The Psychology of Prejudice Against African Americans and Literary Pedagogical Solutions

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The Psychology of Prejudice Against African Americans and Literary Pedagogical Solutions

by

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This paper examines the psychological factors which motivate racist behaviors toward African Americans and the ways in which these discriminatory behaviors can affect the emotions and behaviors of their victims. This research, in addition to the included study of college students’ reactions to reading and discussing literature, attempts to prove that pedagogical discourse about the psychological effects of racial prejudice can cause an alteration in the psychology causing racism. To prove this assertion, this paper analyzes various degrees of psychological distress which African Americans experience as victims of racism and then illustrates the importance of reducing racism through psychological and literary education. This paper also includes a study in which twenty two college students read literature with themes of racial prejudice and then discuss this literature in a group setting. This study was conducted to study students’ reactions to the types of literary pedagogy proposed in this paper, testing the effects of this style of learning on students’ empathy and understanding of racial issues.

KEYWORDS: Racism, pedagogy, psychology, literature
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Psychology of Prejudice Against African Americans and Literary Pedagogical Solutions

Research has shown that education about the psychological effects of racial prejudice can cause an alteration in the psychology causing racism. Individuals who are able to achieve empathy for—and understanding of—the psychological consequences of racism are likely to become less racially prejudiced and, therefore, likely to reduce any racist behaviors to which they may have been previously inclined. In order for potentially prejudiced individuals to achieve this understanding and empathy, the most effective ways of imparting information about racial struggles must be determined. I will propose that a combined intellectual and emotional understanding of the psychological influence of racial prejudice is likely to cause a reduction in racist ideologies believed by and behaviors practiced by individuals who discriminate racially. Investigations of the pedagogical applicability of psychological research, literary fiction, and poetry support my argument that Psychology of Prejudice courses are effective in reducing prejudice, and that these courses can increase their effectiveness by adding relevant fiction and poetry to the curriculum. I will examine research which indicates that literary pedagogy at the college level can have an ameliorative effect on the degree to which prejudiced perceptions and behaviors occur. Through these examinations, I will show that American fiction and poetry that present themes of racial struggles have the capacity to educate
readers and affect a reduction in prejudiced behaviors. In addition to explicating the usefulness of literature and poetry for improving empathy and understanding, I will propose the importance of pedagogical use of facilitated group discussions to supplement the knowledge gained from reading such texts. To further support the effectiveness of college courses about prejudice and the relevance of literature in these courses, I conducted a study which shows college students’ reactions to reading and discussing literature and poetry which include themes of racial conflict. My combined research and study will show that individual racism can be reduced through the acquisition of emotional empathy and intellectual understanding regarding the detrimental psychological and physical effects of racism for its victims.

Racial prejudice against African Americans is persistent in contemporary America, and racist ideologies, whether they are expressed physically or subconsciously, have negative psychological impacts on those who are discriminated against. Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams (1999) explain that prejudice can be conceived of as “beliefs, attitudes, institutional arrangements, and acts that tend to denigrate individuals or groups” because of actual or perceived belonging to a certain ethnic group (p. 805). Racial prejudice is described as having a “toxic effect on the lives of millions of people” by D’Andrea and Daniels (1999) and these authors also note that racism is “often manifested in covert and unintentional ways” (p. 93). Michael Spencer (1998) supplements these definitions in the publication, “Reducing Racism in Schools: Moving Beyond Rhetoric,” by noting that racism can be considered as “‘an antipathy based upon faulty and inflexible generalization [which] may be felt or expressed’” (para. 5).
therefore, important to consider not only the negative effects of prejudiced actions, but also subconscious prejudiced behaviors.

In alleviating the psychological and social problems caused by prejudiced behaviors against African Americans, it is critical to examine the relationship between the psychological causes of prejudiced behaviors and the effects of racism on its victims. Therefore, I will explain important social and psychological factors which may incline an individual to discriminate against African Americans, as well as some of the significant ways in which prejudice can psychologically affect its victims. This essay will explore the factors which motivate prejudiced behaviors toward African Americans and provide an analysis of the ways in which these discriminatory behaviors can affect the emotions and behaviors of their victims.

This paper will also attempt to demonstrate that in order to effect significant reductions in students’ levels of prejudice, educators should combine multiple educational approaches to ensure that students understand the importance of racial struggles. Hardaway (1999) argues in “Addressing Racial Tension and Other Diversity Issues Through Adult Education: Theories in Practice,” that “[v]arious theories of adult learning and pedagogical styles can be utilized in higher education institutions to educate students” about ethnic differences (p. 295). The theory that I will put forth is that literary texts can be used as important elements of an ideal education in social prejudice; fiction and poetry can both provide information and influence readers emotionally. In the publication, “Future Directions for a Critical Social Psychology of Racism/Antiracism,” Derek Hook and Caroline Howarth (2005) posit that “[g]reater reference to the literature of fiction, to the epistemological domain of the aesthetic, may benefit us given that it
permits different positionings, imaginings and modes of self-reflection than afforded within the strict truth-conditions of mainstream social science practice” (p. 506). An emotional impact is helpful—if not necessary—to alter prejudiced perceptions and behavior. I will then propose that educators teach students not only about the psychological consequences of racism for its victims, but also about fiction and poetry that uses relevant racial themes. Such a pedagogical approach will educate students about the unfair nature and consequences of racism; the psychological content of this educational model will foster developed intellectual understanding, while literature and poetry will inspire emotional understanding. Literature uses narrative language and abstract descriptions of emotion to communicate interesting and compelling manifestations of the psychological effects of racism to its audience. Psychological studies, on the other hand, ground these observations in objective evidence and will make educational solutions to the issue of racism evident. These two elements, when used in a dialogic, educational setting, operate as ideal mechanisms in the reduction of prejudiced ideologies; as a result of this combined style of education, students will become more aware of racial issues and become less likely to think and act in racially prejudiced ways. To support these assertions, this essay also contains the results of a study I conducted in which college-age participants read relevant literature and discussed them in a group setting. The first hypothesis for this study was that the participants would report decreases in happiness, calmness, and desired social distance as a result of completing the study. The second hypothesis was that the participants would report increases in altruism, understanding of racial conflict, and empathy.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The negative effects of racism on African Americans’ self-perceptions and attitudes are rooted in individual psychology. The psychologically detrimental effects that prejudiced ideologies and behaviors have on African American victims seem to originate in victims’ styles of cognitive perception relating to differences between ethnic groups. To understand the ways in which racism can contribute to “high rates of [African American] morbidity and mortality,” Clark, Anderson, Clark, and Williams (1999) note that it is important to “explor[e] the psychological . . . effects of perceived racism among African Americans” (p. 805). Psychological predispositions related to behavior and perception of one’s surroundings can influence the degree to which an African American perceives environmental stimuli as prejudiced. African Americans whose psychological dispositions lead them to perceive racism more acutely, then, may come to believe that their ethnic affiliation has condemned them to such factors as “substandard housing, lack of skilled labor . . . and lower wages” (1999, p. 807). Therefore, stress caused by perceptions of racism against oneself can cause deleterious perceptions of one’s socioeconomic standing and one’s control over this factor. These individuals may, then, believe that they are unable to succeed and improve their socioeconomic standing simply because they are African American. Health consequences also exist for the psychological effects of racism. Clark et al. (1999) explain that “immune, neuroendocrine, and cardiovascular function[s]” (p. 811) are susceptible to deterioration as a result of psychological stressors, including those caused by perceptions of racism.
The deleterious psychological influences caused by racial discrimination against oneself are further investigated by Fanon (1967), one of the first writers to psychoanalyze the combined ideas of race and identity. While Fanon’s writing refers to Black ethnic groups including Algerians and Caribbeans of African Descent, the situations proposed in this author’s work can be considered to be analogous to racism issues faced by African Americans. Fanon (1967) asserts that people may assume black people to be inherently classifiable by a set of (stereotyped) characteristics, and that these entrenched perceptions are greatly unjust. Cognitively engrained stereotypical perceptions condemn blacks to be an “eternal victim[s] of an essence . . . for which [they are] not responsible” (p. 35). An archetype by which an African American feels societally classified is likely to negatively influence his or her psychological perceptions of his or her self. Furthermore, archetypal classifications may negatively influence one’s psychological perspectives about his or her prospects for overcoming these stereotypes. Fanon discusses the concept of having to “experience [one’s] being through others” (1967, p. 109), implying that victims may perceive that racist people are paying extra attention to them (the victims) because of perceived racial differences. Fanon conjectures that an people of African descent who interact only with other African Americans will feel relatively homogenized, never having occasion to perceive his person through the same type of figurative lens that immersion in White society affords (p. 109). When an African American is subjected to racial attention (which is arguably a manifestation of racism), he becomes much more aware of who and what he is, and also what he is expected to be like (p. 109). Fanon considers some of the details of the expectations placed upon an African American under a prejudiced societal lens: “I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, [and]
intellectual deficiency” (p. 112). This remark elucidates the idea that a victim of racial discrimination can experience dissatisfaction and frustration with societal perceptions of himself, while the phrase “battered down” implies that the author also feels disheartened about his potential to change these societal perceptions of him as primitive or less-intellectual because of his race.

If an African American individual is confronted with a potentially prejudiced act or behavior from a non-African American individual, “numerous psychological stress responses may follow . . . including anger, paranoia, anxiety, helplessness-hopelessness, frustration, resentment, and fear” (Clark et al., 1999, p. 811). It is arguably unfair that African Americans, who are “disproportionately exposed to . . . sources of chronic and acute stress” because of perceived racism, should have to suffer these stress responses. However, it is also worthy of consideration that the entire American citizenry may be indirectly impacted by these stresses felt by the African American population; coping mechanisms may be employed by the individuals who experience psychological stress, the results of which may be harmful to a variety of people. For example, “hostility, aggression, [or] verbal expressions of anger” may be used by an African American as ways of displacing psychological turmoil caused by perceptions of racism (p. 811). In such cases, any verbal or physical aggression used may result in harm to the aggressor and the individual(s) to whom they are directed. This issue is elaborated upon in the publication by Tunnala-Narra (2007), “Skin Color and the Therapeutic Relationship,” where it is explained that a person’s perceptions of “oppressive images of his or her skin color” can result in “angry or hostile feelings . . . displaced onto others or turned against the self” (p. 263). It can be concluded, therefore, that all Americans have reason for
concern regarding the psychological effects of racism, whether for empathetic or self-preservation reasons.

