

Pre-service Art Education: Examining Constructions of Whiteness in/through Visual Culture

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I describe an arts-based curricular project taught to ten White-identifying and two non-White-identifying pre-service art teachers in Fall of 2018. The curriculum used a cultural studies framework to examine Whiteness as both a hegemonic cultural construction and identity construct. As a means to expand an arts-based pedagogy and curriculum, I utilize film as a pedagogical tool, and the circuit of culture, as a framework to reveal the power inherent within various “moments” or processes of visualization culture. By using this framework, students analyzed, exposed and challenged White supremacist ideologies and were given a contemporary way to examine Whiteness and the power invested in its creation and how this investment impacts every part of their personal and professional lives. Three key cultural analyses of Whiteness are offered in this paper. In sum, I propose the necessity of development of Whiteness art education curricula in support of critical multicultural methods and give suggestions of next steps for art education.

KEYWORDS: arts-based pedagogy, art education, circuit of culture, cultural studies, preservice, racial identity, time-based media, Whiteness

Over the last decade, educators and researchers interested in social justice education have concerned themselves with centering the study of Whiteness in their work (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 1997; DiAngelo, 2012; Lipsitz, 1995). More commonly, scholars invested in examining Whiteness in preservice teacher education have paid close attention to exploring the nature of preservice teachers’ White racial identity (Bloom, Peters, Margolin & Fragnoli, 2015; Fasching-Varner, 2012, 2013; Groff & Peters, 2012; Lawrence, 1997; Rieger, 2015; Seidl & Hancock, 2011). In these studies, various modes of multicultural interventions (through curricula and field placements, for instance) have been used to examine White preservice teachers’ racial awareness and identity development. While this is an important endeavor, fewer preservice education studies have explored how preservice teachers understand Whiteness as a hegemonic cultural system. A deeper examination of the varied interlocking systems invested in Whiteness would benefit these efforts.

(In)visibility of Whiteness¹ in Art Education

Whiteness, because it is predicated on the power to grant recognition and legitimacy, exercises the right to impose meaning, objectives and worldview on the racialized other, and so makes the issue of race undiscussable.

Ronald A. Kuykendall, 2018, p. 194

Even with the recent investment in examining White identity in teacher education, an examination of the literature in the field of art education reveals a gap in Whiteness studies, specifically in preservice teacher training. The introductory quote speaks to these powerful silences. Collective efforts to expose the arts as “White property” (Harris, 1993) and fill this gap in arts education have begun to emerge (Kraehe, Gaztambide-Fernández & Carpenter, 2018).

If social justice art education is to broaden its concern with systems of racialized inequities, I propose that we shift the lens to centralize and expose Whiteness within preservice art teacher training as a means to examine: 1) how higher education plays a role in either disrupting or perpetuating the hegemony of Whiteness through curricular decisions, and 2) how larger systems are always at work in constructing White racial supremacy. I have found resonance in the work of cultural and political studies scholars (Hall, 1996; hooks, 1996; Kuykendall, 2018) as starting points for this work.

Using their frameworks, I advocate for broadening a critical arts-based pedagogy to examine the power inherent within various “moments” or processes of visualization culture (Wilson, 2019) and the investment in *imposing* and *maintaining* constructed meanings of Whiteness as cultural hegemony. In order to do this, I propose that art educators adopt a cultural studies approach by using the *circuit of culture* (DuGay, Hall, MacKay, Janes & Negus, 1997) as a tool of analysis. I suggest that pre-service art teachers need a fresh way to examine Whiteness and the power invested in its *creation* and how this investment impacts every part of their personal and professional lives. To these ends, I submit that preservice art teachers, as artists/creatives, should become aware of the cultural processes invested in what I have referred to as the “creation loop” (Wilson, 2019), and I ask: *How might an arts-based pedagogy help to examine the power invested*

¹ The author has chosen to give equal importance and consistency to racial designations of Black, White and so forth signified by the use of uppercase lettering, rather than black and white, as designated with lowercase lettering, except when directly quoting another author; according to the APA Publication Manual, sixth edition, racial and ethnic groups are proper nouns designated by capitalization.

within a visual(ization) education process? In using a cultural studies approach (Hall, 1996; hooks, 1996), I have found it useful for students to examine racialized representations in/through media culture by examining the various moments in the creation process of the visual culture texts of film.

