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1. THE FAIRNESS OF SHADOWS

Implications of Shadeism on Urban Secondary School Students

ABSTRACT

Initiatives around anti-racism education in the secondary school system are presently insufficiently applied, particularly in recognizing Shadeism and its impact on the behaviour, academic achievement, and social engagement of students. This chapter hypothesizes that the closer in proximity to Whiteness of the student, the greater their access to White privilege. Obeyesekere situates the idea of Shadeism in the colonial context and establishes its present day implications on racialized secondary school students in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Shadeism is deconstructed using critical anti-racism theory (CART) in order to examine its consequences on urban students (Dei, 2011). Drawing upon research from anti-racism scholars, Obeyesekere grapples with the question of how Shadeism affects students in the supposedly post-colonial world. It is proposed that Shadeism can be addressed in schools through the multifaceted implementation of CART, in order to create an inclusive and engaging learning environment for all students. The chapter recommends strategies to address the consequences of Shadeism on students through the exploration of a three-tiered initiative. The initiative proposes to encompass and concurrently apply; a ministry and board-wide culture change, teacher training, and holistic student programming. The focus of this chapter is on student programming.

Keywords: Shadeism, colourism, critical anti-racism, post-colonial, education, teacher training, holistic student programming

INTRODUCTION

It is projected that by 2018, the global skin-lightening market will be worth an estimated US\$19.8 billion (King, 2013). This growth is driven in large part by the desire of people predominantly from the Asian, African, and Middle East regions for lighter skin (King, 2013). While this trend exists within these regions that are considered the global South, I will be discussing its influence on students from their diaspora in Canada. In Canada, the valorizing of lighter skin over darker skin is representative of racialized students' desire to reproduce and reflect the dominant culture. This internalized inferiority has the potential to have an enormous impact on the self-esteem and perceived attractiveness of individuals, and consequently,

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impacts how they are received by society. This is especially problematic in its effects on the developing minds of adolescents. The hegemonic nature of the Eurocentric education system in Canada continues to perpetuate a structure where the closer in proximity to Whiteness a person is, the greater their access to White privilege. Initiatives around anti-racism education in the secondary school system are presently insufficiently applied, particularly in recognizing Shadeism and its impact on the behaviour, academic achievement, and social engagement of students. Shadeism, in this context, refers to both inter-racial and intra-racial discrimination based on skin tone. I will explore the importance of skin-tone and its consequences on students, particularly in a heterogeneous, urban environment.

This chapter will be divided into three parts. In the first part, I will briefly situate the idea of Shadeism in the colonial context and establish its present day implications. Through locating myself by examining my own experiences with Shadeism, I will attempt to resist the positivist paradigm, which suggests that there is an objective way of knowing.

The second part of this chapter will deconstruct Shadeism using critical anti-racism theory (CART). Through the analysis of Shadeism grounded in the CART framework, I will examine its consequences on urban secondary school students, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). I will draw upon research from anti-racism scholars to grapple with the question of how Shadeism affects students in the supposedly post-colonial world.

The objective of this chapter is to offer analysis into the more nuanced aspects of race and skin colour and its impact on students, as well as to suggest integrative solutions to address this issue and create a more inclusive classroom. The third part of this chapter will conclude with thoughts on the implications of my findings and recommend strategies to address the consequences of Shadeism on students through the exploration of a three-tiered initiative. It will do so by breaking down the approach into three parts to be applied concurrently; a ministry and board-wide culture change, teacher training, and holistic student programming. For the purposes of this chapter, my focus will be on student programming.

I. DEFINING SHADEISM: EXPLORING THE ORIGINS AND ITS ENDURING EFFECT

My Changing Reflection: Locating the Self

I am engaging in Shadeism through critical anti-racist theory from my position as a South Asian/cisgendered/hetero/woman living in the global North. As such, I am approaching the issue of Shadeism particularly as it pertains to students in an urban environment, from my experiences in two very distinct metropolises, Toronto, Canada and Colombo, Sri Lanka. As a Canadian-born woman of Sri Lankan descent I have spent my life between the two countries. One of my earliest memories as a young child in Toronto was of my paternal grandmother insisting that my mother not

allow me to play outside for fear that I would “become dark”. This notion of darkness being a negative, undesirable trait, is one that permeated my childhood. My acute awareness of my skin had a grave effect on my schooling experience in Toronto. My consciousness of my skin colour prevented me from engaging in sports and outdoor activities in school; I actively avoided the sun at recess, opting to seek shade instead. Further, this desire to be lighter-skinned resulted in a lack of confidence, which manifested in shyness and disengagement in school.

As I transitioned into adolescence, I could not escape the obsession with skin colour, particularly during my time spent in Colombo. Comments such as “though you are so dark, your features are still nice” were constant. These feelings of inferiority came to a head as an adult, on a visit to Colombo; I was present during a conversation between my female cousin, fifteen at the time, and a group of her friends. They were discussing their feeling that teachers in their urban girls’ school would consistently call on students with lighter skin over darker girls to answer questions, and for coveted roles within the school. These comments resonated with me and upon my return to my job at the time, as a secondary English teacher in Brampton, Ontario, I began to wonder about the attitudes of racialized students in the GTA toward the colour of their skin. I noted that the students in the GTA had similar feelings of insecurity connected to the colour of their skin. Notably, while reading the novel *A Bronx Masquerade* with my Grade 11 College Level English class, a character revealed that she had reservations about the compliments she received as a result of her fair skin, as the historical circumstances surrounding the unwanted mixing of races at the hands of White colonizers made it painful for her (Grimes, 2002). As this section was being read aloud, a male student of Caribbean descent loudly interrupted the class stating “why is she complaining, I wish I were light-skinned”. I realised in that instant that urban students in the global North were just as plagued with feelings of inferiority surrounding the colour of their skin as students in the global South. As a result, I wished to explore the consequences of these feelings on students’ learning and well being through my academic research.

