



No Longer Adding to the Problem Changing Society's Racialized Structure from Within

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Abstract: In this paper I critically explore the role race has played in my personal life. Whether the events portrayed paint me in a light of perfection or not is not the issue at hand, but how the misperceptions of society in regard to race can easily sway the uninformed mind is essential to understand. The goal of this paper is to show how "race" is socially constructed and is not some inherent characteristic that separates us from one another. In becoming aware of this reality we can free ourselves from being prejudicial and racist, and begin to see people for who they truly are and not what we have been told to think they are.

INTRODUCTION

This self research paper is an exploration of the personal events in my life that have brought me to the current position I hold in regards to race in the North American society. In the earlier part of my life I viewed race "as an essence, as something fixed, concrete, and objective" (Omi and Winant, 75); However, as I matured in my thinking and further immersed myself into more than the miniscule world of Somerville, Massachusetts, my view of society and race became different, and more complex. This process not only transformed my way of thinking, but I believe has also allowed me to evolve as an individual.

I was able to accomplish this because

the more exposure I had to the non-white world the more evident it became to me that race is not a creation of any genetic traits such as skin color, brain size, nose shape, etc., but is something more subjective and abstract and is in fact a social construction in which racial formation has occurred in order to decide who has what and who goes without.

In order to explain the evolution of my attitude toward racism in the past to the present, I would argue that it has taken place in five distinct phases of my life. These phases are very similar to the ones developed by William Cross, author of *Shades of Black: Diversity in African American Identity*, in which he argues that the five stages of racial identity development are pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/em-

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ersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment (see Tatum, pp. 54-55). This model was referred to as the psychology of nigrescence, or the psychology of becoming black, because this model was developed to explain how blacks have come to view themselves in the racialized world of American society. I think, however, this model can be applied in another way to the development of my own psychology as a white American. I can apply the model to understand how my attitude toward race and racism developed ever since my adolescent years and into my present adulthood.

I am presently undergoing the internalized-commitment stage in my life in which I see the misdeeds of many of my past actions in which I at the time had not perceived as wrong, and am making the commitment as an individual to help change the injustice of society while at the same time being comfortable with my identity as a white male.

PRE-ENCOUNTER

In the first stage of racial development, we have the pre-encounter phase, which takes place normally around the ages of 8-10, but certainly will vary depending on a person's specific experiences. I remember one of the last instances in which I was still present in this initial phase of racial development. I was about 7 or 8 years old and my friend Brian's mom took him and me to the local playground, probably to stop bothering her. When we got there a couple of kids in our age group asked us if we wanted to play freeze tag with them, and of course that being the game of the time we were more than happy to participate. Before we started, Brian's mother said we should offer them some of the leftover donuts that we had bought earlier, because she rationalized that her son and I would have an easier time catching these kids if

they were weighed down by the donuts. That itself seemed logical to me even for the age of seven, but then she said something to us that at that point in time did not make perfect sense to me. "Make sure to give one to that black kid, you will need whatever you can to slow him down." I instantly thought to myself "hmm, I wonder what she meant by that as both of them are tall and skinny and look like they would be much faster than me and my short pudgy friend." It did not occur to me that she was basing this statement solely on the fact that this kid was black, and not for the obvious physical reasons that would give him and his white friend a certain edge on my friend and me.

It is in this stage that the issue of race is of no concern to an individual for one of two reasons. The first being that they are too young to grasp the understanding of the social connotations that come along with being a member of a specific racial group or scenario; and second, their exposure to other groups has been very limited, because they come from a racially homogeneous neighborhood in which diversity is non-existent. The former of the two reasons would be more aligned with how I grew up, because in my immediate neighborhood there was a decent number of families of color around, and certainly I would encounter black kids at the parks and playgrounds, but in these early stages my view of race was not yet developed. In this pre-encounter stage, the individual truly lives in a color-blind society because while the physical differences are visible, the realities of many racial injustices are not yet apparent (see Gallagher, pp. 96-99). I saw race at this time in a very simplistic way because I simply saw everyone the same. I was too young to comprehend the social significance of any racial actions or comments, such as the one made by Brian's mom. In these early stages of my life, I was aware of the visible differences such as skin color that existed between me and this kid at the

playground, but I would not be aware of the social stigma that came along with his black skin until I was much older.