Why Cultural Studies?

The field of cultural studies provides an important foundation for art education in general, and specifically for visual culture art education studies. The practice of visual representation is a concept commonly studied in cultural studies (Hall, 1996) and without a doubt, is essential for critical arts-based educational inquiry (Wilson, 2019). Hall's work (1996) on the concept of racial representation is important because he would later help to develop a framework to unpack the unwieldy question: *How does representation work?* as it relates to race as a cultural construct. Specifically, Hall was interested in how cultural artifacts or visual "texts" of race are produced and represented in/through various media, such as cinema and television (Kellner, 1995). In other words, he was interested in the practice and process of visual representation. In order to examine the varied interconnected moments in the process of representation, Hall would help to advance a circuit of culture framework.

Visual culture art education: Curricula centered in examining Whiteness

In the Fall of 2018, I designed a graduate-level art education seminar course that aimed to encourage pre-service and in-service art teachers to examine the nuances of power and hegemony by using cultural studies and arts-based frameworks (Hall, 1996; hooks, 1996). Using time-based media texts (cinema, television and music video) as a springboard for conversations about race, I wanted students to engage the power invested in these texts as pedagogical tools for critical examination of how Whiteness (as an ideology and culture) has advanced, yet remained simultaneously and strategically invisible (Craven, 2018).

In designing the curricula for the course, I made a deliberate decision to center the concept of Whiteness as our point of departure. Students engaged in weekly readings and viewed various media texts examining Whiteness (film, television, music video, etc.). They also responded to these readings and viewings with visual journals—they created visual responses in Google Slides and gave in-class presentations. In creating multiple platforms for engagement, my aim was to allow for a variety of responses. Using students' responses, I offer a look at three key cultural analyses of Whiteness, using the circuit of culture. These analyses will be discussed in depth later in

this paper.

By centering and exposing Whiteness as a cultural text (Hall, 1996), I also aimed to counter and reframe a multicultural method within pre-service art education (Acuff, 2018; Kraehe & Acuff, 2013) that advances justice-oriented work and examines the hegemonic system of Whiteness. Further, I believed that students should examine the visual-relational aspects of race, in order to uncover its inherent power in the construction of racial identity narratives. I tasked students with examining intersecting moments of culture: the *construction of Whiteness* alongside the construction *processes* involved in its creation. This would prove to be an eye-opening endeavor for students. By examining the construction of White racial identity through the lens of the time-based arts expression of film, the aims of the course were twofold: 1) to position these visual expressions as powerful pedagogical tools for engagement in conversations about race, and 2) to frame these expressions as products of a cultural exchange, supporting White supremacist systems.

Key theoretical and methodological readings from the field of Cultural Studies (Hall, 1996) were used to examine a variety of visual arts/time-based texts and engage in conversation about critical structural issues of race and racism through contemporary American cultural productions. Students were exposed to pedagogies that challenge hegemonic social norms and raise issues of power in relation to intersections of race, gender and class inequities (Desai, 2010).

Expanded arts-based pedagogy

In a prior commentary (Wilson, 2019), I discuss the potential of cinema, television, music video and social media as art-based pedagogical tools, which prompt deep engagement and discussion among my preservice art teachers. I find that these time-based platforms provide unique historical account of values, beliefs and attitudes of the times. Like hooks (1996), I find that these media texts (Kellner, 1995) provoke students in ways that traditional academic literature does not and find them particularly useful when I engage students with the topic of race.

Each week during the semester students took deep dives into scholarly cultural studies readings, listened to podcasts and viewed various forms of time-based texts. My aim was to pair the readings along with provoking cinematic forms and then have students respond to key questions related to what they had read and/or viewed in their visual journals and in a Google Slides format. Later in the semester they presented findings of their own research on media texts that they chose on their own. This task yielded interesting results

(I write more on this in later sections). I found that even though the course material about race was uncomfortable to digest for many of my White-identifying / presenting students, they were eager to discuss the content of the popular media texts that they had viewed.