Situating Shadeism within the Colonial Context

Shadeism, also called colourism or Pigmentocracy, is unquestionably rooted in the colonial experience. In his work *Black Skin White Masks*, Frantz Fanon (1986) analyses the alienating effects of colonisation on those who were colonised, by deconstructing what he calls the “juxtaposition of the White and Black races” (Fanon, 1986, p. 44). According to Fanon, the world is divided into Black and White, separated by a power dynamic where Blacks experience themselves as inferior. This perceived inferiority arises from the dynamic that dictates that Whites have power and Blacks do not. Fanon goes on to state that Blacks internalise these feelings of inferiority, which manifest in the devaluing of oneself and the desire to be White. In their comprehensive analysis of Fanon’s work entitled *Fanon*

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Revisited: Race Gender and Coloniality Vis-à-vis Skin Colour, Linda Lane and Hauwa Mahdi (2013) propose a more nuanced racial hierarchy where White or light skin stands at the apex and is the most valued, and Black or dark-skin is directly opposed, positioned to have no value. Lane and Mahdi ground the location of different subgroups and groups specifically in North America and the Caribbean in Fanon's hierarchy of race in order to reflect a gradient hierarchy. I believe that Lane and Mahdi's understanding of this gradient racial hierarchy best places Shadeism in the colonial context.

Lane and Mahdi pose that White colonisers consorting with Black and Indigenous women have shattered the Black-White binary. This mixing created a middle position, "*métissage*" a term used to signify the result of neither Black nor White (Lane & Mahdi, 2013). Colonisers used this intermediary condition that they themselves created to drive a wedge between racialized groups. By privileging lighter-skinned and mixed-race groups, colonists established a hierarchy that linked skin colour to economic and social class (Lane & Mahdi, 2013). Thus, Shadeism developed as a direct result of discrimination by White colonialists against other races and the favourable treatment of lighter-skinned and mixed-race groups. Groups that gained political and economic power as a result of *métissage* maintained their position of power within the hierarchy by discriminating against others who were further down the skin colour scale (Lane & Mahdi, 2013). In his work *Colorism, Complexion Homogamy, and Household Wealth: Some Historical Evidence*, Howard Bodenhorn (2006) reports that during the time of slavery, lighter-skinned Black and mixed-race groups received skill training and as a result were relatively well positioned to be hired into good paying jobs after abolition. Over time the *métissage* came to form an elite, which strongly discouraged marriage outside the group in an effort to preserve this wealth (Bodenhorn, 2006). This creation of a gradient or scaled hierarchy of skin colour resulting from European colonisation is not exclusive to the North American context. The following section will explore the effects of Shadeism at present.

The Effects of Shadeism in the 21st Century

Among the colonial effects of Shadeism that remain today is the correlation between darker-skin and lower wages. In *Skin Color, Immigrant Wages, and Discrimination*, Joni Hersch (2008) reports that lighter-skinned immigrants earn on average 8–15% more than darker-skinned immigrants with similar qualifications. Her research indicates that these findings extend to immigrants of the same ethnicity (Hersch, 2008). Hersch's results were based on data from 2,084 people using an eleven-point scale where 0 represented the absence of colour and 10 represented the darkest skin colour. Ruling out other factors such as language proficiency and the sun possibly darkening the skin of those who are employed as outdoor labourers, Hersch concluded that the discrimination was based on colour of skin (Hersch, 2008). Margaret L. Hunter (2007) echoes this sentiment in her article entitled *The Persistent*

Problem of Colourism: Skin Tone, Status and Inequality. Hunter notes that lighter-skinned Black Americans earned more than their darker colleagues (Hunter, 2007). Another study conducted by Emroy University in 2006 revealed that employers prefer to hire lighter-skinned Black males to darker-skinned males, irrespective of their qualifications. Results of the study showed that a lighter-skinned Black male with a Bachelor's degree and standard work experience was preferred over a darker-skinned Black male with an MBA and past managerial experience (Harrison, 2005). This research shows that dark skin is negatively correlated with lower wages not only in the Black community but also in many other racialized immigrant groups, such as South Asian and Latino.

The impact of skin colour on wages is not suggestive of Shadeism being exclusively inter-racial discrimination. According to Evelyn Glenn (2009) in *Shades of Difference: Why Skin Colour Matters*, allegations between people of the same racialized group make up 3% of the 85,000 discrimination allegations annually reported to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). The EEOC communicated a sizable increase in discrimination allegations based on colour from 374 cases in 1992 to 1,241 cases in 2006 (Glenn, 2009). It is important to problematize the fact that reported allegations of discrimination based on skin colour are increasing. The intra-racial discrimination evident in this study is directly tied to the gradient hierarchy of race established by the dominant and reinforced by the *métissage*, post-abolition.

Fairness in Marketing

The Guardian UK published an article in 2013 that featured the Indian actress Nandita Das' support of the *Dark is Beautiful* campaign. The campaign challenges the widespread South Asian belief that success and beauty are governed by skin colour (Rajesh, 2013). Amazingly, Das noted that another article, which reported on her support for the campaign against skin-lightening, featured a photo of her that had been altered to make her look lighter-skinned. The actress expressed that she often faces directors and makeup artists who try and lighten her skin when she plays the role of an educated, upper-class woman (Rajesh, 2013). This furthers the belief that only fair-skinned women can be educated and successful (Rajesh, 2013). The article goes on to state that since the 1978 launch of "Fair and Lovely", a skin-lightening cream produced by the Anglo-Dutch company, Unilever, the industry in India has grown to US\$432 million. This spike in sales indicates a strong desire for light skin as a means to acquiring racial capital; the process of obtaining social and economical capital from racial identity.

