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ADDRESSING HOW WHITENESS SILENCES AFRICAN AMERICAN  
NARRATIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES THROUGH  
NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

by Keith Cyril Bistodeau

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctorate in Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

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## ABSTRACT

Bistodeau, K.C. Addressing how Whiteness Silences African American narratives in Higher Education in the United States through Narrative Analysis (2019)

Addressing systemic issues of Whiteness in higher education in the United States is vital for understanding how Whiteness influences the culture and environment of college campuses and within college classrooms. Furthermore, the experiences of those negatively impacted by Whiteness help to explain and provide examples of how Whiteness exists in higher education, and what areas of our college climates need to be addressed and changed in order to provide an equitable environment for all individuals involved in higher education in the United States: students, faculty, staff, etc. This dissertation aims to better understand and more accurately address how Whiteness, the social construction of the White race and social construction and framing of what it means to be White or of White status and privilege, continues to persist and cause barriers in higher education in the United States. To do this, this research uses the narratives and experiences of African American faculty members and students to frame how the status quo still allows individuals to be marginalized and silenced by Whiteness, and comparing those experiences to those of the researcher for this study, in order to provide a means to discuss ways in which scholars, researchers, faculty members, staff members, students, and community advocates can reduce or eliminate the influence Whiteness has in higher education in the United States.

*Keywords: Whiteness, Race, Racism, Higher Education, Silencing, Meta-Narratives, Counter-Narratives*

## DEDICATION

To all my family and friends for your continuous encouragement and support, especially my wife Candace, who allowed me to pour myself into this research. Without her, this project would not have been completed. Thank you to my Dissertation Committee. Your guidance and patience helped me to complete this project and learn so much along the way. A special thanks is due to my research participants who helped to shape this research project. I learned a great deal from each of you.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”

-Gandhi

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*There is a difference between agreement and understanding: When discussing complex social and institutional dynamics such as racism, consider whether "I don't agree" may actually mean "I don't understand."*

*Robin DiAngelo*

#### **Introduction to Context of the Study**

The landscape of higher education has changed drastically in the United States since entering the 20th century. From a growth in enrollment, to allowing women to attend colleges, to allowing individuals of Color to attend any university in the United States, the landscape of the student population at our universities has continued to become more representative of the population of our nation (Crenshaw, 1995; Fulwood III, 2016; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Milner IV, 2010; Nelson & Rogers, 2003; Rooks, 2006; Stanley, 2006; Wilder, Jones, & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). However, what has not changed during this time is the presence of Whiteness in higher education, and the complications and difficulties Whiteness causes African American faculty and students, particularly when the silencing power of Whiteness is considered and explored.

Due to this noticeable shift in higher education demographics and the still prevalent issue of Whiteness in higher education, a better understanding of the changes that have occurred in higher education in the United States is needed in order to frame the context and rationale for this study, which will be guided by the following research

questions:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

According to the National Center for Education Statistics 2018 report entitled, *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities*, in 1976, 82.2% of the student population in undergraduate higher education was White, 10.0% were Black, 3.7% were Hispanic, 1.7% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.7% were Native American/Alaska Native, and 1.5% were individuals with Nonresident Status. When reexamining the populations in 2018, 55.0% of the student population in undergraduate higher education identified themselves as White, 13.0% identified themselves as Black, 16.0% identified themselves as Hispanic, 9.0% identified themselves as Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.0% identified themselves as Native American/Alaska Native, and 4.0% identified themselves as individuals with Nonresident Status. Meaning, that over a thirty-two year period there was a drastic shift in student demographics in higher education pertaining to identified race, with almost a 20% drop in the overall percentage of White students in the higher education population being replaced proportionally by students of Color.

While we have seen a significant shift in our student population, research and statistics illustrate that we have not seen the same shift in representation within individuals who work at the university level, particularly when we look at African-American professors in the United States. As Fulwood III (2016) explained in a *Center for American Progress* study, of the 722,934 full-time faculty at degree granting postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2013, only 20.4% were faculty of Color. Of the 722,934 full-time faculty at degree granting postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2013, 5.97% identified themselves as Black, 4.59% identified themselves as Hispanic, and 9.84% identified themselves as Asian, while the remaining 79.6% identified themselves as White. While these numbers are much more representative and follow a similar trend to the student population shifts, there is still a significant underrepresentation of African-American faculty in the United States compared to the enrollment percentages of students in undergraduate programs.

In order to better understand and more accurately address how Whiteness, the social construction of the White race and social construction and framing of what it means to be White or of White status and privilege, continues to persist and cause barriers in higher education in the United States, the status quo in higher education will be discussed further, while also drawing connections to research methods that will be used in this dissertation. While an initial overview of the concerns was presented above, a deeper explanation into the importance of this area is critical to understanding how this dissertation is framed, and how I approached investigating and analyzing the data for this study. This dissertation addresses the experiences of African American individuals in higher education, and how those experiences are impacted by Whiteness. In order to



address how Whiteness influences the experiences of African American individuals on college campuses in the United States, a narrative approach is used within this study to allow for specific instances where Whiteness influences African American individuals experiences, identities, and stories to be drawn from for analysis and discussion. This approach, I believe, best allows this research to address concerns presented by hooks (2006) where she explained the social construction of racial disparity and the negative implications it has on our society, especially from media and power dynamic perspectives:

Mass media's trivialization of Black rage reinforces White denial that White supremacy exists, that it is institutionalized, perpetuated by a system that condones the dehumanization of Black people, by encouraging everyone to dismiss rage against racism as in no way a response to concrete reality since Black folks they see complaining are affluent. Concurrently, affluent Blacks are rarely linking their rage to any progressive challenge and critique of White supremacy rooted in solidarity with the Black masses. (p. 29)

hooks (1995) helped to illustrate just how prevalent and deeply ingrained these issues still are in our society, considering hooks (1995) addressed these issues over twenty years ago. It should also be noted that while there may be other areas and methods that could be stressed or used as a framing lens for this dissertation, I decided to focus more on the status quo in higher education pertaining to student and faculty demographics due to the status quo being most directly correlate to the theoretical approaches that are used in this dissertation. While a shift has occurred in higher education where more individuals from more diversified groups are entering the academic realm as both students and faculty, the

White framework and hierarchy that helps to frame the environment and overall structure of higher education in the United States still creates clear barriers that are not present for White individuals.

Research and scholarly work pulled from Whiteness studies for this dissertation draws primarily from the ideas presented by Endres and Gould (2009) and Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007) from a methodological standpoint, due to their focus on narrative analysis and power dynamics relating to race. Research and scholarly work pulled from critical race theory studies for this dissertation draws primarily from Arai and Kivel (2009), Duncan (2005), and Solórzano and Yosso (2002), due to their use of narrative framing and their connections to implications and influences of race and culture in higher education in the United States. The use of narrative analysis draws from Fisher's methodology of the Narrative Paradigm. Fisher (1984) created the narrative paradigm under the assertion that communication follows narrative patterns, and this understanding of the importance of stories and themes will be used in this study to create connections that can also be drawn between Whiteness studies and critical race theory practices. Foucault (1980)'s methodological framework focusing on power and knowledge is also used to make the final connections of themes across multiple areas that I believe helps to clarify specific areas of concern that were present in interview responses, while also providing another means for framing potential ways to address the influence Whiteness has in higher education in the United States.

### **Acknowledgment of Positionality**

It should also be noted that I take a particular lens and vantage point into this area of research. Considering that I am, a straight, White, heterosexual male, who happens to

work in higher education in the United States, I may have a different interpretation and manner in which I approach this topic compared to others who may be completing research and studies in the same research area. However, I also acknowledge the fact that while I may have a different interpretation, approach, or viewpoint towards the topic of this study, the need to better understand and address the ideas and issues of Whiteness that will be discussed throughout this dissertation should be viewed as universally beneficial to all individuals who are impacted by this area of research, which is all of us. It should also be noted that Black, African-American, and White will be capitalized throughout this study, due to the need for these terms to be viewed and used on an equal plain within this research. While this may not be an approach that is taken in all research pertaining to Whiteness, I feel that it is important to ensure that any framing of this issue of Whiteness, and individuals impacted by Whiteness, needs to ensure equality for those who are involved and being addressed by this study.

### **Defining Whiteness**

Before moving into a discussion on the status quo in higher education in the United States, I feel it is important to define and frame how Whiteness is applied and defined in this study. As Leonardo (2002) explained, there has been an ever growing interest and depth of research regarding Whiteness and Whiteness studies since the late 1990s. With this growth of research and increased interest in examining Whiteness, the need for a clear definition of Whiteness within a particular study has become more vital in order to frame how that study fits into the current realm of research regarding Whiteness and Whiteness studies. Meaning, a clear and functional definition of Whiteness is required in order for a particular study or research to be clearly framed

while also staying connected to other works in the same research area.

Roediger's (1991) book is considered to be one of the earliest texts of the Whiteness Studies movement, and focused on a historical approach and application to the concept of Whiteness. Similar to Roediger's (1991) book, much of the early work on Whiteness was completed from a historical approach, and focused on class differences and social construction of class, as class is related to race and socioeconomic structure in many of the works using Whiteness as a critical framework. DiAngelo (2018) addressed the complexity that Whiteness and White fragility present regarding having discussions about race and race relations when she explained:

In fact, when we try to talk openly and honestly about race, White fragility quickly emerges as we are so often met with silence, defensiveness, argumentation, certitude, and other forms of pushback. These are not natural responses; they are social forces that prevent us from attaining the racial knowledge we need to engage more productively, and they function powerfully to hold the racial hierarchy in place. (p. 8)

Over the last fifteen years, researchers have started to apply Whiteness studies in more social settings, but there seems to still be a gap in how Whiteness Studies are defined and framed. As McWhorter (2005) stated:

Whiteness Studies theorists have not thoroughly critiqued the juridical conception of power that they have inherited from traditional political theory; as a result, they can not get away from psychological accounts of the origins of racism, even though they usually state very clearly that they believe racism is an institutional phenomenon and racist subject positions are formed within networks of power.