To set the stage for the course, I felt it timely for students to view an adaptation of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, aptly titled: *Rebirth of a Nation*, by DJ Spooky (2007). The adaptation by DJ Spooky contains powerful cinematic elements from the original film, yet is updated with a new musical score. I chose this film as an introductory pedagogical element to underscore the impact that the original movie had in the "making" of White Supremacist ideals (Craven, 2018). Our discussion began with us examining the varied ways we could identify this film as a cultural text of its time. Different from other scholarly reviews that spoke to D. W. Griffith's use of technological advancements in cinema (Alberti, 2015; Paolo, 1994), our analysis was from a cultural studies perspective, using the circuit of culture as a framework (Figure 1). This framework set the foundation for all subsequent media analyses for the semester.

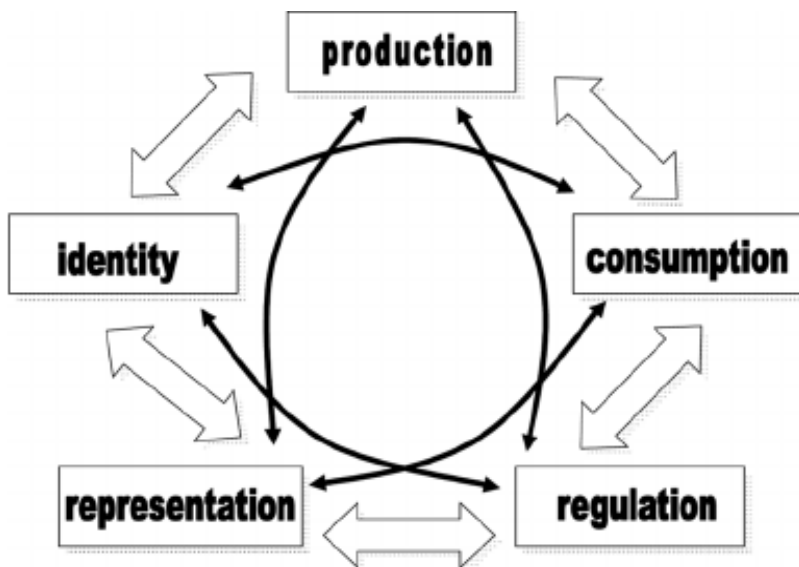


Figure 1. *Circuit of Culture*, DuGay, Hall, MacKay, Janes & Negus, 1997, p. 4.

Circuit of Culture

To examine the double layer of “representation” (Hall, 1996) in the assigned cultural texts, each week students presented an analysis of a racial trope in and through a personally-selected media text (DuGay, Hall, MacKay, Janes & Negus, 1997). Students selected from a broad variety of texts to include historical and contemporary forms (film, television, music video, social media, Google images, etc.). Their presentations needed to show an understanding and application of the circuit of culture.

The circuit of culture (Figure 1) is a framework developed by cultural studies scholars and is a useful tool when analyzing a cultural text (site, practice or object) from as many angles and as many contexts as possible. This framework suggests that when studying a cultural text or artifact (and in this case, a film, television series, music video), one must look at the interconnected moments in the creation process. These linked moments contribute to the production of meaning. For instance, when examining racialized (re)presentations in film, one must look at all points of the production process.

In other words, to understand a text, is to examine it in terms of *production, consumption, regulation, signification, and identity*, and how each of these elements of culture relates to and is a *part of all the others*. In production, we might ask: *Who is paying for it? Where is the money/ other resources coming from? Who is making/producing it? How different are the people who are paying for it from those who are producing it?* In consumption, we could ask: *Are the people who consume it different than those who are producing it? Paying for it? If so, how? Also: How, where, why do you consume it?* For regulation, some questions include: *Is it illegal or against the rules? Who makes and enforces the rules? What type of certification/license do you need before you consume/produce it?* For identity: *Who cares about it? What do others think about those who use it? What do you have to know, understand, value, believe in order to use it?* And finally, for signification: *What does it signify? And what/who signifies it? What genre conventions does it work with? What arguments is it making--intentionally or not?* Asking any and all of these questions for each cultural “moment” is optimal and necessary in order to fully understand how something is (and becomes) represented.

