort of depends when you're looking at it, right? Like, at one point, racial inequality is because of laws and stuff, but like, now, it seems to be because of beliefs. But then again, it's like inequality is sort of how society works."

"Say more about that last part, Frankie. What do you mean that inequality is how our society works?" Ms. Brown probed.

"Well, like, there are the haves and the have nots. But the have nots only exist because the haves exist, right? Like, take a billionaire. There can only be so many billionaires in society because that guy's billions is based on a whole bunch of other people not having enough." Several students nodded in agreement when Frankie shared this idea.

"Interesting proposition there, Frankie. What I find most interesting is that, to me, it sounded like you were stating that like a rule. Like that's how society has *to work."*

"It doesn't have *to work like that," Frankie interjected. "But that's how capitalism works, right?"*

"Good push back. Class, Frankie has given us an interesting rule and condition here. I want us to try and work together to examine that idea and connect it back to racial inequality. Frankie proposed that under capitalism, there are haves and have nots, and they are dependent on each other. By that, I mean the only reason that haves have so much is because the have nots exist. First, I want to know what you all think about that and second, I want to know if that relationship helps us make sense of the durability of racial inequality in the United States over time. I'll put those questions on the board. Take a minute to jot down your ideas, and then start discussing them with your classmates at your table."

Students worked together, mulling over and trying to understand Frankie's idea. Several groups tried to connect that idea about economic inequalities to racial inequality, but it was tough to try and think about that large swath of history in any kind of sustained way. Ms. Brown anticipated this difficulty, and after about 15 minutes of individual writing, table talking, and whole group discussion, Ms. Brown started giving her lecture.

"I am really impressed by the way y'all tackled that question. It's really hard to connect multiple time periods to each other. So for the time being, let's take two time periods and work through them together. This might help you connect to the provocative idea that Frankie put forward earlier." Ms. Brown made a table on the white board. In the first rows, she put two different time periods and labeled one "the emergence of Jim Crow" and labeled the other "post-major Civil Rights legislation of 1960s". Then, in the first column she wrote, "How did racial inequality show up here?"

She and the class went systematically through their notes to figure out how racial inequality manifested at these two different times. Then, they moved on to the other columns, so that the full table looked like this.

	How did racial inequality show up here?	**What were some of the major ways people tried to fight it?**	**How did people understand racial inequality at that time?**
the emergence of Jim Crow			
post-major Civil Rights legislation of 1960s			

The next 20 minutes of class was a mix of Ms. Brown lecturing, the students talking to each other and looking at their notes to figure out how they would answer each question. Pretty soon, the class period was nearing its end.

"We are going to keep coming back to this. Contextualizing history is not easy work, but your final product is going to be all the better because of this," Ms. Brown encouraged the students. Ms. Brown then told the students

that their homework was to continue working through answering the questions for these two time periods. All of this work was in preparation for the essays they would be crafting at the end of the week to close off their unit.

After class, Ms. Brown and I talked about how she thought the unit went. While she was proud of the work she had done to help students think contextually and complicate some of the narratives about race and racism they had experienced in other spaces, she was still unsure if teaching history in this sweeping way was the best approach. She liked how students were able to recognize patterns and make the past relevant to the present; however, she felt that she was unable to get to the nuances that she wanted to get to and provide all of the texture of the past that was meaningful. "This one unit could have been our entire school year!" she shared.

While true, there are several things that Ms. Brown did here that could be useful for other educators given the time constraints and standardized pressures they may be confronting. In each field note or vignette I have highlighted here, Ms. Brown worked with students to contextualize text prior to making comparisons to other time periods. Asking students to sit with what was unique about a period before asking them to compare across time allowed their eventual comparisons to be much deeper than they would have been otherwise. Additionally, Ms. Brown worked to disrupt the binaries of narratives that students were most familiar with, especially when thinking about Black and even multiracial resistance to the existing racial order. By introducing figures and events that were specially chosen to help students look anew at the past, Ms. Brown encouraged them to rethink the familiar narrative in ways that helped them think through and, at times, beyond the haunting modality of persistent racial inequality.

These speculative field notes and interactive vignettes were a way to think about how else this history might be taught, and what the potential outcomes of that other way might be for young people as they are making sense of racial inequality in the past and present. In particular, I used these speculations to demonstrate what I see as a possible path out of teaching history in the ways I

examined in Part I. For example, Ms. Brown engaged in and supported her students to do deep contextual analyses, where actors were examined and discussed given the constraints and possibilities of the times they operated in. Rather than looking exclusively at the language of a time period, Ms. Brown asked her students to examine what the language meant in the context it was uttered and gave assistance to help students understand both continuities and discontinuities across time. She also spent a significant amount of time looking at multiple responses within a historical moment to racial inequality, demonstrating the range of perspectives and approaches that existed that must be taken into account when trying to understand the past. Finally, Ms. Brown not only stated for students that the whole notion of race was a social construction, something they had heard multiple times both in school and in popular culture; she gave specific examples of when and how race was made meaningful in the past. That is, she did not assume that an individual's race was always already the primary way through which they understood the world, even in the midst of formation of racial apartheid in the South known as Jim Crow. In these ways, Ms. Brown strove to challenge the idea of race essentialism across time, complicate authoritative texts and discourses about what race means and what it meant, and couple rhetorical analyses of laws and other texts with an understanding of the political economy – that is, the specific constraints and possibilities of any given time period – within which those texts were produced.

Additionally, Ms. Brown worked to complicate the idea that whiteness was the driving force of racial inequality by highlighting moments of possibility and disrupting narrative frames that students were likely familiar with (e.g., frames of integration and segregation made popular in the post-Civil Rights Movement Era that does not grapple with the terms of both political projects). She worked towards complexity by engaging students in having multiple relationships towards the past, both asking young people to sit in the tensions of a time period period *and* make connections across time periods. In so doing, Ms. Brown supported students in telling more textured causal stories,

where the past-present relation shifted to a past(s)-present(s) relation. By examining the tensions and possibilities of approaches in one time period before connecting across time, Ms. Brown emphasized the multiplicity of pasts that could be used to understand the present. Finally, Ms. Brown modeled how texts provide pedagogical invitations, even asking students to speak from the voice of a text when encountering new questions, as she did in the activity where Lawrence Goodwyn and Michele Alexander were in conversation with each other. Creating this space of texts as pedagogical, and explicitly structuring her stance towards texts to complicate the invitations they offered, Ms. Brown demonstrated how to engage in a kind of historical thinking that had implications for understanding the present.

These speculations were based on my experience both as an educator and working closely with the students in Mr. Sumner's class for an extended period of time; as such, they are necessarily incomplete. Rather than thinking about these vignettes as examples of what to do, I take them more as sketchings of what could be possible. While I cannot say with any certainty what conclusions students may draw from this shift in pedagogical approach about the durability of racial inequality into the future, or what learner identities they would find meaningful based on these resources, I can say that this approach does ask students to grapple with different narratives and can only assume these narratives offer new possibilities and even limitations for history educators.

CONCLUSION: RETHINKING RACE TALK IN HISTORY EDUCATION

In this concluding chapter, I reengage some of the questions that shaped this project. I n short, I explore what it means to think historically about race. Throughout this project, I have argued that haunting is one of the ways young people come to understand and explain the durability of racial inequality in the United States. I have described the resources that young people in the classrooms I observed drew upon to understand, and I take an in depth look at one student's learning trajectory. I have also provided in each chapter a limited exploration of the possibilities and limitations of the particular facet of haunting that I explored, and I extend the work on implications that started in those empirical chapters. I wonder, in this chapter, how this particular way of thinking about race in history education is supported by other literatures (e.g. whiteness studies) and I continue the speculation that I began in Chapter V about what other ways of organizing the discourse in history education around race might afford.

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that haunting represents a distinct modality or form of historical thinking. While history education research has focused on a more specialized form of historical thinking, seeing this disciplinary approach as a bulwark against presentist or teleological thinking, I have demonstrated that, when it comes to narrating the durability of racial inequality in the United States, there is a different kind of historical thinking that is not quite disciplinary, in the sense that the literature means it, and not quite presentism. In the haunting modality, the young people I worked with and learned from were able to creatively assemble history to create causal sto-

ries that emphasized a transhistorical whiteness that was responsible for enduring racial inequalities. I followed the learning trajectory of one student in particular, Sara, in how she moved from describing a generalized and amorphous racism as evident in one spatiotemporal context to naming a whiteness that spanned across 400 years as being responsible for enduring racial inequalities. Sara's case demonstrated the limits and possibilities of haunting as historical thinking: that is, while Sara was able to see this history as relevant to her life in the present, her main antiracist action was to denounce whiteness, much like a witness may be called to testify against a guilty defendant.