In order for solutions to the problem of racism to be identified, the source of racism—psychological causes of prejudiced ideologies and behaviors—must first be determined. Having observed that the psychological effects of (White) racism against African Americans are negative and prevalent, D’Andrea and Daniels (1999) composed a study with the goal of discovering ways to ameliorate this problem. The study, D’Andrea and Daniels (1999) explain, is predicated on “research that focuse[s] on the psychological underpinnings of White racism over the past 16 years” (p. 93). Through naturalistic inquiry which is predicated on the belief that the participants employ “multiple constructions of reality,” these authors conclude that various cognitive characteristics can incline a person toward discriminatory ways of thinking about African Americans (and other ethnic groups) (p. 93). For example, many individuals display an “affective-impulsive disposition” which is “characterized by a cognitive style that reflect[s] simple, hostile, and illogical ways of thinking about individuals from different racial groups” (p. 93). Individuals who possess such affective-impulsive cognitive characteristics are likely to adhere to beliefs about racial stereotypes and other “hostile fictions” about racial groups, rather than drawing their own conclusions based on observations and experiences with African American people. Research further indicates that “people who manifest an affective-impulsive disposition frequently demonstrat[e] marginal impulse control when reacting to people of color,” making them more likely to perform actions of violence or symbolic disrespect based on their discriminatory dispositions (p. 93). Other individuals may exhibit a “rational disposition” which also inclines them toward racism and
susceptibility to stereotypical beliefs. Individuals with this cognitive manifestation often perceive conflicts between racial groups in “dichotomous” terms; they tend to believe that one group is right, and the other, wrong (p. 95). People with this tendency, therefore, may be more likely to solidify prejudiced perceptions based on learned stereotypes or isolated experiences. Another cognitive disposition which can lead to racism is the “liberal disposition,” which is a more refined and intricate way of viewing ethnic differences. Individuals of this disposition are likely to exhibit some degree of respect for African American people because they perceive “a set of basic human rights” to which they feel all people are entitled. However, these people tend to display “a general sense of apathy” and inaction regarding the negative ways in which racism affects African Americans (p. 96). D’Andrea and Daniels (1999) also discuss the “principled disposition” and the “principled activist disposition,” which are characterized by analytical perceptions of racial issues. These individuals may be “very knowledgeable about the historical and social-political underpinnings of . . . racism” (p. 98), and are more perceptive and rational in regards to the nature of ethnic differences than individuals with affective-impulsive, rational, or liberal cognitive styles. The authors note, however, that only a small percentage of their research demographic displayed the principled or principled activist dispositions (p. 98), so it is possible that such individuals are relatively rare in the American citizenry in general.

These examples of psychological dispositions illustrate ways in which American individuals may perceive African Americans and interactions with people of other races. Several dispositions can elicit prejudiced tendencies, while only a small percentage of the research demographic seems dispositionally likely to formulate fair, analytical
perceptions *and* to take measures to alleviate racial discrimination. Spencer reiterates that “racial biases and ethnic prejudices are . . . correlated with cognitive sophistication, moral development . . . and receptivity toward ethnic and cultural pluralism,” (para. 22) which supports D’Andrea’s and Daniels’s (1999) discussion of the ways in which one’s cognitive and psychological dispositions influence the degree to which they are prone to analyze racial issues fairly. Spencer speculates that if an individual’s “cognitive and moral functioning” capacities can be stimulated to achieve “higher levels” of analysis of racial differences, it will potentially lead to a reduction of racism (para. 21).

Psychological dispositions can incline an individual to unthinkingly adhere to prejudiced ideologies, and research suggests that social interactions are an important means through which these ideologies are strengthened and expressed through physical action. Postcolonial literary theory provides relevant insight into the nature of racism and its effects; as Bhabha (1983) alludes in his discourse on colonialism, “The Other Question: Homi K Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse,” a “sense . . . of racial and cultural otherness” is “circulat[ed] and proliferat[ed]” by societal constructs and interactions (pp. 21-22). Research suggests that the implementation of prejudiced actions—or even unobservable prejudiced ideologies—is the result of collaborative interactions between multiple individuals. As Condor (2006) explains in “Public Prejudice as Collaborative Accomplishment: Towards a Dialogic Social Psychology of Racism,” groups of people often use prejudicial language for several purposes, notably “to display . . . private attitudes or to defend a group’s position” along with a possibly infinite amount of peripheral intentions, such as using racism to gain attention, “to bully, to amuse . . . to display intimacy and solidarity, [or] to mark a variety
of personal and social identities” (p. 1). With these examples, Condor expresses the idea that prejudiced behaviors can operate for numerous reasons, many or all of which involve the individual’s desired situation in a social setting. Condor’s research suggests that while racial prejudices seem to originate in personal cognitive and emotional tendencies (rooted in individual psychology), “the presence of others is significant . . . as it provides a ‘stimulus context’ facilitating or impeding” the “open expression” of racism through action (p. 2). It is probable that this argument is applicable to the formation of prejudiced ideologies as well; the social influences (and even the mere presence) of others can lead to adherence to prejudicial ways of perceiving African American individuals. This means that social interactions have an important role in the expression of prejudicial views of African Americans; situations in which others are present can elicit the formation of prejudices and catalysis of prejudicial actions.

The influence of psychological predispositions and social settings in attitude formation is evident in Condor’s stipulations that “displays of prejudice necessarily occur in situations in which people are thinking or talking about ‘race’” and that the nature of these situations is a result of “the expression or suppression of subjective beliefs” (p. 6). These stipulations illustrate the idea that personal beliefs about ethnic groups exist, and that multiple individuals must be present for prejudicial actions to be caused and executed. In social settings, then, many individuals’ tendencies to (mis)construe inferiorities in people of African American ethnicities may find precedence and become amplified by their desires to appear—to the group—to be in some way superior. Bhabha explains the objective of colonizing peoples: “to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish
systems of administration and instruction” (p. 23). American racism toward African Americans can be analyzed in similar terms: the quest for power by colonial people is analogous to the implementation of racism as a tool (used by American citizens) to impugn the social standing of African Americans. So, by denigrating their African American counterparts, non-African American individuals may seek to further themselves in a social hierarchy.

Education about the psychological causes and effects of racism could benefit African American sufferers of discrimination, a concept posited by Fanon. Fanon (1967) explores the “attitudes [of the black man] in the white world” and endeavors to explain the psychopathology and philosophy “of the state of being a Negro” (p. 13). Fanon (1967) asserts that proving “the absurdity” of various statements about the intellectual or moral inferiority of African American individuals (which are often founded on unsound pseudo-scientific and Biblical references, respectively) would be a simple task (p. 30). However, Fanon’s goal is, instead, to aid the black man in “free[ing] himself of the arsenal of complexes that has been developed” by societal influences, so that he may achieve psychological freedom from prejudiced expectations (p. 30). It is probable that education about the psychological causes and effects of racism would be pertinent in achieving this freedom.

The psychological functioning of African Americans can be negatively impacted by demeaning uses of language exercised by racist individuals. The use of language to present racist conceptions of black people is exercised by many, whether or not individuals consciously intend to be demeaning. Fanon (1967) allows that there are individuals who do not display prejudice toward black people, but “side by side with
[these] normal people who behave naturally in accordance with a human psychology, there are others who behave pathologically in accordance with an inhuman psychology” (p. 32). Fanon illustrates the example of a physician who uses normal intellectual language with a White patient, but speaks in a condescending pidgin dialect when dealing with a black patient. “‘Please sit down’” may be said to a White patient, but this phrase may become “[s]it here, boy’” for a black patient. Similarly, “‘[w]hat are your symptoms?’” is instead articulated as “‘[w]here does it hurt, huh?’”, when the patient is black (p. 32). Fanon hypothesizes that individuals convolute language in this way to “get[] down to [blacks’] level, it puts them at ease, it is an effort to make them understand” (p. 32). Conversely, the African American individual who is subjected to this prejudiced use of language often experiences anger when he or she perceives this patronization as an “automatic manner of classifying him [or her], [imprisoning him [or her], primitivising him [or her]” (p. 32). The racially victimized individual is also likely to experience long-lasting frustration and psychological turmoil. Fanon (1967) notes that prejudiced usages of pidgin language will be reinforced and continue if the patient responds in a similar dialect. However, if the patient replies in an educated or disdainful manner, the prejudiced language configuration disintegrates (p. 33), being obviously irrelevant. From this potential reversal of prejudiced behavior (which occurs when stereotypical assumptions of intellectual inferiority are disproven or negated by African American displays of intelligence or resolve), it is clear that African Americans can use their own formal education as an important tool for combatting racism. Although racist individuals can use language in discriminatory ways, African Americans can also use
refined language to show that they are capable of higher thought, such that racist
individuals will see that their perceptions of African Americans were erroneous.

While language can be used to perpetuate racist assumptions and demean black
people, individuals can analyze such language to expose fallacies in the presented
stereotypes. Fanon’s example of the doctor’s office shows that language can be used to
perpetuate racist stereotypes, and Bhabha shows that analysis of colonial discourse (in
particular, language with racist content) can expose the erroneousness of language that
attempts to perpetuate stereotypes. Bhabha’s (1983) work suggests that discourse is
effective in reducing stereotypical beliefs. This author’s discussion notes that the
ideological elements of a stereotype “must always be in excess of what can be empirically
proved or logically construed” (p. 18). Logically, then, an individual must implement his
or her analytical abilities in order to perceive fallacies in stereotypical ideas. With the
purpose of moving toward more effective discourse including a more objective viewing
of stereotypes, Bhabha (1983) argues that “the point of intervention should shift from the
identification of images as positive or negative, to an understanding of the processes of
subjectification made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (p. 18).
Here, Bhabha suggests that colonial discourse can be analyzed to expose the invalidity of
stereotypes (pp. 18-19). In the same way, educators can use literary texts that depict
unfair racial stereotypes and acts of racism so that students can discover the
unjustifiability of racist actions and beliefs by analyzing these texts. For example, a
student who reads fiction or poetry in which unfair racial stereotypes are presented may
identify a lack of reason in the stereotypes presented. By discussing the errors in the
views presented by such literature with peers in a classroom setting, the student can
compare his or her analyses with those of others. Through these comparisons, the student can refine his or her conceptions of an ideal (non-racist) way to deal with the issue of race.

For individuals to utilize their psychological predispositions in ways that will reduce or eliminate the formation of prejudiced ideologies and the execution of prejudiced behaviors, an intellectual understanding of the negative effects of racism on African Americans must be obtained by these individuals. As Hardaway (1999) asserts, education can be conceived of as a means of inciting “emancipatory activity,” or “changing individuals’ thinking in order to change society” (p. 301). Hardaway (1999) claims that on college campuses, increasing racial diversity often leads to division due to racial tension (p. 295). Hardaway (1999) proposes that “[v]arious theories of adult learning and pedagogical styles can be utilized in higher education institutions to educate students about the various ethnic . . . differences of groups and within groups” (p. 295), and that this education will result in a reduction of racial tension. This proposal indicates a way that Psychology of Prejudice education can be beneficial to show students the nature of group differences in order to improve their understanding and reduce prejudice.

One example of a campus issue that illustrates racial tension is the criticism undergone by the Yale University law review committee for “allowing all students competing for an [admission] slot to rewrite their essays” if they did not gain admission on their first attempt (p. 297). Hardaway explains that “this policy was based on a study indicating that [African American] . . . students become more anxious before tests because society has stereotyped them as ‘bad test takers’” (p. 297). The policy enabling students to rewrite essays, then, was implemented in hopes of reducing the effects that the negative
psychological influences of racism can have on the admissions process (p. 297).

However, it would be arguably more efficient and logical if the same students could have been previously educated about the psychology of racism. This way, African American students could learn about the invalidity of racial stereotyping and improve their perceptions of their test-taking ability. Then, the ramifications of racial anxiety in test taking could be negated. By the same token, if such education had taken place, non-African American students would similarly improve their perceptions of different ethnic groups and racial stereotyping would become less prevalent. In this case, African American students would be less likely to develop negative perceptions of their test-taking abilities, and problems such as the controversy at Yale University would potentially be solved.

