Introduction
The future of whiteness: a map of the ‘third wave’

France Winnddance Twine and Charles Gallagher

Abstract
This article surveys the interdisciplinary field of whiteness studies and outlines an emerging ‘third wave’ of research in this international and interdisciplinary field. This article begins by locating the origins of whiteness studies in the work of W.E.B. DuBois, who provided the intellectual foundations for this body of scholarship. We then identify three characteristics that distinguish this ‘third wave’ of research from earlier studies. This new wave of research utilizes: 1) innovative research methodologies including analyses of ‘racial consciousness biographies’, music and visual media; 2) an analysis of the recuperation of white innocence and reconstitution of white supremacy in neo-apartheid, post-imperial and post-Civil Rights contexts; and 3) analyses of white identity formation among members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Keywords: Anti-racism; critical race theory; sociological research; whiteness; white supremacy; W.E.B. DuBois.

The formation of white identities and ideologies and cultural practices that buttress white supremacy, have been central to the intellectual projects of US black scholars for more than a century (DuBois 1970 [1899], 1936; Roediger 1998). In the 1990s the number of scholarly works on the study of whiteness and white identities grew exponentially, particularly in the United States. Among media elites, however, the perception remained, that this field of inquiry was, at best, a passing intellectual fad, and at its worst a means for careerist white academics to acquire, as The New Republic’s Margaret Talbot put it, ‘a portentous new legitimacy’ (1997, p. 118). Whiteness and white identities is not simply a new academic fashion.
Writing in *The New York Times Magazine* over a decade ago Talbot explained that this field of study, or academic ‘enterprise’ as she framed it, consisted of two warring, but equally irrelevant theoretical camps. One approach to whiteness studies was said to be inhabited by ‘post-structural-type scholars who clearly adore the idea of white trash culture’ and the other by anti-racist crusaders hostile to ‘American liberalism’ who wish to ‘abolish’ whiteness. Her understanding of the field simply brokered on two familiar academic stereotypes: the narcissistic, out of touch academic hipster and radical Marxist dinosaurs who loathe US style capitalism. She concluded her withering indictment by suggesting that studying whiteness essentialized race itself, ‘making those categories seem immutable’ even though, by Talbot’s own admission, ‘both fieldwork and statistical studies – the kind of work done, often slowly, in sociology or anthropology departments – is pretty sparse’ (Talbot 1997, p. 119).

The slow, empirical academic work on whiteness has now been done. The study of whiteness and white identities now includes hundreds of books, ethnographies, scholarly articles and reviews that examine the role whiteness and white identities play in framing and reworking racial categories, hierarchies and boundaries. Drawing on how racial identities frame and are framed by nation, class, gender and immigration, these new empirical studies of whiteness and white identities pose novel questions that challenge existing historical and contemporary accounts of racial identity construction. The recent research on whiteness focuses primarily on examining and exposing the often invisible or masked power relations within existing racial hierarchies.

It is simply no longer the case, as Margaret Andersen suggests in an otherwise outstanding overview on whiteness, that the ‘mechanisms and sites of racial domination and subordination’ (Anderson 2003, p. 28) are absent from this area of research. Much of the recent scholarship on whiteness and white identities has moved beyond ‘voyeuristic ethnographic accounts’ and personal narratives. The field now includes critiques of whiteness that examine the institutional arrangements, ideological beliefs and state practices that maintain white privilege even as those prerogatives are being challenged by anti-racist social movements, identity politics, multiculturalism and immigration.

The articles in the special edition explore how white privilege is maintained even as the prerogatives of whiteness are challenged by the new interracial social movements, progressive social policies, democratization projects and multiculturalism. It is these white inflections, the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented, that is the central focus of third wave whiteness. The new scholarship has
opened up new lines of research and analyses of racisms and racial formations that we call Third Wave Whiteness. This third wave of whiteness studies incorporates and builds on existing scholarship on racial identity construction with a particular focus on emerging empirical accounts of how whiteness is deployed and the discursive strategies used to maintain and destabilize white identity and privilege.