Skin lightening products have been on the market since the late 19th century (Peiss, 1999). By the 1930s there were over 230 brands of skin-lightener. Though these products were initially marketed to White women in America, they have been used to lighten the skin shade of women in Africa, Asia, and more recently, Europe. Skin-lightening creams usually contain hydroquinone, mercury, or derivatives of

the two, and are activated by suppressing melanin production at the basal layer of the skin (Garner, 2010). The creams are marketed to racialized women as ways to become more radiant, attractive, and Western (Garner, 2010). A popular Fair and Lovely television advertisement widely aired in South Asia, depicts a traditionally dressed Indian woman who overhears her parents expressing their concern and disappointment at the fact that instead of having a son, they have an unemployed and unmarried daughter. After being passed over at a job interview for an airline, the woman begins to use the skin-lightening cream. Weeks later, she returns to the airline not only lighter-skinned, but also dressed in a distinctly more Western and modern fashion. The advertisement concludes with the woman getting the job, meeting a man- a Western dressed pilot – and coming home to very satisfied parents (Prakash, 2010). This is one of several advertisements that explicitly connect the idea of lighter skin to attractiveness, desirability, and success.

Problematizing the connection between light skin and success is particularly important in the deconstruction of Shadeism and its implications on the self-perception and perceived inferiority of individuals and groups with darker skin. The perpetuation of these ideals negatively positions darker-skin in society.

This reaffirming of the Western colonial ideals, which valorize White/light skin over dark skin as evident in the marketing of the aforementioned skin-lightening products, is also extremely present in global Media and Entertainment industries. In his 2011 track *Look pon We*, Jamaican Dancehall artist Vybz Kartel sings about his use of ‘cakesoap’ a substance popularly used in Jamaica to lighten skin (Kartel, 2011). Though there have been many celebrities who have recently been accused of using products to lighten their skin, Kartel is among the few who have openly admitted to the practice. According to Margaret L. Hunter (2011) Vaseline, another Unilever product has sponsored an “app”, a downloadable program typically used in mobile devices, which allows users to lighten their skin tone on their Facebook profile photos. “By dragging a vertical bar across their pictures they can create instant before-and-after images devised to sell more of Vaseline’s best-selling product, *Healthy White: Skin Lightening Lotion*” (Hunter, 2011, p. 144). Hunter problematizes Facebook, the world’s largest social media network for permitting such an app to function within their interface. Both of the above mentioned are examples of the increasingly overt desire of racialized bodies to acquire racial capital by altering their appearance in order to move toward the dominant within the gradient racial hierarchy.

Shadeism in the Greater Toronto Area Today

As I gathered the data presented above and continued to reflect on my personal experiences, I was haunted by the inferiority internalized by racialized youth. Is there still material consequence to having lighter skin, or is this desire simply a remnant of our colonial past? Lane and Mahdi state that the discourse around the

saliency of skin colour is very relevant today. The desire for light skin and the embodiment of Whiteness as representation provides social mobility and greater access to economic resources in the United States (Hall, 2006). Winston James (1992) argues that pigmentocracy exists on an ideological level, but is also a material force for binding colour to class, position, and privilege. As discussed previously in this chapter, racialized subgroups that historically gained power as a benefit of their lighter skin discriminated against others who were lower down the hierarchy. In her work entitled *Muslim Youth in Canadian Schools: Education and the Politics of Religious Identity*, Jasmine Zine (2001) describes the existence of this intra-racism on students in Canada today. She discusses Shadeism through the example of a female Muslim student who reported that as a darker-skinned Pakistani girl she felt a victim of racism in White society and Shadeism within her smaller community. These deportments of victimization and inferiority can leave young people feeling disconnected and irrelevant. I aim to question how these issues present themselves in the urban classroom in relation to the affect of Shadeism on student learning and feelings of self-worth in school.

II. VISUALIZING SHADESIM THROUGH THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Imagining Shadeism through a Critical Anti-Racist Theory (CART) Lens

“We cannot read and understand race without being anti-racist” (Dei, 2013, p. 1). This statement, anchors my understanding of what it means to do anti-racist work, and is the foundation for my inquiry into the subject of Shadeism. As Dei states, the very act of realizing race is the first step in doing anti-racist work. According to the principles of CART, to be anti-racist is to be active. The purpose of social engagement and politics is to elicit societal structural changes either through social practice, beliefs, attitudes, or systemic/institutional changes (Dei, 2013). The CART framework can be applied to the deconstruction of Shadeism for both analysis and application purposes. I have broken down the principles of CART into six categories to be considered in the discursive analysis of Shadeism:

1. Salience and centrality of race
2. Race identity
3. History and context
4. Intersectionality
5. Othering
6. Whiteness

I aim to deconstruct Shadeism using these six categories in order to dismantle its implications through an anti-racist lens.

Saliency and Centrality of Race

According to Dei, the centrality of race is a keystone of CART (Dei, 2013). In order to engage in anti-racist work, Dei posits that the practitioner must recognize the relative saliences of different identities, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, disability, and religion in relation to particular settings and situations of oppression (Dei, 2013). This saliency and centering of race is important in the consideration of Shadeism in the global context. If race is at the centre of the analysis of oppressions, as suggested by Dei, then it must act as an anchor for all other aspects of identity. The application of the concept of centrality of race is helpful in contextualizing Shadeism, as it is a manifestation of racism. Using this framework, skin colour can be understood as a continuum whereby whether one is perceived as light-skinned or dark-skinned can change based on their cultural or geographic locations. For example, Zhara, a pseudonym for a former female student whom I taught in the GTA, described how the way her skin-colour was perceived changed as her geographical location within the GTA changed. As a Caribbean student of Indian decent she was a minority among her Indo-Canadian peers at her former high school in Markham, Ontario. Students there had commented on her skin as being dark, and ‘othered’ her by connecting her dark skin to undesirability, ugliness, and poverty. Conversely, when she moved to Mississauga, her peer group changed to a more diverse ethnic group of Eastern European White students and African Black students from both the Caribbean and the continent. In this context, Zhara was perceived as ‘light-skinned’ and noted that this association made her feel more attractive, desirable, and capable. Recognizing the saliency of race and skin colour is crucial to understanding the consequences of the perception of skin colour in relation to where one is at particular time and place. Zhara’s perception of her skin colour reflected a piece of her identity that was directly related to her confidence and sense of self-worth.