While describing the thinking and learning that took place in this context, I have tried to situate the student trajectories and sense making within a larger context of the authoritative texts that they drew upon. My goal in doing in this was twofold. First, I wanted to show a contextualized picture of how students reached the tentative conclusions that they did, and a close analysis of key texts (conceived as tools) was central to demonstrating that. Secondly, however, I wanted to show some of the possibilities and limitations presented in how the texts themselves construct racial inequalities. In how they constructed whiteness, the texts themselves decoupled whiteness from material conditions and made it unchanging across time. There are several limitations to this approach, especially when teaching about racial inequality to young people in an elite setting.[20]

To really understand what those limitations and possibilities are, though, a brief grounding in the intellectual history of whiteness studies is important. Scholars, in particular Black scholars, have described whiteness as a key component to the issues of facing non-white populations for decades (Du Bois, 1935; Fanon, 1970; Rodney, 1972); therefore, telling the story of how whiteness studies as a path of academic inquiry emerged could have multiple origin points. One place to begin

[20] It should be clear that my goal in teaching young people about any history is to advance a more just, non-exploitative vision of the future. It is a necessarily anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist approach to teaching history, and I make those political commitments transparent; for someone who has a vision of teaching history that replicates or maintains the status quo, the limitations of this discourse may not be limitations.

telling that history is with Theodore Allen's 1975, two volume tome *The Invention of the White Race*. In this text, Allen emphasized that the white race was an invention for the purposes of social control. Through white privileges that continued from that point of inception, Allen focused in particular on the white working class and how whiteness continues to oppress workers of all races. Other whiteness scholars, such as David Roediger, have followed in Allen's footsteps and looked closely at how these white privileges work. Roediger's *Wages of Whiteness* demonstrated that more than material benefits, having "white skin privileges" gave its bearers a psychological benefit in that they conceived of themselves as superior to, and a part from, other humans. While Roediger focused on the psychological distance whiteness created, others have focused on how whiteness is codified in law (Harris, 1993) and public policy (Lipsitz, 2006). Throughout these works, the idea that whiteness is the primary way to understand inequality in the United States remains consistent.

However, there are those who dissent from this formulation of the long history of inequality, racial or otherwise, in the United States. As historian Cedric Johnson (2019) wrote, "whiteness has come to function not so much as an analysis of interests in historical motion, but rather, it functions as catechism—America's original sin is racism and redemption in the post-political hereafter lies in white atonement." In making whiteness, a priori, the primary way to understand any moment of United States history, Johnson argued that this approach "reifies whiteness, even as it explores its social construction, presupposes that racial identity is the foremost shaper of working-class thought and action, and silences interracial solidarity." Johnson noted that most who engaged in forming whiteness studies were attempting to show and understand the very real obstacles to building a workers party in the United States. In fact, scholars like Roediger were engaging in a useful point of inquiry that "counter[ed] the myth that working-class solidarity springs organically from shared oppression." However, Johnson argued that this formulation of history substituted one myth for another. "Working-class solidarity" Johnson stated, "like all other forms of alliance and common

cause, is forged through politics, an imperfect and unwieldy process of discovering and advancing common interests through debate, conflict, bonding, experimentation, sustained work, failures and victories." In other words, the obstacles that working-class solidarity faced in particular historical moments could be found in specific sets of social relations and political alliances, not a timeless spring of whiteness that lurked ever below the surface.

Other critiques of whiteness studies have noticed similar tendencies and how they limit historical analysis and political organizing in the present. Historian Touré Reed argued that an "insistence that race is a force that operates independently from political economy leads [Coates][21] to the erroneous conclusion that modern liberalism's failures are owed to a refusal to acknowledge that racism is a distinct evil that warrants its own solutions" (p. 105, 2020). Reed argued that postwar liberalism did, in fact, see racism as a distinct evil and its solutions (such as affirmative action and curtailing housing discrimination) were ineffective not because liberals could not name racism and white supremacy as bad, but that the goal in naming those forces was to integrate black people (and non-white people altogether) into a capital, imperial system, not transform that system (see Gordon, 2015, for an intellectual history of postwar racial liberalism). In fact, many postwar liberals saw racism as so distinctly evil that it pathologized not only its victims, but its perpetrators (Last, 2020). In other words, naming whiteness or white supremacy as warranting "its own solutions" does not center the fact that solutions to racial inequality require solutions to inequality, writ large. These particular constructions of whiteness, as I have shown throughout this dissertation, were incorporated in an elite school setting that is, by definition, founded on its exclusivity. Racial equality at a place like GLS means something very different than equality at large.

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[21] In this excerpt, Reed is comparing and contrasting the racial politics of President Obama and Ta-Nehisi Coates, arguing that their "postracialism" and "post-postracialism", respectively, are both outcomes of "neoliberal benign neglect." By this, he means that Obama's emphasis on and commitment to, during his presidency, personal responsibility ideology and Coates's commitment to ontological racism are both a continuation of postwar liberalism. "At best," Reed argues, both approaches are "a call for continuing along the same path that has failed most black Americans since the Johnson administration. At worst, it is a call for no more than ritualized acknowledgement of white privilege and black suffering" (158).

My goals for history education moving forward are directly connected to how I reimagined pedagogical practices in Chapter V: I want young people to (1) break down and question race essentialism of all kinds, (2) challenge the authority of texts that are presented to them as authoritative through close examination of historiography, and (3) couple political economy with rhetorical analysis. These things cannot be done with the same weight at all times and necessarily need to be approached in a long trajectory of working with young people. That is, one lesson cannot do all of this work, one unit cannot do all of this work, and even one year cannot do all of this work. Rather, this approach to historical thinking that builds on and challenges the haunting modality that is becoming more prevalent as young people encounter history curricula that is engaged with a more social justice orientation[22] must be a sustained approach that defines multiple interactions with history. This is part of the reason why I am returning to high school teaching; the ability to work with young people over four years is key to being able to do this work and do this work well. My hope is that my experiences working with young people can serve as a useful case study for other educators hoping to support students in understanding the past and what it means for the present and future.

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[22] See, for example, the recently published *Teaching History for Justice: Centering Activism in Students' Study of the Past* (Martell and Stevens, 2020).

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Appendix. Student Essays.

Student essays were written on Google Docs, and I have shown the edits that students made by keeping those additions in blue text. However, for clarity, I have omitted the things they deleted in their second drafts and have standardized the spacing in each essay.

No. 1: Duncan's Essay
Title "Rises and Falls: The Legacy of Race in America"

The legacy of race in the United States of America can be described as poor at best. Even if slavery were to be excluded as a whole, its track record from Reconstruction to present day has been far less than stellar. The legacy has been formed through many events both positive and negative, but it can be summed up by a specific few that fit into a grouping of "set ups and turning points." In this case, a set up is an event, or a movement that favored or benefitted black people, and the turning point is a following event that allowed white people to regain power, or remain in power. Historically this has included events anywhere from the olympics, where black track stars Tommie Lee and John Carlos went from winning first and third place respectively in the 200 meter to being banned from the event for life due to the "black power salute that they made from the podium, to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. where one of the biggest voices in black history had his voice, and his life taken away far too soon. From the first days after the end of the Civil War to the 2016 election the country has been full of crucial set ups and turning points that have ultimately plagued the country and its legacy, and are big reasons for why there are still massive racial tensions and problems in the country today.

The Union, and its President Abraham Lincoln , were still celebrating winning the Civil War and bringing an end to slavery with the 13th Amendment. In addition to the 13th Amendment, the 14th Amendment, which guaranteed that all people born on United States soil would be treated equally regardless of any other factor, and the 15th Amendment, which gave black men the right to vote also instilled a belief that life could improve for black people after the Civil War. For the first time in a long time the potential for proper race relations in American was increasing. {things were looking better for the race relations in America.} Black people in the south were finally free and America would be getting its first taste of life without as big of a racial divide. Less than a week after the end of the war however, Lincoln was shot dead and one of the most blatantly racist presidents in American history, Andrew Johnson took office. His presidency included the creation of the black codes which ended up being the lead in to Jim Crow, and included ideas such as, "If any apprentice shall leave the employment of his or her master or mistress, without his or her consent, said master or mistress may pursue and recapture said apprentice"(Mississippi,1865) which was essentially an updated version of the Fugitive Slave Act. Although no one can be truly certain how the country would have turned out if Lincoln had stayed alive for his second term and the beginning stages of Reconstruction, it is reasonable to believe that black people wouldn't have been snapped back into a system of legalized slavery so soon which is why this was why the the Union's Civil War victory { winning of the civil war} was the set up to the Johnson presidency and the Black Codes. Despite the creation of the black codes there, was a period in United States history before the civil rights movement in which the condition that black lives had to live under improved. It was called recon-

struction, and it spanned from 1865-1877 which was from the end of the war to when the north gave up official control of the south. Reconstruction included an increase in black rights and a massive increase in black representation in government. The end of reconstruction signaled a new era of extremely unconcealed racism in specifically the south, but also the country as a whole. Many states changed their state flags either back to their confederate designs or created new ways to honor the confederacy, the people of the south took it upon themselves to put black people back into the place they felt was right, and the Supreme Court ruled that Separate but Equal was legal in a court case known as Plessy versus Ferguson. Plessy v. Ferguson occurred in 1896 when Homer Plessy, who was both white and black, but more visually white, was not allowed to sit in a whites only train car on account of Louisiana's separate car act which legally allowed train cars to be separated by race in the state. After not getting the wanted results in Plessy v. The State of Louisiana and in a second trial in front of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, Plessy took his case to the Supreme Court of the United States. Plessy ended up losing 7-1 and that decision set the precedent for many awful, racist events that followed and would go on to be the main targets of the Civil Rights Movement.