ENCOUNTER

The innocence of the pre-encounter stage gave way to the harsh realities of the encounter stage. It is at this stage that individuals become aware of the different societal roles that come along with being a member of certain racial groups. This realization for me took place shortly after the playground incident, and it took place in two separate incidents. In the first incident, I was still about 8 years old or so. This encounter stage began with a very routine day-to-day encounter in which my younger sister's friend Lisa came to our steps as she had numerous times before to ask us "is Valerie around to play?" Sitting on the steps was, my older brother, older sister, and I just sitting there talking, and we told Lisa that "Valerie went to the grocery store with my dad and that she would be back later." As soon as she walked away I remember hearing coming out of my older brother's mouth a word that I would come to hear many times throughout my life "I can't stand that fucking *N---r*." Being the innocent yet inquisitive kid that I was I quickly responded to my older brother's statement by asking what the word meant. I was expecting to hear this long drawn out elaborate definition of what this word meant, but my brother simply responded "A black person."

The second incident of the encounter stage could not have happened without the existence of the first, and this second incident was perhaps the most intense racial encounter of my life. Fast forward roughly two months later from the first incident and we have my older brother and three of his friends playing street hockey, and one of the three happened to be black. Therefore, I thought perhaps naively that, well, if a

black person is a "*N---r*" then well he must be one as well, so for some reason I thought like most young kids who hear a new word I would like to try it out. Lets just say that my calling him using that word did not go over so well and perhaps the only reason I left that scenario unharmed was because my brother and his two other friends were able to calm him down and convince him that I was a child who did not know any better.

At the time I time felt conflicted by this whole scenario, after all how could my brother tell this kid I didn't know any better when he was in fact the one who taught me this obviously painful and dangerous word. In retrospect, I realize that what my brother was trying to do was convince this kid that I did not know any better at my young and naive age to comprehend that the word is such an ignorant and racially harmful expression to use. The fact of the matter is that my brother honestly meant that I didn't know any better to censor myself and refrain from using such words in the presence of black people. At the time, I could not have possibly perceived what all this meant, but now that I am older, I realize this incident truly embodies American society. I say this because America no longer practices Dejure segregation as used in the Jim Crow South, but we now practice what Lawrence D. Bobo (2006) would argue Laissez-faire racism.

This type of racism is not as open and blatant as the Jim Crow form in which it was legally acceptable to have whites and blacks segregated from one another; nevertheless this type of racism still promotes the idea of inequality. The only real differences of these two types of racist tools is suggested in the article by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva titled "Keeping them in their Place" in which he suggested the widespread lynchings that occurred during the Jim Crow South are now being legitimized by the state's legal system in which over half of all death-row inmates are black in spite of the

fact that in society blacks make up only 12 percent of the population. This suggests that while we as a society don't blatantly enforce unequal policies we still as a society have constructed a system that punishes minorities, especially blacks unequally. It is hard to say what is worse and what is better, because both forms lead to such unfair treatment, but surely today's racism is not quite as bad; after all we refrain from using the N word until blacks are absent from the conversation.

White attitudes such as the one my brother had developed and I was developing truly were a product of this type of racism of which Bobo speaks. This type of racism not only has created an unjust system but has tricked white people into believing their actions have not been unjust. This accomplishment is evident in the sense that as of a 2001 Gallup Poll nearly 70 percent of whites said that in regards to the workplace blacks are treated "the same as whites," while at the same time 60 percent of blacks reported experiencing racial barriers at the work place (Herring, pp. 278-9). The reason for this is as my brother would have explained back then—that it was not wrong for him to use the N word because he didn't mean anything by it and it was just a word to use to define black people. Nevertheless these actions and words have consequences and have come to reflect society's behaviors. We may say that we care to change things and that we don't believe in inequality, yet our actions don't support the changes that are necessary for this to happen such as government interference in overturning the wrongs of the past and present. In fact many white Americans especially in the North agree with many issues that would further the cause of equality for minorities, such as in 1986 when 93 percent of all whites supported the idea of integrating white and black schools; yet this was highly problematic in the reality in which only 26 percent of all whites supported government interference to pur-

sue these ends (Bobo 2006).