Intellectual understanding of the challenges posed by racial prejudice is a critical step in not only reducing one’s use of unfair prejudice, but also in taking subsequent action in order to make necessary social or administrative changes. My claim is that group discussion and collaborative learning about racial issues is a greatly useful teaching strategy for helping students reduce their levels of racial prejudice, and the University of Memphis introduces an interesting and effective model for the use of group discussion for this purpose. Hardaway (1999), deciding that education about the issues of ethnic diversity is important in resolving administrative conflicts (such as those experienced at Yale University), discusses educational “efforts toward better race relations” primarily as they are implemented at the University of Memphis (p. 295). The University of Memphis’s strategy focusses on correcting administrators’ racism, but these strategies are also applicable for reducing students’ racism by applying collaborative learning strategies
in classroom settings. The University of Memphis, Hardaway describes, has established an Office of Diversity which uses “organized dialogue . . . to educate the administration[,] students and faculty about racial tensions,” and also forms focus groups for continuations of dialogue (p. 298). Hardaway (1999) defines this educational dialogue under the following terms: “(1) dialogical interaction, i.e. conversational, investigative interaction . . . ; (2) critical thinking and reflection which actively engage the student[s] in the learning process; (3) a democratic environment which provides a . . . non-silencing opportunity for each student to participate . . . ; and (4) an outcome of conscientization [sic] which is intended to invoke self-directed action” (p. 299). Focus questions used to “catalyze” discussion evoke students’ opinions of how racism is learned, how racism is bolstered, and whether there are possible ways of unlearning racism (p. 299). The pairing of these types of questions with the dialogic format of meetings represents an interesting way in which individuals can educate themselves (and each other) about racial issues through reasoned interpretation, without having to be explicitly “taught” about racial issues by some type of formal educator. Through my own study of the reactions of students at the University of South Dakota to reading and discussing literature and poetry about racial prejudice, I will show that the University of Memphis’s collaborative learning strategies are also applicable in educational settings. An atmosphere of conversational investigation of literary topics of race, along with guiding focus questions, can teach students multiple reasoned viewpoints on prejudice.

Similar to my suggested use of literature and poetry as a basis for group discussion, the University of Memphis Office of Diversity adds elements such as viewing films which depict representations of racial issues (pp. 299-300). These films prove
effective for eliciting a variety of responses from students, who learned from one another’s viewpoints in the group discussion following the viewings. With the addition of a group discussion to the film viewings, students can “[discuss] various diversity issues in terms of the characters and plots,” which appears to allow students to present their conceptions and feelings more effectively than when discussion is not supplemented by the visual apparatus of films (p. 299). Hardaway (1999) also notes that the students observe “the problem with objectivity because they [are] able to analogize reality to the film[s’] context,” thereby improving their comprehension of racial issues (p. 299). In Hardaway’s study, students are able to examine the farcicality of certain racial stereotypes through the educational combination of film-viewing and discussion. For example, one foreign student had mistakenly believed that “every Black person in American could play basketball,” but an African American student in the group informed him that this was not the case; he himself could not play basketball (pp. 300-301). The two students perceived this exchange of information as humorous, and, as Hardaway (1999) asserts, “[d]ialogical interaction had not only taught the foreign student about the fallacy of racial stereotypes, but served as catalyst for a positive relationship for both students” (p. 301). Overall, the method of establishing focus groups as an educational method allows students to “reflect on their own experiences, which is [perceived by researchers as] a ‘necessary precursor to learning,’” and to participate in a subsequent learning process which has the potential to greatly enhance their perceptive abilities regarding racism against African Americans (p. 300). Students who have participated in this type of education are, therefore, more likely to perceive certain ideas and actions as (illogically) prejudiced, therefore reducing their own racism and possibly combatting its
display by others. This educational method’s focus questions further prompt the students to become more aware of factors which may have caused them to form negative perceptions of African Americans. Upon achieving this awareness, they can consider the likely invalidity of racism-prompting factors and focus on potential ways to unlearn racism, which they have also discussed in the focus groups.

Interestingly, students in the focus groups Hardaway (1999) discusses further discovered that “they had often characterized human conflict as racial tension, when in fact it was not” (p. 300). Hardaway (1999) elucidates that the students in the discussion groups described problems they had had with African American roommates in which they perceived racial tension, but further discussion prompted the realization that these problems were actually begun by the roommates’ unfavorable behaviors or abrasive personality qualities (p. 300). The fact that students may assume racial differences to be the origin of problems which are, in reality, virtually unrelated to race, exemplifies the psychological prevalence of prejudiced ideologies in American society (specifically, American universities). However, the study also encouragingly reveals the positive impact that dialogic education can have on individuals’ perception and understanding of the psychology of racism, from which one can extrapolate the potential for consequent reduction in racism against African Americans. Hardaway (1999) concludes that dialogic education can enable individuals to recognize racism as an obstruction affecting their lives, so that “they can then take action . . . to remov[e] those barriers” (p. 303). Education about the nature of racism helps individuals identify ways to overcome unfair prejudicial ideologies, reconsidering their conceptions of race in order to improve their own lives as well as the lives of African Americans.
Further evidence indicates the validity of Psychology of Prejudice courses at the university level. Pettijohn’s and Walzer’s (2008) study indicates that after completing a course which educates about group differences, students display “significant decreases in prejudice” when compared with students who took only an Introductory Psychology course (which did not focus on the psychological causes or effects of racism) (para. 1). The Psychology of Prejudice course used in the study “provided an overview of theories of prejudice, exposure to relevant research, and discussion of prejudice reduction,” and employed “[i]ndividual-oriented techniques . . . [to] help individuals recognize the contradictions in their own personality and behavior, and therefore, become more tolerant of people of different groups.” Notably, the students who earned higher academic grades in the class (and who likely earned similarly high academic marks in other courses, as well) did not display a greater reduction in prejudiced tendencies than other students who made lower grades. This finding may indicate that individuals of any level of academic achievement can achieve a reduction in prejudiced proclivities when they are educated about the psychological causes and effects of racism. Pettijohn and Walzer further emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate course content in attempting to influence a reduction in racism. These authors note that lecturing topically “about human differences and the way humans think, act, and feel does not necessarily cause a change in student prejudice levels,” whereas “[p]resenting theories and research on how prejudice develops and how it can be reduced, in addition to honest discussions of discrimination and stereotypes from personal experiences[,] allows students to analyze their beliefs and actions” (para. 19). As I have argued, improvements in one’s ability to
perform such analyses are imperative and invaluable in instigating a reduction of various manifestations of racism.

Sedlacek (1995) provides further support for the notion that educational strategies can be implemented to effect reductions in racism. The purpose of this author’s study is to raise the university’s awareness of the prevalence of racial prejudice, to cause university officials to recognize prejudice as a problem (by improving their knowledge and analytical abilities regarding the issue), and to enlighten these officials that “the school has a responsibility” to mitigate the problem (para. 3). Sedlacek’s article explains two developmental models of understanding racism, which can provide “different perspectives on interpreting changes in . . . behavior” (para. 8). The Sedlacek-Brooks Model, firstly, is comprised of six stages which are argued to be useful in lessening racism. The first stage involves the presentation of information about the differences between ethnic groups, and during this stage, “social science research on the problems, attitudes, and needs of [different ethnic] groups are useful” (para. 10). This research can provide knowledge which challenges “assumptions and stereotypes” early in the model (para. 10). The second stage employs research on obstacles which African American students and faculty may face to achievement, and focuses on “learning to identify manifestations of racism (both individual and institutional) and to recognize what might be done to ameliorate them” (para. 11). Stages three and four focus on individuals’ use of analysis to realize their roles and attitudes in racism, and research about racial issues at that particular university is used in stage four. After having completed these stages, all involving “a variety of research-related activities,” the fifth stage is entered in which research material is analyzed and condensed “to generate a set of accomplishable
goals” (paras. 11-12). Finally, stage six allows the participant to decide and implement strategies to achieve these researched goals. Sedlacek (1995) also details Helms’s Model, which is a proposed method “of racial identity development for [African American] and [Caucasian American] individuals” (para. 14). The first three stages involve, respectively, identifying racial differences, analyzing these differences, and perceiving one’s own attitudes about racism. Next, in the Helms Model, the participant experiences the “Immersion-Emersion stage,” during which responsibility for racism is taken and anger or embarrassment is felt (para. 22). Here, likewise to the Sedlacek-Brooks Model, it can be assumed that the individual begins to strategize ways to reduce or eliminate his or her prejudiced ideologies and behaviors as a result of these negative emotions. Lastly, during the “Autonomy” stage, an attempt is made “to interact with other races from a positive, non-prejudiced perspective” (para. 27). In both models explained by Sedlacek (1995), it is clear that an understanding of one’s perceptions of racial differences—which originate in the psychological causes and effects of racism—is among the first necessary steps toward the allayment of racism.

Education about the psychological causes and effects of racism against African Americans provides an important cognitive premise for alterations in ideologies and behaviors, but, as Pettijohn and Walzer (2008) stipulate, “[c]ognitive changes are not equivalent to behavioral and affective changes” (para. 20). Some students in these authors’ control group (who took an Introductory Psychology course) exhibited a significant increase in knowledge of ethnic groups, “but no increase on . . . social distance tests,” which are tests with content that indicates the student’s likelihood of taking action based on certain social issues (para. 20). It is likely, then, that not only must
an effective type of knowledge be imparted, but psychological education must also be supplemented with an emotional appeal which will encourage a perceptible change in behavior.

Along with the necessity for a scientific understanding of racism, an emotional reaction, which can be elicited by literature about African American experiences of racism, is imperative for effective reduction of racism. As Hook and Howarth (2005) elucidate, a wholly effective “critical psychology” of racism and its effects has not historically or contemporarily been obtained (p. 506). Students can learn about the psychological causes and effects of racial prejudice to better understand their own conceptions of prejudice and race relations, but fiction manifests an entirely different medium of expression and can therefore operate as a different conduit of understanding. Through literature that focuses on African American struggles with racism, “[d]ifferent things can be said; different statements, positionings, imaginings, modes of self-reflection can be managed here than might be accommodated within the stricter truth-conditions of . . . mainstream disciplinary social psychology” (p. 507). Because the language of fiction writing can operate under a unique and relevant set of truths, it is logical that the combination of scientific education with elements of fiction can significantly increase and refine one’s ability to reason and analyze the nature of racism, making him or her more capable of perceiving the fallacies of prejudiced ideologies and behaviors to which psychological dispositions and prejudiced group interactions may have previously inclined them (Hook & Howarth, 2005).

Fiction and poetry present notions of racial stereotypes, racism, and negative effects of racism on its victims in ways with which the reader can empathize, creating an
emotional reaction while reading. Empathy is important in the process of reducing one’s unfair prejudicial ideologies; readers can experience the emotions of the characters vicariously and realize the consequences of racist behaviors. The propensity for readers to experience feelings of empathy when reading texts with themes of racial prejudice is explicated by Travis (2010). Travis shows that novels, particularly those that deal with historical trauma, “pose searing ethical questions that convey the uncanny haunting of the real that marks the self’s ability to arrest the meaning of the other” by establishing narrative distance from the reader (p. 231). Novels cause readers to reflect on their understanding of racial differences and the ethicality of their (readers’) behaviors and beliefs regarding race. When the reader attempts to better understand the experience of the narrator (and reduce the distance between himself and the narrator), the reader feels empathy. I want to show that individuals who experience feelings of empathy will be likely to reevaluate their perceptions of race and become less prejudiced as a result. Travis (2010) makes the clarification, though, that “one finds no guaranteed relationship between literary empathy and a socialized ethical response” (p. 232). Therefore, reading literature may not be sufficient to catalyze action in the reader, although it may be sufficient to make the reader more aware of the ethical fallacies of racism. So, I will assert that class discussion about readings can help influence readers’ action based on the empathy they have achieved by reading by making students feel ethically accountable to their peers and by allowing the group to establish a standard of ethics they plan to follow.