Much of the recent research on whiteness explores the ideological practices that render white privilege invisible (Lipsitz 1998; Twine 1996, 2004; Frankenberg 2001; Gallagher 2003b; Ansell 2006), the ways in which whiteness is increasingly a contested category (Bhattacharyya, Gabriel and Small 2002; Doane 2003; Anderson 2003), how race politics transform whiteness into a ‘victimized’ marked identity (Wellman 1993; Yancey 2003; Gallagher 2004) and the power relations that allow whiteness to be positioned as a benign cultural signifier (Dyer 1997; Bonnett 2000). Third wave analysis takes as its starting the understanding that whiteness is not now, nor has it ever been, a static, uniform category of social identification (Saxton 1990; Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005). In this way third wave whiteness avoids the tendency towards essentializing accounts of whiteness by locating race as one of many social relations that shape individual and group identity. A third wave perspective sees whiteness as a multiplicity of identities that are historically grounded, class specific, politically manipulated and gendered social locations that inhabit local custom and national sentiments within the context of the new ‘global village’.

This exceptional third wave of intellectual inquiry into whiteness is now examined in virtually every branch of the social sciences. Social geographers map how residential proximity of whites to racialized minority groups shape racial attitudes and group affiliations (Durrheim 2005; Forrest and Dunn 2006; Kincheloe 2006). Post-colonial scholars examine how accounts of nationalism and whiteness become synonymous with citizenship and which groups are granted ‘legitimate’ access to state resources (Nayak 2002; Garner 2006; Twine 2004). Given the mobilization of far right movements throughout Europe and the United States this line of research is a needed examination of how whiteness and nationalism are used to portray racial minorities as perpetual foreigners, potential terrorists or permanent cultural outsiders (Chan 2006; Juge and Perez 2006; Lamont 2000; Potter and Phillips 2006). Education scholars chronicle how whiteness is learned, internalized, privileged, institutionally reproduced and performed in educational settings (Perry 2002; Gallagher 2003; Lewis 2003; Choules 2006). Feminist scholars address how whiteness and gender shape racialized identities and how identity construction and patriarchy are linked to racism, nation and class location (Twine 1996, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Frankenberg 1993, 2001; Walker 2005).
This diverse scholarship is linked by a common denominator – an examination of how power and oppression are articulated, redefined and reasserted through various political discourses and cultural practices that privilege whiteness even when the prerogatives of the dominant group are contested. Although the symbolic and material value of whiteness is in flux, one can locate whites who belong to economically deprived communities throughout the world. However, the concentration of wealth, power and privilege for the latter groups is, as Howard Winant argues ‘outliers in the planetary correlation of darkness and poverty’ (Winant 2001, p.305). While whiteness often is synonymous with regimes of terror, genocide and white supremacy, a third wave perspective on whiteness rejects the implicit assumption that whiteness is only an unconditional, universal and equally experienced location of privilege and power. The empirical studies included in this special issue demonstrate the situational, relational and historic contingencies that are reshaping and repositioning white identities within the context of shifting racial boundaries.

Reflecting on the relational nature of white privilege, Ruth Frankenberg observes that ‘whiteness as a site of privilege is not absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage and subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect or modify it’ (Frankenberg 2001, p. 76). Poor whites living in the southern part of the United States, London or Africa typically do experience white skin privilege relative to racially subordinated groups. However, whites living in exclusive, all-white gated enclaves throughout the world experience and live whiteness in vastly different ways than poor and socially marginalized white populations. Third wave whiteness makes these contradictions explicit by acknowledging the relational, contextual and situational ways in which white privilege can be at the same time a taken-for-granted entitlement, a desired social status, a perceived source of victimization and a tenuous situational identity. It is these white inflections, the nuanced and locally specific ways in which whiteness as a form of power is defined, deployed, performed, policed and reinvented that is the central focus of third wave whiteness.

First wave whiteness

The critical treatment of whiteness owes its greatest intellectual debt to the work of W.E.B. DuBois. Three observations that DuBois made about race and whiteness provide the theoretical foundation for critical white studies. In Black Reconstruction in America 1860–1880 (1936) DuBois argued that white labourers in the United States came to embrace the racial identity of the dominant group, rather than adopt an identity framed around a class solidarity with recently freed slaves,
because white workers received a ‘public and psychological wage’ by joining or at least queuing themselves up for admission into the white race. Membership in the dominant group provided labourers on the margins of whiteness an extensive and heady mix of social and material privileges. On the material level white labourers could monopolize economic, social and state resources. At the social psychological level all white workers, but particularly those white workers on the economic or social margins, were provided with an inexhaustible ‘wage’ in the form of social status, symbolic capital and deference from blacks that embracing white supremacy provided. By adopting the racist beliefs and practices of the dominant group, labourers from southern and eastern Europe were able to eventually shed the stigma of occupying a middling racial identity between whites and blacks. The material rewards of whiteness were substantial for immigrant labourers. Whiteness granted workers racially exclusive footing on the first rung of America’s expanding industrial mobility ladder, provided an inherited racialized social status to future generations who would come to see themselves as unambiguously white and created the ability to accumulate and transfer intergenerational wealth (Shapiro 2004).