Beginning in the 1950s, the Civil Rights Movement brought in a new era for black people. It was responsible new laws supporting black people and for bringing how black people were treated in the south to national attention. This was another point when life was really starting to look up for black people throughout the United States. However, for many of the white citizens and government officials in the south and in the country as a whole this was seen as a negative as opposed to a positive . {This was not a good thing to everyone though.} There were many people specifically in the southern part of the United States who felt as though blacks posed a threat to the society that they enjoyed, and feared what life would be like on a more level playing field. Thus making the need to stop the tide and retaliate with law and order. As author of the *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* a nd civil rights advocate , Michelle Alexander stated that "The rhetoric of "law and order" was first mobilized in the late 1950s as Southern governors and law enforcement officials attempted to generate and mobilize white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement"(Alexander,2010,40) so it was very much a conscious decision by the white people in power to halt the progress of black people in their region. The rhetoric of law and order was dripping in law and order and what would become one of the most memorable parts of the concept getting "tough on crime" only applied to black people, and primarily black neighborhoods. The Law and Order movement was most publicized by Richard Nixon as a way to take advantage of the increasing fear that the people of the United States felt as a result of increasing crime. As a part of this movement, Nixon introduced the War on Drugs introduced despite the majority of Americans not seeing drugs as something plaguing the country. Nixon's successor Ronald Reagan furthered the cause aggressively, bringing in the concept of a "welfare queen" a very poor black woman who took advantage of the system in place for her. Persona's like these fostered more hate for the black community particularly amongst lower and middle class white people who felt as though black people were being rewarded for their lack of work. Because of the hatred that had been cultivated, the war on drugs progressively received more public backing, and the tactics being used were allowed to be more aggressive. The major, most notable parts of the Civil Rights Movement started fading in the 1970s, but law and order, and what would become the war on drugs truly stood the test of time which shows just have powerful the ideas were. As a result of the war on drugs and getting tough on crime, a disproportionate amount of black people were arrested for actions that their white peers evaded punishment for, and due to new laws on mandatory minimum sentencing, far too many black people were taken out of their communities for crimes that would have resulted in either lesser sentences, or no sentence at all. That was most specifically due to the Three Strikes and You're Out policy started by Bill Clinton which ensured that after three different drug convictions one would be

sentenced to life in prison. That law would seem like it was racially blind, but even in a completely random year such as 2011, black people were 5-7 times more likely to be arrested for drug related crimes. Because of this, a cycle was created, where black people would be arrested for drugs the first time, but due to the arrest they'd lose everything, but drugs and have to get back into selling drugs to regain the money that they'd previously lost, and then they'd get caught again because on top of all of that they were being unfairly targeted. The war on drugs was shaped in such a way that it was almost as though the white people in power were saying to black people "you can have more rights but you won't get to experience them."

In 2008, the first black president , Barack Obama , was elected. There was a sense of accomplishment for black people everywhere who felt as though the country was turning a permanent corner with race relations in the United States. Having a black president brought upon a modern era of black power, where suddenly hate crimes were taken more seriously, the president genuinely cared about police brutality, and black children could grow up seeing someone who looked like them in the most powerful seat in the world. Because of all of this, what would happen eight short years later has to be considered the true turning point to all of this. In 2016, Donald Trump was elected to succeed Obama as president. At best it could be considered a hit to racial progress in the United States and at worst it could be considered a tragedy. One of the biggest problems with Trump being elected was made said by New York Times Best Selling author, and Howard University graduate Ta Nehisi Coates stated " Trump had made his worldview clear. He fought to keep blacks out of his buildings, according to the U.S. government; called for the death penalty for the eventually exonerated Central Park Five; and railed against "lazy" black employees. "Black guys counting my money! I hate it,""(Coates,2018). If the racial divide solely between black and white people due to Trump wasn't clear enough, 57 percent of white voters voted for Trump compared to the 8% of black people. If one were to make the argument that it was because Trump is white, it could easily be disproved by the fact that 82% of black voters voted for Clinton, a white woman, so being against Trump was clearly more due to his ideals than his race. In addition to that, Trump received 28 percent of the Latinx vote, 27 percent of the Asian vote, and 36 percent of the vote from people who didn't identify as any of the races just mentioned. Due to the election of Trump, the country has seen situations that were otherwise unheard of, like black athletes getting into direct arguments with the president over t T witter, and what feels like the attacking and tearing down of the "politically correct era". The p P resident himself has even told police "Please don't be too nice"(Trump,2017) with regards to making arrests which was a bold and harmful statement considering the country's quite messy history with police brutality. If his world view was in any way unclear, Coates lays it out quite well saying "Trump had made his worldview clear. He fought to keep blacks out of his buildings, according to the U.S. government; called for the death penalty for the eventually exonerated Central Park Five; and railed against "lazy" black employees. "Black guys counting my money! I hate it,"" which does not show contempt for specific black people, which would be fair, but generalized contempt for black people as a whole which is unacceptable for a president of the United States and worrisome. In a recent testimony, former lawyer for Trump Michael Cohen made several statements regarding president Trump and his thoughts on black people, including Trump saying that black people wouldn't vote for him because they're too stupid, saying that black people could only live this way while he was driving through a Chicago neighborhood, and asking Cohen to name one country that was run by a black person that wasn't in ruins. All of this comes from someone who was close to Trump away from the public eye, and it shows more of the same from Trump. Because of the election of President Trump, the legacy of race in America made a turn for the worse.

Due to these three set ups and turning points, the racial legacy of America is that right when it looks like black people are making serious progress, the white people in power, do something to punch back. True freedom may never be something that is truly attained for black people, and if it is then the road to getting there is unclear. The United States only recently issued an official apology for the occurrence of slavery, but that should just be the start. America has recognized slavery as being the truly tragic event that it was, but has not acknowledged the Black Codes, Jim Crow, or the War on Drugs in a similar manner, and until they do so legitimate progress will be hard to come by. On the off chance that truly sustainable progress is made, it will be on the country to make sure that it continues until we are on a completely different plane, not just a different part of the same one. Albert Bennett, professor at Roosevelt University, and chair of the St. Clair Drake Center, who was alive during the Civil Rights Movement and all throughout the War on Drugs stated told me that he doesn't celebrate the Civil Rights Movement because he feels as though it is like celebrating getting to half time of a sporting event. Yes we moved forward, but all the movement did was get us close enough to participate in the game. It is not close to being over, and it is quite unclear when it will be. All that is known is this, history repeats itself, so the set ups won't stop happening. The question is if the set ups will start going in favor of black people, and if history is any indication they won't, and {we} the country will be stuck in this vicious cycle for years to come.

No. 2: Emma's Essay
Title "Reconstruction: A Stained Legacy in American History"

After the abolition of slavery, society was in a state of questioning. What is the role of black people in society? How should they be integrated into our world now as newly freed slaves? The concept of Reconstruction proved to be one full of hope, promise, and achievement, but it was also one full of struggle and regression. At the beginning of the Reconstruction movement sharecropping became prevalent, trapping black Americans in a different form of slavery where they were being taken advantage of by white landowners. Once sharecropping became less common, a rise nationalization of social movements and civil disobedience was seen presented itself through events such as the Plessy v. Ferguson case in which the supposed end of legalized segregation when Plessy was overturned by Brown, as well as the Civil Rights Movement. Although the outcomes of these events weren't always positive, they played a key role in the formation of the legacy of race in America. Since the mid to late 1800s, life for black Americans has certainly improved. They are now able to vote due to the Voting Rights Act and the 24th Amendment, and their rights are protected by the law. But, they now see experience added hardship in their daily lives that stems from the turbulent history that Reconstruction brought. In his article *The Case for Reparations,* T a-Nehisi Coates writes, "From the 1930s to 1960s, black people...were largely cut out of the legitimate home-mortgage market," (Coates, 2014). This created, specifically in Chicago, a struggle for blacks to find housing, resulting in an extremely segregated city that has held strong to this day. The legacy of Reconstruction and race in America has been a roller coaster of events full of many turning points, ups, and downs, that has ultimately stained the ideals of society, causing aspects of the racial turmoil prevalent for the last 100 years to repeat itself in our world today.