Representation

In Hall’s (1997) view, the word representation has double meaning: 1) to offer a depiction of something else and also indicates that something was *already there* in the media text, and that processes of creation has re-presented it, and 2) it also serves as a “stand-in” or something that depicts something else. In other words, representation is the way in which meaning is given to the thing depicted. To accept this notion, we should ask the question of whether events, the

meaning of people or groups *do* have any one essential fixed or true meaning against which we could measure the level of “distortion,” or (the way in which they are represented). The *meaning* is the complicated thing to decide. So, we could say that representation does not fully capture the process by which the representation rests; what is uncertain is a “true” and fixed meaning of the representation. This truth will depend on what meaning people make of it (this could be situational due to time and space parameters) and depends on how “truth” is represented; in other words, representation is constitutive of the event; representation happens within the event. A critical lens allows an unpacking of representation through an examination of interlocking cultural systems and contexts.

Culture as primary

Cultural studies, as a field, is more than simply about examining distortions of representation; the larger question is why the notion of culture becomes a primary element. Culture is the way we make sense or give meaning to things in the world. Each of us has our own take on the conceptual world. We have shared meanings within the social world.

Culture consists of the maps of meaning; the things that allow us to make sense of a world that exists; it is ambiguous until we give meaning to it. At some point, we begin to believe that our concepts are mere images of the world (Hall, 1997). To this end, visual media are an ideal way in which to observe representations of/from the dominant/minoritized groups in a culture and to examine themes of racialized identity and representation.

Racial representation in/through the media

When the film *Birth of a Nation* (Griffith, 1915) is analyzed through the circuit of culture, salient moments of the process are revealed. Using the “circuit,” I modeled my *response to* and *analyses of* the film for students in class (Figure 2). In my discussion, I felt it was important to note two things: 1) that at the time of its production, *Birth of a Nation* was considered to be a racist film by many (McEwan, 2007), yet classified as a cinematic success (Anderson, 1953), and 2) the film was produced, directed and openly received by members of a White dominant class, despite protests by the NAACP. In presenting this information to students, they were able to give radical context (Grossberg, 1997) to the power invested in the film as a cultural product, which simultaneously advanced a racist narrative for the U.S. nation to view (McEwan, 2007).

- Producer/Director: D. W. Griffith
- Budget: \$110,000 (personally funded)
- Consumption: White audiences
- Screened in Los Angeles and at the White House
 - Purpose of original story by Thomas Dixon, Jr. was to create a feeling of abhorrence in white people, especially white women against colored men" (Geduld, 1971)

Regulation: as one of the most prominent film directors of the period, his blockbuster film passed National Board of Censorship standards; The NAACP protested the film (Olund, 2013).

Identity: it was important to those who had a stake in the film's success; largely tells a biased narrative

Signification: the film is an indication of the differing opinions/perspectives based on which side of the biased story one found themselves on.



Figure 2. Cultural analysis, *The Birth of a Nation*, Courtesy of G. J. Wilson.

A broad sweep of the film also revealed what McEwan (2007) describes as “the particularities of early twentieth century racism and the centrality of mediated images to that racism” (p. 99). My closer analysis (Figure 2) revealed that the purpose of the original storyline (as told by the author, Thomas Dixon, Jr.) was to “create a feeling of abhorrence in White people, especially against colored men” (Geduld, 1971, p. 94). For anyone familiar with the film, it could be said that D. W. Griffith honored Dixon’s sentiments by creating a Mulatto (half White, half Black) character, Silas Lynch, who was framed as a villain and almost-rapist to the central White female character. This White female character would later be “saved” by the Ku Klux Klan. Given that this cultural text, from production to consumption, was the project supported by White people and for the benefit of a White supremacist ideology, we can also begin to see the makings of a bifurcated White identity (savior and innocent/pure victim). The success of *Birth of a Nation* is that it was able to operationalize White racial anxiety (Rose, 2015) and reasonably justify Blackness as dangerous (Kuykendall, 2018).

This is but one example of what I would call “getting to the dirty details of cultural processes.” Moments of production, consumption, and regulation, for instance, are often overlooked when discussing cultural texts and their potential meaning (Hall, 1996). After viewing and discussing the film, I asked students to put a cultural studies (circuit of culture) framework to the test and have them choose a media text which they believed contained a trope of Whiteness as described in their readings (Benshoff & Griffin, 2004). Discussion of how these tropes “show up” in educational spaces followed. In the next section, I discuss two student examples of this process.