Particularly emotional texts are likely to elicit empathy in the reader, causing the reader to think about issues of race and become less racially prejudiced. An example of an emotional text is forwarded by Fanon; his narrative about issues of racism includes the
following literary portrayal of the anguish the narrator feels due to the prejudiced pressures of Caucasian society: “All round me the white man . . . and there is a white song, a white song[,] [a]ll this whiteness that burns me” (p. 114). Racism is described by Fanon as irrational hatred, and he describes his realization of racism’s irrationality thusly: “I was hated, despised, detested . . . by an entire race. I was up against something unreasoned. The psychoanalysts say that nothing is more traumatizing . . . than . . . encounters with what is rational. I would personally say that for a man whose only weapon is reason there is nothing more neurotic than contact with the unreason” (p. 118).

Such a realization is likely to lead to hopelessness and affect an African American’s psychological perceptions of his prospects in a negative manner. Fanon (1967) describes his feelings of hopelessness in subjective language, which, as a part of fiction literature, is important in helping the audience to understand and sympathize with the psychological turmoil resultant of racism:

I feel in myself a soul as immense as the world, truly a soul as deep as the deepest of rivers, my chest has the power to expand without limit. I am a master and I am advised to adopt the humility of the cripple. Yesterday, awakening to the world, I saw the sky turn upon itself utterly and wholly. I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep. (p. 140)

This exposition details the struggle that Fanon undergoes in knowing that he has incredible promise as an individual, but the racism he perceives being issued against him has an undermining potential to restrict his abilities. Because of the psychological effects of racism, he feels unable to exemplify his personhood to the extent that he is (or, should be) fundamentally capable. Fanon’s narrative enlightens the reader of the notion that racism, particularly in the form of stereotyping, has the potential to undermine one’s
fundamental capabilities by reducing the apparent possibility of reaching one’s goals or potential.

The subjective nature of fiction may seem to make it an unreliable source of information about racial prejudice, but the fact that literature can be interpreted in a multitude of ways actually makes it a useful point of discussion for groups of people attempting to better understand race issues. In the 1999 publication, “Why Fiction May Be Twice as True as Fact: Fiction as Cognitive and Emotional Simulation,” Keith Oatley (1999) describes that fiction has been excluded from educational discourse “because it is seen as involving flawed empirical method,” or assumed to represent psychological “truths” too subjectively for correct interpretation (p. 101). Oatley counters that fiction is not meant to pragmatically represent ubiquitous information; it is instead useful in allowing “personal truths [to] be explored that allow readers to experience emotions— their own emotions—and understand aspects of [their psychology] that are obscure” (p. 101). Oatley proposes that fiction can be conceived of as an important tool “for psychologists interested in language . . . because it has the same status that illusions have for psychologists interested in perception”; fiction is a medium of achieving an abstract, subjective understanding of the ways in which language can be used and understood (1999, p. 102). Oatley elucidates that “fiction can help to demonstrate cognitive processes that underlie both fictional and nonfictional understanding” (p. 102). This author’s claims are based on the argument that three types of truth are considerable in complete understanding: “empirical correspondence[,] . . . truth as coherence within complex structures[,] and truth as personal relevance” (p. 103). Psychological study, Oatley notes, can only satisfy the first of these types of truth, while fiction is able to convey the latter
two “criteria” for truth by allowing the reader to employ personal insight and emotionality in his or her understanding of issues of racism (p. 103). “Mimesis” is defined as a way of relating literary fiction text to the world, which is an important technique for converting the experience of reading the text into an experience of emotion for the reader (pp. 103-104). It is conjecturable that authors who write fiction strive for effective mimesis with the aim of conveying their emotions, and therefore perceptions, to the reader (p. 104). In the event that this fiction-mediated evocation of emotions occurs, the reader will arguably become more likely to demonstrate behaviors which are accordant with the emotions and beliefs that the reader has come to share (to some extent) with the author. To accomplish effective mimesis, authors first seek to influence the reader to empathize with the protagonists of a fiction work, at which point the text introduces a threat to the protagonists (p. 106). The threat “originat[es] from some person or agency toward whom the reader will feel antagonistic” because of his or her acquired feelings of identification with the central characters (p. 106). Then, it is logical that, for novels in which racism is manifested as a threat to the protagonist with whom the reader sympathizes, the reader will develop negative perceptions of prejudiced ideologies and behaviors, and will additionally achieve an empathetic understanding of the negative psychological effects of racism on its sufferers.

The basis for inclusion of literary fiction as a supplement to psychological data in education with the aim of reducing racism is further supported by a study of “self-probed retrospection” (Oatley, 1999, p. 109). In this study, readers were asked to read either a non-fiction expository test (which could have been essentially analogous to a report of psychological data) or a fictional text, making a mark each time they experienced a
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memory prompted by the content of the text (p. 109). The results indicated that “twice as many memories in which the reader was . . . involved as an actor (as compared with an observer of . . . events) occurred with the fictional text as with the expository one” (p. 109). The concept of the reader remembering an experience in which he or she was “an actor” seems particularly significant because it indicates that the reader was able to discover “personal resonance between themes of the story and those of [his or her] own life” (p. 109). Based on these results and the nature of the mimesis technique, it can be postulated that the experience of memories, when compounded with feelings of camaraderie with the protagonists, can provoke or strengthen psychological emotions in the reader. When reading American literature in which issues of racism prompt a memory in which the reader is an “actor,” the reader is likely to experience negative emotions if they acted in a prejudiced capacity in the memory, or positive emotions if they had acted in a fair, nonprejudiced way. In the former case, it is possible that literary mimesis and resultant negative memories will cause readers to reflect on their perceptions of racial differences with consideration for their empathetic emotions, and they may then affect a reduction in prejudiced behaviors. Likewise, readers who experience positive emotions such as pride or commitment to a set of nonprejudiced values will encounter the opportunity to strengthen their dedication to avoiding the affectation of racism, or even to combatting racism expressed by others.

To implement the educational strategies put forth by other researchers (such as those at the University of Memphis) with the addition of a literary element, I organized and completed the following study. I hoped to observe the ways that students at the University of South Dakota react to reading and discussing texts with themes of racial
prejudice. To determine whether students benefit more from reading and group discussion than from only reading, I established a control group (referred to as Condition One in the study) who only read a selection of readings and did not discuss the materials. I selected three literary texts for this study: “We Wear the Mask,” a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1903); “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” a short story also by Dunbar (1903); and two excerpts from *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison (1970). Future researchers who deal with a similar topic might find Richard Wright’s *Native Son* to be a well-suited text for eliciting emotional responses from the readers; however, I chose to omit this text from my own study because I found it difficult to isolate episodes of racial struggle that were likely to elicit empathy from context that the readers would likely find disturbing. Because I wanted the participants to be able to relate to the African American characters in the selected texts rather than be disturbed or frightened by their actions, I chose another set of texts for the current study. I selected “We Wear the Mask” because this poem presents an abstract and metaphorical description of intense feelings, and I hoped that the participants in the study would gain an understanding of racial issues by contemplating and discussing the possible meanings of the poem’s themes and metaphors. I chose to have the participants read Dunbar’s “The Lynching of Jube Benson,” on the other hand, because this text represents historical moments of intense violence caused by racism. Finally, because I had selected an entirely female demographic as participants for my study, I chose *The Bluest Eye* because this text is narrated by a female and introduces the unique concept of racial (and racist) perceptions of beauty.
CHAPTER THREE

Method

Literature Discussion: Texts with Themes of Racial Conflict

Method

Participants

Twenty-two students from the University of South Dakota participated in this study. All selected participants were female, in order to create a more uniform conversational dynamic for the group discussion. The participants’ ages ranged between eighteen and twenty-two. One participant identified her ethnicity as “Hispanic/Latino,” and the other twenty-one participants identified as “White/Caucasian.” Twelve students participated in the first condition and were asked to complete the surveys and the readings but did not participate in a group discussion. The remaining ten students participated in the second condition of the activity, which includes the surveys, readings, and group discussion.

Materials and Procedures

This study utilized paper surveys, writing utensils, and reading selections printed on paper. The participants met in a classroom on the University of South Dakota campus and completed the following surveys and readings in the following order:

Initial Survey.

Survey About Past Experience and Viewpoints
Please circle the appropriate answer for the following questions.
1. What is your sex?
   1. Female
   2. Male
2. What is your ethnicity?
   1. White/Caucasian
   2. Hispanic/Latino
   3. Asian/Pacific Islander
   4. Native American Indian
   5. Black/African American
   6. Other

3. Which of the following best represents your current mood?
   1. Very happy
   2. Happy
   3. Somewhat happy
   4. Neither happy nor sad
   5. Somewhat sad
   6. Sad
   7. Very sad

4. Which of the following best represents your current mood?
   1. Very calm
   2. Calm
   3. Somewhat calm
   4. Neither calm nor anxious
   5. Somewhat anxious
   6. Anxious
   7. Very anxious

5. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I would very much dislike helping people who are in need.
   2. I would not like to help people who are in need.
   3. I am indifferent toward the idea of helping people who are in need.
   4. I would like to help people who are in need.
   5. I would very much like to help people who are in need.

6. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I feel that I do not at all understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   2. I feel that I do not understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   3. I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   4. I feel that I understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   5. I feel that I fully understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.

7. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I would very much dislike getting to know people of a different race.
   2. I would not like to get to know people of a different race.
   3. I do not care whether or not I get to know people of a different race.
   4. I would like to get to know people of a different race.
   5. I would very much like to get to know people of a different race.

8. Growing up, I was exposed to a lot of ethnic diversity.
   1. Strongly disagree
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2. Disagree
3. Somewhat disagree
4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Somewhat agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly agree
9. I have often seen individuals being exposed to racial prejudice.
   1. Strongly disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Neither agree nor disagree
   5. Somewhat agree
   6. Agree
   7. Strongly agree
10. I feel that I have, in the past, been a victim of racial prejudice.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Somewhat disagree
    4. Neither agree nor disagree
    5. Somewhat agree
    6. Agree
    7. Strongly agree
11. I feel empathy for people who experience discrimination because of their race.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Somewhat disagree
    4. Neither agree nor disagree
    5. Somewhat agree
    6. Agree
    7. Strongly agree

*Rationale for initial survey questions.* Several of the questions asked in the initial survey are also asked in the concluding survey in order to compare participants’ responses before and after the activity. The first two questions about the participants’ sex and ethnicity are meant to determine the uniformity of the research demographic. The sign-up process for this study necessitated that only females became participants, but the sign-up process did not prevent students from participating based on ethnicity. Therefore, the second question asks about the participant’s ethnicity so that the researcher can
examine whether differences in ethnicity seem to impact the results of the study. The third question on the initial survey is meant to determine whether completing the activity causes the participants to feel sadder, in order to test the assumption that the intense nature of the readings will make the participants feel sad. Similarly, the fourth question on the survey is meant to measure whether the activity causes the participants to feel more anxious or less calm. The fifth question is an altruism measure, designed to determine whether the activity causes the participants to feel more altruistic toward others (particularly victims of racial prejudice). The participants’ answers to this question may indicate their likelihood of altering their behavior toward people of other races after completing the activity. The sixth question is asked to determine whether the participants improve their understanding of the problem of racism as a result of completing the activity. The seventh question is a social distance measure; the participants are asked to rate their interest in getting to know people of other races in order to determine whether they report a higher interest in doing so in the concluding survey. The participants are then asked questions about their familiarity with racial issues (and whether they have personally been victims of racism) in order to show whether participants’ differences in degrees of familiarity impacts their reported levels of emotion, empathy, altruism, understanding, and desired social distance. These questions are also meant to determine whether the sample of participants have similar or differing backgrounds with racial prejudice. Finally, the eleventh question is asked in the initial survey and the concluding survey to show whether the participants report feeling more empathy after having completed the activity.