From the late 1800s to the mid 1900s, the legacy of race in America was full of both great accomplishments and considerable regressions. The Plessy v. Ferguson court case in 1896 serves as the beginning of a low point in terms of race relations in which Homer Plessy's decision to purposefully disregard the Separate Car Act in order to take a case to the Supreme Court had immense potential to begin to mend the segregation prevalent in the country. But the Court rejected Plessy's arguments 7-1, legalizing and solidifying segregation under the protection of the law. This sparked the strengthening of Jim Crow policies and the emergence if of white supremacy groups, including the Ku Klux Klan which gave way to an epidemic of extreme violence towards black people, specifically in the form of lynchings. This sparked a major turning point in the legacy of race in America: The Great Migration. In an effort to escape the mindset southerners had against former slaves four million formerly enslaved men and women being integrated into society, blacks traveled north, seeking safety and a better economy full of opportunities. In New York, the Harlem Renaissance provided a fresh start for young black people in that at this time, none of the men and women under the age of 30 had been born under slavery or were in sharecropping, finally giving blacks the ability to cultivate and thrive in a rich, vibrant culture that wasn't being torn apart by white supremacist groups. Almost 60 years after the court case in which segregation supported by the law arose, Brown v. Board of Education served as a victory for black people in America and a high point regarding race relations in the country. The verdict deeming the segregation of schools unconstitutional was the first large-scale moment where equal rights were upheld by the law, sparking an even firmer desire for equality between all people, regardless of their skin color.

At this point, the black experience in America was on a bit of an upswing. National support for the Civil Rights Movement was peaking in the early 1960s. But, so was white resistance. But, there was still a considerable amount of racism and hate being pointed towards blacks. The abduc-

tion and brutal murder of fourteen year old Emmett Till further infuriated black people across the country, sparking one of the most powerful movements in American history. In her piece *Free at Last,* Sara Bullard includes a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. about the discrimination black people have to face daily, saying that he is tired of "being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression. We have no alternative but to protest," (Bullard, 1989, 19). The Civil Rights Movement was a period in history where black Americans came together as one community, despite their differences, and fought for equal rights, often times putting that cause above their safety. Martin Luther King Jr. , Malcolm X, the little rock nine, and many others were the face of that movement-a face of hope and determination to achieve equality. Civil disobedience and non-violence became two strategies that were used frequently throughout the movement, as citizens were trained on how to participate in successful sit-ins and protests. They were taught to put their well being at risk in a push for societal change, and that was something that they didn't seem to struggle with which took incredible strength and resilience . The Montgomery Bus Boycott tackled an aspect of blatant inequality-the segregation of buses. In Alabama, NAACP activist Rosa Parks was seated in the front of a bus, a space prohibited to blacks in the black section of a bus and was asked to move back to allow a white person to sit . When told to move, she refused to get up and was arrested. She didn't put up a fight and didn't cause any violence to break out. It was a simple act of non-violence that is well known to so many Americans today, inspiring JoAnn Robinson and the Women's Political Council to begin their 381 day boycott with the help of the MIA . White resistance was strong, organized, and institutionalised, so change through the Civil Rights Movement did not come easy. Violence between protesters that were part of the movement and white people and police who were against the movement increased immensely. So much hate built up in many white minds towards everyone involved in the movement, enough hate to the point that Martin Luther King Jr. wore a target on his back daily. With not only his assassination in 1968, but also with the assassination of many other activists, the push for civil rights lost many crucial leading figures, and from that point on the movement was never as strong and soon after came to an end.

With all the turmoil surrounding the conclusion of the Civil Rights Movement under Martin Luther King's leadership, a new Jim Crow Era arose, and although the provisions that the Jim Crow laws put society under were no longer implemented, some of the same ideas appeared in newer policies that were put in place. During this time period, law and order was at the forefront of people's minds, and was presented as one of the main focuses of political leaders, along with what arguably was the government's biggest focus: the country's drug problem. In 1971, President Nixon declared a War on Drugs through his "law and order" presidency and created the Drug Enforcement Administration (or DEA) in hopes of fixing the national crisis. As Michelle Alexander writes in her book *The New Jim Crow,* "The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) trains police to conduct utterly unreasonable and discriminatory stops and searches," (Alexander, 2012, 70). These suspicionless searches not only violated the Fourth Amendment, but they also targeted blacks through racial profiling wherever they went in that they could be randomly searched on the street, in their cars, or even on buses without a motive, serving as a regression in the momentum and legislative victories of the Civil Rights Movement the legacy of race in America. In 1986, President Reagan signed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, creating mandatory minimum sentences for the distribution of cocaine and crack, through which blatant racism was signed into law. The punishment for the distribution of crack, a drug more strongly associated with the inner city and the Black population , was much more severe than the one for distribution of cocaine, a similar drug more strongly associated with whites, which created disproportionate incarceration rates among communities of color that continued to grow once Clinton became president. In her book *The New Jim Crow,* Michelle Alexander includes a quote from Clinton's announcement of his new initiative surrounding the "three strikes and you're

out" rule, writing that "...the rule for residents who commit crime and peddle drugs should be one strike and you're out," (Alexander, 2012, 57). This act targeted poor people and racial minorities, and because of it the numbers of inmates, particularly black inmates, being held in prison skyrocketed, leading to a period of mass incarceration that left a stain on the legacy of race in America.

Race relations have come a long way, and now, in 2019, history is beginning to repeat itself. Though the War on Drugs is now over, police still target African-Americans on a daily basis. Our country has reached a point where it has almost become normal to hear about another white police officer shooting a black person, whether they're innocent or not. Recently, officer Van Dyke was sentenced to just under seven years of jail time for shooting 17 year old Laquan McDonald 16 times and killing him, despite the determined jail time for each shot meaning he would have a longer sentence than what he was given. Black people are much more likely to be targeted for crimes they didn't commit than white people are, and there are countless stories in the news of innocent black Americans being killed because a police officer thought they had committed a crime, even if there was no proof. Trump's presidency has also contributed to the worsening of race relations in the nation, in that it has begun to bring the southern mindset and multiple hate groups back to life. Photos of Congressmen in blackface are being brought to light, and government officials are proudly admitting that they would be in the front row at a public lynching if one were to happen. Reconstruction may have been able to help America transition out of an era of slavery as well as fix some laws and policies that were discriminatory against black Americans, but how much has it really changed people's ideals? Are we going to be able to experience a world where black people are treated as equals to white people? The legacy of race in America is one that has had moments of hope and triumph, but ultimately still has a long way to go before Reconstruction can be seen as considered a success.

No. 3: Lulu's Essay
Title "The Legal Exception: Slavery Reconstructed"

On January 1st, 1863, in the midst of the extremely bloody Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln. The proclamation was followed by the 13th amendment, which constitutionally ended slavery, stating, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime** whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." Although the 13th amendment was intended to create equality and justice, the exception stated in its text has allowed for years of unjust laws, policies, social standings, and unequal opportunities. The racist and discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction in the United States is evident through the substitution the 13th amendment introduced, along with the opportunities it created for racist policies and practices to disproportionately discriminate against people of color, specifically black Americans.

The default "super-predator" identity for black men in the United States has remained the same from slavery, through Reconstruction, until today, with only minor cultural adjustments. The original super-predator gained fame during the Reconstruction era as Jim Crow; an unintelligent black man who was either a violent rapist or murderer, or a helpless and useless individual. The rebranding and rebirth of this stereotype began in the 1950s, through the racist social and political call for "law and order" during white Southern opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. As civil rights lawyer and author Michelle Alexander states in her New York Times Bestselling book, *The New Jim Crow*, "civil rights protests were frequently depicted as criminal rather than political in nature." Through the criminal depiction of Civil Rights Movement participants, the reformation of the violent Jim Crow super-predator began. The call for law and order by white Americans was not made in order to protect citizens, but rather, in order to ensure the continuation of white supremacy and racial inequality. From the 1950s onward, since the majority of eligible voters were white due to discriminatory laws, campaigning politicians realized that the only way to win an election was to be extremely tough on crime, which really was just masked racism. These politicians are responsible for perpetuating the idea of the dangerous, violent, black male super-predator. The updated version of the super-predator , whose portrayal is strikingly similar to the portrayal of Jim Crow, was overrepresented in media in an attempt to instill fear in white Americans to gain their approval on harsher crime crackdowns. The idea of the super-predato r does not exclusively exist within white communities, but also within the criminal justice system. In *The New Jim Crow* , Alexander details the results of studies surrounding unjust jurors and judges, "...people become increasingly harsh when an alleged criminal is darker and more 'stereotypically black.'" The unjust legacy of Reconstruction in the United States is demonstrated through the societal and legal reformation of the Jim Crow inspired super-predator.