Race and Identity

For Zhara, the perception of her skin colour has very real consequences. Dei states that it is precisely these experiences that make race and racial identity real (Dei, 2013). Dei’s response to those who postulate that race is not real as it is a social construct and has no biological validity, is that what makes race real is the existence of racism (Dei, 2013). According to Dei, an anti-racist simply speaks to the nature and extent of the racism that already exists. The same can be applied to Shadeism. Zhara, like the student in Zine’s study, struggled with Shadeism both in and out of her racial group. CART stresses that people have the responsibility to resist the terms of the identities that are being used to oppress them. However, it also acknowledges that the more people experience instances of racism, the more likely they are to either embrace or detach from their racial identity (Dei, 2013). This notion speaks directly to the issue of Shadeism as it establishes the desire to move towards Whiteness, whether that manifests in the literal use of skin-lighteners or the figurative desire to

gain racial-capital by ‘acting White’, which will be discussed in further detail in the context of Cultural Revitalization in Part III.

History and Context

CART emphasises the importance of history and context in understanding race. In order to grapple with the implications of race and Shadeism, they must be linked to the history of colonialism as discussed in Part I of this chapter. As Dei postulates, an understanding of the colonial implications of race will allow for the re-invention of the ontology of races as a socio-historical and political condition. This re-imagining is necessary to change how race and skin colour are experienced. In Alfiee M. Breeland-Noble’s (2013) article *The Impact of Skin Colour on Mental and Behavioural Health in African American and Latina Adolescent Girls: A Review of the Literature*, she reasserts this need for a socio-historical change to combat Shadeism. Breeland-Noble analyses the impact that having a dark-skinned Michelle Obama as the First Lady had in changing the attitudes on skin colour, especially in African American and Latina adolescent girls. She references an article from the Washington Post that states, “The fact we had to hold our breath and the fact we had to be proud spoke volumes about where colorism is today” (Brown, 2009, p. 4). Breeland-Noble explicitly states that Shadeism or “colourism” as she calls it, “impacts young people early on, and has significant implications for their long-term life course” (Breeland-Noble, 2013). To her point, it is important to recognize the significance of the colonial history on how skin colour is perceived, but also the effect of the small changes as part of a larger action that is mandated by CART. It is through the action of this anti-racist work, that the fluidity of history can yield positive change, specifically in the teaching and learning of young people.

Intersectionality

The CART framework recognizes race, gender, sexuality, class, (dis)ability, language, and religion as being multiple sites of difference and oppression (Dei, 2013). CART emphasises that these oppressions must be fought on multiple fronts, both collective and individual. Dei describes the structures within which oppressions operate as working to establish material advantage and disadvantage, making individual distinctions of self/other (Dei, 2013). Notably, however, the intersectionality of oppressions must be envisioned through a race-centred frame, as they are not equal in their consequences (Dei, 2013). In the context of Shadeism as it pertains to students, this race-centred approach to the intersectionality of oppressions is particularly important. The subject of skin colour needs to be anchored in the larger context of race. Although there are multiple factors that contribute to a student’s identity, race is at the centre, because as Dei suggests, it is the only site, which is impossible to transcend.

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In the earlier example of the Indian actress Nandita Das, the connection between education and class is necessarily centred by race (Rajesh, 2013). The desire to lighten Das' skin when she played the role of an upper class, educated woman speaks to the concept of race at the centre of discourse surrounding the intersectionality of oppressions. The Fair and Lovely television advertisement discussed in the same section also speaks to issues of gender, class, and education. Though the woman's parents associated the "successful child" or the "dependable child" as being male, their daughter's eventual success was premised on her lightened skin. The examples above are two of many that outline the importance of centering race as dictated by CART in discourse around the intersectionality of oppressions. Lane and Mahdi reiterate this idea by connecting relations of power, privilege, and agency between individuals and between and within groups, with the notion that there are a multitude of experiences of individuals and subgroups within the larger domain (Lane & Mahdi, 2013). For them, the goal of intersectionality is to comprehend how social and historical processes create and recreate privileged groups and how these groups develop and sustain ideologies of superiority and valorization (Lane & Mahdi, 2013). Lane and Mahdi emphasize the idea that not only are there multiple sites of oppression which contribute to an individual's identity, each individual experiences these oppressions differently in relation to the space which they occupy at a given time. Race, gender, sexuality, class, (dis)ability, and language are all sites of oppression that cannot be dealt with in a vacuum. Dei discusses CART's conclusions on these aspects of difference as they relate to each other by stating:

The degree of permanence of race as a site of oppression marked onto particular bodies is often denied or dismissed along with severity, saliency, and centrality of skin colour in relation to race, notably in discourses of pluralism or plurality which posit that we are all simultaneously oppressed or even 'we shall overcome'. In such cases, the politics of difference separates itself from a politics of race. This allows centralist dominant systems to maintain their hegemonies of privilege. (Dei, 2013, p. 5)

His emphasis on the permanence of race is particularly important when considering Shadeism. Though the misguided desire to gain racial-capital by lightening skin can assist in the move toward the dominant, there is an undisputable permanence to race.

In the 2010 Canadian short documentary film, *Shadeism*, filmmaker Nayani Thiyagarajah problematizes the issue with a group of her racialized peers. Amanda, a student featured in the film, reported feeling that her light skin gives her power in certain spaces but not others. She shared her experience of working with racialized children, where little girls looked up to her and commented on her beauty, noting "it was not from a place of celebration, but from a feeling that they were lacking" (Thiyagarajah, 2010). This speaks to the saliency of race outlined by Dei. Though Amanda is light-skinned her position of power only exists in relation to other racialized bodies.

