

# On Being Named a Black Supremacist and a Race Traitor: The Problem of White Racial Domination and Domestic Terrorism in U.S. Teacher Education

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**Abstract** This article is concerned with the preparation of future teachers and the continued Whiteness of teacher education. Using the critical race theory methodology of counter-storytelling, this article presents a composite story to highlight and analyze how race and racism influence the preparation of future teachers in ways that typically sustain rather than challenge the Whiteness of education despite widespread self-reports of successful multicultural teacher education. While a great deal has been written about the need to better prepare future teachers for the multicultural realities of contemporary public schools, less examined is the modus operandi of race-based dominance in teacher education. This article seeks to use an examination of the intersections of White racial domination and the daily business of teacher preparation as a learning tool for pushing forward endeavors to prepare all teachers to successfully teach all students.

**Keywords** Critical race theory · Academic lynching · Whiteness

*“Malcolm....I know that you are incredibly angry. Believe me: We all know that. It is always extremely apparent how you feel. I personally perceive you to be an angry Black supremacist, if there is such a thing. And I have to keep asking myself, what would I do if you were a White supremacist instead? And my answer is always the same: anger will not change anything. It never has. It never will.”*  
—E-mail correspondence, Fall, 2009 (emphases in the original).

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## Introduction

Across U.S. teacher education there is widespread agreement on the importance and necessity of preparing future teachers for today's increasingly socially diverse classrooms (Ball and Tyson 2011; Cochran-Smith et al. 2004; Ladson-Billings 1999a, b). Fortunately, most teacher preparation programs self-report that they are successfully preparing teachers who are culturally competent and qualified to meet the opportunities and challenges in today's public schools (Bell 2002; Gay 2002; Gollnick 1995)—some with straight A's (Juarez and Hayes 2010). Unfortunately however, perhaps ironically, most teachers continue to be credentialed and enter contemporary public schools best prepared to teach primary English speaking White students who come from middle class, two-parent heterosexual, Protestant Christian homes, a demographic that is rapidly decreasing (Blanchett 2006; Grant and Secada 1990; Sleeter 2001; Weiner 2000). Students in classrooms, by contrast, are increasingly from economically poor and socially diverse backgrounds (Suits 2007; Trueba and Bartolome 2000).

The under-preparation of future teachers has substantial negative implications. Teachers directly influence students' educational experiences and outcomes (AACTE 2010; Irvine 1990; Darling-Hammond 2004; Reyes 2006). Notwithstanding, students of color are presently facing significant racial disparities in educational outcomes, opportunities, experiences and school discipline (Gregory et al. 2010; National Center for Education Statistics 2002; O'Connor et al. 2007; Perry et al. 2003; Rodriguez 2012). There is likewise now a rapidly expanding and pipeline-like connection between U.S. prisons and public schools serving students and communities identified as racial minorities and economically poor (Schott 2010; Noguera 2012). As King (2005) put it, "The abysmal state of education for students of color in the United States is an inhuman situation that calls into question the values and pronouncements of Western 'civilization'" (p. 3).

In this paper, then, we are concerned with this on-going failure of U.S. multicultural teacher education and the ways the Whiteness of teacher preparation programs is maintained. Using the CRT methodology of counter-storytelling (Love 2004; Solorzano and Yosso 2002; Taylor 1998), we create a composite story highlighting the experiences of Malcolm and Gloria, fictional characters based on actual people and groups of people and their lived experiences and perspectives, to explore how the continued under-preparation of teachers is realized despite widespread claims of successful multicultural teacher preparation (Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995).

While a great deal has been written about the need to prepare future teachers for the multicultural realities of contemporary classrooms and the on-going failure of teacher education to do so, less examined is the modus operandi of exactly how that failure of multicultural teacher preparation is realized. Put bluntly, the 'big house' of teacher education is on fire and burning brightly: "These super-men [and women] and world-mastering demi-gods listened, however, to no low tongues of ours, even when we pointed silently to their feet of clay" (DuBois 1920/1995, p. 456; Ladson-Billings 1998).

Our hope is to use our examination of the intersection between the Whiteness of teacher education and the daily business of preparing future teachers as learning tool for interrupting the seeming multicultural paradox of teacher preparation. We submit that teacher educators and vested others, individually and collectively, participate in and help to perpetuate the Whiteness of teacher education, intentionally or otherwise. Since individuals and groups make decisions to perpetuate Whiteness, very importantly, they can also make decisions to unmake Whiteness.

### Critical Race Theory

Like Knaus (2009), we apply critical race theory (CRT) for the purpose of developing the voices and narratives that challenge racism and the structures of oppression. Tate (1997) asks the question, “Pivotal in understanding CRT as a methodology, what role should experiential knowledge of race, class and gender play in educational discourse?” (p. 235). Ladson-Billings (1998) states that CRT focuses on the role of “voice in bringing additional power and experiential knowledge that people of color speak regarding the fact that our society is deeply structured by racism” (p. 13).

CRT scholars have developed the following tenets to guide CRT research; all of these tenets are utilized within the design and analysis of this study (Kohli 2009):

- (1) *Centrality of race and racism* All CRT research within education must centralize race and racism, as well as acknowledge the intersection of race with other forms of subordination (Kohli 2009; Sleeter and Delgado Bernal 2002).
- (2) *Valuing experiential knowledge* Solorzano and Yosso (2002) argue that CRT in educational research recognizes that the experiential knowledge of students of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education. Life stories tend to be accurate according to the perceived realities of subjects’ lives. They are used to elicit structured stories and detailed lives of the individuals involved (McCray et al. 2002).
- (3) *Challenging the dominant perspective* CRT research works to challenge dominant narratives, often referred to as majoritarian stories. Harris (1995) also argues that Whiteness conferred tangible and economically valuable benefits, and it was jealously guarded as a valued possession. This thematic strand of Whiteness as property in the United States is not confined to the nation’s early history (Frankenberg 1993; Ladson-Billings 1998).
- (4) *Commitment to social justice* Social justice must always be a motivation behind CRT research. Part of this social justice commitment must include a critique of liberalism, claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness and meritocracy as a camouflage for the self-interest of powerful entities of society (Tate 1997). Only aggressive, color conscious efforts to change the way things

are done will do much to ameliorate misery (Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Tate 1997).