(p. 533)

Frankenberg (1993) made the point that Whiteness exists in a framework of dominance where it can be extracted and situated as a sort of "anti-Color." It is with this in mind that Whiteness for this study is defined as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin, which in turn create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race. This definition blends together elements of definitions that are used in historical, sociological, and communication studies based research on Whiteness, while also using elements of Foucault's (1984) concept of "biopower", in order to address gaps and critiques that are present in currently used definitions of Whiteness. This definition also takes into consideration the work of DiAngelo (2018) which stated that, "Whiteness rests upon a foundational premise: the definition of Whites as the norm or standard for human, and people of Color as a deviation from that norm," (p. 25) which only reinforces the social construction and reinforcement of White privilege that is addressed above.

The definition created for this study is also meant to help frame the contextual area of this study more clearly, since the research is being completed in a higher education setting, the definition of Whiteness for this study needed to be able to address the socially constructed norms, values, and expectations that allow Whiteness to remain prevalent in higher education in the United States. While it may seem to some that Whiteness is not as large of an influential element in higher education as this research is framing it to be, a look at the current state of higher education should more clearly illustrate just how badly we need to start taking a more critical and honest look at how Whiteness is alive and well for those who benefit from Whiteness in higher education in

the United States, while it continues to create challenges and barriers for those oppressed by Whiteness.

### **Current Climate of Higher Education**

One of the first descriptions I heard of what it is like to work in Higher Education in the United States was that since I had completed enough courses and degree to become a teacher, I had made it to the tall “ivory tower” of power and knowledge that exists on every college campus in the United States. The description of being in a position of power on a college campus, where the reference to being an instructor within a tall, ivory tower, seemed fitting to me when I looked at the demographic breakdown of faculty in higher education in the United States. As stated above, under 14% of all faculty in higher education are African American, and retaining faculty of Color, in general, has become a major issue. As Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) explained, with the disproportionate number of faculty of Color, specifically African American faculty, it becomes difficult to find colleagues to work with and discuss workplace issues/concerns that may not apply to White colleagues. Patton (2009) furthered this discussion by explaining how mentoring is a key factor in retaining faculty, and due to a lack of African American faculty in higher education, mentoring opportunities are lacking, which can lead to burnout and a lack of shared identity within departments and universities.

When thinking about what is expected of faculty in higher education, my experience and conversations with other faculty, graduate students, and community members helped to illustrate to me that there is a general assumption that is made by our society as a whole about the role(s) of faculty on college campuses in the United States. Faculty are responsible for creating curriculum, teaching courses, grading assignments,

and helping students in every possible capacity. However, this general social view overlooks some key underlying issues that faculty who do not fall into the social majority need to face. As Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) explained, due to racial microaggressions and racial climates on college campuses, faculty of Color face challenges to following the expected faculty roles compared to their White colleagues. Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) explained the manner in which roles and norms are written and framed from a White social norm, and that the further an individual is positioned from that norm or identity, the harder it becomes for an individual to identify with and follow the roles created by the prevalent social norm or group. Microaggressions can be understood as commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial views, beliefs, and insults toward any historically marginalized group. The challenges that faculty of Color experience that would fall into the framework presented by Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) can be situations in which faculty of Color are limited in their interactions with students outside of undergraduate classrooms, or are scheduled to teach during departmental meetings, or are required to advise more students or produce more research in order to be given the same opportunities as their White colleagues.

### **Reason for Investigation**

The premise for this dissertation is quite simple, we as scholars, educators, and citizens need to identify, address, and come up with strategies for combating the racial issues that are still impacting the quality of education, campus life, and workplace environments on college campuses in the United States, specifically focusing on the

influence of Whiteness. This dissertation builds off of the previous research in the areas of Whiteness and Whiteness studies, but investigates this topic in a more specific and detailed manner from a narrative approach. I believe a study looking at the sharing of African American narratives in American society can be used to identify specific elements of Whiteness influence across higher education institutions in the United States. Those counter-narratives can then be analyzed to understand how the competing meta-narratives and counter-narratives are used to both bolster and marginalize individuals in academic and workplace settings (Bamberg, 2004; Bradley, 2005). This study can also create methods for addressing those particular elements that allow Whiteness to persist across higher education institutions in the United States. This dissertation will take a narrative based approach for addressing Whiteness, by gathering and analyzing the narratives of African American faculty and African American undergraduate students at higher education institutions in the United States. The collection of these narratives is done in order to identify common experiences relating to the influence Whiteness has had on the educational and career journeys of the African American faculty and undergraduate students interviewed for this dissertation. This narrative approach also provides specific examples of situations that Whiteness creates on college campuses in the United States that need to be addressed and resolved, due to the experiencing being collected and framed from the perspective of those who have experienced the negative implications of Whiteness in higher education in the United States firsthand. I will elaborate more on as I talk about my experiences and conversations that I have had with colleagues regarding this topic, and what I have observed in my life that has led me to view this research as so important and vital to undertake.



It should be noted that throughout his dissertation there may be instances and experiences shared by myself and the interviewees of this study that may be distressing to readers or may call to mind memories and experiences that may cause discomfort. These shared experiences may include language, events, and reflections that may be graphic or disturbing in nature. All of the experiences and interview responses shared in this dissertation are unedited in order to show respect for the experiences shared and to provide an accurate representation of the influence Whiteness has had in the lives of everyone included in this dissertation.