Reading Selection 1. See Appendix A. This selection is a poem.
Reading Selection 2. See Appendix A. This selection consists of two excerpts from a novel.

Reading Selection 3. See Appendix A. This selection is a short story.

Concluding Survey.

Survey About Your Experience During the Activity
Please circle the appropriate answer to the following questions.
1. Which of the following best represents your current mood?
   1. Very happy
   2. Happy
   3. Somewhat happy
   4. Neither happy nor sad
   5. Somewhat sad
   6. Sad
   7. Very sad
2. Which of the following best represents your current mood?
   1. Very calm
   2. Calm
   3. Somewhat calm
   4. Neither calm nor anxious
   5. Somewhat anxious
   6. Anxious
   7. Very anxious
3. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I would very much dislike helping people who are in need.
   2. I would not like to help people who are in need.
   3. I am indifferent toward the idea of helping people who are in need.
   4. I would like to help people who are in need.
   5. I would very much like to help people who are in need.
4. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I feel that I do not at all understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   2. I feel that I do not understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   3. I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   4. I feel that I understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
   5. I feel that I fully understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.
5. Which of the following best represents your current attitude?
   1. I would very much dislike getting to know people of a different race.
   2. I would not like to get to know people of a different race.
   3. I do not care whether or not I get to know people of a different race.
4. I would like to get to know people of a different race.
5. I would very much like to get to know people of a different race.

6. Do you think that the activity caused you to better understand the struggles of people who are exposed to racial prejudice?
   1. Yes, this activity greatly helped me to understand these issues
   2. Yes, this activity helped me to understand these issues
   3. This activity somewhat helped me to understand these issues
   4. No, this activity did not help me to understand these issues
   5. No, this activity did not at all help me to understand these issues

7. After the activity, I feel empathy for the characters that experienced racial prejudice.
   1. Strongly disagree
   2. Disagree
   3. Somewhat disagree
   4. Neither agree nor disagree
   5. Somewhat agree
   6. Agree
   7. Strongly agree

8. Do you think that a more in-depth group discussion would have helped you to learn more about the struggles of people who are exposed to racial prejudice?
   1. Yes
   2. No

9. What effect do you feel this exercise has had on your level of prejudice?
   1. After completing this exercise, I have become much more prejudiced.
   2. After completing this exercise, I have become somewhat more prejudiced.
   3. My level of prejudice has not changed after completing this exercise.
   4. After completing this exercise, I have become somewhat less prejudiced.
   5. After completing this exercise, I have become much less prejudiced.

10. What other comments do you have about the activity? Please provide a short written response.

   If you participated in a group discussion after reading the texts, please answer the following question.

11. Which part of the activity had the greatest effect on making you think about racial issues?
   1. The readings.
   2. The group discussion.
   3. Neither activity caused me to think about racial issues.

After I gave a short presentation about my study to students in a composition class and two psychology classes, students who expressed interest in participating were signed up and asked to meet at a specified date and time. During the activity, participants began by completing the initial survey. Then, participants were asked to read the reading
selections and to be prepared to discuss the readings afterwards. After completing the readings, the participants in the first condition were told that there would not be a group discussion and were asked to complete the concluding survey. The participants in the second condition were asked to introduce themselves to one another after completing the readings, and then they were asked to discuss the readings. I facilitated the group discussion, encouraging participants to identify episodes or ideas in the texts that they found compelling. In order to guide the discussion, I asked some questions concerned with identifying plot elements and interpreting metaphors in order to expedite participants’ sharing of their interpretations of the readings. The participants in the second condition also completed the concluding survey after approximately 45 minutes of group discussion. The results of the surveys were analyzed using averages of participants’ responses and by using dependent t-tests to examine whether results for certain questions were significant at the 1% level. Because of the small sample sizes of the study, the power was relatively low.
Results

Individual score changes for all t-tests can be found in Appendix B.

Happiness/Sadness

Before beginning the readings, the participants in the first condition rated their mood on a scale of 1 to 7, with one meaning “very happy” and seven meaning “very sad.” The mean rating of this group was 2.17, approximately meaning “happy.” All participants rated their mood between 1 and 3 (very happy and somewhat happy), and the mode rating was 2, meaning “happy.” After completing the readings, the participants rated their happiness at an average of 4.67, between “neither happy nor sad” and “somewhat sad.” This mean rating for condition one was 2.5 points, or 17.5%, higher than the group’s rating in the initial survey. The following chart shows the t-test for this study and indicates that the results were significant at the 1% level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happiness/Sadness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$M=-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Mean:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 (assumed as a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no-change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2=SS/df=11/(12-1)=1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2 m=S^2/N=1/12=.083$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Sm=.288$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t=(M-0)/Sm=-2.5/.288=-8.681$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis
In the initial survey, participants in the second condition rated their mood on the happiness-sadness scale at an average of 2.4, between “happy” and “somewhat happy.” After completing the readings and the discussion, their average rating on this mood scale was 3, meaning “somewhat happy.” This rating was 0.6 points, or 4.2%, higher than the initial rating. Here is the t-test for the second condition’s happiness ratings, showing that the results are not significant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Happiness/Sadness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2=6.4/9=.711$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2m=.711/10=.071$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Sm=.266$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t=-.6/.266=-2.256$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following chart illustrates the differences in the average reported mood throughout the activity (and compares the two conditions), with increasing numerical value indicating decreasing levels of happiness:
Calmness/Anxiety

When asked to rate their mood on a scale of 1 to 7, with one meaning “very calm” and seven meaning “very anxious,” the mean rating for condition one was 2.42, between “calm” and “somewhat calm.” All participants rated their mood between 1 and 4, with four meaning “neither calm nor anxious.” The mode for this question was 2. The group’s mean calmness-anxiety level after the readings was 3, meaning “somewhat calm,” and was .58 points, or about 4% higher than the group’s initial ratings. The following chart shows that the results were not significant at the 1% level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calmness/Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M=-.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2= 10.917/11=.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2m=.992/12=.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm=.288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t= (-.583)/.288=-2.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the second condition, the participants had a mean calmness-anxiety rating was 2.3, between “calm” and “somewhat calm.” After the activity, the participants’ mean calmness-anxiety rating was 2 (slightly closer to “somewhat calm” than the initial rating). The t-test for this measure shows that there is not a significant difference between the ratings before and after the activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calmness/Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2=.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2m=.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm=.179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=-.559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This graph compares the ratings of the two conditions before and after the activity.
Altruism

Before completing the readings, when asked to rate their attitude toward helping people who are in need, the average response of condition one was 4.17, approximately meaning “I would like to help people who are in need.” After completing the readings, the group rated their attitude toward helping people in need at an average of 4.58, between “I would like to help people who are in need” and “I would very much like to help people who are in need.” This rating is .41 points, or 2.9%, higher than the group’s rating at the beginning of the activity. This change was not significant, as shown by the following t-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Altruism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2= 7.667/11=.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2m=.697/12= .058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm=.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=-.167/.241=-.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the activity, the condition two participants’ mean rating of their interest in helping people in need was 4.6, between “I would like to help people in need” and “I would very much like to help people in need.” After the activity, this interest had increased to a mean score of 4.8. The following t-test for this measure shows that the results are not significant:
The following graph compares the results from condition one and condition two:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Altruism</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2=1.6/9=.178$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2m=.178/10=.018$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Sm=.134$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t=-.2/.134=-1.493$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following graph compares the results from condition one and condition two:

**Altruism:**

*Increased Score=Increased Altruism*

- **Before the Activity**
- **After the Activity**

**Understanding of Racial Conflict**

When asked to rate the degree to which they feel they understand what it is like to experience racial conflict, the first condition’s mean rating was 2.83, approximately meaning “I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.”

After completing the readings, the group was again asked to rate the degree to which they thought they understood what it is like to experience racial conflict, and the mean rating was 3.33, approximately meaning “I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to
experience racial conflict.” This rating is .5 points (3.5%) higher than the group’s initial rating, although the mean response has the same approximate meaning as the initial rating. After completing the readings, only one participant indicated that she felt that she did not understand what it is like to experience racial conflict. The following t-test indicates that the ratings before and after the activity were not statistically significant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding Racial Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2=6.917/11=.629$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2m=.629/12=.052$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm=.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t=-.583/.228= 2.557$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about the degree to which they felt they understood what it is like to experience racial conflict, the mean rating on the initial survey was 2.9, close to “I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to experience racial conflict.” After the readings and discussion, the mean score was 3.1, having approximately the same meaning (“I feel that I somewhat understand what it is like to experience racial conflict”). The t-test for this study shows that the differences between the responses before and after the activity are not statistically significant:
This graph compares the results from condition one and condition two:

Social Distance

Participants were also asked to rate their interest in getting to know people of a different race. The mean rating was 4.17 for the first condition, approximately meaning “I would like to get to know people of a different race.” After the activity, these participants rated their interest in getting to know people of a different race at a mean of 4.58, between “I would like to get to know people of a different race” and “I would very much like to get to know people of a different race.” This response is .41 points (2.9%) higher.
than that of the participants before completing the readings. This result was not significant at the 1% level, as shown in the following t-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M = -.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2 = \frac{6.917}{11} = .629$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2_m = \frac{.629}{12} = .052$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S_m = .228$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = \frac{-.417}{.228} = -1.829$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both the initial survey and the concluding survey, nine participants in the second condition indicated some level of interest in getting to know people from other races, and the remaining participant indicated that she did not care whether or not she got to know racially diverse people. This chart shows the t-test for this measure, in which the results do not significantly support the hypothesis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M = -.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2 = \frac{0.9}{9} = .1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2_m = \frac{.1}{10} = .01$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S_m = .1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = \frac{-.1}{.1} = -1$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This graph compares the social distance ratings for the two conditions:
Empathy

All participants expressed that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel empathy for people who experience discrimination because of their race.” In the concluding study that the participants completed after finishing the readings, all participants still indicated agreement or strong agreement with this statement. This chart represents changes in the participants’ responses before and after the activity:
The following chart represents the t-test for the participants’ empathy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M= -.333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population mean=0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2=8.667/11=.788$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2m=.788/12=.0656$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Sm=.257$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t=-.333/.257=-1.296$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject null hypothesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second condition, five of the participants strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel empathy for people who experience prejudice because of their race,” four agreed with the statement, and the remaining participant neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. After the readings and the discussion, eight of the participants reported that they strongly agreed with this statement and two reported that they agreed with it. The following chart shows differences in responses to this statement.
for condition two:

This chart shows the t-test results for the empathy measure of the second condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Initial Survey</th>
<th>Concluding Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows the t-test results for the empathy measure of the second condition.

Familiarity with Racial Conflict

In the initial survey, participants were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: “Growing up, I was exposed to a lot of ethnic diversity.” Four
participants indicated some level of disagreement with the statement, five indicated some level of agreement, and three indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed. When asked to rate their agreement with the statement, “I have often seen individuals being exposed to racial prejudice,” two participants expressed disagreement, eight expressed agreement, and two neither agreed nor disagreed. Eleven of the twelve participants’ surveys showed that they did not feel that they had personally been victims of racial prejudice in the past, and the twelfth participant indicated that she neither felt that she had or had not been a victim of racial prejudice (an ambivalent response).