Over the next couple of years, my thoughts, and views on the differences between me as a white person and blacks, further developed through the use of media, my society, school, etc. My view of race by the time I was in high school progressed to the point as discussed by Herbert Blumer in his article "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position"¹ in which he makes the argument that racial prejudice is a tool largely to maintain and preserve the status quo that currently exists among different groups. In our current racial society there are two roles that are being played off each other, on one side of the coin you have the dominant group played by the whites and on the other side of the situation you have the subordinate race, largely a cast consisting of blacks and other people of color in the starring role. The dominant group seeks to preserve this relationship for numerous reasons according to Blumer, such as a feeling of superiority in comparison to their minority counterpart, a feeling of intrinsic difference between the subordinate race, a belief that they are entitled to certain rights and privileges that do not extend to all spheres of life, and lastly a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race has plans to reign as the dominate group in American Society.

IMMERSION/EMERSION

These thoughts of white superiority and the need to preserve this dominance traveled with me and developed further into my high school years. By now I was full swing into the third stage of racial Development, that of Immersion/Emersion. It is in this stage in which one becomes aware of their societal position in terms of race and starts embracing this position. For me I

¹ Herbert Blumer in his article "Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position" discusses positions of the superior and the dominate group.

was embracing the position of white superiority, and my actions this time were aligned with those of furthering the cause of inequality whether I was aware or not. I remember sitting at the lunchroom in high school, my friends and I were stupid teenagers and were well aware of the presence of the segregated white and black tables. At my table during the freshman and sophomore years there were eight of us sitting there and except for our table all the tables in the cafeteria were completely segregated. But at our table one of the eight kids sitting was black. One day we were having a debate about this and the question was posed "Why are all the black kids sitting together at the cafeteria?" My friend Ryan who was the one black kid at the table immediately interjected and said well "I am black and I am sitting with you guys." Immediately after Ryan said this we all looked at each other and thought the same thing, but I was the one to convey it aloud. "Ryan you might as well be white!" By making this comment, I assumed that those of us at the table and the black kids at the school all agreed that he was an "atypical" black student due to his being an Honors student, speaking an extensive vocabulary, using minimal slang terms, and not wearing baggy clothes.

Ryan did not embody any of the mannerisms or slang that has been traditionally associated with being "black." For us sitting at the table a great deal of our perceptions in regards to what is black was shaped by our media intake. We were all familiar with movies such as "Boyz N the Hood," "Blue Hill Avenue," etc., as well as many Rap videos on MTV and grew accustomed to the notion that blacks by and large were typically aggressive, violent, inarticulate, and for the most part uneducated. Ryan did not fit any of these stereotypes in which the media has portrayed as being black, and as far as we were concerned at the table he was not black. I did not think of the significance of the remarks I had made

at the time. It just came out as a natural response to his observation. Ironically I meant my comment of his being "white" as a positive statement, and not as a negative one. This is very similar to the situation in the novel *The Indian Killer* in which the main character John (who was Native American adopted at birth by a white family) was referred to as "Chief" by one of his construction co-workers. It is not quite clear which way his co-worker meant this word, but I believe based on the prior actions of his white co-workers to invite him out for drinks this man was actually making an extension to John to be a part of the group at work and no longer feel isolated from everyone else. John, however, took this comment especially from a white person to be demeaning and an affront to his Native American heritage (p. 65). When I said this I was in fact granting Ryan acceptance into the dominant white group, as Blumer wrote about, and was allowing him to feel comfortable as just another one of us sitting at the table. But what Ryan saw was me stereotyping black people by saying essentially they are the opposite of what he is, and therefore he is not black. "No stereotype is a good stereotype."² This instance shows the harms of stereotyping because it forces people a lot of times to act in a certain manner, because they believe that by not embracing these stereotypes they are not a part of this group. I am not surprised that by junior year Ryan was no longer sitting at our table, and was now wearing baggier clothes, and lost his spot as one of the top kids in our class; in turn he had become increasingly more popular among the black kids who the year before rarely associated with him.