In *The Philadelphia Negro* (1970) [1899]) DuBois provides a scathing critique of ‘color prejudice’ that he chronicled in his groundbreaking study of Philadelphia’s Seventh Ward. The ideological import, cultural meaning and how the relative invisibility of whiteness by whites maintains white supremacy was observed by DuBois over one hundred years ago. The larger problem combating the issue of racial prejudice, DuBois argued, was that ‘most white people are unconscious of any such powerful and vindictive feeling; they regard color prejudice as the easily explicable feeling that intimate social intercourse with a lower race is not only undesirable but impractical if our present standards of culture are to be maintained’ (1970 [1899], p. 322). DuBois explains that for whites colour prejudice ‘is not to-day responsible for all or perhaps the greatest part of the Negro problems; or of the disabilities under which the race labors . . . they cannot see how such a feeling has much influence on the real situation or alters the social condition of the mass of Negroes’ (ibid.). What follows in the next thirty-five pages in *The Philadelphia Negro* is DuBois chronicling the ways white supremacy results in discrimination, institutional racism, prejudice and the material deprivation of blacks, a situation a majority of whites are ‘unconscious’ of, or do not care to ‘see’. This blind spot to racial inequality remains in large part unchanged. In the United States a majority of whites (71 per cent) believe blacks have ‘more’ or ‘about the same opportunities’ as whites (Kaiser 2001) even though every quality of life indicator tells a story of continued and in many cases growing racial inequality.
White supremacism, in concert with early modern capitalism, cemented in place a two-tiered, mutually reinforcing system of material and psychological oppression that is painfully evident throughout the globe. Unlike the rather obvious patterns of discrimination and legally sanctioned state sponsored terror that characterized much of US history, contemporary discursive accounts of race and whiteness serve to make the material benefits of whiteness appear normal, natural and unremarkable. Third wave whiteness is an attempt to make the privileges associated with whiteness ‘conscious’ by illustrating how white advantage are maintained through various ideological narratives. These accounts include how colour blindness as a political ideology is increasingly used to negate institutional racism or state reforms (Twine 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Gallagher 2003; Lewis 2004; Ansell 2006), the use of cultural deficit arguments to explain away racial inequality and demonize racial minorities (Bobo 2001; Bobo and Smith 1998) and how appeals to nationalism are employed to mask the extent to which racism motivates reactionary politics (Lamont 2000). These accounts of inequality also serve to deflect attention away from the critiques of white racial dominance and towards other ostensibly non-racial social concerns like immigration, class inequality, post 9/11 geo-politics and cultural nationalism.

DuBois details, and critical white studies expounds upon, how whiteness operates as the normative cultural center that is for many whites an invisible identity. DuBois understood that whiteness is not monolithic nor is it a uniform category of social identification. As DuBois phrased it in *The Souls of Black Folks* whites in the South were not of a ‘solid’ or uniform opinion concerning racial matters. He explains that ‘To-day even the attitude of the Southern whites towards blacks is not, as so many assume, in all cases the same’ (1982 [1903], p. 92). While acknowledging that racial prejudice, institutional racism and white supremacy are core features of US society, DuBois nonetheless discerned that there was no single white experience concerning race that all whites universally shared. DuBois’s framing of whiteness as a host of competing, situational, mutating and at time warring ethnic identities is a point of inquiry of third wave whiteness.

Finally, DuBois’s observation that ‘the problem of the twentieth century is the color line’ has been used as prophetic judgement of the struggles the United States would be forced to confront. However the rest of this oft-quoted line demonstrates DuBois’s keen understanding that white supremacy’s hegemony was global in scope. The entire line in the opening second chapter of *Souls* reads ‘The problem of the twentieth century in the problem of the color-line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and in the islands of the sea’ (1982 [1903], p. 54).
Whiteness as a form of privilege and power ‘travels’ from western countries to colonies throughout the world. As whiteness travels the globe it reinvents itself locally upon arrival. As Raka Shome points out ‘whether it was the physical travel of white bodies colonizing “other worlds” or today’s neocolonial travel of white cultural products – media, music, television products, academic texts, and Anglo fashions’ (1999, p.108) white hegemony continues to shape the colour line. A recent study found that 40 per cent of women in Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan routinely use whitening creams to both enhance their social status and increase the odds they will be able to ‘marry up’ socio-economically (Fuller 2006). Bleaching salons and ‘Fair and Lovely’ lightening soaps are part of the $250 million dollar ‘fairness-cosmetics market’ in India (Perry 2005). After controlling for all the relevant variables (English proficiency, education, work experience) researchers in the United States found that immigrants with lighter skin earned up to 15 per cent more compared to immigrants with darker skin (*New York Times*, 28 January 2007, p. 19). Not only does whiteness travel the globe but it also reinvents within locally upon arrival.