### **How I Arrived at this Topic**

When I was five-years-old I had my first experience, or at least the first experience I can remember, where an individual was silenced/pushed aside due to the Color of their skin. My father had taken me to my first Minnesota Twins game with a few of his friends from work and their kids. My mother hates baseball so she did not come with, but made sure to tell me that I may hear some things at the game that I may not be used to hearing. I had no idea what she meant by that at the time, but looking back at the conversation she had with me and the experience I had at the baseball game, I know she was trying to protect me in the only way she knew how. Sadly, my father's friend Calvin, and his son, who are both African American, did not have anyone who would protect them from what they experienced/what I witnessed at that game.

It was a rainy day in the middle of April and the Minnesota Twins were playing the Detroit Tigers. My dad and I met up with his friend Calvin and his son down at the stadium to watch the game, and I could not have been more excited. However, that excitement quickly changed to confusion, fear, and anger.

When we walked into the stadium, we went to get some food before sitting down. There were four, fairly large, White men who were behind us in the snack line. The men were talking quite loudly and making a lot of comments about my dad's friend Calvin. Thinking back to what was said, I am glad I did not understand what they were saying at the time, but I could tell by Calvin's reaction and my father's reaction, that nothing they were saying was kind.

After we got our food, we went to find our seats and I thought things would calm down so we could enjoy the game, but those same men had seats just a few rows behind us. Throughout the first five innings, they continued to heckle and harass Calvin and his son. It got so bad by the end of the fifth inning that other people in the seats around us had left because they did not want to hear these men anymore. Finally, in the sixth inning, security came and escorted the men out of our section. I do not know how security knew, or why it happened then, but as the men were taken out of our section, multiple people stood and applauded them leaving.

After the game on our way home, I asked my dad why no one confronted the men even though everyone was happy when they were taken away. He said we all have to pick our battles, and that was not our battle to pick. The problem I learned with that statement, and that I have continued to learn and reform throughout my life is that statement comes from a point of privilege, a point of Whiteness. I was privileged to have a choice to engage or disengage from the situation as a result of being White, my relationship to the individuals attacking Calvin and his son was inherently rooted in our shared race, and that Whiteness removed me from being a target, even though my father and I were at the game with Calvin and his son. We had the choice to be in that situation,

Calvin and his son did not have a choice. In a crowd full of White baseball fans, not one person stood up to address the attacks on an African American man and his son.

As I grew older and attended middle school and high school, I noticed these same types of events and interactions occurring frequently around me. Not necessarily to the same level of vulgarity and overtness, but occurring more frequently, or perhaps I was just more aware of these events occurring as I got older. One of the big underlying factors I believe that allowed these situations to happen was the lack of racial diversity that existed in my hometown when I was younger, and how the racial diversity drastically shifted as I went through my middle school and high school years.

Over the course of ten years, the demographics of my hometown shifted from 95% White to 70% White. While the diversity of the town kept changing, the diversity of the teachers in our school district did not. During my time as a student in K-12 education, I did not have a single teacher of Color, and when I graduated from high school in 2007, there were only three teachers of Color in any district building. Our community and our schools did not talk about race, and we allowed racial issues to continue and to go unaddressed (racial comments in undergraduate classrooms, the vandalization of homes and cars of families of Color, the scapegoating of students of Color in situations where multiple students were at fault, etc.). By the time I graduated, I wanted to move and go to college where I felt the community and the school I would be a part of would be more open-minded and supportive.

As I stated above, when I decided to attend college, I wanted to go somewhere where I felt I could have a fresh start, but also a place that was more open and honest about addressing issues students and community members experienced in their lives. I

wanted to attend a university that was a place where I thought I would be able to escape the racism, classism, and prejudice of my hometown. However, I learned very quickly that these are issues you can not run away from, because they are everywhere, they just happen to look different in different situations.

During my undergraduate program, I encountered racism and sexism on almost a daily basis when living in Fargo. I was naive in thinking that I could move away from/escape these experiences, as I learned during my early college years, because these issues are not isolated instances. Wherever I went with my friends, or where I traveled with teammates or classmates, those of us that were White were treated differently than those of us who were of Color.

During my freshman year I remember going out to Taco Bell late at night with some friends to grab food to bring back to our dorm where we were playing video games and just goofing off. We walked there from our dorm and got to Taco Bell about 10 minutes before they closed. There were four of us, two of us are White and two of us are Black. I knew what I wanted right away so I went and ordered, and my friend Chris, the other White male in the group ordered next without any issues. When James and Charles tried to order, it was a different story.

When James walked up to order the White cashier at the register left and walked into the back. None of us thought anything about it until a White manager came up front about a minute later and told James and Charles that they were not making any more food for the night and they were closing down. Charles told him that we had just ordered food and that they just wanted to get their food too so we could all head back together. The manager insisted again that they were not making any more food, at which time the

cashier came up with the food Chris and I had ordered. It was at this point I got involved in the situation.

When I grabbed my food I asked why James and Charles had not ordered yet. The manager said they were low on food and were closed for the evening. I pointed to the food Chris and I just ordered and said we did not have an issue so why not just make food for two more people so we could leave. At this point, he got angry with us and said we either needed to leave or he would call the cops on us. This is when Chris told him that we did not want to cause problems, we all just wanted to get food and go back to our dorm. Then another White employee came out from the back and said that we had our food so we needed to leave so they could close.