This third stage of development may have been the most emotionally painful, because looking back I realized my comments had threatened Ryan's security as a

² This is a statement from professor Beckwith, made in one of her lectures.

black male when I referred to him as white. The irony of this whole situation is that I had a similar encounter in which my identity as a white male and a member of the dominant group was put into question by my peers during my high school years. I was at this point a junior in high school and I went to a Catholic High School in Somerville/Medford Massachusetts in which many kids that attended were from Somerville, Medford, and various Boston neighborhoods. The most represented neighborhood in the school was the heavily Irish ethnic enclave of Charlestown in which this neighborhood was bombarded with houses decorated by Irish flags and shamrocks painted on the front of numerous buildings as well as plenty of Irish pubs scattered throughout the tiny square mile area that Charlestown was comprised of. Needless to say, the people from this area are very proud of their Irish heritage and were not afraid to show it, and were not afraid to let you know especially if you were Italian that you were nothing more than a Guinea, a Wop, etc.

When I encountered this situation myself I was in shock. I felt as if I as an Italian was below them. Sure I was Italian, but most importantly I was white, and throughout the entirety of my life always felt compelled to circle or check the white/Caucasian box on any form I had ever filled out but I was not their type of white. I was shackled to the *Hyphenated identity* of being Italian-white or Italian-American, if you will, in which these two identities conflicted with one another;³ this, as far as they were concerned, was just not good enough for them as members of the dominate Irish group, or at the very least they represented the most dominant group in my neighborhood. In recalling this memory, I cannot help but compare it to the PBS Document-

tary, *Race: The Power of An Illusion*, in which in the 1900s the Massachusetts legal system ruled in favor of Armenians being white. What this ruling essentially did was give Armenians access to all the benefits that were associated with being white and allowed them membership into the dominant group of American society, the white group. I reflect on this, because I feel as if in this instance these two Irish kids were acting as the judges in this case and by their choices of words referring to me as a Guinea were making the ruling that I was not white, or at the very least I was not part of the superior group that was entitled to the best treatment within our society.

I exited out of my high school years with a racial identity that was very confused and bitter; I was unsure of myself regarding where I belonged on the racial and ethnic hierarchy. Sure I saw the color of my white skin as being the same as those kids who called me a Guinea, but was my white as good as their white or was I experiencing the same phenomena that many Southern and Eastern European immigrants had experienced years prior?—an experience in which many ethnic groups such as the aforementioned Armenians, the Irish themselves and the Jews were not considered white. These groups—such as the Jews depicted in Karen Brodtkin's article "How Did Jews Become White Folks?"—went through years and even generations before they assimilated into American society, that is, before they were accepted by the Anglo-whites as being a part of their racial order. After this experience in my life, I felt as if I was not apart of this order and that I, as my ancestors before me, had to prove myself as white. I exited the phase of immersion confused between my dual identities of being white, and being Italian, as well as pondering the puzzling question of whether any of it really mattered.

³ In "A Hyphenated Identity" Harry Kitano discusses the trials and tribulations he experienced as being both Japanese and American.

INTERNALIZATION

In the early part of my college years I entered the internalization phase of my life or as James Marcia would define as the moratorium phase (Tatum 1997), which is a state of active exploration of roles and beliefs in which no commitment has been made to any specific role. It is at this stage that I became acutely aware of a lot of my past prejudices and the fact that I was blinded by my own whiteness. I even remember my first day at the University of Massachusetts, when I looked around the campus observantly, and immediately thought to myself “wow so college is where all the Asian people in Massachusetts have been hiding.” I was unaware of the damage of these thoughts and my past actions.⁴ Until this stage, I never saw my actions as wrong, nor did I even view them as racist per se, even when I would casually refer to black people using the N word; after all that is what I was taught they were. I never could get past my own whiteness and that’s all that seemed to matter until this phase of my life, because by this point I wasn’t even sure how to view myself, but I was certainly searching.

As I matured in my thinking and in my behaviors certain things in my life started to click. At work, I received two promotions in the same year, the first to a shift manager, and the second to an Assistant Manager. I initially saw these promotions as a sign of my hard work, my intelligence, etc. Even though my good fortune was blossoming, the sociologist in me could not help but pay attention to the injustices that were occurring in the workplace. In my first year and a half at my place of employment I received two promotions during this period, yet two other people I had been working with had yet to be promoted once during this same time. Initially I perceived

⁴ See “Blinded by Whiteness” by Mark A Chesler, Melissa Peet and Todd Sevig.

the justice in this to be the mere fact that they were not as hard working as I, but as I got to know them better and work with them more, and especially once I became one of their bosses, I realized my hypothesis was far from the truth.