**Second wave whiteness: black theorists, feminist theorists and critical legal theorists**

Second wave whiteness includes a host of critical race scholars, many of them US blacks who continued on in the DuBoisian tradition of challenging and making white supremacy and institutional racism visible. The seminal works of E. Franklin Frazier, St. Clair Drake, Horace Cayton, James Baldwin and Ralph Ellson (to name just a few) presented unflinching empirical accounts of racism and its root causes. These scholars were the Cassandras of their time; providing detailed, accurate accounts of racial inequality that would went unheeded, disregarded or ignored.

Throughout much of the twentieth-century mainstream, white social scientists did not focus on the institutions that created, reproduced and normalized white supremacy. The focus that guided whites in the academy primarily concerned itself with the pathology of racist individuals rather than the structural forces that produced racist social systems. The question that guided a majority of race research after the Second World War in the United States was framed by Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944). As Myrdal saw it, the dilemma the United States found itself in was the need to reconcile the deeply held belief of equal opportunity for all and profound racism that structured every facet of American society. It was Myrdal’s contention that:
even a poor and uneducated white person in some isolated and backward rural region in the Deep South, who is violently prejudiced against the Negro and intent upon depriving him of civil rights and human independence, has also a whole compartment of in his valuation sphere housing the entire American Creed of liberty, equality, justice and fair opportunity for everybody.

(Myrdal 1944, p. xlviii)

The cognitive dissonance was defined as the tension guilt-wracked whites experienced trying to negotiate the ideal of equal opportunity and the Jim Crow racism in which they were embedded. America’s racial dilemma was not the depths of which white supremacy organized every social, economic and cultural aspect of society; nor was it the material or symbolic rewards racism delivered to whites. The problem occurring to Myrdal was to be found in ‘what goes on in the minds of white Americans’ (1944, p. li). As a matter of sociological research the material and psychological advantages normalized through white supremacy that DuBois outlined were rejected in favour of an approach that focused on the individual afflictions of the ‘white mind’, rather then the structures that reproduce racism and inequality from one generation to the next.

Toni Morrison, a Pulitzer Prize winning novelist and US black literary theorist, helped usher in scholarship that would shift attention away from psychologistic accounts of racial inequality to ones that examined the discursive practices that render whiteness invisible. In *Playing in the Dark* (1992), a critical interpretation of US fiction, Morrison reveals how whiteness operates as a cultural referent and normative identity through literacy tropes that frame all races but whiteness as marked categories. Through this act of racial negation immigrant populations could both come to understand their own ‘Americanness as an opposition to the resident black population’ (Morrison 1992, p. 47) and frame American as a racial signifier that would come to ‘mean’ only white.

Critical legal theory has also made significant contributions to second wave whiteness by linking how legal institutions define who is white and consequently which groups are entitled to the material and social advantages whiteness confers (Delgado and Stefancic 1996). Using DuBois’s notion that whiteness operates as a ‘wage’ Cheryl Harris (1993), a US black legal theorist, argues that being defined by the courts as white granted rights to groups who were then able to lay claim to the resources (land, jobs, contracts, schools) that only whites could enjoy. She argues that whiteness, like land or buildings, operates as a form of ‘property’, one that needs to be policed, guarded and regulated. Ian Haney Lopez (1996) examines how the law came to define non-white and white status and the implications this definition
had for citizenship. Being unfit for naturalization became synonymous with being non-white which also became shorthand for ‘degeneracy of intellect morals, self restraint’ while being white signified ‘moral maturity self-assurance, personal independence and political sophistication’ (Lopez 1996, p. 16). The state did of course maintain white privilege in these court cases, but Lopez argues the parameters of whiteness were altered through this process and the nation itself was permanently remade as racially categories were redefined. This nation building through racial exclusion for some and inclusion for others has been the focus of similar works done on Brazil and South Africa (Twine 1997; Marx 1998).