At this point, James and Charles were just trying to order anything they could so we could get food and leave by the manager refused to even take their order and walked into the back. I yelled to the back and told him that he was being racist and that we would report their store, to which he replied that he was calling the cops and that we better leave. James and Charles led the way out and Chris and I left the food we ordered and paid for at the Taco Bell. If my friends were not going to be served, I was not going to eat the food prepared by a restaurant that denied my friends service and respect.

As we walked back to our dorm we talked about what happened (and ended up grabbing food from a gas station near campus). Chris was trying to rationalize what had happened, but James and Charles talked about how common that type of situation is for them and how they have learned to just walk away and not cause a scene. I could not understand how they could just walk away and not call out the employees at the restaurant for what they did. James said it in a way that made what happen stick with me,

“It isn’t an issue if you do it because you look like them and the cop that came wouldn’t bother you. If we did it, we would be at fault and most likely be in jail.” I thought he was exaggerating the situation and the potential results then, but as I have experienced and witnessed more situations like this, I have come to realize how accurate his words were that night.

When I was a junior in college my friend Charles and I were verbally berated at a football game that we went to in Iowa with a few of our friends. We had decided to go and check out the restaurants around the hotel we were staying at for the game. The hotel was just a few blocks away from a really nice part of the town. Where we were staying had a lot of restaurants and stores that others had mentioned wanting to go to on the drive down for the game. As we were walking down the main strip of stores, we heard some people yelling about a half a block behind us. We did not think anything of it at first, but after a few minutes we realized that they were yelling at us.

When we turned around we saw a group of five college-aged White males who were about fifty feet away from us. All five of them were yelling that our team was going to lose and that we should just leave town now before the beating happened. We did not think it was serious at all, just some banter between students from a different school. We talked some smack about our team back at them and then turned to start walking to the end of the block so we could hear to our hotel. That was when we heard one of them say, “Yeah, you better leave now Black boy, before we kick your ass and beat the shit out of the honkey that is with you.” Charles and I looked at each other when we heard it, but said nothing and just walked back to the hotel in silence.

The next day Charles and I had put the situation behind us, we were focused on going to the game and watch our team play (NDSU won 27 to 19). We got checked in with our friends and found our seats at the stadium. What we did not notice until the yelling started, was the same group of White guys we saw the day before, were sitting only a couple of rows behind us, and this time they did not let up on harassing us.

They started going after Charles first, calling him derogatory names, such as “a dumb ape, a coon, and a dirty monkey.” When Charles kept ignoring them they started to yell and the women that had made the trip with us, calling them sluts, whores, and coon bitches. All of us were uncomfortable while they were doing this until it reached a boil over point for us all late in the game. Our team had basically sealed the win, and there was no distraction from our group and these five White guys escalated. They left their seats and walked down by us and said, “You stupid White bastards and your Black loving whores better take that damn Nigger out of here before he gets his ass beat.” I was the one sitting next to the aisle where these guys were standing, which allowed me to create a barrier between them and the rest of our group when Charles and all of the other guys in our group stood up to confront them.

The White guys in the aisle tried to push past me to get to Charles and my other friends, but they could not all get down one aisle, and no one else around us was moving, either out of fear or out of the shock of the situation. While I was shoving the front two guys back into the aisle, Charles and our friend David had managed to push past the rest of our group and were now pushing and hitting the guys in the aisle in an effort to try to get space between all of us and the other group. This whole situation lasted maybe two minutes before security showed up and broke up the situation. While security initially

blamed us for the situation occurring (their reasoning was we were visiting fans, so we had to start the altercation) fans around us told them these five White students had come down and started to harass us. While the five White students who verbally and physically attacked us were kicked out of the game, security stayed by us for the rest of the game and escorted us to our car after the game to “ensure no other issues.”

While there are other experiences I can draw upon, these two experiences where individuals of Color were exposed to being ignored, insulted, underserved or addressed, and at times verbally or physically harmed and attacked shaped how I understand and experience my own privilege. These experiences also helped me to better understand how my privilege was challenged or ignored if I was with individuals who did not appear White. All of these experiences echoed what I experienced before college, and made me realize just how important it was to me to be able to research and address these issues as I got older.

After I finished my undergraduate program, I wanted to make sure the work I did during my master’s program helped to address the underlying social issues I had experienced throughout my life up to that point. I did not just want to do research that was easy and that would allow me to finish my degree, I wanted to do research that would let me actually help people and help figure out why these issues still exist in our society. Due to my experiences in collegiate competitive speech and debate, I used the persuasive speeches students presented in competitions to address social issues as my content focus for my thesis on the structural changes that have occurred in competitive collegiate speech over the last fifty years. While this work was interesting and unique, and provided a platform for me to build off of, I did not find what I found really



interesting and impactful from an educator and researcher perspective until I entered my doctorate coursework.