I may often talk of the hardships of growing up in a family of seven in which my parents combined income was less than \$65,000 per year (based on today’s numbers), but nevertheless in spite of my working class upbringing I was afforded certain access to society that many black kids were not allotted. I went to a high school that taught college prep classes, and was able to prepare me for the challenges I would see in the future. I also received special attention from teachers who recognized my intellectual abilities and talents such as the argument made by Deirdre A. Royster in the article “Race and the Invisible Hand.” Essentially, she argues that whites are more likely to be assisted by white teachers who pay attention and are willing to assist their white students in bettering themselves (287-291). For my co-workers this was very much so the case: both of them came from rough neighborhoods in Boston, and were by their own admission neglected by many of their teachers and as a consequence didn’t put forth as much effort in their schoolwork as I had—as someone who was constantly given positive reinforcement by my high school teachers as well as my employers. I am not necessarily making the claim that solely for the reason that these two co-workers of mine being black was the basis for being passed over per se, but it is significant to realize that because of their status and role in society as blacks they were not given the structural, organizational and educational background that many white people in higher classes are given or even for that many whites in similar class backgrounds such as myself.

Through these experiences in this phase, I realized that maybe in regards to those two kids from Charlestown I was not

white, but as far as society was concerned, I was apart of the advantaged group. My role in society became evident to me as I progressed in my life while the lives of many of the minorities around me remained static because I had the advantages of being white in a white dominated society. The upbringing I had—even though it was a working class one—was still one in which the advantages of being white are present, as it is pointed out by Royster in “Race and the Invisible Hand.” This is because I had access in my white neighborhood to the larger white society that many black people don’t have access to such as my co-workers, teachers an education, and white people with good societal standing that could vouch for me if I needed them to do on any job application. As far as society was concerned regardless of my ethnicity or my class upbringing that I was born into, I was indeed white.

INTERNALIZATION-COMMITMENT

Now that I was aware and certain as to which role I adhered to in society, I was able to make the transition to the fifth and final stage of my racial development—that of internalization-commitment. It is at this stage that I am becoming aware of the daily injustices that exist in the racialized world of American society, and am trying to eliminate my part in constructing these injustices, and trying to broaden my horizon as well as expand my views.

As a youth growing up in Somerville, Massachusetts, I stayed away from the projects and ghettos of nearby neighborhoods such as Rindge Ave in Cambridge, or Mystic Ave in Somerville, because they were so gross in appearance due to their run-down look and frankly these neighborhoods were downright scary. It was not until I started working in the Rindge Ave area rather recently that I have moved past my hang-ups of this place being a horror movie

within a white reality. In many ways this neighborhood is friendlier than others, people know each other, give high fives and “show some love” towards one another. However, I still hear people say, “wow you actually walk through there late at night to get home?” We hear this from many people because there is a negative stigma about such places as Rindge Ave because these neighborhoods are often associated with drug dealing, violence, etc., as well as being predominantly black. As a consequence of this reality it has been racialized in the minds of white society that geographic locations such as ghettos and low-income housing is an African American phenomenon. The reality, however, is much more complex, because such areas are a construction of white society’s racist policies of isolationism and segregation of African Americans from the larger society.

In the article titled “The Making of Groveland” by Mary Pattillo-McCoy we see an example of how white society has created a disadvantaged black culture. The Chicago neighborhood of Groveland is a prime of example of society at work. Groveland in the 1960s had a total population of 12,710 people in which only six inhabitants were African-American. In just 10 short years the neighborhood transformed into being over 80 percent white, and today is a staggering 98 percent black (p. 248). This rapid transformation is largely a bi-product of real-estate agents utilizing selling tactics such as “blockbusting”⁵ in which they prey on the fears and concerns of white homeowners that as the presence of blacks in the area will increase, property values fall. While this tactic for the homeowner may not be racially based, certainly is of an economic concern, given that one’s house is a great source of wealth and probably a significant reason as to why white families have an average net worth of

⁵ A term used in the documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.