How racial minorities have been written out of history, the lack of attention to the way immigrants on the racial margins were whitened and the means by which culture and ideology work to constantly re-cloak whiteness as a normative identity have been a central focus of white studies’ second wave. Historians such as David Roediger (1991, 2005), Theodore Allen (1994) and Matthew Jacobson (1998) have retold the story of race and ethnic identity in the United States by examining how changes in American labour practices, the racial ambiguity of European immigrants and the tangible rewards groups received for aligning themselves with the dominant group all conspired to reframe race, rework whiteness and maintain white supremacy.

Third wave whiteness

The articles in this special issue provide a preliminary map of what we provisionally term the ‘third wave’ of whiteness studies. This ‘wave’ can be distinguished from earlier waves in several ways. First, third wave whiteness employs a range of innovative and renovative research methodologies including the use of internet sites (Back 2002), racial consciousness biographies (Twine 1999a, 1999b, 2004; McKinney 2005; Knowles 2006; McDermott 2006), music (see Mann, this issue) and photo-elicitation interviews (Twine and Steinbugler 2006). The increasing use of what Twine terms ‘racial consciousness biographies’ has enabled sociologists, particularly ethnographers, to carefully explore how whites produce, translate, and negotiate whiteness in their everyday private and public lives. This wave of research builds upon earlier work in critical race studies by scholars who have examined how people learn race and racism (Van Ausdale and Feagin 2002). One example of this type of innovative use of racial biographies is the work of Karyn McKinney (2004) who collected racial biographies of two hundred university students in two regions in the United States. In this same tradition, this special issue includes an example of this type of research by Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens. Drawing on two separate research studies, they strategically employ similar innovative research
methodologies to explore the meaning and cultural translation of whiteness as a Dutch cultural expression of everyday racism. Essed and Trienekens draw on student essays and analyses of newspaper discussions of multiculturalism to demonstrate how the meaning of whiteness is translated and managed in a European nation in which it is taboo to systemically collect data by race or ethnicity.

Second, the third wave of whiteness studies is characterized by an interest in the cultural practices and discursive strategies employed by whites as they struggle to recuperate, reconstitute and restore white identities and the supremacy of whiteness in post-apartheid, post-industrial, post-imperial, post-Civil Rights. Troy Duster (1997) uses the term ‘neo-apartheid’ to describe these contexts. This reconstitution of white identities, recuperation of white privilege, and less often resistance to racism, has been a central focus of third wave whiteness studies (Gallagher 1997, 2006; Nayak 2002; Weis 2004; Knowles 2006). Some of this work owes a significant debt to feminist scholarship on race, intimacy and the gendered labour of carework that women in heterosexual families are required to provide (Weis 2004; Byrne 2006). This research examines the quotidian production of white identities ‘on the ground’ as people move across public, private, urban, rural spaces. In this special issue, Melissa Steyn and Donald Foster contribute an article that belongs to this genre of third wave whiteness studies. Drawing on discourses that they call ‘white talk’ in two mainstream newspaper columns from the largest daily circulation in South Africa, Steyn and Foster analyse discursive moves that attempt to defend ongoing racial inequality and buttress white supremacy in post-apartheid South Africa.

Third, whiteness studies scholars, based in the United States, are also shifting their analytical lens away from European immigrants and their descendants towards an analysis of white identity formations among immigrant and post-migration communities whose national origins are in the Caribbean, Latin America, Mexico and other nations outside of Europe (see Basler, this issue). Since 1965 the vast majority of immigrants to the United States are coming from Mexico, the Caribbean, Central and South America and only a minority from Europe. In the United States, the addition of the ‘Hispanic’ category to the 1970 census and the subsequent classification of individuals with Spanish surnames as ‘Hispanic’ or Latino has generated new identities and political constituencies at the federal and national level. This community has diverse origins and, rather than being a monolithic group, is fractured not only along lines of class, education and region but between those who self-identify as ‘white’ and those who embrace a ‘brown’, black or multiracial identity. Sociological analyses of the recruitment of ethnic minorities to ‘whiteness’ and the strategic deployment of whiteness by groups currently at its margins are needed.
to better understand the production of whiteness and the achievement of ‘white’ identities by members of ethnic minorities. The complicated meaning of whiteness and white identities to the Hispanic/Latino populations, has been undertheorized by whiteness studies scholars, particularly as it intersects with age, class, skin colour, tenure and region in the United States.