When I think about what I am currently doing as a college professor, speech and debate coach, and researcher, I keep finding myself being reminded of why I research what I do. I am reminded why I am so passionate about the work I do, the research I do, and what still needs to be done to address these issues in our society. I personally believe that racism, classism, and sexism are still prominent issues that need to be addressed not just in higher education, but on a societal level as well. My work outside of this study focuses on engaging student voices in the classroom and opening up multiple perspectives and discussion points within a classroom. This study builds off of those existing areas of work to directly address the issue of Whiteness and the role I feel it takes in regulating, limiting, and guiding interactions within undergraduate classrooms.

### **Preview of Existing Research**

There is a rich vein of research pertaining to racial issues and concerns in higher education in the United States, but a relatively small amount of research that looks at the impact of Whiteness and silencing of African American narratives and identities on college campuses. As a result, I will be pulling theoretical perspectives and studies from a variety of areas that address race in higher education in order to better place this study within the current context of research on racial issues and Whiteness in higher education. While there may be other areas to consider, I felt these areas best oriented themselves with the dissertation topic, and provide an overarching view of existing research in the field that could be used for this dissertation.

Research on leadership in higher education will be investigated in order to better

understand how leadership theory can be used to address this issue, and to articulate how racial issues and silencing has a negative impact on college and classroom environments for both students and faculty. Research on meta-narratives and counter-narratives will be investigated in order to provide a better foundation for understanding how White norms and cultural assumptions impact African American individuals in higher education. Meta narrative and counter-narrative research will also be investigated to understand how these methodologies can be implemented for this study, and how these two approaches may be able to be used to complement and strengthen one another, as well as to provide a connection to the use of Fisher's (1984) Narrative Paradigm as a narrative framework for this study.

Research on race in higher education will be investigated in order to provide a reference to what is currently being looked at pertaining to race in higher education and how this dissertation will interact and work both with and within the current research contexts that look at how race is currently playing out in higher education in the United States. Research on invisibility will be investigated in order to view how invisibility is being framed and addressed regarding race and identity in higher education. Research on classroom climate and college climate will be investigated to articulate the link between race, identity, and culture as it pertains to creating undergraduate classrooms and colleges where identities are representations are free to be expressed, and understanding how society and social structures limit the ability for narratives to be shared and expressed. Research regarding power and knowledge will also be investigated in order to help shape the theoretical framing for the methodology and data analysis for this study.

This dissertation could not be completed, and would not do justice to the subject

matter at hand if I did not acknowledge the impact that Whiteness and critical race theory have on this discussion; particularly since I am, a straight, White, heterosexual male, who happens to work in higher education in the United States. Research on Whiteness will be investigated in order to help to frame where scholars are looking at the prevalence and impact of dominant White narratives and social norms in our country. This area of research pairs well with the current research occurring using critical race theory, a theoretical framework in the social sciences that uses critical theory to examine society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race, law, and power. Research on how critical race theory is currently being used in this area will be investigated in order to provide another layer of theoretical framing for the level of importance and impact this study offers. Critical race theory provides a means of countering how Whiteness can be viewed and understood in higher education in the United States.

All of these topic areas, and my experiences as a student, coach, friend, colleague, and instructor have led me to view this topic as vital to address. Whiteness does play a major role in higher education, a role that has predominantly negative implications for African American individuals in higher education in the United States. This study will use the experiences and narratives of African American individuals at higher education institutions in the United States to address Whiteness and concerns regarding the influence of Whiteness. To guide this study and frame how I will approach addressing how Whiteness influences African American faculty and students in both similar and different manners, there are two research questions for this study:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in

higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed the general field of interest for this study: to understand how Whiteness influences African American narratives in higher education in the United States. In addition, this chapter outlined how current research has been framed and positioned to look at this issue, and how historically significant trends and factors still have a large impact of classroom and college environments in the United States pertaining to race and diversity issues. This dissertation is the start of a research plan that is meant to help serve and support African American faculty and students on the college campuses where I am employed, and also across other college campuses where issues of Whiteness are prevalent. This research is investigating how Whiteness creates a culture and system of silencing African American narratives within higher education, and explores how these created cultures and systems on college campuses exist and how they can be addressed. In the next chapter, the literature review will highlight the scholarly topics relevant to this study: critical race theory, race in higher education, Whiteness, meta-narratives, counter-narratives, the narrative paradigm, power and knowledge, leadership in higher education, invisibility, classroom climate, and college climate.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*Whiteness has been, above all, a racial formation that presupposed and reproduced relations of inequality and domination between "Whites" and their racial others.*

*Moon-kie Jung*

#### Overview of Literature Review

As stated in chapter one, investigating how Whiteness creates a culture and system of silencing African American narratives within higher education is important to address with this study, due to the continually changing demographics of students and faculty within higher education. This focus helps to frame and address the research questions for this dissertation:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

When considering the changing demographics, along with other social and political

concerns that can be tied to race in our current culture, this area of research is vital to investigate and understand. While this chapter may not serve as an exhaustive literature review of all of the themes that will be presented below, it does clearly articulate the depth and complexity of the topic of this study, while also helping to reinforce the need for not only this current study, but also future methods and modes of investigation into how Whiteness impacts, and in many instances silences, the narratives and experiences of African American individuals on within higher education in the United States.