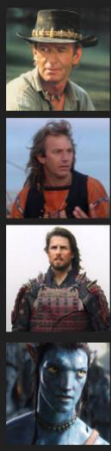
Tropes of Whiteness

“The logic of whiteness...is the justification on which whiteness rests: innocence. As in other words, power rests on the mythical (re)construction of itself in relation to the other.”

Kuykendall, 2018, p. 296

When tasked to locate historic tropes of Whiteness in film and television, students in my class could identify common tropes of “White savior,” (Figure 3) and “White innocence” (Figure 4). Many students could easily make connections between the White savior trope and K-12 classroom spaces, citing two Hollywood movies: *Dangerous Minds* (1995) and *Freedom Writers* (2007). In her two-year ethnographic study Brown (2013) notes, “Racialized and classed discourses of saviorism operate not just in terms of school reform in a broad sense, but rather in classrooms, in regard to the construction of the White female savior teacher” (p. 128).

Although the examples cited by graduate student, Jen Schero (Figure 3) are male-centered, we can make the connection between these filmic character examples and classroom spaces, which often portray a White protagonist who goes into “dangerous” or “failing” areas to make them “safe.” Thus, the White protagonist is often portrayed as becoming more superior than the indigenous inhabitants.



TROPE: White male, has some kind of issue with his place in the world, goes “native” (purposeful word choice) and finds himself (TVtropes. org). Often becomes even greater than those in the clan/tribe/group - becoming the better version of the “Other”. Examples: **Crocodile Dundee** (1986): Creator, Co-Writer, Lead Actor: Paul Hogan **Dances With Wolves** (1990): Producer, Director, Lead Actor - Kevin Costner **Last Samurai** (2003): Producer and Lead Actor - Tom Cruise **Avatar** (2009): Director and Writer - James Cameron

(A romantic view of Westernizing “distant” cultures is also at play in each of these.) The above films contain varying degrees of violence, gun use, and romance. Audience members would most likely appreciate these aspects, and would likely identify with the main (White) character and/or the Producer, Director, Writers, or Lead Actor. Avatar is included, despite being situated in a fictitious world, as the same idea is at work.

The filmmakers also highlighted that the culture of the “Other” is sensitively cared for - gaining “approval”/“accuracy” by hiring consultants (e.g. an aboriginal choreographer, samurai historians, or Lakota (Sioux) consultants). Of note, Costner was once honored for his sensitivity to Sioux traditions, but then later attempted to build a casino/resort on disputed Sioux land (Johnson, 1995).

Johnson, D. (February 24, 1995). To some Sioux, Costner now dances with the devil. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/02/24/us/0-some-sioux-costner-now-dances-with-devil.html>
TVTropes.org. <https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/GoingNative>

Images from films. Sources are (from top to bottom): National Film and Sound Archive; <https://readingatrecss.com/2014/10/22/worst-best-picture-is-dances-with-wolves-better-or-worse-than-crash/>; <https://exploiterblog.com/index.php/2018/12/24/recep-the-last-samurai/>; and <https://www.screenpeek.net/2018/11/16/avatar-sequels-james-cameron/>

Figure 3. “The Savior” trope. Courtesy of VCU student, Jen Schero, 2018

The White savior female protagonist in movies like *Dangerous Minds* and *Freedom Writers*, more accurately reflects the demographics of the teaching profession (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Here, the potential for danger exists in these enduring cyclical tropes of “White = goodness = White” and less a critique of a deficit-based mindset, which undercuts the goodness already present in the minoritized student (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003; Valencia, 2010). If both of these cultural texts (films and education) are put through the circuit of culture, it is easier to see the underpinnings of a broader and historic narrative of White supremacy.



Figure 4. Innocence. Images courtesy of G.J. Wilson and VCU student, Danielle Houdek, 2018.