Othering and Whiteness

Othering as understood by CART is the importance of difference in the dominant's imagination (Dei, 2013). 'othering' lends consequence to the permanence of race and skin colour. Thus, if the dominant did not position White at the top and Black at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, the permanence of race would be insignificant. A Black-White binary establishes a duality between Black and White. A Black-White binary is created by the attribution of negative qualities on the Black body such as unintelligence, inferior minds, violence, and criminality, as outlined by Dei, juxtaposed with opposite, positive values attributed to the dominant body; that which represents Whiteness. A Black-White paradigm expands on this notion by acknowledging the existence of a gradient racial hierarchy based on White supremacy where lighter skin is valued over darker skin. Analysis based simply on a binary misses the nuances within Shadeism that the paradigm recognizes. In his article, *The Black White Binary Paradigm of Race: the Normal Science of American Racial Thought*, Juan F. Perea (1997) problematizes the consequences of this Black-White binary on the Latino American community. As neither Black nor White, Perea claims that the existence of this binary operates to exclude Latinos from full membership and participation in racial discourse. Further, Perea contends that this exclusion perpetuates the Black-White binary as well as negative stereotypes about Latinos in America (Perea, 1997). The existence of this binary acts to legitimize the dominant's 'othering' of those who are not White, and maintain White power, superiority and privilege. Racialized people are then relegated to the margins, but even this space is monitored by the coloniser. This example is indicative of the inter-race element of Shadeism as it illustrates the perception of the superiority of Whiteness, which stands directly opposed to the inferiority of Blackness, perpetuated by the dominant.

Dei importantly notes that the visibility of Whiteness is denied by the dominant by its normalization, Whiteness is seen by Whites as 'normal', 'neutral', 'natural', and 'objective' (Dei, 2013). For Dei, naming Whiteness is just as crucial to anti-racist work as naming Blackness. In *Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism*, Sara Ahmed (2004) states that Whiteness, or non-colour, acts as the absent presence, or hidden referent against which all other colours are measured as a form of deviance. This centring of Whiteness itself, acts to negatively 'other' racialized bodies. Ahmed posits a political project to address the centring of Whiteness by beginning with a Black critique of how Whiteness works as a form of racial privilege (Ahmed, 2004). Thus, for Ahmed, to study Whiteness as a racialized person is to contest its dominance (Ahmed, 2004). As a teacher of a majority of racialized urban secondary school students, the importance of critiquing Whiteness is evident in that it is necessary for students to deconstruct racism in order to move forward. Though the coloniser may not be in the room, the effects of racism and Shadeism are ever present. It is therefore necessary to create an environment for cooperative discourse in the classroom through which the theoretical and practical aspects of anti-racist work can be bridged.

III. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF WORK:
THREE-TIERD APPROACH

Addressing Shadeism in Urban Schools: A CART Method

CART calls theory into action, it dictates that racialized bodies must act in order to create systemic political and cultural change. This agency involves questioning, critiquing, reflecting, reframing, and self-implicating (Dei, 2013). This is a concrete call to action, one that demands that schools be sites of change rather than sites of oppressions. Agency is transformed in the process of transforming social and cultural conditions, according to Dei, in a changing world people change themselves (Dei, 2013). Deconstructing Shadeism through CART poses questions about how agency can be encouraged, particularly in schools in order to change attitudes and underlying perceptions about skin colour. Dei believes that schools can be sites of oppression but also sites of power and change. As an educator in an urban secondary school the question around how racialized bodies can be repositioned as part of the process of dismantling the dominant hegemonic system, is crucial to my desire for inclusive pedagogical practices. Contextualizing and deconstructing Shadeism in the context of schools is for me, an imperative part of centering race.

My experiences as a racialized body both as a student and an educator within the urban school system in the GTA has made me acutely aware of the presence of Shadeism within the system. I propose a three-tiered approach to addressing the issue of Shadeism in GTA schools. The first tier will take a macro approach, concentrating on the overarching culture of the board and ministry. The second tier will focus on initial teacher training and Professional Development for experienced teachers. Finally, the third tier will be directed to holistic inclusive student programming. I wish to do further qualitative research in the form of student and teacher focus groups in order to address the first two tiers and the third tier more extensively and comprehensively. For the purposes of this chapter, I will be discussing the third tier.

Implications of Shadeism on Self-Confidence: Effects on Student Behaviour, Academic Achievement and Social Engagement

Shadeism can be witnessed in schools in the GTA in overt oppressions such as bullying, teacher expectation, and streaming, as well as in the hidden curriculum that works to 'other' and ostracize racialized bodies by omitting and excluding their experiences. The effects of Shadeism on the behaviour, academic achievement and social engagement of racialized students in the GTA prevent them from participating fully in school.

Perceived student behaviour: The consequences of Shadeism on adolescents can be linked to perceptions of their behaviour in school and the fields that they choose to pursue. For example, research shows that darker skin for Black males

can reflect attributes of dominance and status, evident in the fact that some of the highest paid male athletes and entertainers such as Michael Jordan and Denzel Washington have darker skin (Wade, 1996). However, analysis of the criminalization of racialized bodies indicates that darker-skinned Black males are seen as more aggressive and violent than their lighter-skinned counterparts (Dixon & Maddox, 2005). The implication of these studies on darker-skinned Black male students suggests the propensity towards being viewed as dominant and aggressive. Further, these readings of the behaviour of darker-skinned male students have material consequences for them later in life, noted in the Emroy University study outlined in Part I, which indicated a correlation between darker-skinned Black males and lower wages (Harrison, 2005). Shadeism can pervert perceptions of certain behaviours onto students based on the colour of their skin. This transference of expectations can create an environment where students feel they must alter their behaviour to fit expectations, and feel confined to a narrow window of career paths to pursue, subsequent to graduation.