In the second condition, two participants agreed with the statement, “Growing up, I was exposed to a lot of ethnic diversity,” while six participants disagreed and two responded neutrally (“neither agree nor disagree”). Six participants agreed with the statement, “I have often seen individuals being exposed to racial prejudice.” Three participants disagreed with this statement, and one responded neutrally. Eight of the participants indicated that they did not feel that they had personally been victims of racism in the past, but one participant responded neutrally and one participant responded that she had been a victim of racial prejudice before.

Reactions to the Activity

After completing the condition one activity, the participants in condition one were also asked (in the concluding survey) to rate the degree to which the activity had caused them to better understand the struggles of people who are exposed to racial prejudice, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “Yes, this activity greatly helped me to understand these issues” and 5 meaning “No, this activity did not at all help me to understand these issues.” The mean rating for this question was 2, which means “yes, this activity helped
me to understand these issues.” For the second condition, rating for this question was 1.6, between “this activity greatly helped me to understand these issues” and “this activity helped me to understand these issues.” The following chart illustrates the participants’ mean response to this survey question:

![Reported Understanding of Racial Issues](chart)

The independent t-test for this measure is represented in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Racial Issues: Independent t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$S^2(y) = 2.4/(10-1) = 0.267$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S^2(x) = 6/(12-1) = 0.545$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = (2-1.6)/\sqrt{(0.545/12)+(0.267/10)}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = 0.4/\sqrt{(0.045+0.027)}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = 0.4/0.268$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$t = 1.493$, need 1.725 for $p &lt; .05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision:</strong> Do not reject null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concluding survey also asked the participants about the effect of the activity on their level or prejudice, with response choices on a scale of 1 to 5, with one meaning “After completing this exercise, I have become much more prejudiced” and 5 meaning “After completing this exercise, I have become much less prejudiced.” Condition One
participants had a mean rating of 3.92, approximately meaning “after completing this exercise, I have become somewhat less prejudiced.” In Condition Two, the participants’ mean score for this question was 4.1, approximately meaning “After completing this exercise, I have become somewhat less prejudiced.” This chart shows the mean ratings for both conditions:

![Degree to Which the Activity Helped Reduce Participants' Prejudice](chart.png)

The following chart shows the results of the independent t-test for this measure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Prejudice: Independent t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mx=3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My=4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2(x)=2.917/11=0.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S^2(y)=4.9/9=0.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=(3.92-4.1)/sq.rt.[(0.265/12)+(0.544/10)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=-0.18/sq.rt(0.022+0.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=-0.18/sq.rt(0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=-0.18/0.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t=0.652, need 1.725 for p &lt; .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight of the ten participants selected the discussion as the part of the activity that had the greatest effect on making them think about racial issues, and the other two
participants selected the readings and the part that had the greatest effect. No participants selected the option that stated “neither activity caused me to think about racial issues.” Four of the participants responded affirmatively to the being asked if they thought a more in-depth group discussion would have helped them to learn more about the struggles of victims of racism, and the other six participants responded negatively. The concluding survey also asked the participants to provide a short written response about any other comments they wanted to make about the activity. Participants in condition one generally described the reading selections as “good,” “great,” “interesting,” and indicative of racial prejudice issues. Multiple participants also mentioned that the readings “made you empathize” with people who experience racial prejudice. Some of the participants identified notions of beauty and African Americans being “conditioned to hate blackness” as important topics in the texts. Two participants noted that they would have liked to participate in a group discussion about the readings, because a discussion would have provided an opportunity to share viewpoints with the group. One participant also mentioned that “it would have been optimal for this study to have participants of different races” who would likely be able to provide valuable insight, and another participant similarly mentioned that she would be interested in hearing an African American’s perspective on issues such as beauty and racism. In written comments, seven participants stated that the readings had caused them to think about racial prejudice, and three of the participants wrote that they had felt empathetic or “emotionally involved” as a result of the activity. The average length of the written response for the first condition was 64.75 words. This average includes one outlier of 156 words which is much higher than the other submissions; the group mean without this outlier is 56.46 words.
The participants in the second condition were also asked to provide a short written response with further comments about the activity. While the written responses from the participants in the first condition focused on the effectiveness of the readings (since they had not taken part in a group discussion), the responses from the second condition participants focused on the discussion. Only a few participants mentioned the readings, noting that they were interesting and that readings like these can be part of a process of trying to understand the emotions of victims of racism. Four participants mentioned that the group discussion introduced helpful “perspectives” from other students, increasing their understanding of racial prejudice and their own feelings regarding race. Participants noted that they had gained “insight” and “become more aware of racial issues.” One participant mentioned that she appreciated that I had “made sure everyone’s ideas were valued and appreciated” during the group discussion. The average length of written responses in the second condition was 24.3 words. This chart compares the average lengths of written responses for the two conditions:
Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The participant group in the first condition was fairly evenly-mixed, having nearly equal numbers of people who believed they had grown up around a lot of ethnic diversity and people who did not believe that. However, the fact that eight of the twelve individuals indicated that they had “often seen individuals being exposed to racial prejudice” suggests that most participants were familiar with situations of unfair racial discrimination, regardless of the amount of diversity the participants had been exposed to in their lives.

The participants in the first condition experienced marked decreases in levels of happiness after they read the selections, whereas the average reported levels of happiness for the participants in the second condition changed less markedly throughout the study. This finding is interesting because it suggests that whether or not group discussion is helpful for further reducing students’ levels of prejudice, it is helpful for diffusing feelings of sadness elicited by reading about intense racial situations. Interestingly, reading the texts did not have a significant effect on how calm or anxious the participants felt, but it is possible that more intense reading content (such as an excerpt from Native Son) might have created a greater change in anxiety levels.

The survey question about the participants’ interest in getting to know people of another race acted as a social distance measure in this study; the question was introduced to determine whether students became more interested or less interested in being socially close to racially diverse individuals as a result of completing the readings and the
discussion. Interestingly, students’ reported interest in getting to know individuals of a different race increased slightly (2.9%) for the first condition, but remained the same for the second condition. However, neither group of participants reported significant increases or decreases in their interest in getting to know people of different races. It is possible that participants rated their interest quite high initially to avoid appearing racially prejudiced. If this is the case, the participants’ fairly high reported social distance ratings in the concluding survey may either have been genuine, indicating that the activity had helped to increase their interest in interracial acquaintanceships, or they could have been bolstered (again, to avoid the appearance of prejudice).

The results indicate that individuals who participated in the group discussion following the readings thought the activity helped improve their understanding of racial struggles slightly better than the individuals who did not participate in the group discussion did. Although there was only a 0.4 point (2.8%) difference in the mean ratings of the first condition and second condition groups, the slight difference may indicate that group discussion is beneficial for improving students’ understanding of issues of racism. It is also possible that students’ understanding of the material in the second condition would have been improved by more facilitator guidance, or by a lecture from the facilitator to establish important concepts. However, slightly fewer than half of the participants in the second condition thought that a more in-depth discussion would have helped them understand racial conflict better. This result might indicate that students do not feel that group discussion is particularly important for improving their understanding of racism. On the other hand, this result could indicate that the participants in the second condition felt that they had had a sufficiently in-depth discussion, such that a more
focused discussion was not necessary and they felt that they had achieved substantial understanding through the format of their discussion as it was.

Furthermore, participants in both conditions expressed that the activity had caused them to become less prejudiced. There was not a significant difference in the average response to this topic between the two conditions (3.92 for condition one and 4.1 for condition two). Although the participants in the second condition had an average response that shows a slightly higher decrease in prejudice than the participants in the first condition, the difference between the two groups is not significant. These average responses support my hypothesis that reading literature can reduce racial prejudice. It might seem that the lack of significant differences between the two conditions may show that class discussion—although it does not reduce the degree to which students’ prejudice decreases—does not help to decrease students’ prejudice further. However, the fact that 80% of participants in the second condition reported that the group discussion had been more influential than the readings in making them think about racial issues suggests that the discussion did, in fact, have a significant effect for the participants. So, another possible explanation for the lack of difference between the average responses of each group for the topic of reductions in prejudice is that the participants in both groups wanted to indicate that the activity had been helpful in making them think in a less-prejudiced way, but they were reluctant to select a rating of 5 (meaning “After completing this exercise, I have become much less prejudiced”) because they did not want to indicate that they had been prejudiced before. That is, participants in the second condition might have selected a higher rating if they did not feel that doing so would imply that they had been prejudiced individuals previous to completing the activity.
The results of this study also indicate slight increases in altruistic feelings. Participants expressed slightly greater agreement with the idea of wanting to help people who are in need after completing the activity. Furthermore, the participants reported a slight increase in their understanding of racial conflict. Although all participants rated their feelings of empathy as being very high both before and after the activity, the increase in their feelings that they understand racial conflict might indicate that their empathy for victims in these situations also increased somewhat.

The written responses for the participants in the second condition tended to be less specific in content than those written by participants from the first condition. Perhaps since the first condition included only readings and no discussion, the participants could focus more closely and independently on textual issues of racial prejudice. Instead, participants in the second condition took the concluding survey after having contributed to a lengthy group discussion, the content of which was more varied and transient, possibly making it difficult to identify specific issues to write about. In addition, the participants in the second condition might have forgotten about interesting issues they had identified in the texts after having been involved in the group discussion. So, the second condition seemed to elicit responses that were briefer and more focused on the general idea of widening one’s perspective, while the first condition elicited more lengthy responses to specific topics in the readings.

By completing the activities in this study, the participants achieved slight increases in reported feelings of altruism, understanding of racial conflict, and interest in getting to know people of other races. Although increases in empathy were not reported, many participants asserted that the activity caused them to think about racial issues and
improve their understanding of these issues. Overall, the participants’ emotional and intellectual responses to the activity support the argument that that literature and group discussion are useful pedagogical methods for reducing racism.

**Conclusion**

Despite promising advances in—and expansions of—adult education about racism, “the goal of attaining a definitive critical social psychology of racism remains elusive” (Hook & Howarth, 2005, p. 507), partly because of the multiplicity of ways in which racism can operate or be deployed (p. 507). Individuals and educators can (and should) attempt to counteract this multiplicity with “ongoing generation of new analytical frames [and] new modes of intervention,” but these cannot likely be perfected to a level at which they can operate ubiquitously in anti-racism education (p. 507). However, it is probable that the addition of an emotional element (via fiction literature) to an individual’s education about racism and ethnic relations would aid in the resolution of the problem posed by Hook and Howarth. By considering both psychological data and literary fiction, it is hopeful that the combined cognitive influences of these educational means can “produce a form of resistance psychology” against racism (Hook & Howarth, 2005, p. 511).

Extensive evidence indicates that racism is psychologically detrimental to its victims. Racism can culminate in negative internalized perceptions of one’s self and one’s abilities, and African American victims of these psychological distresses may then retaliate in ways that are harmful (physically and psychologically) to the prejudiced individuals themselves. However, it is possible to assuage prejudiced ideologies and behaviors—and, therefore, their effects—by conceiving and implementing an educational
regiment, the primary component of which should be understanding of the psychological causes and effects of racism. After a psychological basis for understanding these issues is achieved, literature can be implemented into pedagogical methods meant to reduce racism. The addition of literary fiction to these methods will motivate the development of a salient understanding of the varying and intense nature by which internalized psychological perceptions are experienced by the victims of racism. The addition of a literary component to discussion methods in classrooms would likely result in effective achievement of the benefits inherent in the reduction of racism.

References


Appendix A

Reading Selection 1

We Wear the Mask
Paul Laurence Dunbar

We wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,—
This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
Nay, let them only see us, while
    We wear the mask.