The period of law and order gave rise to mass incarceration, in which black Americans, specifically black men, are incarcerated at disproportionately high rates compared to white Americans. The gateway to mass incarceration was through the War on Drugs, which began in the 1970s through President Richard Nixon's law and order campaign. During this era, politicians perpetuated the idea that dangerous drugs exclusively existed in black or brown communities and because of this, drugs were depicted as the focal point and root of all violence. Throughout many presidencies, countless laws were introduced to expand the Drug War and increase mass incarceration, such as mandatory minimums, reduced judge's discretion, and the militarization of police forces. Author Michelle Alexander puts it into perspective, stating, "there are more people in prisons and jails today just for drug offenses than were incarcerated for *all* reasons in 1980." The War on Drugs reduced black Americans to Jim Crow era status, by stripping their constitutional rights and introducing dis-

criminatory laws, such as mandatory drug testing, random searches, expanded governmental wiretapping authority, and the forfeiture of property based on unproven allegations of drug activity. As Alexander explains it, "these new legal rules have ensured that anyone, virtually anywhere, for any reason, can become a target of drug-law enforcement activity." Although these laws state that anyone, regardless of race, can be searched at any time, the racist component of who the laws are practiced on cannot be denied. The Ku Klux Klan's announcement in 1990 that they intended to join the battle against illegal drugs exposes the undeniable connection between racism and the War on Drugs. The War on Drugs and mass incarceration have proved even more ways in which white Americans who were still resentful of black progress and civil rights to discriminate upon black communities and continue supremacy.

Although mass incarceration and the War on Drugs are responsible for huge amounts of discrimination against black communities and individuals, even African Americans who have clean records are significantly disadvantaged by racist housing policies. In the 1930s, the Federal Housing Administration insured private mortgages, thus dropping the price of the down payment required to buy a house. The neighborhoods and houses that were eligible for FHA backing were graded and decided based on their perceived stability. As acclaimed journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates states in his famous essay, *The Case for Reparations* , "neighborhoods where black people lived were rated 'D' and were usually considered ineligible for FHA backing." This system disabled blacks from obtaining a mortgage and excluded them from a fundamental part of American freedom--homeownership. The legacy of this exclusion is very present today in terms of economic disparity between white and black households. In *The Case for Reparations*, Coates details the Pew Research Center's estimation that, "white households are worth roughly 20 times as much as black households...only 15 percent of whites have zero or negative wealth, more than a third of blacks do." The economic disparity between black and white Americans is rooted in racist policies and practices that have disabled black Americans from remotely equal fiscal independence. The black socioeconomic exclusion from freedom the government created is proof of the discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction in the United States.

The racist and discriminatory legacy of Reconstruction in America is evident through the substitution the 13th amendment introduced, along with the opportunities it created for racist policies and practices to disproportionately discriminate against people of color, specifically black Americans. Although the 13th amendment was intended to create racial equality, it merely created an opportunity for a social, economic, and legal rebirth of slavery in modern America. Laws that explicitly segregate and discriminate against blacks have been replaced by a "colorblind" legal and social rhetoric, which is just as (if not more) dangerous. Although there has been an undeniable amount of progress made from the Reconstruction era until now, the social, economic, and legal fight for racial equality in the United States is not over.

No. 4: Rachel's Essay
Title "Social Activism and Hatred: Effect on Reconstruction"

Since the Civil War, America has had a fluctuating rate of acceptance towards black people. In between the Supreme Court case Plessy V. Ferguson in 1896, which legalized segregation, and the election of the first black President, Barack Obama in 2008, there have been many highs and lows for the black population. At the root of all of these issues is the fight for social acceptance. Social movements for a greater goal were propelling factors throughout the period of Reconstruction. These types of movements fell on both sides of many issues with opposing social groups such as the KKK and the Black Panthers. Trends also had a huge role in the equality of black people in this country. Periods such as the Great Migration or Mass Incarceration were all due to social movements, some for the equality of black people and some against it. In addition, some of the most deciding factors of the fate of black people in America were due to social activism groups such as the SCLC or the NAACP who performed acts of civil disobedience that were dangerous yet successful and often lead to important Supreme Court decisions. At every point of these 112 years between the introduction of Jim Crow and the election of the first black President, social movements, both for and against the cause, have played an important role in the every so slowing moving race towards integration of black people into American society, although some caused setbacks along the way.

The period of time in between the Supreme Court decisions Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896 and Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, there were many social movements that stood at the backbone of this important era for black Americans which had both positive and negative connotations. The Great Migration was moving former slaves and descendants of slavery up to the North where, as Langston hughes one said, "Negro was in vogue"(Hughes 1928). In cities like Chicago, Illinois and Harlem, New York, black people made up the culture and thrived in their new, more welcoming home where culture was imperative. The Harlem Renaissance was a time of cultural development and freedom for the black people who had moved. However, during this same period of time in the South and other places outside of major cities, under Jim Crow laws, black people were forced into the sharecropping system and lynched at a horrifying rate. These lynchings occurred mainly for the pleasure of the white southerners who still had a pre-civil war mentality. Being black was accepted in some places and practically a death sentence in others. In addition, during this time, the Ku Klux Klan was beginning to gain momentum and grow to the hateful organization that it still is, by creating a social movement that revolved around a common goal of sharing their dislike of black people. Parts of the country showed tremendous progress towards integration and acceptance during this period of time, but there were still major problems spreading throughout the nation with the prevalence of Jim Crow and the KKK.

Throughout the height often Civil Rights Movement, 1954 through 1972, there was an influx of social movements that surfaced. Much of this movement began after Emmett Till was lynched in Mississippi in 1955 at the young age of 14. Groups of activists such as SNCC, the NAACP and the SCLC began to organize sit-ins, protests and other modes of civil disobedience to get their voice heard and fight against the Jim Crow laws that had been put in place. Without the people who put their life on the line during the movements, it is unlikely that political steps such as the Voting Rights Act, the 24th Amendment or many supreme court decisions would have gone the way they had. The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Little Rock Nine were just some of the important social displays that activists put on during this time, all of which proved a different yet equally important point about the importance of integration and equal rights. Fannie Lou Hamer, a black democratic activist

and leader once said, "We have to build our own power...The question for black people is not, when is the white man going to give us our rights, just remember when he gets ready he will take it right back. We have to take for ourselves."(Hamer, 1955). Despite the intense push for integration from much of the black community, there were people who simultaneously believed that it would be better not to integrate and enforced Black Nationalism, such as Malcolm X of the Nation of Islam. Nevertheless, social movements were the main aspect of the civil rights movement that took place during this era and were what propelled activists to speak up for what they believed in and truly make a difference.

From 1972 to 2008, America saw a quick shift from progress and national support in the rights of black Americans to major issues for black Americans. The country began to turn against black people, stemming from the highest seat in the land, the presidency. Presidents such as Nixon, Reagan, Bush and Clinton were tasked with the issue of the crime and supposed drug epidemic which were major issues sweeping across America. Many black populations were below the poverty line and living in worse conditions than their white peers. In many cases, "With segregation, with the isolation of the injured and the robbed, comes the concentration of disadvantage." (Coates, 2014) which is exactly what became so prevalent in Black communities. The result of countless presidential attempts to stop these issues from occurring was to target the black community with rules such as the minimum sentencing law or the "three strikes your out" mentality introduced by Clinton. Michelle Alexander, author of The New Jim Crow writes, "The criminal justice system... is no longer primarily concerned with the prevention and punishment of crime, but rather with the management and control of the dispossessed." (Alexander, 2012, 45). The social stance of the black Americans was silenced and the only social opinion that was let free was the of hate groups like the KKK or that of the police force which became more like an army that only targeted black people. Because of the astronomical rate of people being put in prison, mass incarceration became more prevalent all over the country and often lead to a lack of stability or options for a better future for inmates. The social standards that were set during this period of time were horrifying and based on misconceptions and targeting of a historically marginalized group that deserved much better than what they received from this country.