This chapter starts off by reviewing the eleven areas of the literature review that were introduced in chapter one. These eleven areas can be split into three themes and eight topic areas, where the themes are the overarching concepts in the literature that will be used for the study, while the topic areas support the framework to be applied to this study within each of the three overarching themes. Meaning, the eight topic areas exists within each of the three themes, just in different manners and at different levels of impact and implication.

After the introduction of the three themes for this dissertation, the dissertation moves into a more detailed articulation and explanation of each topic area that exists within each of the three themes and examine specific academic works within those topic areas that will be used to frame and guide this study. To finish this chapter the dissertation provides a brief summary of all of the themes of the literature review, and provide a preview of the methodology for this study that will be covered more in depth in chapter three.

The three guiding themes for this literature review are: race in higher education, Whiteness, and the narrative paradigm. These three elements identified in the literature

related to this study were identified as the guiding themes due to their prevalence in almost all of the literature that is used and cited in this study. These three areas are also used as themes for this research study since they are overarching broad concepts and areas of research, while the topic areas are smaller, more focused elements used in this study that help to identify specific aspects of Whiteness influence in higher education that can be tied back to one of the three overarching themes.

The eight topic area that bridge across all three themes for the literature review are: critical race theory, meta-narratives, counter-narratives, power and knowledge, leadership in higher education, invisibility, classroom climate, and college climate. These topic areas function as specific focus areas that reflect more direct aspects of the influence on Whiteness compared to the broader themes listed above. These areas were also not as present within the reviewed literature as the three guiding themes for this dissertation, but still provide a focused lens for analysis, evaluation, and discussion of the findings of this study.

In chapter one, the dissertation reviewed the general field that this dissertation participates within: to understanding how Whiteness creates and influences the silencing of African American narratives in higher education in the United States. In addition, chapter one outlined how current research has been framed and positioned to look at this issue, and how historically significant trends and factors still have a large impact of classroom and college environments in the United States pertaining to race and diversity issues. The literature review in this chapter highlights how the fundamental principles of critical race theory is used within this dissertation to provide a starting point for discussions and analysis of participant experiences regarding how race in higher

education and Whiteness are not only intertwined, but on many college campuses in the United States, placed in competing and conflicting positionalities.

By analyzing the narratives and experiences of the individual participants for this study, overarching experiences and meta-narratives, as well as counter-narratives can be identified and analyzed using the framework of the Narrative Paradigm in order to draw out specific challenges, issues, and situations pertaining to Whiteness and the silencing on non-White individuals in higher education. This narrative analysis approach also creates an avenue where discussions and investigations as to how power and knowledge are shaped and guided by the influence Whiteness in higher education, while also allowing the research to investigate how leadership in higher education can be guided by, influenced by, or skewed due to the influence of Whiteness on the higher education system. Connections between the areas listed above can also be made between students, faculty, and staff, and the different manners in which Whiteness influences individuals in these different avenues of higher education by looking at how Whiteness helps to foster a culture of invisibility within higher education, by allowing that discussion to occur in comparison and within the same conversational vein of current research that investigates classroom climates and college climates in higher education in the United States.

While this literature review may not be an exhaustive look at all potential themes pertaining to the influence Whiteness has on the silencing of African American narratives in higher education in the United States, the literature review presents an extensive look at the themes identified as being directly linked to the narrative methodology that will be used for this study, and themes identified as being linked to the subject and cultural issues being addressed by this study. In order to accurately frame and start the literature review



for this study, the first theme that will be explored pertains to race in higher education. The literature review starts with this area of focus due to the large amount of influence race still has in higher education and the influencing power that exists within racial hierarchies that exist within our society.

### **Race in Higher Education**

Looking more closely at racial issues in higher education allows this literature review to address the role race holds in higher education in the United States. Framing how race is currently being viewed and researched in higher education, allows the investigation of this research area to position this study within the current discussion occurring within Whiteness studies (DiAngelo, 2018) and also within research currently occurring regarding how race is understood and addressed within higher education (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). Race has been an important discussion point, especially examining how students and faculty become defined, shaped, and limited around race at higher education institutions. From different social assumptions, to social labels that become markers for individuals, the role race holds within higher education institutions in the United States needs to be examined in order to provide a framing of how prevalent and exclusionary race can and has become for some individuals in our country.

**Deficit labeling.** One of the particular roles that has been heavily researched in the last ten years is the tendency within higher education to view African American males as at-risk students, regardless of their positions and backgrounds before coming to college. Jackson and Moore (2006) explored the social and academic expectations and consequences that resulted from the categorization of African American males as at-risk

students in higher education settings. As Jackson and Moore explained, “Throughout the educational pipeline—elementary, secondary, and postsecondary—in the United States, many African American males lag behind both their African American female and White male counterparts,” (Jackson & Moore, 2006, p. 201), and as a result, the social tendency is to group African American males who are enrolled at higher education institutions into an at-risk position, regardless of academic, social, or financial standing or concern regarding each individual student, a phenomena that can even start as early as the primary years of schooling. Meaning, even if an African American male meets none of the criteria for being an at-risk student in college, the default tendency and action is to label male African American undergraduate students as at-risk. This categorization and tracking creates an inherent stigma and expectation of these students, which as Jackson and Moore (2006) explained, creates a social expectation of failure for these students, and starts them off as being expected to achieve less than their African American female and White student counterparts. The problem that exists with this categorization tendency is that this categorization problem is not just contained to predominantly White institutions, where White individuals account for over fifty percent of the student body and individuals employed by a university, but also occurs throughout the higher education system.