We smile, but O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
    We wear the mask!

Reading Selection 2

From The Bluest Eye
Toni Morrison

Excerpt One. What I felt at that time was unsullied hatred. But before that I had felt a stranger, more frightening thing than hatred for all the Shirley Temples of the world. It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue-eyed Baby Doll. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish. I was bemused with the thing itself, and the way it looked. What was I supposed to do with it? Pretend I was its mother? I had no interest in babies or the concept of motherhood. I was interested only in humans my own age and size, and could not generate any enthusiasm at the prospect of being a mother. Motherhood was old age, and other remote possibilities. I learned quickly, however, what I was expected to do with the doll: rock it, fabricate storied situations around it, even sleep with it. Picture books were full of little girls sleeping with their dolls. Raggedy Ann dolls usually, but they were out of the question. I was physically revolted by and secretly frightened of those round moronic eyes, the pancake face, and orangeworms hair. The other dolls, which were supposed to bring me great pleasure, succeeded in doing quite the opposite. When I took it to bed, its hard unyielding limbs resisted my flesh--the tapered fingertips on those dimpled hands scratched. If, in sleep, I turned, the bone-cold head collided with my own. It was a most uncomfortable, patently aggressive sleeping companion. To hold it was no more rewarding. The starched
gauze or lace on the cotton dress irritated any embrace. I had only one desire: to
dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty,
the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops,
magazines, newspapers, window signs--all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-
haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is
beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it." I fingered the face,
wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly teeth stuck like two piano
keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy blue eyeballs,
twisted the yellow hair. . . . I destroyed White baby dolls. But the dismembering
of dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the
same impulses to little White girls. The indifference with which I could have axed them
was shaken only by my desire to do so. To discover what eluded me: the secret of the
magic they weaved on others. What made people look at them and say, "Awwwww," but
not for me? The eye slide of black women as they approached them on the street, and the
possessive gentleness
of their touch as they handled them. (17)

**Excerpt Two.** Soaphead Church told her to come in. "What can I do for you, my child?"
She stood there, her hands folded across her stom-
ach, a little protruding pot of tummy.
"Maybe. Maybe you can do it for me." "Do what for you?" "I can't go to school no more.
And I thought maybe you could help me." "Help you how? Tell me. Don't be frightened." 
"My eyes." "What about your eyes?" "I want them blue." Soaphead pursed his lips, and
let his tongue stroke a gold inlay. He thought it was at once the most fantastic and the
most logical petition he had ever received. Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty.
A surge of love and understanding swept through him, but was quickly replaced by anger.
Anger that he was powerless to help her. Of all the wishes people had brought him--
money, love, revenge--this seemed to him the most poignant and the one most deserving
of fulfillment. A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and
see the world with blue eyes. His outrage grew and felt like power.
For the first time he honestly wished he could work miracles. Never before had he really
wanted the true and holy power--only the power to make others believe he had it. It
seemed so sad, so frivolous, that mere mortality, not judgment, kept him from it. Or did
it? With a trembling hand he made the sign of the cross over her. His flesh crawled; in
that hot, dim little room of worn things, he was chilled. "I can do nothing for you, my
child. I am not a magician. I work only through the Lord. He sometimes uses me to help
people. All I can do is offer myself to Him as the instrument through which he works. If
He wants your wish granted, He will do it." Soaphead walked to the window, his back to
the girl. His mind raced, stumbled, and raced again. How to frame the next sentence?
How to hang on to the feeling of power. His eye fell on old Bob sleeping on the porch.
"We must make, ah, some offering, that is, some contact with nature. Perhaps some
simple creature might be the vehicle through which He will speak. Let us see." He knelt
down at the window, and moved his lips. After what seemed a suitable length of time, he
rose and went to the icebox that stood near the other window. From it he removed a small
packet wrapped in pinkish butcher paper. From a shelf he took a small brown bottle and
sprinkled some of its contents on the substance inside the paper. He put the packet, partly
opened, on the table. "Take this food and give it to the creature sleeping on the porch.
Make sure he eats it. And mark well how he behaves. If nothing happens, you will know that God has refused you. If the animal behaves strangely, your wish will be granted on the day following this one." The girl picked up the packet; the odor of the dark, sticky meat made her want to vomit. She put a hand on her stomach. “Courage. Courage, my child. These things are not granted to faint hearts. (146-148)

Reading Selection Three
The Lynching of Jube Benson
Paul Laurence Dunbar

Gordon Fairfax’s library held but three men, but the air was dense with clouds of smoke. The talk had drifted from one topic to another much as the smoke wreaths had puffed, floated, and thinned away. Then Handon Gay, who was an ambitious young reporter, spoke of a lynching story in a recent magazine, and the matter of punishment without trial put new life into the conversation.

“I should like to see a real lynching,” said Gay rather callously.
“‘Well, I should hardly express it that way,” said Fairfax, “but if a real, live lynching were to come my way, I should not avoid it.”
“I should,” spoke the other from the depths of his chair, where he had been puffing in moody silence. Judged by his hair, which was freely sprinkled with gray, the speaker might have been a man of forty–five or fifty, but his face, though lined and serious, was youthful, the face of a man hardly past thirty.
“What, you, Dr. Melville? Why, I thought that you physicians wouldn’t weaken at anything.”
“I have seen one such affair,” said the doctor gravely, “in fact, I took a prominent part in it.”
“Tell us about it,” said the reporter, feeling for his pencil and notebook, which he was, nevertheless, careful to hide from the speaker.
The men drew their chairs eagerly up to the doctor’s, but for a minute he did not seem to see them, but sat gazing abstractedly into the fire, then he took a long draw upon his cigar and began:
“I can see it all very vividly now. It was in the summer time and about seven years ago. I was practising at the time down in the little town of Bradford. It was a small and primitive place, just the location for an impecunious medical man, recently out of college. “In lieu of a regular office, I attended to business in the first of two rooms which I rented from Hiram Daly, one of the more prosperous of the townsmen. Here I boarded and here also came my patients—White and black—Whites from every section, and blacks from 'nigger town,’ as the west portion of the place was called.
“The people about me were most of them coarse and rough, but they were simple and generous, and as time passed on I had about abandoned my intention of seeking distinction in wider fields and determined to settle into the place of a modest country doctor. This was rather a strange conclusion for a young man to arrive at, and I will not deny that the presence in the house of my host’s beautiful young daughter, Annie, had something to do with my decision. She was a beautiful young girl of seventeen or eighteen, and very far superior to her surroundings. She had a native grace and a pleasing way about her that made everybody that came under her spell her abject slave. White and
black who knew her loved her, and none, I thought, more deeply and respectfully than Jube Benson, the black man of all work about the place.

“He was a fellow whom everybody trusted; an apparently steady—going, grinning sort, as we used to call him. Well, he was completely under Miss Annie’s thumb, and would fetch and carry for her like a faithful dog. As soon as he saw that I began to care for Annie, and anybody could see that, he transferred some of his allegiance to me and became my faithful servitor also. Never did a man have a more devoted adherent in his wooing than did I, and many a one of Annie’s tasks which he volunteered to do gave her an extra hour with me. You can imagine that I liked the boy and you need not wonder any more that as both wooing and my practice waxed apace, I was content to give up my great ambitions and stay just where I was.

“It wasn’t a very pleasant thing, then, to have an epidemic of typhoid break out in the town that kept me going so that I hardly had time for the courting that a fellow wants to carry on with his sweetheart while he is still young enough to call her his girl. I fumed, but duty was duty, and I kept to my work night and day. It was now that Jube proved how invaluable he was as a coadjutor. He not only took messages to Annie, but brought sometimes little ones from her to me, and he would tell me little secret things that he had overheard her say that made me throb with joy and swear at him for repeating his mistress’ conversation. But best of all, Jube was a perfect Cerberus, and no one on earth could have been more effective in keeping away or defrauding the other young fellows who visited the Dalys. He would tell me of it afterwards, chuckling softly to himself. ‘An,’ Doctah, I say to Mistah Hemp Stevens, ‘’Scuse us, Mistah Stevens, but Miss Annie, she des gone out,” an’ den he go outer de gate lookin’ moughty lonesome. When Sam Elkins come, I say, “Sh, Mistah Elkins, Miss Annie, she done tuk down,” an’ he say, “What, Jube, you don’ reckon hit de——” Den he stop an’ look skeert, an’ I say, “I feared hit is, Mistah Elkins,” an’ sheks my haid ez solemn. He goes outer de gate lookin’ lak his bes’ frien’ done daid, an’ all de time Miss Annie behine de cu’tain ovah de po’ch des’ a laffin’ fit to kill.’

“Jube was a most admirable liar, but what could I do? He knew that I was a young fool of a hypocrite, and when I would rebuke him for these deceptions, he would give way and roll on the floor in an excess of delighted laughter until from very contagion I had to join him—and, well, there was no need of my preaching when there had been no beginning to his repentance and when there must ensue a continuance of his wrong—doing.

“This thing went on for over three months, and then, pouf! I was down like a shot. My patients were nearly all up, but the reaction from overwork made me an easy victim of the lurking germs. Then Jube loomed up as a nurse. He put everyone else aside, and with the doctor, a friend of mine from a neighbouring town, took entire charge of me. Even Annie herself was put aside, and I was cared for as tenderly as a baby. Tom, that was my physician and friend, told me all about it afterward with tears in his eyes. Only he was a big, blunt man and his expressions did not convey all that he meant. He told me how my nigger had nursed me as if I were a sick kitten and he my mother. Of how fiercely he guarded his right to be the sole one to ‘do’ for me, as he called it, and how, when the crisis came, he hovered, weeping, but hopeful, at my bedside, until it was safely passed, when they drove him, weak and exhausted, from the room. As for me, I knew little about it at the time, and cared less. I was too busy in my fight with death. To my chimerical
vision there was only a black but gentle demon that came and went, alternating with a White fairy, who would insist on coming in on her head, growing larger and larger and then dissolving. But the pathos and devotion in the story lost nothing in my blunt friend’s telling.

“It was during the period of a long convalescence, however, that I came to know my humble ally as he really was, devoted to the point of abjectness. There were times when for very shame at his goodness to me, I would beg him to go away, to do something else. He would go, but before I had time to realise that I was not being ministered to, he would be back at my side, grinning and pottering just the same. He manufactured duties for the joy of performing them. He pretended to see desires in me that I never had, because he liked to pander to them, and when I became entirely exasperated, and ripped out a good round oath, he chuckled with the remark, ‘Dah, now, you sholy is gittin’ well. Nevah did hyeah a man anywhaih nigh Jo’dan’s sho’ cuss lak dat.’

“Why, I grew to love him, love him, oh, yes, I loved him as well—oh, what am I saying? All human love and gratitude are damned poor things; excuse me, gentlemen, this isn’t a pleasant story. The truth is usually a nasty thing to stand.

“It was not six months after that that my friendship to Jube, which he had been at such great pains to win, was put to too severe a test.

“It was in the summer time again, and as business was slack, I had ridden over to see my friend, Dr. Tom. I had spent a good part of the day there, and it was past four o’clock when I rode leisurely into Bradford. I was in a particularly joyous mood and no premonition of the impending catastrophe oppressed me. No sense of sorrow, present or to come, forced itself upon me, even when I saw men hurrying through the almost deserted streets. When I got within sight of my home and saw a crowd surrounding it, I was only interested sufficiently to spur my horse into a jog trot, which brought me up to the throng, when something in the sullen, settled horror in the men’s faces gave me a sudden, sick thrill. They whispered a word to me, and without a thought, save for Annie, the girl who had been so surely growing into my heart, I leaped from the saddle and tore my way through the people to the house.