Understanding of academic achievement. As certain behaviours are assigned to racialized bodies based on their skin tone, Shadeism can also create expectations around the academic capability of students. This can affect a student's perception of their own aptitude and the teacher's expectation of the student's intelligence. The association between light skin and attractiveness is problematic in its effect on students' self worth and teacher expectations. A 2016 study conducted by the University of St. Andrews, United Kingdom outlines the existence of an 'attractiveness halo', that ascribes desirable attributes to attractive people. The research indicates that the effect of this attractiveness halo on perceptions of students' academic performance is shown to influence their future academic performance (Talamas, Mavor, & Perrett, 2016). The results of the study showed that there was no relationship between attractiveness and academic performance, but a strong positive correlation between attractiveness and perceived intelligence, and attractiveness and perceived academic performance (Talamas, Mavor, & Perrett, 2016). As Talamas, Mavor and Perrett found, the skewed effect of attractiveness on the initial impression of competence of a student can have serious consequences to their future education and hiring (Talamas, Mavor, & Perrett, 2016). I argue that this correlation is extended to students who are deemed more or less attractive based on the colour of their skin. I posit that a teacher's perception of a student as being less-attractive, and therefore, less intelligent because of their dark skin, can have grave material consequence on their academic achievement.

Social engagement. An essential aspect of the holistic approach to schooling is the social engagement of students in such things as sports, arts, clubs, friendships, and dating. Throughout my career as a secondary school teacher I can recount several occasions where students described attractiveness by first ascribing positive attributes to light skin. There have been many times that students would hide under

trees or cover their faces during summer fire drills or field trips, in an effort to shield their faces from the darkening effects of the sun. Shadeism has the very real effect of preventing students from fully participating in their own schooling experience. Two girls featured in *Shadeism*, relate stories about comments made regarding their skin colour, which made them apprehensive about gym class (Thiyagarajah, 2010). This is evidence of how Shadeism can affect the self-confidence of adolescents and prevent them from fully engaging in their educational experience.

The exclusion of certain bodies from social spaces, even by their own racial group has persisted over time. The post-emancipation creation of the “Blue Vein Society”, by a group of formerly enslaved mixed-race members, restricted membership to those whose skin was light enough that their veins could be seen at the wrist (Burrows, 2011). In the 1960s and 1970s, fraternities and sororities of upper-class Black colleges engaged in a practice called the “brown paper bag test” where they only accepted members whose skin was lighter than a brown paper bag (Burrows, 2011). In 2007, a Detroit club promoted an event where women with light skin would be granted free entrance (Starr, 2011). In a 2013 article published by the Toronto Star, students in the GTA reported feeling discriminated against based on their skin tone. One boy reported being told by a girl he was interested in dating, that she “doesn’t date dark boys” (Hinkson, 2013). This kind of Shadeism enacted to negatively prescribe attributes to darker-skinned students in social spaces, can prevent them from engaging in a full and complete educational experience.

Recommendations: Applying CART to Issues of Shadeism

Many of the racialized students in the GTA are living in what Homi Bhabha calls a Third Space of resistance (Dei & Wood, 2006). Dei and Wood suggest that these students must shoulder the burden of navigating their diasporic existence through the Eurocentric practices, which continue to impose colonial and imperial control on the processes of knowledge production, interrogation, and validation (Dei & Wood, 2006). This form of existence only acts to marginalize racialized students risking their further disengagement in school. Change in schools is imperative for the inclusion and engagement of racialized students in the GTA. The following recommendations apply CART principles to addressing Shadeism in GTA schools. They are divided into three facets of learning; transformative change, dislocation of voices, and spirituality and indigeneity.

Transformative change. According to Dei, anti-racist educators must combine scholarship and activism (Dei, 2013). Essentially, educators must be sure that the curriculum we teach and learn should actively seek change. In Enakshi Dua’s (2007) article entitled *Exploring Articulations of ‘Race’ and Gender: Going Beyond Singular Categories*, she deconstructs the process by which the school system works to marginalise racially oppressed female students. Dua divides this act into three areas: the imposition of a Eurocentric curriculum, teacher’s attitudes and expectations, and

streaming (Dua, 2007). Each of these areas is implicated in the failure to address issues of Shadeism in GTA schools. For the purposes of this chapter I will discuss the imposition of a Eurocentric curriculum and its failure to address Shadeism in GTA schools.

The Ontario Curriculum is an optimal site to deconstruct the implications of Shadeism, as it presently insufficiently engages in anti-racist work. For example, the Grade 11 Social Science Course, *Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology* (HSP3C), a course that I often teach, could be an excellent passage to engage students in issues of racism and Shadeism. However, the curriculum does not instruct teachers to engage in anti-racist discourse. Race is only superficially mentioned in the course curriculum. The table below briefly summarizes the 2013, Ontario, Ministry of Education’s curriculum document for the HSP3C course as it pertains to race. Shadeism, or any reference to discrimination based on skin tone is glaringly omitted from the document entirely. The chart lists strands, specific expectations related to race, and outlines my observations in relation to Shadeism and race. It is important to note that race is excluded from the overall expectations for each strand of this course. Therefore, the overall expectations are not outlined in the following chart:

HSP 3C: Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology, College Level

<i>STRAND</i>	<i>SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS</i>	<i>MY OBSERVATIONS</i>
Anthropology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify significant contributions of influential anthropologists (Noam Chomsky, Charles Darwin, Jane Goodall, the Leakeys, Margaret Mead, Edward Sapir, Marvin Harris, Richard Lee, Biruté Galdikas, Sherry Ortner) • identify the effects that diffusion, assimilation, and multiculturalism have on culture <p><i>Teacher prompt:</i> “What do you know about how the residential school system affected First Nation, Inuit, and Métis cultures and languages?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the practitioners are of White/European heritage • race is not mentioned in the discussion of identity. It is replaced with the indirect term “multiculturalism” • Teacher prompt does not account for racism in the context of Indigenous assimilation, but directs only to culture and language • Shadeism/skin colour is omitted
Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify significant contributions of influential psychologists (e.g., Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Ivan Pavlov, Carl Rogers, B. F. Skinner, Thomas Bouchard, Mary Ainsworth, Carol Gilligan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each of the practitioners are of White/European heritage • Race/skin colour omitted completely from this section