\$140,700 whereas blacks have an average of \$20,400.⁶

Tactics such as blockbusting and redlining are also used to discriminate based on race by refusing to grant loans, mortgages, or insurance to blacks to buy houses in white advantaged neighborhoods. These tactics have created separate societies within the larger societal structure in which blacks are isolated from the white society where much of the economic power exists. For the Burnett family who wished to purchase a home in Levittown, Long Island in the 1950s this was impossible because this area was constructed to be the perfect ideal white society and blacks were not allowed to “penetrate through.”⁷ This is very much the opposite the situation of Groveland. It turned a middle-class neighborhood that was largely white into a low-income area with a lot of social strain and a greater likelihood of crime. It did this because it removed the economic middle class of the area and replaced it with a poor class of people. Ironically the first set of African-American families in this neighborhood were as affluent and as well off economically as their white counterparts, but the scare tactics of real estate agents drove off the white families who were bombarded with images of young black mothers pushing strollers in their neighborhoods, and other such negative visuals they could use to drive off the white families and make the sell.

Understanding these injustices is all apart of the process that goes along with this last step of commitment. The last step I believe is a lifelong battle because as long racism exists we will be constantly dealing with race. Racism is not something that is going to stop easily in our society; it is a day-to-day phenomenon. Even earlier on

⁶ Information on wealth comes from a reading handed out in class titled “Race, Wealth and the Commons.”

⁷ A term used in the documentary *Race: The Power of an Illusion*.

this very day of Sunday May 18, 2008, I encountered a situation that was troublesome to me. Three young black kids came into my store today causing a disturbance. One of the three kids started yelling the N word, and I asked him politely to stop yelling in the store as well as to refrain from using such an inappropriate word. When I said this he argued back at me by saying the word “aint a swear, it’s a word for black people.” Once again I was encountered with a very simplistic definition of perhaps one of the most troublesome and complex words ever to be constructed in America. The reality of all of it is that words such as the N word, Guinea, etc., do not really have any true meaning; they are all words that have been created over time to which no fixed meaning is attached. These words have no meaning until we as a society give them meaning. For the eight year old Dave, the N word was just a word I never heard it until others told me that it was a word for black people. This very idea embodies Howard Taylor’s essay entitled “Defining Race” in which he argues that race is a social construction that has been created through human interactions with one another throughout the course of history. Until recently I was not aware of the transient nature of race, but now I realize it is all subject to historical time as well as individual experience and interpretation. I as an Italian was not considered “white” to the Irish kids I went to school with.

CONCLUSION

These issues in regard to race will eventually need to be answered as America becomes “A Nation of Minorities” (Chideya 2006) in which the non-Hispanic white population that currently represents 75 percent of the U.S population is expected to decline. The decline is a result of exponential rise, during the last 30 years, in the migration from non-white areas of the world

such as Asia, and Latin America, to the U.S. This massive wave of immigration is similar to the influx of foreign born peoples that transpired at Ellis Island in the late 1800s to the early 1900s in which masses of southern and eastern Europeans such as Jews, Italians, Poles, etc., flooded the Island of New York (Foner 2006). These people were initially not perceived as “white” and therefore denied participation in many essential sects of society such as politics, certain jobs, etc., but the more next generation assimilated into America and became successful, the more they were accepted as “white.” If groups such as Armenians, Italians, and Jews can become viewed as “white” and be allowed entrance into the privileged classes of society who is to say that eventually Hispanics, Asians, blacks, etc., won’t be eventually allowed similar participation in our society.

Before entering this class just four months ago my whiteness would have blinded me to these realities, but in this final stage of development my eyes are opened and I am well aware that we do not live in a color blind utopian society in which stereotypes don’t exist. In being aware of these injustices, I must make a conscious effort as a member of the dominate group in society to at the very least change my own prejudices if I cannot help transform those of society. My actions are significant, since as an employer who has power to hire people I have to be willing to look at more than what is on their resume, as well as to see beyond their skin color, their hair style, etc., and view them on equal footing.

In the past, I was unable to do this. I often would go into an interview and already have an answer in the back of my mind just by seeing names such as Rashaad, Ntianu, etc., on the applications. Now that I am aware of my mistakes, as well as of the reality that my whiteness is not an inherent trait but a construction of society, I must be willing to work on the role I play in the ra-

cialized world—a role that is significant because of its potentially damaging consequences. However, I am making a commitment to work on my behaviors, and at the very least if I can’t change society’s racial structure I certainly don’t want to be adding to the problem.

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