- (5) *Being interdisciplinary* According to Tate (1997), CRT crosses epistemological boundaries. It borrows from several traditions, including liberalism, feminism, and Marxism to include a more complete analysis of “raced” people. Therefore, adopting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing the ever-present issue (Ladson-Billings 1998).

### **Domestic Terrorism and Lynching: Setting the Socio-political-cultural Stage**

Dictionary.com defines domestic terrorism as the “terrorism practiced in your own country against your own people and appear to be intended—to intimidate or coerce a civilian population.” Acts of domestic terrorism, symbolic or otherwise, refer the calculated use of violence, or the threat of violence, to produce goals that are political and ideological in nature.

Cleveland who grew up in the South has an insight on lynching that helps us set the stage. It should be noted that it is not our intent to minimize the physical lynchings that took place in the South during slavery and during the Civil Rights Movement. However, it is our intent to show psychology effects of academic lynching are the same. Lynching academically or otherwise still kills the person’s soul. The fear as shown in the narratives is the same.

The term lynching according to Holtzclaw (1984) originated with Charles Lynch a planter during the American Revolution. Lynch and his friends took the law into their own hands to punish those who sympathized with the British. In Mississippi, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) or as Cleveland’s family members referred to them as “kluckers,” was directly or indirectly responsible for the lynchings that occurred between 1882 and 1968 (Hayes 2006).

Lynchings often became public spectacles with the entire community watching and actively participating. This lynching in the academy also happens publically as we will illustrate in the narratives of Malcolm and Gloria. Blacks in Mississippi were killed, especially Black men, by the thousands.

### **Academic Lynching**

But Sherman’s not a ‘thug’ because he has a high GPA, or because he graduated from Stanford.” Whether a graduate of Stanford or Harvard Law, or a Black youth forced out of school or hunted down by racist vigilantes, the “thug” label furthers the normalization of anti-Black violence in the name of White supremacy (Leonard 2014, p. 1)

In 2008, the United States did what many thought impossible in electing a man of African decent to be its leader. In the wake of this election many ‘conservative,’ ‘progressive,’ and ‘neo-conservative’ factions have claimed that the election and

subsequent re-election of Obama represent a post-racial moment. We developed this notion of academic lynching was developed out of this notion of post racial America.

The post-racial is a mythical idea that ironically shelters and helps to sustain the endemic nature of racism in the United States (Delgado, 1995). Every year since the landmark *Brown v. Board* decision, the United States has become markedly more politically correct in its articulations. Despite these articulations racism remains fully present and just as violent, though under a new yolk of post-Jim Crow *neuveaux* racism.

Never in the history of the United States has the President been so challenged along lines of race. The examples are endless, but the Obama's birthplace has been questioned, he and the first lady have been compared to monkeys, and in an unprecedented experience a U.S. Representative called the President a liar from the floor during the State of the Union. While not physically violent like the lynchings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, these attacks centered on race and shrouded in the discourse of post-racial represent a type of emotional and academic lynching—attempting to kill the personality, soul, and spirit of people of color.

Harris (1995) describes the “valorization of Whiteness as treasured property in a society structured on racial caste,” arguing that whiteness confers tangible and economically valuable benefits, and is consequently highly guarded as a valued possession. Fasching-Varner (2009) argues that people vested in the value of Whiteness experience a high sense of value, demonstrating a certainness and absoluteness about their own value. When people begin to attack the potential and realized benefits associated with Whiteness in the academy they threaten a highly guarded commodity, and consequently become victims of academic lynching so as to kill the threat to the property value of whiteness. Academic lynching can take many forms, but its foundation is always centered on eliminating any threat to the white social order, just as Jim Crow-era lynching worked to eliminate any physical threat to Whiteness as perceived by Whites.

As Fasching-Varner (2009) argues, whites often attempt to determine what kind of Blackness is acceptable to them, how that Blackness should be expressed, and how one gets disqualified or excluded from whiteness through one's Blackness—tame versions of ‘Blackness ONLY allowed!’ reminiscent of Jim Crow segregation.

## The White World of US Teacher Preparation

*Watch out! Watch Out! Nothing in the world more dangerous than a White school teacher.*

—Paul D, in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

How is it, then, that most teachers are being prepared to effectively teach all students while most teachers continue to enter the classroom under-prepared to effectively teach all students? Like most key institutions in US society, teacher education remains a White world (Juarez et al. 2008; Marx 2006)—the future teachers are White, the teacher educators are White, the teachers are White

(National Center for Education Statistics 2002; National Summit on Diversity in the Teaching Force 2002). Pointedly, White educators tend to have negative views about racial differences accompanied by low expectations for students of color (Fuller 1992; Barry and Lechner 1995; Terrell and Mark 2000).

The Whiteness of teacher education becomes visible against the on-going calls for multicultural education and cultural diversity activities on the margins of programs away from the main daily business of preparing future teachers (Cross 2003; Ladson-Billings 1998; McIntyre 1997; Leonardo 2005). The educational literature, in turn, has clearly identified the existence and negative consequences of Whiteness within US teacher preparation programs (Cochran-Smith et al. 2004; Marx 2006; Villegas and Lucas 2002).

### **White Racial Domination and Domestic Terrorism: A Framework for Understanding the Seeming Multicultural Paradox in US Teacher Education**

To understand this seeming multicultural teacher preparation paradox—all teachers are prepared to effectively teach all students, yet few teachers enter the classroom prepared to effectively teach all students, we must keep in mind a reality that Malcolm X regularly noted—that racism is a lot like a Cadillac, a new model comes out every year (Gaskins 2006). Today, explicit racial animus is not required for White supremacy to be maintained (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Feagin 2012; Hooks 1989). Indeed, most often it is the upstanding, good-intentioned individuals from helping professions, which individually and collectively act in ways that sustain the domination of Whites (Gillborn 2005; Leonardo 2005).

Indeed, White racial dominance doesn't happen so much behind the backs of White people but off the backs of people of color as Whites willfully and actively and at times even aggressively take resources from people of color all over the world, appropriate their labor, and construct policies that deny minorities full participation in society" (Leonardo 2005, p. 76). bell Hooks (1989) explains,

When liberal Whites fail to understand how they can and/or do embody white-supremacist values and beliefs even though they may not embrace racism as prejudice or domination (especially domination that involves coercive control), they cannot recognize the ways their actions support and affirm the very structure of racist domination and oppression that they profess to wish to see eradicated (p. 113).