In ‘White Americans, the new minority?: Non-blacks and the ever-expanding boundaries of whiteness’, Jonathan Warren and France Winddance Twine (1997) argued that the white category has expanded in the United States to include groups previously excluded and that it will continue to expand, with blacks continuing symbolically and politically to represent the most significant racially defining other at the national level. Thus, there exists a space for non-black immigrants and their children to position themselves as ‘white’. The evidence that whiteness is continuing to expand in the United States, and that it continues to incorporate ethnics of multiracial, Asian, Mexicans and other Latinos of non-European heritage, is evident among some segments of the US born Asian American population. For Asian Americans whose parents were born in the United States, particularly where one parent is white, the assertion that Asians will remain or be viewed as ‘forever foreign’ (Zhou 2004) does not necessarily reflect the ways in which the white race has historically incorporated groups who have been on the racial margins. A 2000 National Health Interview Survey (Lee 2001) of multiracial offspring found that among those who self-identify as being both Asian and white, close to half of the respondents marked white as their ‘main race’ in follow-up interviews. In interracial relationships where the father was white about two-thirds of multiracial Japanese and Chinese families defined their offspring as white. These families are more likely to live in white suburbs (Farley 1999) and tend to have attitudes on race relations, and more specifically negative attitudes concerning blacks, that are similar to whites (Herring and Amissah 1997). Light skinned, middle-class Latinos, many who self-define as white already, are marrying non-Hispanic whites. It is likely the children of these unions will self-identify and be viewed as members of the white race. The ‘racial redistricting’ (Gallagher 2004) or redrawing of the colour line that is taking place in the US points to an expansion of the white population over the next fifty years.

In this special issue, scholars trained in anthropology, geography, sociology, psychology, history and English provide nuanced socio-political analyses of the formation of white coalitions, the management of whiteness and white identities among the following: Mexican Americans (Basler), Native Americans/American Indians (Lipsitz), Dutch students (Essed and Treiènekens), and retired and repatriated white colonials (Knowles), white South Africans (Steyn and Foster)
and unhyphenated white Americans (Mann). The articles we have selected for this special issue provide a theoretical and empirical snapshot of what, in our view, constitutes the third wave of whiteness studies. We use the term ‘third wave’ provisionally as a theoretical space holder. The articles in this special issue are not exhaustive or even representative of all of new work in this wave. However, like the canary in the miner’s cage, they signal the coming empirical trends and theoretical orientations. We will briefly outline several analytical shifts that, in our view, are moving whiteness studies to broaden its empirical base and deepen its international contours.

White voices and the soundtracks of whiteness: popular whiteness

An analysis of the cultural production of whiteness and the constitution of white identities requires a range of strategies to protect, legitimate and secure white privilege. Micro-political analyses of diverse cultural sites, including newspapers, autobiographical writings, music, public policy debates, social relationships and state discourse, are central to third wave whiteness. Three articles in this special issue analyse the production of white subjects and the reproduction of whiteness through music (Mann), newspaper columns (Steyn and Foster), and media coverage of multiculturalism (Essed and Treinekens). Media such as newspapers (increasingly on-line internet versions) and music are popular spaces where collective white identities are produced and white identities normalized.

In ‘Repertoires for talking white: resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa’, Melissa Steyn and Donald Foster, both white scholars based at the University of Cape Town, illuminate the flexibility of discursive resources employed by white South Africans as they struggle to ‘give White South Africans the greatest competitive advantage’. Using the mainstream press as an ideological battleground over representations that legitimate ongoing social inequalities, we learn that a new international whiteness is being established in South Africa. Steyn and Foster analyse two discourses from two newspaper columns, one from the business and entertainment sections of The Sunday Times. Steyn and Foster argue that white South Africans engage in discursive practices that enable them to ‘enact, establish, entrench and promote the dominant white ideology through ongoing circulation of representations of contemporary South Africa’. A form of ‘white talk’ circulates in the mainstream press that consists of opinions, themes and attitudes that would be shared by a large percentage of South Africans, and thus would indicate a sense of compatriotism. These discourses emphasize the importance of values such as democracy, social development, non-racialism and non-sexism, reconciliation, and individual freedom while legitimating
ongoing racial disparities. These flexible discursive resources allow white South Africans to utilize the mainstream media to resist changes to the power structure. This is accomplished by strategically employing discourses that present positive self-representations while ‘reproducing and extending the power structures of whiteness into post-apartheid South African society’.1