Social change movements have been prevalent throughout the period of Reconstruction had both positive and negative connotations. From the Harlem Renaissance to student activist groups and from the KKK to the aggressive police force, it is obvious that social movements based on beliefs were the most important factor of all of the change that was made during Reconstruction. Without all of the positive, goal driven people who fought to integrate this country, nothing would have ever happened. That being said, we have in no way reached at time of full integration. Many Americans still hold hateful beliefs about black people and other marginalized communities across the country. However, similarly to the examples of activism and civil disobedience that took place during Reconstruction, there are how many prevalent groups fighting for equality such as the Black Lives Matter Movement, the Women's March or other organizations that fight for specific issues. The actions of past activists have set the precedent of how important civil disobedience is to the success of the country and the push for change. Saldy, hate groups that we have seen in the past are still alive such as the KKK which, under the leadership of President Trump is given to much of a voice in this country. It will take many years to fully achieve what all these past activists were fighting for, and it may never be fully reached but, no matter how small, social activism can always play a part for the greater good and hopefully, enough people can get on the right side of this issue so we can achieve true equality.

No. 5: Sam's Essay
No Title

The 1865 Union victory in the Civil War may have set some four million saves free, but the biggest challenges of race in America arose after the war when the time came to rebuild the South. The Jackson Administration passed the "black codes" which were restrictive state legislatures which greatly limited black people's economic, political and social mobility. The black codes upset what was known as Presidential Reconstruction and initiated Radical Reconstruction which provided newly enfranchised blacks their first opportunity to have a voice and place in government. However, this period of true freedom and equality for blacks didn't last long. Southern whites quickly reacted to blacks gaining societal power by forming white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan. After a decade, nearly all of the progress made by Radical Reconstruction had been undone. Since then, racism has only become more disguised as different forms of oppression which limited black people have come and gone in different forms of racial oppression such as Jim Crow, law and order rhetoric and the War on Drugs all of which socially, economically, and politically limit blacks living in America.

The end of reconstruction didn't suddenly equalize whites and blacks because of newly enforced legalized segregation and the emergence of the doctrine "separate but equal". The Plessy vs. Ferguson verdict upheld and defended the constitutionality of legalized segregation through the "separate but equal" doctrine. A little earlier, the newest evolution of black codes and a new form of racial oppression arose in the south-Jim Crow laws. These Jim Crow laws prohibited intermarriage, the integration of buses and waiting areas, restrooms, parks, neighborhoods, prisons, mental hospitals, restaurants, schools, and much more in select southern states. In North Carolina, for example, it was stated that textbooks "shall not be interchangeable between white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them." ("Jim Crow Laws", 3). Jim Crow laws like these which prevented black kids from being as well educated as white children was a legalized way for white people to prevent the upcoming black generation to be well educated enough to the point where they could hold high government positions or have any job that was not blue-collar level. The legalized segregation of the Jim Crow laws also encouraged whites to act violently and disrespectfully towards blacks. Lynchings and daily verbal and physical abuse was a driving force of the great migration out of the South, along with the promises of education and jobs in the North. Blacks spent all of their saved money buying tickets to bring their families to more progressive-but still segregated-cities like Chicago. Although living in less blatantly racist and segregated cities, blacks were still limited in where they could live and were charged extra for housing and related loans, hence robbing them of plenty of opportunities for economic growth. Jim Crow was as harsh if not harsher than black codes were, and still expanded the legality of the segregation and therefore social, political and economic oppression. The laws normalized the oppression of blacks and implemented it into American culture which has been hard for many Americans to grow out of and see as unjust because it is just a part of their everyday culture.

As associations to advance and protect the rights of colored people (such as the NAACP) emerged, and the Civil Rights Movement was on the rise, they had so much to overcome because the oppression of blacks was already so ingrained in society. Generation by generation, oppression was normalized, and it became harder to divest the country of the legacy of slavery. Initial attempts

to oppose Jim Crow laws such as the Little Rock 9 attempt at integrating schools, proved the extent to which white people would go to preserve white supremacy. Rather than negotiating or even thinking about integrating, white parents reacted violently and felt as though their kids were in danger and drove the school to be shut down instead of letting the nine black students be in class. The idea that blacks are inherently more violent is a result of slavery in that black people were being worked like animals as slaves and that aggressive image is still in people's minds. Even before Little Rock 9 we could see white fear of black people as a threat to their status but also safety. It was this assumption that was the driving force behind the death of Emmett Till, two years before Little Rock 9. The 14 year old was accused of offending a white woman in a store and because of the political rhetoric of 'law and order' which generated and mobilized white opposition to the Civil Rights Movement, the boy was lynched. The underlying rhetoric of law and order along with the emergence of the southern strategy to increase Republican political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racism against African Americans, were becoming more and more disguised. In her book, The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander states that "Nixon's successful presidential election campaign could point the way toward... the building of a new Republican majority, if Republicans continued to campaign primarily on the basis of racial issues, using coded antiblack rhetoric" (Michelle Alexander, 44-45). In the book, H.R. Haldeman also says that he recalls Nixon emphasizing the fact that "you have to face the fact that the whole problem is really the blacks. The key is to devise a system that recognizes this while not appearing to." (H.R. Haldeman, 44). Such antiblack language portrayed blacks as outcasts and isolated beings to be "dealt with". This rhetoric was mastered by government officials who even still use it to gain political support and fuel racism, oppression, and fear of blacks amongst white citizens, and also helped to preserve vestiges of racism in America and stall effort to combat it.

Another way in which racism had been institutionalized is through the policies implemented and practices since his campaign philosophies. In the 1970's, Nixon's War on Drugs had thinly veiled policies which targeted blacks. There were few legal rules which constrained the war and the Supreme Court seized almost every opportunity to facilitate the it, mostly by eviscerating the protections of the Fourth Amendment. This amendments grants people "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures... but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized." (The United States Constitution, Fourth Amendment). To implement the policies of the war, police were trained to racially profile and conduct pretextual stops as an excuse to search for drugs with no other evidence. Additionally, based on the Terry v. Ohio decision of 1967, as long as an officer could articulate the reason that they had suspected someone of criminal activity or dangerous, they are constitutionally allowed to stop, question, and "frisk" them without probable cause. They have managed to find ways around the Fourth Amendment based on the idea that blacks are dangerous, violent and threatening. During the war, Seacourt also began approving mandatory searches of public schools and students, permitting police to obtain search warrants based on an anonymous tip, and expanded the wiretapping authority of the government. Nixon, Reagan and Bush's political and legal influence have stigmatized African-Americans as criminals and have hence made it even more difficult for America to take further, faster steps toward racial equality.

Since the Reconstruction period, racism has been less overt as methods to oppress blacks have only come and gone in different, more disguised forms all of which make social, political and economic growth for black people extremely difficult. We have seen that "so many of the disparities that exist in the African-American community today can be *directly traced* t o inequalities passed on

from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow." (Obama, 3-4). Norms implemented into American culture have been hard for lot of people to let go of. Some people today are taking radical steps towards trying to make America as racially equal as possible such as Cory Booker who is writing the Marijuana Justice Act in attempts to help make mass incarceration as just as possible. He recently posted, "The failed War on Drugs has really been a war on people—disproportionately criminalizing poor people, people of color & people with mental illness. I'm reintroducing the #Marijuana Justice Act to begin reversing our failed federal drug policies." (Cory Booker, Facebook). However no matter the time or passion people put into trying to make equality prevalent in society, many other Americans still aren't ready to take those progressive steps. People-especially white people- want to live in the history where they had superiority right as they came out of the womb, and they don't want to have to work to get what they want in terms of jobs, government positions, or any positions of power. By continuing to oppress black people, they eliminate competitors for the positions they want to hold. America is becoming more and more polarized politically as politicians continue to use "antiblack rhetoric" from the period of the War on Drugs, and others are trying to acknowledge the past and its moments of ill-nature in order to try and rectify it. Some Americans think that African-Americans should have reparations for out history of unjust oppression, while others still believe that blacks are inferior to whites. Until we as Americans can take a progressive step forward, we will only continue to live in a racially oppressive, unequal society all because of our country's dark history of unjust slavery and our failure to unite and reconcile it.

No. 6: Victoria's Essay
Title "The Fight For Racial Equality And How It Still Is Not Enough"

It's not uncommon to say that America was built on the suffering of others. From the very start of this country until now, citizens have been fighting for equal rights on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, etc. Just because Civil Rights Acts were passed that deemed people of color equal with white people, doesn't mean that racial discrimination suddenly disappeared off the face of this country. After slavery was abolished, racism became thinly veiled behind the "separate but equal" laws that were meant to alienate blacks and whites from any sort of relationship or intimacy. Children couldn't get proper education because of their skin color and they could be killed for being at the wrong place at the wrong time. The fear of racial equality was so intense that the American government sent letters to the French and forbade them from having any kind of contact with African Americans who were in the armed forces during the American and French alliance in World War I. Riots and mobs were created by white people to terrorize black neighborhoods because more African Americans started to get similar jobs to them. Even though all of this happened from fifty to one hundred years ago, news channels still blare about innocent men being shot down because they looked "suspicious". Even though America says that race doesn't matter in terms of wealth, power, status, education, etc, our country's view on race is a tool that is an advantage to some and a disadvantage to many.