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) has referred to this process of good, nice people helping to create White racial domination as racism without racists.

#### **Racism Without Racists as Domestic Terrorism**

Drawing from the first tenet of CRT, which centralizes race and racism, we wonder, exactly how does racism without racists happen in US teacher education? The epigraphs above are representative of and reflect snapshots of moments within

processes of White racial domination being enacted through acts of domestic terrorism to realize the continued failure of multicultural teacher preparation.

Each instance of domestic terrorism enacted is part of and contributes directly to processes that secure the dominance of Whites by willfully sabotaging and derailing the multicultural preparation of future teachers (Juarez and Hayes 2010). Specifically, the maintenance of White racial dominance is [re] secured and buttressed by individuals and groups as they draw on institutional authority and respectability to make decisions, act and interact in often patterned ways or rituals that use acts of domestic terrorism, symbolic in these instances above, to silence challenges to the historical privileging of Whiteness, that is, the interests, values, beliefs, histories and accomplishments of Whites as a racial group (Feagin 2010; Leonardo 2005; Lipsitz 2006; Lopez 2006).

Accordingly, acts of domestic terrorism are the building blocks of processes of White racial domination in terms of “those acts, decisions, and policies that White subjects perpetrate on people of color” to secure the supremacy of Whites (Leonardo 2005, p. 75). The supremacy of Whites, in turn, is clearly visible across nearly all domains within US society (Feagin 2012; Gillborn 2005; Leonardo 2005), not excluding education (Juarez and Hayes 2010). Ensuring that future teachers are not prepared to effectively teach all students protects White supremacy, “a racialized social system that upholds, reifies, and reinforces the superiority of Whites” (Leonardo 2005, p. 127).

### Academic Lynching: A Form of Domestic Terrorism Useful for Securing Racial Domination

Above, Gloria and Malcolm, both teacher educators, albeit one White and female and the other Black and male, are subjected to acts of domestic terrorism as institutional authority. We use these names to represent fictitious characters we have created based on composites stories of actual events and individuals in a process we explain in our methodology section.

This authority is applied by groups to symbolically position them as outside of that which is normal; too angry, a lunatic, a racist, outspoken, arrogant, inflexible, lacking in emotional and physical availability, and outright too outrageous with shock and awe teaching techniques. Violence is enacted at this point of intersection between systemic racism and the daily business of preparing future teachers as individuals and groups, usually representatives of the institution or ones who invoke institutional authority and respectability, apply the racial power of Whiteness as the hidden referent to symbolically position those targeted by domestic terrorism, Gloria and Malcolm in this instance, as unreasonable, and therefore not credible or worthy of respect, attention or other forms of social reward.

Pointedly, there are very real and very significant, material economic, political, familial and many other types of severe consequences to being repeatedly subjected to acts of domestic terrorism and consequently pushed outside of respectability (Solorzano 1997); Too direct—for White people, in his communicative approach, Malcolm received a helping committee of senior faculty members assigned to assist him in learning to speak less angrily and more acceptably to Whites in particular. Being too outspoken—for White people in particular, Gloria was in essence fired

from her teacher education position when an official letter handed to her by two White male college of education administrators advised her that her contract of employment would not be renewed.

To become targets of domestic terrorism, importantly, Gloria and Malcolm had each repeatedly, openly and boldly challenged the Whiteness of US teacher education in the preparation programs they respectively worked in by consistently taking stances with Blackness and therefore against Whiteness. In reference to Blackness, and paraphrasing ideas from Black radical traditions in the US, when we are talking about the Black experience, that is to say, the African American community and its collective history and group-based experiences over time in this nation-state known as America, we are referring to humanity and the human condition—that which human beings suffer, dream, strive toward, and struggle against. Because the humanity of all cannot be affirmed simultaneously with the affirmation of Whiteness, affirming Blackness requires opposing Whiteness (Cone 1990).

Malcolm's stance with Blackness and constant challenge(s) to Whiteness are rendered visible against charges of him being an angry Black supremacist. In Gloria's case, her stance with Blackness and constant challenge(s) to Whiteness emerge against by charges of her knowing a lot, [too much for White folk?] about cultural diversity and being outspoken, not to mention her shock and awe teaching techniques. Malcolm and Gloria were respectively subjected to acts of domestic terrorism that combined to result in *the academic lynching* of each as e-mail correspondence, course evaluations, evaluative letters destined for personnel files, and other forms of official and unofficial communicative acts, policies, and practices were used to silence their challenges to Whiteness by physically removing them to the margins of the program (in Malcolm's case) or out completely (in Gloria's case) and thus [re] establish White racial dominance.

Pausing, we understand that the term academic lynching brings up deep emotions for persons who are reading the manuscript. We understand the history of lynching as a mechanism to control Black people in particular during the Jim Crow South. However, the feelings and the fear are just as intense for those who have experienced them. While we did not live in the Jim Crow, we both have researched and read and interviewed persons who did and that fear of humiliation and in some cases death for challenging the status quo is still very real thus the term academic lynching as the narratives will show are very important to the premise of this paper.

Drawing from the tenet of CRT that challenges the dominant perspective, we seek to demonstrate that the failure of multicultural teacher preparation is a system success, not a system failure, used to maintain White racial domination. Whereas, the willful failure of teacher education to prepare all teachers is realized through processes of White racial domination enacted as acts of domestic terrorism which in teacher education can and often do take the form of academic lynching.

### **Critical Race Theory and Counter-Storytelling: A Methodology**

In this paper, we use the experiences of Malcolm and Gloria to examine the processes of White racial domination used to secure the continuing supremacy of



Whites in education. CRT provides a useful methodology for helping us to illuminate matters of racial domination (Delgado 1995; Delgado and Stefancic 2001; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; Solorzano and Yosso 2002). Specifically, “CRT is a race-based form of oppositional scholarship developed in the late 1980’s because of the perceived failure of traditional civil rights litigation to produce racial reform that could change the subordinated status of people of color in U.S. society” (Love 2004, p. 228). Based on commitments to societal transformation, CRT attempts to foster circumstances within education that eliminate the likelihood of race to predict negative schooling and life outcomes.