How is whiteness translated, understood and managed in a nation in which race is a legal category, but is invisible as an official public policy category in state discourses. In ‘Who wants to feel white?: race, Dutch culture and contested identities’, Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens provides a necessary corrective to the literature on race and whiteness that privilege the English language and have been dominated by analyses and analytical frames based upon the North American and British analyses of racial hierarchies and meanings. Drawing upon two different empirical studies, including an analysis of student autobiographical writings of Dutch students, Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens argue that ‘The notion of race remains largely unnamed though not invisible the Netherlands and (mainland) north-eastern Europe. The systematic nature of racism, everyday racism, is being denied, and with that the acknowledgement that white skin colour is one of the criteria of inclusion in the community of “real” European nationals. But in the lived perception and in the most commonly used model of explanation for (racial) inequality in Europe, however, one does not primarily refer to skin colour, but to deeper connotations of citizenship, national identity, western superiority and civilization.’ Public policy debates around immigrants, particularly Muslim and African immigrants, and their incorporation into the labour force are linked to European supremacist perceptions of modernity and western civilization. We also learn that the Dutch term *Allochtoon*, a new racial-ethnic label, emerged at the same time apartheid ended (another Dutch term). This newly coined term can best be translated to mean the opposite of the word *Autochtonous*, which means indigenous, native, authentic. Thus these two mutually exclusive terms frame the debate around citizenship and belonging in terms of ‘real Dutch’ and ‘not quite Dutch’. In public discourses and policies ‘allochtoon refers foremost to non-western ethnic groups considered disadvantaged or less integrated into “modern” societies such as the Netherlands: persons (and children of persons) born in Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, the Dutch Antilles, Aruba, former Central Yugoslavia, or countries in South and Mid America, Africa and Asia.’ However, further distinctions are made between ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ *allochtonen* because the racial connotations are not absolute and immigrants from the former colony of the Dutch Indies – many of whom are mixed white-Asian heritage – count as western
allochtonen. This title also applies to the Japanese, who under apartheid in South Africa qualified as honorary whites.

How did country music become white, and how does it stay white? This is the central question asked by Geoff Mann, a Canadian scholar, in the article ‘Why does country music sound white? Race and the voice of nostalgia’. In a brilliant analysis that draws on a range of cultural theorists from Antonio Gramsci to Paul Gilroy to Paul DiMaggio, we learn that the use of ‘nostalgia’ or ‘mythic past’ is central to the production of a white American racial subject. American country music, through the erasure of its multiracial origins, produces a form of ‘white talk’ that can only be heard by whites, and produces whiteness. Country music can be characterized as a specific soundtrack of whiteness. We learn that the production of US white subjects depends on certain historical narratives and erasures that country music provides its listeners. In his words music provides whites with ‘a cultural-political narrative that produces its own past that is not only white, but a particular kind of white’.

### White dissidents: new coalitions and composite identities

Research on white activists, or white *dissidents* has typically focused on anti-racists (race-traitors) or white supremacists (Blee 1991, 2002; Segrest 1994; O’Brien 2001; Thompson 2001). Less attention has been given to transformations in white identities. A small but growing body of work on whiteness examines white activists who may have previously engaged in white supremacist organizing but also form strategic alliances with members of ethnic minorities to achieve particular goals (see Lipsitz, this issue). In ‘Walleye warriors and white Identities: Native Americans’ treaty rights, composite identities and social movements’, George Lipsitz provides an exemplary case of an interracial coalition consisting of anti-racist whites and Native American activists in northern Wisconsin. Lipsitz provides an inspiring map of the strategies employed by Native Americans to launch a social movement that generated new *anti-racist white identities* among former white supremacists. This case study is emblematic of the ‘third wave’ of scholarship on whiteness and social movements. Lipsitz shows us the *local* conditions that can give rise to the formation of ‘white composite’ identities that facilitate political alliances between two formerly estranged groups: Native Americans and the white supremacists who had organized against their spear fishing treaty rights in the 1990s. Lipsitz demonstrates how Native Americans mobilized white allies against white supremacist mob violence and corporate exploitation of mineral resources, thus creating the basis for a new white identity that was not organized around anti-Indian racism. The struggles of Native Americans in defence of their treaty
rights has received little attention from social movement theorists. Yet, we can learn lessons about the conditions under which new white anti-racist identities can supplant white anti-Indian identities by examining the strategies employed by Native Americans to educate the white public and build a broad based interracial coalition that challenge corporate and state exploitation of Indian lands.

In ‘The landscape of post-imperial whiteness in rural Britain’, Caroline Knowles draws on interviews with retired white English colonial administrators who have returned home to southern England. The research of Caroline Knowles is emblematic of ‘third wave’ whiteness in its synthesis of theoretical insights from post-colonial studies and critical race studies. Knowles pays careful attention to significance of rural space and the ways that locality shape ideologies of race, nation and belonging. Her analysis of the ideological production of white racism in rural England among repatriated whites is part of a larger project on white return migration along colonial routes. Her work tracks a reverse flow back from former colonies to rural England where white post-colonial identities have to be reconstituted with fewer material resources. Knowles is at the front of a wave of post-colonial studies that marry the concerns of critical race theorists and geographers with an analysis of the lives of retired non-elites who have returned home.