(Continued)

HSP 3C: (Continued)

<i>STRAND</i>	<i>SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS</i>	<i>MY OBSERVATIONS</i>
Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the significant contributions of influential sociologists (e.g., Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Edward Said, Max Weber, Dorothy Smith, Charles Wright-Mills, Gordon Allport, Reginald Bibby, George Dei, Ibn Khaldun) • explain the relationship between prejudice and individual and systemic discrimination (e.g., on the basis of gender, race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ability, religion, age, appearance), and describe their impacts on individuals and society <p><i>Teacher prompts:</i> “What is the impact of heterosexism on individuals and society?” “How are stereotypes conveyed in the media, and how do these stereotypes affect individual behaviour?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe ways in which social structures (e.g., economy, family, class, gender, race) affect individual and group behaviour <p><i>Teacher prompts:</i> “What is racial profiling, and what is the impact of racial profiling on individuals and groups?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three racialized contributors are included in this section (Edward Said, George Dei, Ibn Khaldun) • race is mentioned in relation to prejudice/discrimination. Racism specifically not mentioned • race/racism/skin colour are not mentioned in the teacher prompts in relation to discrimination • race is again discussed in relation to social structures, it is not discussed in terms of racism, systemic or individual • racial profiling is mentioned as a teacher prompt. The word “racism” is omitted • Skin colour/Shadeism is not included

In addition to the insufficient mention of race and the omission of racism and Shadeism explicitly, in the above analysed curriculum document, the textbook most commonly ascribed to the course, *The Human Way: Introducing Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology* does not have a section on skin colour, or racism for that matter, at all. Race is briefly defined in relation to ethnicity on pg.110 of the text along with a case study about a YMCA employee who wishes to ‘dismantle racism’ on pg. 113 (Bain & Colyer, 2001). If as Dei suggests, schools are a site for change, the education system in Ontario must begin the unlearning process by addressing the glaring omission of racialized voices in order to engage in transformative change.

Dislocation of voices: The need to hear the voices of all students is increasingly more important as the student population becomes more and more racially diverse. Student engagement rests heavily on their identification with the material, and the environment from which they are to learn. As Dei says, and the above table suggests, certain voices, experiences, and knowledges have not been at the table (Dei, 2013).

In the article *Racism is Not a Theory: Racism Matters in the Classroom*, Simpson (2006) states, “Teachers must be committed to creating classrooms that are open to knowledge about race, accommodate conflicting experiences and emotions that do not consistently normalize European attitudes and realities” (p. 156). As the issue of Shadeism does not necessarily affect European understandings, it does not seem to be applied to the Ontario curriculum at all. According to Simpson (2006), teachers and educators must be committed to creating classrooms that are open to knowledge about race and accommodate conflicting experiences and emotions that do not consistently normalize European realities. She notes that discussions of racism, when European Americans are in control, tend to only go as far as most White people are comfortable (Simpson, 2006). This can be combatted through a student-centred approach, where students lead a facilitated discussion anchored in their own lived experiences. Part of including the voices of racialized bodies in the discourse around race and skin colour should involve the development of more comprehensive courses at the secondary level. Not only should racism, and Shadeism be explicitly problematized in high school, in addition to general courses such as HSP3C, there should be a wider variety of subject specific course offerings that are specifically designed to deal with the construct of race and racism, and the saliency of skin colour. Potential courses could include such subjects as; anti-racism, Shadeism, region specific histories, and indigenous knowledges. The availability of these courses would offer racialized students the opportunity to engage in spaces where European hegemony is decentred; this would also provide dominant students an opportunity to learn about their peers through an alternative framework.

Spirituality and Indigeneity: For Dei (2013), a crucial site of knowing is Spirituality. Spirituality in this sense refers to, “a recognition of an understanding of the inner self and relation to the group and communities, understanding a deep sense of meaning and purpose in life, and a necessity to be human and whole again” (p. 10). Dei includes spirituality as being as much a part of human identity as race, class, and gender. Part of this healing from oppression can be addressed in schools by a facilitation of individual spirituality in classes. Not just the teaching of facts, but the teaching of introspection – understanding the self.

I wish to critique the manner in which spirituality is generally taught (if at all), in Ontario schools, particularly in the Catholic school board for which I work. In this setting, spirituality is explicitly connected to religion. It is often presented to students as monolithic and exclusively situated in the Judeo-Christian tradition. This system is depicted as being the only system or way of knowing and experiencing spirituality, religion, and the self. This epistemological framework is embedded in a neo-liberal educational framework that centers the individual and divests from group and community identities. Individuals are treated as independent entities that should strive to preserve their own interest against the “other”; this creates a dynamic where students are taught either explicitly or implicitly to fear difference.

For example, I have been inviting a Buddhist monk from the community in which I work into my classroom over the past few years, to engage the students in mindfulness meditation practices. When I made a previous Vice Principal (a White man) aware of this, he was extremely apprehensive. Despite the push from the board to address the prevalence of stress and anxiety in students through mindfulness practices, and my assurance that the focus of the presentation would be on mindfulness, rather than the tenets of Buddhism, he insisted on sitting in. This defensive reaction is an example of the practice on the part of the dominant to preserve the normalization of Judeo-Christian, Eurocentric belief systems, while simultaneously negating other forms of spirituality.

The above mentioned experience is reflective of how Western knowledge systems have historically denied the religions and spiritualities of racialized peoples as being legitimate ways of knowing or experiencing the self. The result of teaching this singular way of understanding and experiencing spirituality is the alienation of students. If understanding spirituality is to be limited to dominant understandings, students are forced to internalize an external way of knowing the self. This necessarily fragments their identity.

Conversely, I argue that fostering spirituality in students will help to strengthen their identity and love for themselves and others. This will positively correlate with the behaviour, academic achievement, and social engagement of students who until now see themselves only through the gaze of the dominant- through the gaze of Whiteness. The creation of classroom spaces, which encourage critical reflection, is a necessary step in the decentering of dominant beliefs systems that prescribe a static understanding of what spirituality is.