At the center of CRT is the experiential knowledge of people of color drawn from their experiences individually and collectively over generations of living within and learning to survive conditions of White supremacy (Delgado 1995). In this paper, we draw on the valuing of the experiential knowledge of people of color as a tenet of CRT to create a composite counter-story that examines the violence perpetrated by acts of domestic terrorism within teacher education and how this violence helps to sustain the continuing inadequacy of teacher preparation. Counter-stories serve as an entry point illustrating how subordinated people fight interlocking race, class, gender, and spiritual oppression (Knight et al. 2004); they provide a forum for communities of color to call into question the hidden referent of White middle class communities as the standard by which all others are judged (Delgado 1995; Dixson and Rousseau 2006).

Toward the development of our counter-story, we bring a variety of data sources including our own and the respective personal and professional experiences of colleagues and friends of color, those published and those shared with us informally, who have challenged and thus become targets of Whiteness. We likewise draw on literary and historical sources from literature, poetry and other written texts identified as outside of the formal educational research realm of existing literature on teacher education (Solorzano and Yosso 2002). We also include as data our analyses of teacher preparation program documents (e.g., syllabi, meeting minutes, e-mails, department memos, and other written institutional artifacts), and formal and informal, individual and focus group interviews we have conducted as part of larger studies on multicultural teacher preparation.

Both Malcolm and Gloria work at Predominately White Institutions (PWI). Malcolm’s University is a small private college in the American west and while his institution is considered a PWI it is also considered a Latino Serving Institution (HSI). His University is HSI only in an interest convergence kind of way where the University benefits from having a larger number of Latino students, but the students do not receive any financial benefits or curricula benefits. Malcolm’s teacher education students are all post bachelorette and the program draws students from all over the state.

Gloria works at a state sponsored school in the southern part of the state. Her university sits in a city that is 54 % Black but the student body population is only 18 %. Most of Gloria’s students are undergraduates and are from the city in which the University resides.

## A Public Mass Meeting: A Historical Tradition of Resistance for Exploring Contemporary Oppression

To present our composite story, we use the literary device of a public mass meeting of protest and resistance. This construct is useful because in the U.S. historically, African Americans have routinely been expelled and excluded from dominant channels and spaces of public discourses and in response have regularly used tactics such as mass meetings to re-insert themselves into official processes of decision-making and dialogue (Barkley Brown 1994; Dawson 1994). Within the Black community historically, the purpose of holding mass meetings was to not only recount, affirm, and witness to the abuse and violence of White racism experienced by individuals but also to use “their individual stories to construct a collective history” that would counter and was not dependent on assumptions of Black inferiority and White superiority (Barkley Brown 1994, p. 113).

Moreover, like those of fictional character Miss Jane Pittman from Ernest Gaines’ (1971) novel, the details of people’s lives—their daily conversations, actions, and interactions, reflect and carry the very influences and forces of White supremacy that help to organize contemporary society. The details of individuals’ everyday lives, therefore, present us with a fruitful venue for identifying and analyzing the role of domestic terrorism in securing the dominance of Whites in education through the failure of multicultural teacher preparation.

### DuBois’ Tower: The Setting for the Mass Public Meeting

The setting for this mass meeting with its collegial conversations is the same tower that the great sociologist DuBois (1920/1995) wrote from high “above the loud complaining of the human sea” (p. 453). In the tradition of Barbara Love (2004), among others (Delgado and Stefancic 2001), in our composite story there are many people, men and women, as well as children, from the past and present gathered and already seated, some standing, at this mass meeting of public protest. Many, perhaps even a majority, of the people in attendance self-identify as African American and make up those whom DuBois (1920/1995) referred to as the nameless “black martyrs....SO MANY NEGROES killed, so many NEGROES wounded...the thousands of Negroes done to death in the last two centuries....[those on] that crimsoned list of death and slaughter and orgy and torture” (p. 448; emphasis in the original).

Among the story characters specifically named in the counter-story we present herein are fictionalized historical and contemporary freedom fighters including DuBois himself, Ralph Ellison, Rev. Dr. King, Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Jimmy Lee Jackson, James Chaney, Ida B. Wells, Audre Lorde, and Ella Baker. The development of the dialogue amongst story characters in the counter-story (Fernandez 2002; Solorzano and Yosso 2002) is based on a combination of our joint and individual reflections, discussions, and critical analyses of historical sources (e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* 1954) and the published writings and speeches of certain prominent leaders in freedom struggles across generations in the US (e.g., Abolitionism, Civil Rights, Black Power). As part of the

literary device we use in this paper, the dialogue presented through our composite story seeks to expose and provide a venue for examining the assumptions, beliefs, and understandings that often play a key role in maintaining the Whiteness of US teacher education and are embedded within and carried by the real life experiences of individuals and groups subjected to the violence of White dominance and contextualize social situations (Delgado and Stefancic 2001).

In our composite story, importantly, not everyone at the mass meeting self identifies as Black. There are also in attendance some individuals, though not many, especially in comparison to the number of African Americans, who appear to be White. Many often assume that White folk are fully insulated and protected from the domestic terrorizing of Whiteness. Yet, as history tells us, and despite the waxes of Whiteness identified by DuBois (1920/1995), this protection from White racial domination for Whites who fail to uphold Whiteness has not usually been the case. For example, a White minister from Boston, James Reeb, was clubbed to death after leaving a Black cafe in Alabama just days after the Bloody Sunday in March 1965 during the time of the Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery lead by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Just as DuBois worked with Whites to establish the NAACP, and Frederick Douglass maintained a dialogue with John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison, among others, there are also Whites among those in attendance at this mass meeting of protest. Malcolm and Gloria are likewise in attendance at the protest meeting today to not only share their own stories but also to support and affirm the stories of others who have likewise been subjected to academic lynching and other forms of domestic terrorism in predominantly White institutions.