The second example trope of “White innocence” (Figure 4), lends itself to a deeper investigation of what might be considered a hidden curriculum of culture (Wren, 1999). If we use *Birth of a Nation* as a foundation--because it is a movie that was both informed by and set the tone for an American White supremacist consciousness (Craven, 2018) and identity—and we agree that film serves a pedagogical function (hooks, 1996; Wilson, 2019), then we can begin to unravel the trope of innocence. In other words, the (in)visibility of Whiteness (Craven, 2018) invades and pervades as normative; so much so, that without critical engagement with a systems-thinking approach, dominant actors—those in positions of power (teachers, policy makers, film makers)—are let off the hook to take ownership of the role that they play in its persistence.

The example “trope of innocence” provided is interesting in that it is one from the movie *Get Out* (Figure 4). When put through the circuit of culture, we find a few clear distinctions between prior films (i.e. *Birth of a Nation*) that portray the protagonist (in the case of *Get Out*,

Rose) as pure/ innocent. The first distinction is that the director and producer of the film, Jordan Peele, racially self-identifies as Black. As such, he brings a different perspective to film making—that of a Black American male, living in the U.S. In the screenshots offered (Figure 4), the historic trope of innocence, is both portrayed and debunked as the film progresses. The audience, by the end of the film is aware that Rose, the White female character is, in fact, the villain. Peele’s social thriller, takes care to reference and challenge the meaning of this trope as a nod toward its historic construction. The central image of the montage (Figure 4) is a collage titled “Spoonfed,” and made by Danielle Houdek, a graduate student in my course. Her image broadly references media culture, reflecting a distorted *Leave it to Beaver* character, June Cleaver (mother-figure) within a television set. In creating this image Danielle communicates, “White innocence can be hard to see,” and “the old-fashioned television set reminds us that time and place are important contexts to consider” (personal communication, May 10, 2019). Using the circuit of culture allowed for a nuanced discussion and confrontation of a history of White supremacy and hegemonic systems of power in and through media texts and in education.

Confronting Whiteness: Expose, Examine and Challenge

A good deal of time and intelligence has been invested in the exposure of racism and the horrific results on its objects. But that well-established study should be joined with another equally important one: the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it...to see what racial ideology does to the mind, imagination and behavior of the masters.

Toni Morrison, 1992, pp. 11-12

Toni Morrison’s quote resonates with my attempt at a curricular shift—one that turns the lens toward Whiteness, as a constructed culture, and away from the traditional multicultural curriculum which only focuses on the lives of minoritized communities of people. Viewing Whiteness as a cultural text (Hall, 1996), allows an unpacking of a system and institution built on a carefully curated narrative; one that has constructed Whiteness as predicated on normal, innocent and also anti-dialogic (Kuykendall, 2018). In essence, an avoidance of any real acknowledgement of its power and usefulness in maintaining power is inherent in its *meaning*. Through the use of a cultural studies framework, we can begin to unravel the threads of an American racialized consciousness.

So, what does this mean for art education? If the goal of Whiteness studies is to destabilize White identity, it means that educators interested in justice-oriented curricula should examine the systems

and processes created by a White supremacist ideology. This is not an undertaking for the faint of heart. For any initial attempt to unpack this unwieldy construction could be (and will be) clumsy. Perhaps we will experience a systemic silencing (Kuykendall, 2018); one that may begin with school administration, who are necessarily impacted by policy makers or those who enable policy by other unknown means. My initial offering to art educators is that we consider expanding our practice to include arts-based forms of culture such as film, television, music video and time-based social media platforms as pedagogical tools to help facilitate discussion and movement toward White identity reflexivity. It has been irresponsible not to address critical attention to Whiteness in K-12 teacher workforce with demographics of largely White faculty (82%) (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), while student demographics are growing increasingly non-White. These statistical shifts have been occurring since the passage of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which also gives insight for the necessity of development of Whiteness education studies in addition to critical multicultural pedagogy (Acuff, 2018; DiAngelo, 2012).

For this expanded arts-based curricular project, I specifically chose to center the theoretical frameworks of two scholars of color (Hall, 1996; hooks, 1996) whose views I consider cornerstones in discourse about race and representation in visual/time-media texts. I also specifically chose to center Whiteness in order to disrupt a hegemonic narrative. That said, I have spent the better part of nine years teaching preservice art teachers, and more often than not, when the topic of race arises, many of my White-identifying students have said: "I don't know much about my race. I'm JUST White!" This has concerned me over the years and has also provided me with the awareness that Whiteness has been normalized and made (in)visible (intentionally so) still, in many spaces of learning. This suggests that White-identifying students are not encouraged to examine what (their) Whiteness means.