The "separate but equal" stance was first legally introduced in Plessy vs. Ferguson and had disastrous consequences to the African American community. Lynch mobs would form and beat up random black people and if the victims fought back, they would be killed. If the phrase "separate but equal" is looked at just by itself, it implies that no matter what someone's race is, they will be separate but they will have the same opportunities. This, of course, was untrue since black schools, neighborhoods, restaurants, parks, etc., were sorely defunded when compared to their white "equivalents". When activists tried to boycott and demand actual equal treatment, they would be bombed, beaten, and arrested. In "A Black American Ponders the War's Meaning" (WWII-1942), the author writes about how his parents lived by saying that, "Life... was... a war of spiritual and economic attrition; ... fought without heroics, but with stubborn heroism." Organizations such as NAACP and CORE were formed to outlaw segregated schools and to teach activists how to peacefully protest by doing sit-ins at segregated places. Bus boycotts, such as the famous Montgomery bus boycott, involved activists sitting in "illegal" sections of the bus in order to protest the segregated bus laws. Even though these might seem like harmless and peaceful protests, such blatant desegregation enraged white racists who responded by throwing bombs into the cars, setting them on fire, and beating passengers. When the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregated schools were unequal, some Southern governors were so horrified by this that they passed laws that abolished compulsory school attendance. The infamous Governor Faubus even shut down all public schools for a year rather than integrate them, which showed how terrified America was of any sort of racial equality.

The legal desegregation of all American states seemed like the end of the war on race but it, in fact, gave birth to a whole new racially-charged war called the War on Drugs. Even though segregation was made illegal, neighborhoods were still mostly divided by the color of skin. States would send police troops to patrol minority-filled neighborhoods which led to a continuation of police brutality. Michelle Alexander, the author of *The New Jim Crow*, quoted West Virginia senator Robert Byrd, who said, "'If [blacks] conduct themselves in an orderly way, they... won't have to worry about police brutality.'" (Alexander 42) This was just one of the ways that racial discrimination was justified and encouraged by white officials. The whole concept of welfare and who does or doesn't deserve it was also prevalent in the world of black versus white. In her book, *The New Jim Crow* , civil

rights advocate Michelle Alexander writes, "They... raised the issue of welfare,... as a contest between the hardworking... whites and poor blacks..." (Alexander 47) The terms "welfare queens" and "crack whores" were popularized during this time period to stereotype black Americans as lazy drug users. Through Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton, the War on Drugs became a combined effort that eventually tripled the amount of arrests from 1980.

There are two myths that must be addressed when speaking about the War on Drugs. The first is that the War was to put "kingpins" and "drug lords" behind bars but in reality, most of the people put away were people arrested for first offense drug possession. The second myth is that the War on Drugs brough hard and dangerous drugs off the street. 80% of the drug arrests made were for marijuana possession and not crack, cocaine, or others. During the War on Drugs, one out of four African American black men were in prison due to drug arrests; this war was just a thinly veiled concept for racism since it specifically targeted black neighborhoods. Esteemed writer Michelle Alexander argues that the War on Drugs "offered whites opposed to racial reform an... opportunity to express their hostility toward... black progress." (Alexander 54) Police would use "consent" searches to target individuals that might be in possession of illegal drugs. Officers could walk up an individual and ask if they can be searched for drugs and most of the time, the individual would agree out of fear. When speaking about the Fourth Amendment and drug searches in the 1980s, author Michelle Alexander writes about how the Court "acknowledged that... use of consent searches by the police depends on... ignorance (powerlessness)... of those... targeted." (Alexander 66) Police would also use minor traffic violations to stop motorists that they suspected of carrying drugs and even if there were no traffic violations, the Court deemed it legal for officers to do this since it wasn't their place to determine what the police thought was wrong.

America still has a long way to go in terms of equality in general. Police brutality, inequality of pay on the basis of sex, discrimination on the basis of sexualty, etc., are all still prevalent in today's society. In the 1990s, homosexuals could be discharged or beaten to death if they were outed while in the military. This year, transgender people can't serve in the military because of something they cannot change. People still serve major sentences for possession, not even dealing, of drugs. The harsh drug laws were created in the late 20th century, the most infamous ones were by Clinton. The "three strikes, you're out" policy that would end with a life sentence was soon changed to "one strike, you're out" that put even more people in prison for petty drug offenses. Mass incarceration is a current problem that doesn't seem to be going away. Yes, we can say that life in America is better than it was one hundred years ago. But there is more to be done. It is not enough.

No. 7: Jordan's Essay
Title "How Far We've Come"

2019 marks the 400 year anniversary of when the first enslaved person was brought to Jamestown. At that time, both white and black people worked as indentured servants. When Bacon's Rebellion happened, the upper class white people decided that the best way to prevent future resistance from indentured servants was to create a system that divided them into two unequal groups. It worked. Race in America was born. Until 1865, that system was used to enforce slavery, and as time went on, the country became more and more dependent on unpaid labor as the center of the economy. Though it has been over 150 years since slavery was legally abolished, the aftereffects are still very much present in our nation's history through to today.

After slavery was outlawed, segregation came as a way to continue to hold white people above black people. This system allowed entire communities to be neglected and for black people to be oppressed without politicians without violating the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. "With segregation, with the isolation of the injured and the robbed, comes the concentration of disadvantage (Coates, 2016)." Schools, hospitals, and entire neighborhoods that were for black people were underfunded and not maintained as well as their white counterparts. With limited education, corrupt government programs, unfair laws for housing, and a plethora of other disadvantages, it was nearly impossible for black people to make significant economic improvement. There was a cycle where black people were not given the resources that they needed and then could not improve upon their environments, which often left their children in a similar situation. The only way to remove themselves from the cycle required support from government or a large amount of money, neither of which were readily available for black people. Even now, 65 years post Brown v Board of Education, where "separate but equal" was deemed unconstitutional, black and white people are still facing the consequences of the segregation. Schools in predominantly black and latinx communities are still underfunded, black neighborhoods do not receive the same level of attention and resources that white ones do, and black neighborhoods have lower income rates (but higher crime rates) than white neighborhoods. Segregation, along with the policies that were supported by segregation, caused a long term disparity between black and white communities that still have to be repaired.

The Civil Rights Movement was a major step towards decreasing the gap between black and white people. Everywhere people were taking action and making changes but there was a lot of resistance to that change. Many people, particularly lower and middle class white people, were upset about the change in status quo. Since Bacon's Rebellion, they had been placed at a level below many people but always above black people. The Republican Party at the time saw their frustration and decided to use that to lure more people to their party. "Appealing to the racism and vulnerability of working class whites had worked...albeit in a more subtle fashion (Alexander, 2010, 45)." The Civil Rights Movement had changed the way that people talked about race and people of color. There were consequences to using slurs and explicitly attacking black people as part of their campaign so people had to get creative. The "Get Tough On Crime" platform that many politicians ran on from Ronald Reagan to George W Bush was targeted towards African Americans and imprisoning them. The media began to portray black people as predators, addicts, and criminals. Even some of the most legendary figures in American history were painted as villains because they were black. "Civil rights protests were frequently depicted as criminal rather than political in nature ...(Alexander, 2010, 41)." The way that black people were portrayed in media made it easy for many people to ignore the

unjust nature of the War on Drugs and other policies. They were tricked into thinking that the government's penal system was the appropriate response, instead of the racist and harsh system that it is.

The public opinion on the War on Drugs has shifted greatly in recent years. Former President Clinton has since admitted that his "One Strike You're Out" and other extreme penal policies were unfair. Documentaries and books have been written that have exposed the underlying racism in the government behaviors. There are several groups trying to release the people charged with drug crimes. There has been significant progress in many different ways, however, there are still many ways that the country hasn't changed. In the documentary, 13th, a speech by Donald Trump and clips from Trump rallies are played alongside speeches from the War on Drugs era and Civil Rights Movement. The side by side comparison shows the same violence enacted on protesters and the same rhetoric used in the speeches. Our country currently has a leader who is repeating much of the same beliefs that were used fifty years ago and the people who elected him also believe what he is saying. There has been change but not everyone has changed.