Let the Meeting Begin: Here We are Again

*Malcolm: Here we are again. Some 150 years after slavery ends, yet we are still having to assembly together as people who are on the violent end of Whiteness. Yes, we are not being physically hung from trees or taken from our homes in the middle of the night anymore, but we are being lynched all the same. Our homes are still taken from us when we can't find or keep a job. Our health is still taken from us when we have to keep dealing with all the daily hostilities of Whites who take their job of protecting Whiteness so seriously!*

*Gloria: Indeed. It is heartening to see how many people will come out to stand up to Whiteness and share their stories of what happened to them and how they are trying to survive the constant attacks of domestic terrorism. It helps to know that you aren't the only one who goes through it. Look Malcolm, Dr. DuBois is about to resume the meeting.*

Dr. DuBois looks expectantly at the crowd and waits a moment for the crowd to quiet down to silence except for the sounds of the few young infants and children in attendance—all are welcome and expected here regardless of age or other background factors. He then begins: *As is well known, I spent the better part of my life working and advocating for the education and betterment of all, particularly Blacks. As a group, we Black people have always known that education is fundamental to our overall health and wellbeing and a positive future.*

[There is an affirming response of *Yes* and applause that arises from the crowd.] Dr. DuBois continues: *For this reason I am particularly concerned with what is happening with the underpreparation of the teachers who are teaching our children. We are losing too many of our children to prisons, not universities as dangerous as they can be in a different way.*

Malcolm: *Sir! Respectfully, it is not that some of us are not trying to prepare teachers, Black and White and more, to be effective in teaching Black and all students. Some of us are working under extremely hostile conditions and continually under assault as we do so.*

Dr. DuBois: *Come up here, young man. Tell us your story.*

### **Malcolm's Story: Not Well-Scrubbed Enough for Whiteness**

Arriving at the pulpit, Malcolm begins: *Let me begin this way: I have learned that it is a bad idea to question your White colleagues about cultural diversity and poverty issues—White people claim to know nothing about race and racism, that is, until you question them! Then they become the experts. Question them and you too will be called a Black Supremacist.*

[Audience members nod in agreement and give affirming murmurs of understanding].

Malcolm continues: *It started this way—I challenged the use of a text by Ruby Payne in my department. Scholars of color and even some White scholars have soundly critiqued Ruby Payne's 1998 work, *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, as based on racist, classist assumptions. But, again, lest we forget—White people know what is best for people of color so our program uses the text as foundational reading.*

Audience: *For sure!*

Malcolm resumes: *Observing the class of a White, female colleague using this text, I asked, "Why is there a modification for poverty on the lesson plan form? My fear is that teachers will lower their expectations for students who come from lower socioeconomic groups."*

Audience: *And then?*

Malcolm: *"That will not happen," my colleague Michelle replied. I, however, had already heard teacher candidates in the class make negative comments about children from economically poor homes—too many Black people live in conditions of poverty.*

Audience: *Hmmm...*

Malcolm: *I was hoping that my challenge to Ruby Payne's work would spark a useful dialogue for all of us to learn from. My colleague obviously thought differently. She was offended; she ignored my comment and moved on with class as if I had not spoken. After the students left that day, she told me I had been rude and had embarrassed her in front of her class. She told me not to come back to her classroom again—I wasn't welcome. Truly, I was shocked by her reaction.*

*She silenced me by invoking the authority of her seniority to determine what was and was not discussed in class. Yet this is not all.*

*Audience: Oh dear! This does not bode well. You have angered the great White Ones.*

*Malcolm: Being expelled from my colleague's class was my first experience with acts of domestic terrorism. Interestingly, my colleague openly expressed her pride in herself on being such a progressive, forward-thinking White person. At one point, she proceeded to dismiss my critiques of Ruby Payne's work saying that she too had grown up poor and therefore knew the book to be based on truths. This is interesting here—her experiential knowledge was put forth as more valid than mine which questions the truths of Ruby Payne. Moreover, my colleague told me, race is absolutely not an important factor to consider for teaching, let alone teaching for social justice. She was emphatic telling me that effective teaching for all students is not about race; it is about class. She let me know in no uncertain terms that I was wrong and she was right.*

*Audience: Ohhhh no she didn't! [Murmurs of sympathy.]*

*Malcolm continues: The week after Thanksgiving break, I was asked to meet with the chair of the department. I immediately knew something was wrong. I found myself wishing I had gone to apologize to my colleague even though I knew I had not been in the wrong—Black folk have had to do that to survive over time.*

*Audience: You tell it!*

*Malcolm: Upon arriving, I was presented with a letter which I was informed had already been filed with Human Resources before I knew of its existence.*

*Audience: [Noises of sympathetic murmurs of disbelief.] Not right at all!*

*Malcolm again: I knew what this was about. After the incident with my colleague, I had stopped talking to her other than the niceties of daily greetings—we'll call her Michelle. I had also declined her offer to co-author a journal article with her. For Michelle, I had the feeling she felt I was not behaving like a well behaved, model Negro and now I was going to pay for it. I was being represented as a trouble-making, uncooperative, angry Black man.*

*Audience: White is always right.*

*Malcolm: Pointedly, the department chair had made up his mind about my performance without talking to me about it—where was the due process? I am not going to recreate the letter but only present the important sections that illustrate how the structure of the department showed its Whiteness.*

*The letter started off with words like, 'given the reports I have received from a number of sources, including faculty whose judgment and observations I trust, as well as those from students, regarding your performance to date.' The consensus is that 'You have tended to treat the class in a very causal manner in term of both your presence and your attitude. You have interrupted class to argue with the instructor regarding instructional resources and pedagogy. Comments from students related to your behavior in classes in which you shadow include "indifferent," "rude," and "hostile".'*

*Audience: Oh no! [Clicking of tongues making disapproval sounds.]*

*Malcolm: These words are kinds of verbal nooses used as a way to control and threaten to control people of color in academia who depart from the official*

storylines. The department chair did remind me that I am on probation for the next three years.

Audience: *Verbal nooses, alright.*

Malcolm: *In the letter, the department chair also questioned my research agenda. It stated,*

*“I am concerned about your professional fit with the department. I know what your passion is professionally/academically, you made that clear in your interview, you have also made it very clear to Michelle, students, and just about anyone else who is willing to listen. I am not certain that you have the interest or the willingness to develop professionally in the direction that we need you to go.” In other words, I was a misfit in the department and an uncooperative, angry one at that.*

Malcolm pauses for a moment to compose himself. It is difficult to relive this experience.

Malcolm begins again: *The problem statement in this portion of the reprimand is willingness to develop professionally—or in other words, willingness to conform to Whiteness.*

Audience: *Exactly right!*

As Malcolm finishes his story, he turns to look at Gloria in the audience.