Race as it has been constructed and understood by Whiteness cannot be separated from religion. The colonization and subjugation of non-Whites by Whites involved the use of religion (Fanon, 1986), particularly Christianity. Through Christianity, indigeneity in the Canadian context and throughout colonized lands was targeted with the goal of violent erasure of the religious and spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples. Colonisers spoke of “civilizing” non-White races through Christianity. Proximity to Whiteness by performance through mimicry was one result. Whites deployed race, colourism, and Christianity, as tools that non-Whites would use to gain proximity to Whiteness. Secularism as a Western tradition further worked to alienate religion and spirituality. This has an indelible impact on how students in the classroom come to know themselves and the world around them.

Indigeneity in this context refers to the reassessment of the relations of subjects to land and state (Dei, 2013). Dei highlights the Canadian experience in its emphasis on ‘multiculturalism’ (Dei, 2013). For Dei, critical anti-racism must read Canadian citizenship from multiple subject perspectives, including ‘Aboriginal’, White settler, and racialized immigrant. In this context, it is important to problematize the effects of Shadeism on First Nations students in Canada. In *Aboriginal Education and Anti-Racist Education: Building Alliances Across Cultural and Racial Identity*, Verma St. Denis (2007) discusses the concept of Shadeism in the Canadian Indigenous

context. She dismantles the idea of Cultural Revitalization and states that although its goal is to address the problem of systemic social inequality by strengthening Indigenous cultural nationalism, it puts the onus of change back on Indigenous communities. Additionally, Cultural Revitalization has the effect of reforming a cultural hierarchy where there is a notion of “real”, “traditional”, and “assimilated” Indians. In this situation Indigenous peoples are put in a difficult position. In her study of First Nations and Metis teachers, Treaty Indians with darker-skin were the subjects of more racism. However, choosing to “pass” as the dominant for peoples with lighter skin has the consequence of denying that racism is a problem (St. Denis, 2007).

The prevalence of Shadeism in the Indigenous community in Canada is real among students as well. St. Denis relays an example of students socializing at the ‘smokers corner’ at break. A lighter-skinned ‘passing’ student was present when other students were negatively discussing Indigenous people. As a ‘passing’ student, she was being complained to, whereas for a darker-skinned student, the complaints are directed at them (St. Denis, 2007). St Denis suggests that Indigenous teachers be equipped with a CART analysis, as they would be better positioned to challenge such effects of racialization by developing a critical analysis of how Whiteness has been produced as superior. Shadeism in the context of the Indigenous community in Canada seems to be a double-edged sword. Though darker-skinned students may experience more racism at the hands of the dominant, lighter-skinned students experience intra-racism in that they can be considered less “authentic”. Schools can be a site of anti-racism in this context as they can provide a safe and facilitated place to engage in this discourse around race and skin tone. In her article entitled *Indigenous Women and Cultural Resurgence in Tkaronto: Community Development and Identity Sustainability in the Case of ‘Being Urban’*, Jessica Cook (2014) shares an excerpt from an interview where a lighter-skinned Indigenous student recounts her experience with Shadeism. For her, Shadeism manifests in the fact that the dominant does not see her in the context of what they expect a stereotypical Indigenous woman should look like (Cook, 2014). In this sense, Shadeism is real as well; it is closely connected to colonial imprints on how Indigenous identity is formed and what that identity can be (Cook, 2014). This speaks to Dei’s notion that the coloniser need not be present for the effects of colonisation to be felt.

In his piece *In Defense of Official Multiculturalism and Recognition of the Necessity of Critical Anti-Racism*, Dei (2011) problematizes the notion of Aboriginality as being deeply embedded within the colonial context in Canada. For Dei, the push to assimilate ethnic and racial minorities into a society built on White identity needs interrogation. Education is a place where this anti-racist work can happen. In the context of Shadeism in the Indigenous community, both edges of the sword must be examined. The existence of a space in school for students to share these experiences is a necessary component in the call to action dictated by CART.

CONCLUSION

The desire to acquire racial capital through lighter skin, as well as supposed expectations of aptitude and success, are debilitating elements of a pained colonial past. Sara Ahmed asserts, “The power of Whiteness is only invisible to those who inhabit it. To those who don’t, the power of Whiteness is maintained by being seen; we see it everywhere the casualness of white bodies in spaces... I see bodies as White, not human” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 14). In the context of Shadeism this declaration could not be truer. The impact of Shadeism has very real and material consequences today, especially on the individual and social development of racialized youth. If as Dei suggests, schools can act as sites of change, what better place is there to engage in discourse around Shadeism? My hope is that through critical anti-racist work in schools, the effects of Shadeism as it relates to perceived student behaviour, academic achievement, and social engagement, can be dismantled and a culture of awareness created in its place.

By situating Shadeism through deconstructing its colonial roots and examining its implications today, the call to decentre Whiteness is clear. The salencies of race and skin colour indicate that there is no objective way of knowing. Racialized bodies, moving through space and time each experience the consequences of their skin colour differently.

Critical anti-racism theory is a necessary tool in the analysis and dismantling of Shadeism. Examination of the six categories outlined by CART; salience and centrality of race, race identity, history and context, intersectionality, ‘othering’, and Whiteness, as they affect racialized students in the GTA assists in bridging the ideals of theory and practice needed to take an active role in anti-racist work. CART equips teachers and students to act for change.

There is no excuse for any student to experience school as a site of oppression. The institution of the three-tiered initiative proposed in this chapter, which includes; a ministry and board-wide culture change, teacher training, and holistic student programming aims to put the principles of CART into practice. In this supposedly post-colonial world, students are still bombarded with images, advertisements, music, and textbooks that continue to valorize Whiteness. It is imperative that they recognise how Shadeism is enacted in order to understand the false perceptions and consequences ascribed to racialized bodies, and, actively resist them.

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