“It was Annie, poor girl, bruised and bleeding, her face and dress torn from struggling. They were gathered round her with White faces, and, oh, with what terrible patience they were trying to gain from her fluttering lips the name of her murderer. They made way for me and I knelt at her side. She was beyond my skill, and my will merged with theirs. One thought was in our minds.

‘Who?’ I asked.

“Her eyes half opened, ‘That black——’ She fell back into my arms dead.

“We turned and looked at each other. The mother had broken down and was weeping, but the face of the father was like iron.

“‘It is enough,’ he said; ‘Jube has disappeared.’ He went to the door and said to the expectant crowd, ‘She is dead.’

“I heard the angry roar without swelling up like the noise of a flood, and then I heard the sudden movement of many feet as the men separated into searching parties, and laying the dead girl back upon her couch, I took my rifle and went out to join them.

“As if by intuition the knowledge had passed among the men that Jube Benson had disappeared, and he, by common consent, was to be the object of our search. Fully a
dozen of the citizens had seen him hastening toward the woods and noted his skulking air, but as he had grinned in his old good–natured way they had, at the time, thought nothing of it. Now, however, the diabolical reason of his slyness was apparent. He had been shrewd enough to disarm suspicion, and by now was far away. Even Mrs. Daly, who was visiting with a neighbour, had seen him stepping out by a back way, and had said with a laugh, ‘I reckon that black rascal’s a–running off somewhere.’ Oh, if she had only known.

”’To the woods! To the woods!’ that was the cry, and away we went, each with the determination not to shoot, but to bring the culprit alive into town, and then to deal with him as his crime deserved.

“I cannot describe the feelings I experienced as I went out that night to beat the woods for this human tiger. My heart smouldered within me like a coal, and I went forward under the impulse of a will that was half my own, half some more malignant power’s. My throat throbbed drily, but water nor whiskey would not have quenched my thirst. The thought has come to me since that now I could interpret the panther’s desire for blood and sympathise with it, but then I thought nothing. I simply went forward, and watched, watched with burning eyes for a familiar form that I had looked for as often before with such different emotions.

“Luck or ill–luck, which you will, was with our party, and just as dawn was graying the sky, we came upon our quarry crouched in the corner of a fence. It was only half light, and we might have passed, but my eyes had caught sight of him, and I raised the cry. We levelled our guns and he rose and came toward us.

”’I t’ought you wa’n’t gwine see me,’ he said sullenly, ‘I didn’t mean no harm.’

”’Harm!’

“Some of the men took the word up with oaths, others were ominously silent.

“We gathered around him like hungry beasts, and I began to see terror dawning in his eyes. He turned to me, ‘I’s moughty glad you’s hyeah, doc,’ he said, ‘you ain’t gwine let ‘em whup me.’

”’Whip you, you hound,’ I said, ‘I’m going to see you hanged,’ and in the excess of my passion I struck him full on the mouth. He made a motion as if to resent the blow against even such great odds, but controlled himself.

”’W’y, doctah,’ he exclaimed in the saddest voice I have ever heard, ‘w’y, doctah! I ain’t stole nuffin’ o’ yo’n, an’ I was comin’ back. I only run off to see my gal, Lucy, ovah to de Centah.’

”’You lie!’ I said, and my hands were busy helping the others bind him upon a horse. Why did I do it? I don’t know. A false education, I reckon, one false from the beginning. I saw his black face glooming there in the half light, and I could only think of him as a monster. It’s tradition. At first I was told that the black man would catch me, and when I got over that, they taught me that the devil was black, and when I had recovered from the sickness of that belief, here were Jube and his fellows with faces of menacing blackness. There was only one conclusion: This black man stood for all the powers of evil, the result of whose machinations had been gathering in my mind from childhood up. But this has nothing to do with what happened.

“After firing a few shots to announce our capture, we rode back into town with Jube. The ingathering parties from all directions met us as we made our way up to the house. All
was very quiet and orderly. There was no doubt that it was as the papers would have said, a gathering of the best citizens. It was a gathering of stern, determined men, bent on a terrible vengeance.

“We took Jube into the house, into the room where the corpse lay. At sight of it, he gave a scream like an animal’s and his face went the colour of storm–blown water. This was enough to condemn him. We divined, rather than heard, his cry of ‘Miss Ann, Miss Ann, oh, my God, doc, you don’t t’ink I done it?’

“Hungry hands were ready. We hurried him out into the yard. A rope was ready. A tree was at hand. Well, that part was the least of it, save that Hiram Daly stepped aside to let me be the first to pull upon the rope. It was lax at first. Then it tightened, and I felt the quivering soft weight resist my muscles. Other hands joined, and Jube swung off his feet.

“No one was masked. We knew each other. Not even the Culprit’s face was covered, and the last I remember of him as he went into the air was a look of sad reproach that will remain with me until I meet him face to face again.

“We were tying the end of the rope to a tree, where the dead man might hang as a warning to his fellows, when a terrible cry chilled us to the marrow.

“‘Cut ‘im down, cut ‘im down, he ain’t guilty. We got de one. Cut him down, fu’ Gawd’s sake. Here’s de man, we foun’ him hidin’ in de barn!’

“Jube’s brother, Ben, and another Negro, came rushing toward us, half dragging, half carrying a miserable-looking wretch between them. Someone cut the rope and Jube dropped lifeless to the ground.

“‘Oh, my Gawd, he’s daid, he’s daid!’ wailed the brother, but with blazing eyes he brought his captive into the centre of the group, and we saw in the full light the scratched face of Tom Skinner—the worst White ruffian in the town—but the face we saw was not as we were accustomed to see it, merely smeared with dirt. It was blackened to imitate a Negro’s.

“God forgive me; I could not wait to try to resuscitate Jube. I knew he was already past help, so I rushed into the house and to the dead girl’s side. In the excitement they had not yet washed or laid her out. Carefully, carefully, I searched underneath her broken finger nails. There was skin there. I took it out, the little curled pieces, and went with it to my office.

“There, determinedly, I examined it under a powerful glass, and read my own doom. It was the skin of a White man, and in it were embedded strands of short, brown hair or beard.

“How I went out to tell the waiting crowd I do not know, for something kept crying in my ears, ‘Blood guilty! Blood guilty!’

“The men went away stricken into silence and awe. The new prisoner attempted neither denial nor plea. When they were gone I would have helped Ben carry his brother in, but he waved me away fiercely, ‘You he’ped murder my brothah, you dat was his frien’, go ‘way, go ‘way! I’ll tek him home myse’f’ I could only respect his wish, and he and his comrade took up the dead man and between them bore him up the street on which the sun was now shining full.

“I saw the few men who had not skulked indoors uncover as they passed, and I—I—stood there between the two murdered ones, while all the while something in my ears kept crying, ‘Blood guilty! Blood guilty!’”
The doctor’s head dropped into his hands and he sat for some time in silence, which was broken by neither of the men, then he rose, saying, “Gentlemen, that was my last lynching.” (Dunbar 222-29)
Appendix B

Condition One:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Happiness/Sadness</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Before Activity</th>
<th>After Activity</th>
<th>Difference (Bef.-Af.)</th>
<th>Deviation (Diff.-M)</th>
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Population Mean: 0 (assumed as a no-change comparison baseline)

\[ S^2 = \frac{SS}{df} = \frac{11}{12-1} = 1 \]

\[ S^2_m = \frac{S^2}{N} = \frac{1}{12} = .083 \]

\[ t = \frac{M-0}{S_m} = \frac{-2.5}{.288} = -8.681 \]

Decision: Reject the null hypothesis

Condition Two:

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Population mean=0

\[ S^2 = \frac{6.4}{9} = .711 \]

\[ S^2_m = \frac{711}{10} = .071 \]

\[ t = \frac{-0.6}{.266} = -2.256 \]

Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis
### Condition Two:

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\[ M = -.583 \]

#### Calmness/Anxiety

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\[ M = .1 \]
# Prejudice Against African Americans

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\[ \text{M}= -.167 \]

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\[ \text{M}= -.2 \]
# PREJUDICE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS

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Population mean=0

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$S^2m=.629/12=.052$

$S^2=.629/12=.052$

$t=-.417/.228=-1.829$

Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis

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Population mean=0

$S^2=0.9/9=.1$

$S^2m=.1/10=.01$

$t=-.1/.1=-1$

Decision: Do not reject the null hypothesis

$M= -.1$
### Condition One:

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M= -0.6
### IRB Information

#### IRB Signature Page

**Title of Study:** Literature Discussion About Selected Texts With Themes of Racial Prejudice  
**Investigator(s) Name:** Cindy Struckman-Johnson

By signing below, I attest that the information provided in this form is correct. I agree to seek and obtain prior written approval from the IRB for any substantive modifications in the proposal, including changes in procedure, co-investigators, consent statements, survey/interview questions, etc. I will immediately report any unexpected or unanticipated problems or incidents that occur during the study. I will report in writing any significant findings which develop during the course of the study which may affect the risks and benefits to the participants. I will not begin my research until I have received approval from the IRB. I will abide by the IRB requests for to report on the status of the study. I will maintain the records and documents of this research. If there is a grant associated with this research, it completely reflects what is contained in this application. If the above conditions are not met, I understand that approval of this research could be suspended or terminated.

Principal Investigator Signature:  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 9-19-13

Student Investigator Signature:  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 9/23/13

**Advisor and Department Chair Assurances:**

By signing below, I attest that I reviewed the above application and find the research is scientifically and scholarly sound and that competencies and resources are adequate.

**Advisor Signature:**  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 9-19-13

**Department Chair Signature:**  
Signature: [Signature]  
Date: 9/23/13
IRB Approval Letter

October 11, 2013

The University of South Dakota
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

PI: Cindy Struckman, Ph. D. Student PI: Pearl Nielsen

Project: 2013.189 - Literature Discussion: Texts with Themes of Racial Conflict

Review Level: Exempt 1 & 2 Risk: No More than Minimal Risk

USD IRB Initial Approval: 10/11/2013

Approved items associated with your project:

Survey
Consent Statement

The proposal referenced above has received an Exempt review and approval via the procedures of the

University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Annual Continuing Review is not required for the above Exempt study. However, when this study is
completed you must submit a Closure Form to the IRB. You may close your study when you no longer have contact with the subjects and you are finished collecting data. You may continue to analyze the existing data on your closed project.

Prior to initiation, promptly report to the IRB, any proposed changes or additions (e.g., protocol amendments/revised informed consents/ site changes, etc.) in previously approved human subject research activities.

The forms to assist you in filing your: project closure, continuation, adverse/unanticipated event, project updates /amendments, etc. can be accessed at http://www.usd.edu/research/research-and-sponsoredprograms/

irb-application-forms-and-templates.cfm.

If you have any questions, please contact: humansubjects@usd.edu or (605) 677-6184.

October 11, 2013

The University of South Dakota

414 E. Clark Street

Vermillion, SD 57069

**PI:** Cindy Struckman, Ph. D. **Student PI:** Pearl Nielsen

**Project:** 2013.189 - Literature Discussion: Texts with Themes of Racial Conflict

**Review Level:** Exempt 1 & 2 **Risk:** No More than Minimal Risk

**USD IRB Initial Approval:** 10/11/2013

**Approved items associated with your project:**

Survey

Consent Statement
Sincerely,

Sandra Ellenbolt, JD
Director, Office of Human Subjects Protection
The University of South Dakota
Institutional Review Boards
(605) 677-6184
LJTO0000004357