Malcolm: *And you should know that although there are very few Whites who fight against Whiteness, there are some. And those few who do fight against Whiteness are also subjected to acts of domestic terrorism, albeit in different forms especially designed to punish those deemed to be traitors against other White people. Gloria, come up here.*

Malcolm begins to move away from the pulpit. Dr. DuBois gives an approving nod and takes Malcolm’s place at the pulpit as Gloria comes forward to join him.

Dr. DuBois: *Thank you for sharing your story, young man. You are correct about that fact that as a people, we Blacks have very few instances we can look to as instances where we have been able to trust Whites, let alone have Whites fight with us as allies in the cause of freedom.*

Dr. DuBois moves away from the pulpit motioning for Gloria to take the stand at the pulpit. Gloria, with her knees quaking, takes the stand.

### **Gloria’s Story: I Thought My Whiteness Would Protect Me More Than It Did**

Gloria begins: *Thank you for this honor, sir. If I may, respectfully sir, I do not actually see myself as a White ally. White supremacy is created and maintained by Whites and is thus a White problem, not a Black problem. Since I am White, and it is my people who have collectively and individually created the system of Whiteness, I believe the responsibility falls on me to use the advantages and privileges I do not earn yet am nevertheless given to challenge the systemic mistreatment and exclusion of people of color.*

Dr. DuBois replies: *Very well then. You are not a White ally but yet neither are you Black or Brown. How is it that you have likewise come to be subjected to the terrorizing forces of Whiteness?*

Malcolm now comes back to the pulpit and joins Gloria at the microphone. Malcolm intervenes before Gloria can reply: *Sir, members of the audience, Gloria has spoken out so often against Whiteness, in meetings, in her research publications, in her teaching at the university, and all of her interactions, that those around her in the predominantly White institution she works in know her as that crazy White professor who hates her own people. Now the White administration where she works has tired of hearing her constant naming of Whiteness and her contract of employment is not being renewed. I warned her that Whiteness would not spare her from being silenced just because she was White.*

Now Gloria speaks: *It is true. Malcolm did warn me about the dangers of challenging Whiteness. I really did think that my own Whiteness would protect me more than it did. I know that indeed it is a form of White privilege that I even assumed that the White administration and faculty would and should listen to what I had to say with my critiques. Yet, at the same time, I also want to say that I do also believe that as someone who is White, I feel that I have a responsibility to say something about Whiteness despite the dangers of doing so. While I did not know the extent of the dangers I was provoking because of my own Whiteness, I do feel that I would have done so anyway for the simple fact of the matter that if White people do not stand up against Whiteness, then who will? People of color have been standing up and dying in the fight against Whiteness for generations. Most of the martyrs in the struggles against Whiteness are not White but Black and Brown.*

There is a burst of approving applause from the audience. Dr. DuBois motions for Gloria to continue.

Gloria: *I admit it. I have not always known about the violence of Whiteness. I was born into a White family and grew up in a White neighborhood surrounded by all White people. It wasn't until I became the mother of children who cannot pass as White that I really began to get a sense that the Civil Rights movement had not resolved historical racial disparities.*

There is a burst of applause and some noises of pleasure at being acknowledged coming from the crowd.

Gloria resumes her narrative: *I also worked as an elementary teacher and most of my students were economic refugees from Mexico. I could see that teachers did not treat them fairly and they were not doing as well in school as they should be. I knew that what my colleagues told me about them not wanting to learn was not true because I had traveled in South America.*

Gloria takes a sip of the water offered to her by Ms. Ida B. Wells who is also on the stand. She continues: *That is why I went to graduate school, although as a first generation college student I had already exceeded my community's expectations with a bachelors degree. I was bothered deeply by the inequalities I saw around me and I could see that they were race-based.*

Again, applause from the audience and Gloria continues: *After finishing my terminal degree, I began teaching in a college of education where people talked about putting diversity at the center of their work. At first I was so naïve. I thought that every time I heard the word democracy and it was attached to education, we must be talking about the same thing. I couldn't understand how we could sit in faculty meetings and say we were all about putting diversity at the center of our work and then teach classes that had no literature actually written by people of color and were exactly anti-multicultural and pro-White supremacy. I kept finding these kinds of disparities between what we did and what we said. I was surprised and confused but I think back now and I remember that Malcolm and my other Black colleagues and friends were not. To them, it was just business as usual with Whites, the same trickery that has existed for generations. There is some laughter among the audience and exclamations of, "I know that's right!"*

Gloria continues: *But, being White, this was my first experience with White denial. I truly thought that the White people I was working with just simply did not know and therefore I would be super helpful and help them to see what they clearly were not seeing.*

[Again more laughter from the audience—especially Dr. DuBois. The mostly Black audience is aware of the ironies here.]

*After a while though, even though I kept saying that the big house of teacher education was on fire, I began to feel like I was screaming out to my colleagues about the emergency from behind a sound-proof glass mirror. No matter how much I jumped up and down and screamed pointing to the fire, it felt like I was continually put on hold—your call is very important to us, please stay on the line. But they never pick up and actually listen to me. I decided to go to another institution.*

Gloria continues: *During the interview process, I thought to myself, I really have to make sure I don't have of these kinds of misunderstandings to happen again. I don't want to be caught again in an institution that wants talk about cultural diversity without their actually being any cultural diversity.*

*In the spirit of being less naïve, then, I was very explicit about who I was in my job interview. In fact, I incited a big debate during my job presentation when 3 White men protested my emphasis on race instead of ethnicity in my research. In what became a near shouting match, I heard the bootstrap stories of their barefooted great grandparents coming from the former Czech Republic and working hard to realize the American Dream. Apparently they didn't realize that the bottom of the ladder in bootstrap stories isn't the same for all, especially if your people came over to the Americas in chains.*

[Shouts of affirmation go up from the crowd.]

Gloria continues: *That evening the administration took me to a restaurant for dinner. I was exhausted. I thought to myself, I'm not going to take this job even if they offer it to me. After all, if I want to work with a whole bunch of racist people, I can just stay home. Then one of the administrators said he was very interested in democratic education and democratic conversations. Without thinking before*



speaking, I blurted out—“Well, a lot of White people say that but most don’t mean it.”

[The crowd is in near hysteria laughing and clapping. Someone calls out, “Oh no you didn’t!”]