**White Latinos**

There remains a dearth of rigorous empirical research on the constitution of white identities and whiteness in Latino immigrant and post-migration communities. Analyses are needed of the ‘whiteness projects’ that involve the recruitment and resistance to white supremacy by segments of the Mexican American community. In ‘White dreams and red votes: Mexican Americans and the lure of inclusion in the Republican Party’, Carleen Basler, a native of California and a Latino sociologist, analyses the discourses employed by Mexican Americans who voted for Republican Party candidates in the 2004 presidential election. Her rigorous research exemplifies a multi-methodological approach to analysing racial hierarchies, racial logics and conservative party politics. Basler combined interviews with Mexican Americans who voted Republican along with an analysis of voting patterns to analyse the ideological motivations that inspired Mexican Americans to support politically conservative legislation and to support Republican candidates who have endorsed anti-immigrant public policies. We learn from Basler that in the 2004 US presidential election Mexican Americans employed voting to realign themselves with white elites and to distance themselves from their darker and poorer Mexican relatives and from black Americans. By focusing on a
segment of the ‘white’ Latino population and their use of voting to realign themselves with white elites, Basler provides insights into how Mexican Americans seek to secure belonging through their alliance with whiteness via the Republican Party. Her research also shows the problems with lumping all Latinos or Hispanics into one box by revealing the deep intra-familial ideological and political fractures between darker and lighter skinned members of the same Mexican families.

**Conclusion**

In a trenchant analysis of the ‘properties of whiteness’, Troy Duster uses the metaphor of water to describe how white privilege operates. In his words:

> While water is a fluid state, at a certain contingent moment, under thirty-two degrees, it is transformed into a solid state – ice. This is an easy binary formulation. But things get more complicated, because when \( H_2O \), at still another moment boils, it begins to vaporize or evaporate . . . Race, like \( H_2O \), can take many forms, but unlike \( H_2O \) it can transform itself in a nano-second. It takes time for ice to boil and for vapor to condense and freeze but race can be, simultaneously, Janus-faced and multifaceted – and also produce a singularly dominant social hierarchy. Indeed, if we make the fundamental mistake of reifying any one of those states as more real than another, we will lose basic insights into the nature and character of racial stratification in America. So it depends on when a picture is taken in this sequence and on who takes the picture as to whether race is best understood as fluid or solid or vapor – or has evaluated into a temporarily locatable nonexistence, a color-blind fragment in time and space.

(Duster 2001, pp. 114–15)

Duster reminds us that ‘whiteness is deeply embedded in the routine structures of economic and political life. From ordinary service at Denny’s Restaurants, to far greater access to bank loans to simple police-event-free driving – all these things have come unreflectively with the territory of being white’ (2001, p.114). The contributors to this special issue help us to understand how mundane and momentous practices reinscribe, reconstitute and transform whiteness, white identities and white privilege. Our theoretical aim is to map out new empirical approaches to the analyses of whiteness and white identity formations, in an effort to dismantle racial hierarchies so that someday we live in a racially just world in which children will no longer
understand the meaning of the term ‘racism’ or white supremacy. These will be archaic terms they will look up in dictionaries.

Note

1. We are borrowing this term from Lorraine Delia Kenny’s ethnography on upper middle-class white girls in Long Island, New York titled Daughters of Suburbia (2000). Writing of the normalization of white middle-class suburban girls and the demonizing of black girls as pregnant teenagers and unmarried mothers, Lorraine Kenny argues that media portrayals are an important part of what she terms ‘technologies of whiteness’ (2000, p. 159). She argues that technologies of whiteness ‘misconstrues reality and protects and legitimates white privilege … by demonizing the non-White Other and letting her white sister off the hook’.

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FRANCE WINDDANCE TWINE is Professor of Sociology at the University of California at Santa Barbara and a Research Associate at Goldsmiths College, University of London.
ADDRESS: Department of Sociology, 2809 Ellison, Santa Barbara, CA, 93106, USA. Email: <winddance@soc.ucsb.edu>

CHARLES GALLAGHER is Associate Professor of Sociology and Chair of the Race and Urban Concentration at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia.
ADDRESS: Georgia State University, Sociology Department, Atlanta, GA 30303, USA. Email: <cgallagher@gsu.edu>