Through multicultural educational efforts, there exists a plethora of literature which encourages White pre-service teachers to examine the lives of "other" people and also methods for engaging with racially/culturally minoritized groups (Delpit, 2006; Kraehe & Acuff, 2013). Yet, even with research that examines White racial identity (Bloom, Peters, Margolin & Fragnoli, 2015; Fasching-Varner, 2012, 2013; Groff & Peters, 2012; Lawrence, 1997; Rieger, 2015; Seidl & Hancock, 2011), there seems to be fewer educational investments tied to critically unpacking hegemonic Whiteness within pre-service (and in-service) learning environments. It has also become clear that when educators discuss race as a construct, less attention is given to the pedagogical impact of visual culture/constructed representations of Whiteness (Craven, 2018; Holtzman & Sharpe, 2015) and how these representations successfully maintain hegemonic Whiteness.

Additionally, through a cultural studies framework, it is important to question *who* has been awarded the power to create these representations.

The basis of cultural studies is to ask: *What are the ways we classify and organize the world?* and, *How do we give meaning?* We live in an image-dominated world. It has been argued that across time, media images have helped us to understand other people (Hall, 1997; Holtzman, 2015; hooks, 1996). These images/messages work in complex ways and they are always connected with how power operates within a society. When we also consider the term “race” in the U.S., and how it has played an important role in constructing social status, we reveal the impacts of a set of belief systems about human classification (Omi & Winant, 2015). Therefore, when we consider these systems together (race + image-dominated world), we can better understand their power and influence on social and educational inequities.

If a social justice-oriented curriculum is one that aims to advance the belief that race is a social, therefore relational, construct, we would be remiss to overlook that Whiteness, as a dominant ideology exists relative to all other(ed) existing racialized cultural systems. To these ends, if art educators are interested in preparing pre-service teachers to teach within racially inequitable environments, I argue that we must first be able to expose and de-stabilize Whiteness and specifically White identity and point to the role of varied visual systems (both from the tradition canon of art and popular forms) in creating, supporting and maintaining a caste system of human value based on race. It is my belief that by examining all forms of racial identity construction through these visual/time-based systems within our curricula (Wilson, 2019), we are able to provide a necessary educative element often missing from traditional art education curricula. I propose that centralizing *normative Whiteness* within art education would also include an examination of interconnected systems: 1) policy 2) our professional affiliations, locally, regionally and nationally 3) research practices 4) theoretical musings 5) and publications. This is certainly not a comprehensive list, but it is a start.

As for my curricular efforts, my preservice students were able to scratch a different surface of Whiteness: through the interlocking cultural systems which contribute to the making of Whiteness and through a specific cultural product, the media lens. What was encouraging, is it pulled back the curtain on larger hegemonic systems and have begun to answer my original question: *How might an arts-based pedagogy help to examine the power invested within a visual(ization) education process?*

I am optimistically cautious about my students’ direct analyses of media tropes of Whiteness, as I wonder if the fictive narratives of

the lives of the cinematic/television characters analyzed provided just enough distance, that my White students were able to enter into these worlds largely unscathed. They were able to critique the villain without needing to critique themselves, while simultaneously aligning themselves with the hero of the narrative. It is my particular belief that in these fictional portrayals (i.e. film/television characters) there are always kernels of truth. Thus, I continue to align myself with Hall (1996) and hooks' (1996) beliefs that popular culture (i.e. representation of identity) serves as a pedagogical tool for discussions about race. This is important for me to note because as an (art) educator, I look for provocative ways to engage students in and through a variety of lived realities. As a means of understanding larger systems of hegemony, the circuit of culture allows for deeper examination of Whiteness as an ideology and identity. One of the aspects of institutional power is its ability to ubiquitously convey a narrow worldview. Cinema as cultural and already omnipresent text is a beautiful example of this power. As an expanded arts-based pedagogical tool, visual/timed-media texts allows for us to consider the past and imagine and construct a different future.

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