Gloria smiles at the crowd and resumes: *I will tell you—that administrator’s eyes got very wide. But I had nothing to lose. After my last work setting, I just didn’t trust White people on matters of democratic education.*

[A yell goes up from the crowd; lots of laughter: *I know that’s right.*]

Gloria continues: *The next morning, I told everybody in charge, “Look, I am not really impressed with your faculty. You want me to do what they don’t do—talk about Whiteness. That sounds dangerous to me for me.*

[There is a murmur from the crowd: Hmmmmmmmmm]

Gloria continues: *These people in charge assured me that the institution wanted to change. I took the job.*

[A shout goes up from the crowd: *Uh oh!* More laughter.]

Gloria acknowledges the crowd: *Yes, I know I should not have trusted them. But what did I know? I am White myself and not used to dealing with the trickery of Whites turned against me. These were White man who knew who Cornel West is and could recite the title of his book Race Matters.*

[Yells go up from the crowd: *Oh no, chile!’ Po’ baby didn’t know.*

Some less sympathetic: *Serve you right then! Can name one Black man’s name and you think that mean something! Serve you right! That’s your Whiteness showing right there!]*

Gloria resumes again: *I should have known. I didn’t know. But I know now.*

Clapping from the audience: *Tell us girl! What happened to you?*

Gloria leans into the microphone: *I took the job. Again, I believed the rhetoric put forth that the institution wanted to change. Again, I was isolated as the only one talking about things that make most White people uncomfortable. If it was just the students, I could deal with it. Students can be taught. Even White ones!*

[The crowd: *For real? Word!* Lots of laughter.]

Gloria: *It is the institution that is the problem though. It came back to me fairly soon in my tenure there that some of the faculty were advising students not to take my class. Interestingly, I had never had any of my colleagues visit my class or come to talk to me about my teaching.*

Audience: *Now that’s something.*

Gloria: *The real problems start though when I start speaking out in meetings about the Whiteness of our curriculum and our program. I insist that our teachers are not being prepared. But this was dangerous to do because the administration had already decided that they were doing an excellent job of preparing teachers.*

Audience: *That’s White folk. They want no part of hearing Truth when it come to Black folk, and not even from a White girl like you gal.*

Gloria: *I think the last straw came when one of the college’s administrators come up to me in the hallway to ask me how I thought we were doing as a college in preparing teachers. I should not have answered honestly!*

Crowd: [Laughter from the crowd.] *Truth!*

Gloria resumes: *I said, all we have to do is go out to the public schools in our area serving students of color and we can see how we are doing—very poorly. This gentleman, a person of immense authority in the institution, never again asked me for my opinion or spoke to me in faculty meetings. I believe that I punctured his sense of himself as a good White liberal progressive person and he was very angry with me about that—a very bad thing to do when that White liberal is your boss!*

Crowd: [Murmurs with heads shaking up and down in affirmation.]

Gloria continues: *I knew that I had pushed Whiteness too far. But it was too late. Within the 2 weeks, out of nowhere, I got called into the administration's main office and was handed a letter informing me that my contract would not be renewed. That was a truly horrendous moment in my life. It is terrifying to lose your means of feeding and sheltering your children.*

Crowd: *You took the bullet, girl. You took a hit for the team!*

Dr. DuBois motions for the crowd to quiet down and moves to the microphone motioning to Gloria to sit down.

Dr. DuBois states, *Gloria learned at least in a small way what has been our lots as people of color for generations now. Speaking out truth to power is always dangerous and you paid a price for it. One way or another something will work itself out, Gloria. You will do just as we have always done—Make a way out of no way! Thank you to both Malcolm and Gloria for sharing their stories. Now we must take what we have heard today and begin to formulate some plans to act on this crisis in education.*

### Some Lessons to be Learned: A Critical Race Perspective

In this section our aim is to consider this notion of academic lynching and how it contributes to the on-going under-preparation of future teachers and thus the maintenance of White racial dominance. As relayed through our composite story, Malcolm and Gloria were each hired onto their faculties because of their expertise around issues of multicultural education, social justice education and antiracist education. At the end of the day, however, when Malcolm and Gloria began exposing the injustice and hypocrisy in their own departments they were subjected to processes of White racial domination and acts of domestic terrorism applied to silence their challenges to Whiteness. These teacher preparation programs pronounced that social justice in education was an important priority. In reality, however, it was not—at least not in anything but a harmless, tamed, diluted form that would not challenge Whiteness.

Malcolm now has had a “helping committee” assigned to watch over and help him to learn how to speak more softly, in a way that is less offensive to Whites, so that the White people around him can supposedly hear him. That Malcolm has had less to say since he was assigned a helping committee has earned him praise from his White colleagues regarding his “growth” in learning how to communicate better with [White] others. The reward accorded to Malcolm for his “growth” entailed

being given permission to move his office to a previously vacant one on the outer edges of the department thus putting him physically under less immediate surveillance. Malcolm, let us not forget, in his Black and male body, is useful to the White-controlled institution as its representative token of integration and goodwill toward people of color as long as he is kept under control tight enough to prevent him from threatening or doing damage to the existing racial hierarchy.

Gloria, in turn, and by contrast to Malcolm's experience as a target of Whiteness, did not make it through her third year review toward tenure and professional job security. Annually determined, her contract for employment was not renewed after her third year of service. Pointedly, Gloria is White and female. White women in the academy with some multicultural vocabulary and a more sanitized, safer, kinder, gentler approach to issues of cultural diversity in education and the academy tend to be quite plentiful and readily available, a dime a dozen. Accordingly, there are plenty of preferable replacements for those few White women like Gloria who are too outspoken, abrasive, and bold in their critiques of Whiteness. Gloria, in her White and female body, is and was easily disposed of, at least in the immediate, when she refused to cooperate.

Through our composite story, we have worked to challenge the legitimacy of Whiteness in US teacher education and highlight the lived experiences of those who find themselves on the violent end of Whiteness. For the purposes of this essay, the theoretical framework we employed was CRT. The fundamental tenets of CRT help us to illuminate the terror of Whiteness that inhibits the work of those engaged in the advocacy for people of color and social justice for all. There are lessons we can learn from the experiences of Gloria and Malcolm.