Right now, we are becoming more aware of the ways that racism is built into our society. We have more access to fight these things and politicians are rebranding themselves as people who are fighting to fix those injustices. Right now, it seems like there is potential for a great amount of change to happen. However, historically, the periods of times that should have lead to the most social progression also lead to a sharp increase in the boldness of people who stand against that social progression. During Reconstruction, as black people were gaining more access to public office and introducing policies and programs that would greatly improve the lives of black Americans, many white people were creating and gaining support for white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan. After Obama was elected, there was a similar rise in public support for white supremacist groups and the next president was a man who ran on a racist platform. When the country accomplishes something, many people stop working to improve the country. They remove the troops and they start saying that racism is over, but that allows opposition to grow stronger and make large gains that reverse the hard work that has been done. If we want change in this country, we have to consistently work towards that change.

No. 8: Sara's Essay
Title "Racial Equality" in America is in Dire Need of Reconstruction"

From the moment the first Europeans settled on the North American continent, the white race—although it did not yet even have a name—has dominated other racial groups and controlled America's economy and politics. In doing so, certain subsets of the white race have not only enacted violence on racial and ethnic minorities to assert their dominance, but have also occupied the most powerful government positions, using those roles to establish laws and policies that firmly supported other white people and ensured minorities could not advance. The aforementioned laws and policies range from the over 400 -year enslavement of African-Americans to Jim Crow laws to policies put forth during the War on Drugs, but all shared one thing in common: they sought to create systemic advantages for white people that would endure for generations to come. Slavery, which was legally abolished shortly after the Civil War, has left a particularly dismal economic impact on the United States' African-American community. Though Reconstruction is largely seen as a period of and catalyst for radical, systemic change in American society, its legacy has still left the white race with myriad institutional advantages, while people of color—particularly African-Americans—have remained politically disenfranchised, economically stagnant, and socially marginalized.

Immediately following the Civil War, a period of Reconstruction ensued—divided into two phases—during which various laws and policies were passed attempting to equate all races in the eyes of the law and integrate previously marginalized groups into society. Many Americans, particularly abolitionists happy with the results of the Civil War, were optimistic about the potential of Reconstruction to create a more perfect Union, legislatively and economically. Historian Keith Weldon Medley references such confidence in his essay *The Birth of Separate but Equal* : "In the North, there had been optimistic expectations for economic recovery in a free-labor South...." (Medley, 2012) However, the economic damage sustained in the South as a result of the war and slavery's abrupt ending and the racial hierarchy that had been produced as a result of generations of slavery meant the assimilation process moved more gradually than idealists had hoped, and in some cases it failed to work at all. As author and historian Ta-Nehisi Coates wrote in his article *The Case for Reparations* , " ...black people were not left to their own devices. They were terrorized." (Coates, 2012) Lynchings remained an incredibly popular form of punishment and were disproportionately used on black people, white owners of sharecropping farms severely took advantage of black sharecroppers already struggling to make ends meet, white supremacist organizations gained popularity, and segregation became legalized beginning in 1896 with the now-famous *Plessy v. Ferguson* court decision in increasing numbers of institutions, which ranged from schools to public transportation systems. These laws were named "Jim Crow laws" after Jim Crow, a caricature of a black person used as entertainment in minstrel shows throughout the United States. The decimated land and lack of fair education and employment opportunities in the South caused many black families seeking better lives for themselves and their descendants to move North and into more urban areas—including Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, and Detroit—known as the Great Migration. To these families, Northern cities symbolized the opportunity and freedom of which they had been deprived since their arrival on American soil. The Great Migration produced heightened opportunities for and collaboration between newfound black communities in the aforementioned Northern cities, which resulted in black advancement—a prominent example of which is the Harlem Renaissance—but black people continued to be victimized by racism throughout the entire United States.

In the early 20th Century, racial dynamics, relations, and hierarchies in the United States were affected by a series of legislative and social changes in the nation, both positive and negative, which

contributed to the birth of the Civil Rights Movement. The Great Migration caused many black people who had previously been unemployed or forced to pay most of their wages to a white employer found work in the manufacturing industry. The populations of the United States' urban centers swelled and their economies flourished. Black people living in these urban centers had, for the first time, access to educational opportunities for themselves and their children and were able to form independent communities of black people who were finally able to exist and move about their daily lives without the complete control of a white master. The armed forces were integrated in 1948, allowing people of all races to serve their country alongside one another. "Separate but equal" was ruled unconstitutional in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court Case, and schools were subsequently integrated. Conversely, race riots, lynchings, bombings, and other acts of violence continued to be committed against black communities across the country—not just in the South, as is the common American perception. Black people encountered discrimination in the housing system, as Coates wrote in *The Case for Reparations*: "...black people across the country were largely cut out of the legitimate home-mortgage market..." (Coates, 2014) In response to the vast injustices carried out against their communities, black people across the country began to form nationwide organizations—such as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), t he Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)— which planned rallies, freedom rides, marches, sit-ins, boycotts, and other forms of public demonstration in order to call the nation's attention to the still-prevalent racial injustice in the United States using nonviolent means. Their work, particularly the parts that took place throughout the 1960s, evolved into what is now known as the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement produced groundbreaking legislation—such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, both of which prohibit discrimination against minority groups by law. The Civil Rights Movement was incredibly empowering as its participants and organizers "...witnessed the structures of segregation dismantled by the courageous acts of ordinary people like themselves." (Bullard, 1990, 36) However, its effectiveness was diminished by infighting and eventually its progress was nullified as blatant acts of violent racism were replaced by more subtle forms of prejudice in legislation and political agendas.

The Civil Rights Movement produced various successes in terms of advancing racial equality across the United States; however, immediately following its collapse, a shift occurred from blatant, obvious acts of racially charged violence to subtle, coded racism embedded in laws and policies. The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, among other victories achieved by the Civil Rights Movement's many activists, technically remained in effect, but their implementation was slowed and eventually mitigated by racist targeting of minority groups in criminal law: "the past two decades have witnessed a rollback of the progressive legislation of the 1960s." (Coates, 2014) Beginning with President Richard Nixon in 1969 and continuing through President Bill Clinton, a War on Drugs in the United States—a governmental campaign to eradicate the nation of the trade, distribution, and consumption of illegal drugs—has disproportionately targeted communities of color. However, this campaign has traditionally been described by politicians without racially charged vocabulary; rather, a focus on civilian safety overshadows the initiative's racist undertones. Using words like "law and order", "urban", "inner-city", and "poverty" in lieu of "black" and "Latinx"—even though the implication was that these racial groups were the perpetrators of drug crimes and therefore the victims of these policies—led much of the American public to believe that the Civil Rights Movement had improved racial equality in the United States. This was not the case, though, as law enforcement budgets skyrocketed—parallel to the draining of funds from education and rehabilitation facilities—and the populations of minority groups in jails and prisons soared, leaving inmates with no opportunity for behavior correction or restorative justice. As Michelle Alexander wrote in her 2012 book *The*

New Jim Crow , "the mass incarceration of communities of color was explained in race-neutral terms..." (Alexander, 2012, 58) The War on Drugs is a hallmark of the "new Jim Crow" era, an era in which the explicit racism and white supremacy of the Klu Klux Klan and other organizations loses popularity, replaced by laws lacking any mention of race, but whose enforcement indicates that a racial hierarchy is still clearly in place in the United States. Much of American society continues to believe, though, that race relations have never been better in the United States—particularly after the election of President Barack Obama, who was not only the nation's first black President but also the nation's first non-white President—setting a dangerous precedent that there is little-to-no work left to be done.

Though some progress has certainly been made in the United States with regard to racial equality—and such progress is reflected legislatively in the Constitution and in numerous bills passed by Congress—the foundation of such progress is highly susceptible to collapse as the white American public becomes increasingly ignorant of the marginalization, oppression, and suffering minority groups continue to face on a daily basis. Under current President Donald Trump, who has been known to make outwardly racist comments, not only does the implicit, policy-based racism of the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s endure, white supremacist organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan feel empowered to once again exist in public , with over 51 affiliated groups participating in public demonstrations such as those against the removal of Confederate statues, knowing that the nation's top executive will, at the very least, passively condone their comments and actions by failing to address them. At this point, while there is no shortage of work to be done to improve opportunities for people of color in the United States, it is highly unlikely that any sort of radical change will be enacted in the near future which uproots the systems of race-based advantage in American society. Nonetheless, ordinary citizens can do their part by consciously addressing racial biases which exist in day-to-day life and speaking out against racist institutional practices and policies—much like participants in the Civil Rights Movement did. There is no way to eradicate the deeply ingrained racism in the United States completely without enacting major legislative change, but if a conscientious American public carries its weight, it may eventually guide such change in our country's systems.