First, what has to be understood is that racism is an endemic part of American society. The problem with Whiteness is the refusal to consider the everyday realities of race and racism. To recognize racism's pervasiveness requires Whites to face their own racist behavior and to name the contours of racism (Bergerson 2003; Dei et al. 2007; Gillborn 2005). Whiteness refuses to talk about racism let alone acknowledge it. Indeed, Whiteness silences any discussion of race outside of niceties of [White people] having positive feelings toward those identified as the Racial Other but otherwise just like us [White people].

Both Malcolm and Gloria were silenced in their attempts to talk about the Whiteness of the institutions they worked in as their colleagues and others around them drew on and applied the racial power of Whiteness to define them as angry, disrespectful, arrogant, outspoken and more. By defining them as outside of that which is considered respectable, professional, and reasonable within colleges of education, the credibility and legitimacy of both Malcolm and Gloria were positioned as targets subjected to acts of domestic terrorism. Importantly, if Malcolm and Gloria are deemed by the institution and its representatives as inappropriate, unprofessional, and disrespectful, then so too is their critique of the Whiteness in teacher education. Delegitimizing Malcolm and Gloria and their critiques of the White world of teacher education sustain Whiteness.

Second, Whiteness has to understand that it cannot practice true colorblindness; in fact, colorblindness is not an appropriate ideal for social justice. According to Bergerson (2003) Whites attribute negative stereotypes of people of color while at

the same time espousing their opposition to blatant racism. The academic lynching of Malcolm and Gloria serves to protect the existing racial hierarchy in education and society because those deemed respectable and professional are the respectable people who use their abilities to draw on institutional power to silence those deemed as disrespectful within the context of White supremacy. Importantly, Whiteness defines the normative standards of what and who is considered respectful. Therefore, being respectful within the context of White supremacy necessarily means collusion with and perpetuation of the historical privileging of Whiteness.

Third, Whiteness needs to understand that merit is problematic in the United States. It is not enough to say that anyone who works hard can achieve success. Students of color are systematically excluded from education and educational opportunities despite their hard work. Merit operates under the burden of racism; racism thus limits the applicability of merit to people of color (Bergerson 2003). The hard work of some pays off much more than the hard work of Racial Others. Malcolm and Gloria both remained invisible within their work contexts until they began disrupting Whiteness and thus became targets of domestic terrorism. Their hard work was not valued by the official discourses of the institutions they worked in.

Next, Whiteness needs to understand the role experiential knowledge plays in the discourses of people of color. Those who employ Whiteness are usually unwilling to recognize the knowledge of those who are victims of the brutality of Whiteness as legitimate, appropriate, and critical to him as he navigates in a society grounded in racial subordination. Whiteness is usually postured toward faculty members of color who refuse to remain silent and be *the well behaved minority* (Hayes and Juarez 2009). This is what Hytten and Warren (2003) call *appeals to authenticity*. In their model, when Whiteness cited their experiences to counter or contradict non-White voices, their experiences are usually a means to undermine others experiences.

An example of academic lynching is a White professor standing in front of the class espousing arguing that their majoritarian story—I grew up poor too—is also a non-majoritarian story—I am oppressed too. In this way, White people use their experiences as a weapon to silence people of color and others who refuse to conform to Whiteness. In both the cases of Malcolm and Gloria, the stories of the dominant group within teacher education were defined as the respectable stories thus leaving Malcolm and Gloria defined as the angry and disruptive ones.

Since Malcolm is Black and male, he is always and already ascribed as the racial Other. Gloria, however, being White, is expected [by other Whites] to act like a good White person. From the looks of her, Gloria appears harmless and properly socialized to appease Whiteness. It is not until she opens her mouth to speak that she begins to offend the sensibilities of Whiteness among her listeners.

Significantly, the expectations that Whites are supposed to remain united in public even when they disagree with other Whites is communicated to her and she is in that way warned against breaking out of the “clan mentality” or face the consequences—which she was indeed forced to. When she refuses to abide by the etiquette of Whiteness, then this is when she comes under the surveillance and attack of Whiteness. Gloria, unlike Malcolm, has to earn her place on the outside of Whiteness whereas Malcolm is immediately positioned there regardless of how well he plays by the rules of Whiteness.

## Conclusion: There are more than a Few of Us

Pre-service teacher education programs consistently articulate commitments to fairness, equity and cultural diversity. However, what we observe with the two stories of Malcolm and Gloria is quite the opposite. When these two faculty members begin to critique programmatic structures, questioning other colleagues, and pushing White students to begin critiquing the system from which they benefit as Whites, the attacks leading to academic lynching begin.

Pointedly, the concepts and experiences of racial aggression we present in this article are not new. We have simply gathered under one umbrella, the umbrella of domestic terrorism, the terrorizing experiences that are and have been commonplace for faculty members who challenge Whiteness in predominantly White institutions. Dixson and Dingus (2007) describe two female faculty members' personal and professional experiences working with predominantly White pre-service teachers, for example. Stanley (2006) in her edited book *Faculty of Color* similarly presents representative stories of faculty of color and the few White faculty members (Fasching-Varner 2009) who experience academic lynching as a consequence for attempting to disrupt Whiteness.

Many of us who engage in this type of social justice-oriented work were hired specifically to address issues of culturally responsive teaching and anti-racist pedagogy. We argue that many of us during our job talks explain clearly and concisely the nuances of our race-centered scholarship. We wonder then, as do Dixson and Dingus (2007), why these institutions hire faculty members of color and those few White scholars with heightened levels of critical consciousness and then expect us to be and perform as simple White minds in Black and Brown bodies or Whites who abide by Whiteness. As one administrator once called Gloria into ask her, "I'm looking for a Black scholar to teach science methods, but not with all that political [Black] stuff. Do you know any?"

Institutions do not change and future teachers are not prepared to effectively teach all students because the stewards of Whiteness who do the hiring and oversee the tenure review processes are not looking for faculty members of color who refuse to be just a Black and Brown body. Until the pervasiveness of domestic terrorism in teacher education is interrupted, it is indeed disingenuous to continue asking, "Why aren't teachers being prepared to teach for diversity, equity, and global interconnectedness?" (Merryfield 2000). We already know the answer—because White supremacy will use domestic terrorism in the form of academic lynching and any other measure to ensure the future of the existing racial hierarchy.

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