Kim and Conrad (2006) found limited differences in the success rates of African American undergraduate students completing their degrees, regardless of the type of institution the student attended. Specifically, Kim and Conrad (2006) looked at the differences in enrollment, graduation rates, and academic success of African American undergraduate students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) versus African American undergraduate students enrolled at historically White colleges and

universities (HWCUs). Kim and Conrad (2006) explained, “Currently, research regarding the impact of attending HBCUs vs. HWCUs on students’ academic success is limited, and the little research there is has produced mixed results” (Kim & Conrad, 2006, p. 402), and what is more concerning is the similarities that exist between the different types of institutions that may be causing academic harm and distress to African American students. While some studies referenced by Kim and Conrad indicated a higher level of academic success and degree completion for African American undergraduate students at historically Black colleges and universities, Kim and Conrad (2006) noted that the same barriers and challenges (i.e. racism, classism, sexism, forced categorization as “at-risk”, hostile campus climate, etc.) faced by African American undergraduate students at historically White colleges and universities exist at almost all colleges and universities in the United States, and the result is actually a decrease in completion of coursework at historically Black colleges and universities. According to Kim and Conrad (2006):

Although some previous studies indicate that African-American students are more likely to graduate from HBCUs than from HWCUs, the institutionally reported data in this study suggests that the overall percentage of students transferring during their undergraduate years is higher in HBCUs. (p. 415)

While Kim and Conrad (2006) focused on the impact of these overarching racial issues in higher education have on African American students, and the negative impact these issues have on the academic outcomes of students, Kim and Conrad (2006) also referenced how these issues (i.e. racism, classism, sexism, forced categorization as “at-risk”, hostile campus climate, etc.) can be cross-applied and analyzed from a faculty and staff perspective in order to understand how faculty retention, job satisfaction, and career

assessment can be evaluated for African American faculty.

**Faculty job satisfaction.** One area explored regarding the influence racial issues have on faculty in higher education pertains to faculty reports regarding job satisfaction. Laden and Hagedorn (2000) looked at the evaluation of job satisfaction among faculty of Color in higher education, specifically focusing on how faculty of Color maintain a healthy work-life balance and stay in faculty positions long-term (over 15 years). Laden and Hagedorn (2000) found that faculty of Color often become isolated within their departments due to the overwhelming number of faculty at higher education institutions being White, and that faculty of Color often struggle making any form of long-term institutional change regarding job expectations, student advisement, research, or departmental demographics due to a lack of power and access to resources to make those types of changes (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000, pp. 60-63). Building off of the concerns addressed by Laden and Hagedorn (2000), Nelson and Rogers (2003) focused on diversity of science and engineering faculty in higher education in the United States reinforces these issues. As Nelson and Rogers (2003) explained, there is a noticeable lack of faculty of Color teaching in higher education in the United States, particularly in the hard sciences, and in particular, African American faculty are often the most underrepresented group of faculty at higher education institutions (Nelson & Rogers, 2003).

Jackson and Moore (2006), Kim and Conrad (2006), Laden and Hagedorn (2000), and Nelson and Rogers (2003) all helped to frame and support the issues regarding student and faculty demographics that are discussed at the beginning of chapter one, and help to illustrate the continued struggle higher education institutions are having regarding

race and retaining and supporting both students and faculty of Color. The statistics presented in chapter one and the studies discussed in this section also serve to help frame the next theme of this literature review: Whiteness. Whiteness is the underlying social issue that allows these norms and expectations that harm and limit individuals of Color in higher education and in society as whole, and it is vital to this study that research regarding Whiteness is investigated.

### **Whiteness**

Moving forward with the investigation of literature pertaining to key conceptual framework elements for this dissertation moves the literature review into the third theme, research pertaining to Whiteness. This dissertation could not be completed, and would not do justice to the subject matter at hand if the impact that Whiteness has on this study was not acknowledged. As I defined in chapter one, the definition for Whiteness for this study as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the White race and White skin, which in turn create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race.

Whiteness research is rooted in the understanding that underlying White norms and tendencies dictate and guide cultural norms, ideas, and expectations for all individuals, regardless of their race, class, or gender (DiAngelo, 2018). Whiteness influences every individual, but the more closely aligned an individual falls to commonly held and perpetuated White norms, generally the more positive and comfortable their existence is within a particular society due to the benefits individuals receive from aligning with White norms within the American culture in the 21st century. Whiteness studies draw from power dynamics, social construction, and identity construction and

management to help frame how Whiteness looks, works, and exists within culture. As DiAngelo (2018) explained:

We bring our racial histories with us, and contrary to the ideology of individualism, we represent our groups and those who have come before us. Our identities are not unique or inherent but constructed or produced through social processes. What's more, we don't see through clear or objective eyes – we see through racial lenses. On some level, race is always at play, even in its supposed absence. (pp. 85-86)

Understanding how Whiteness shapes theory, research, and how the power and privilege associated with Whiteness is reinforced and played out in society is addressed by Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007), specifically focusing on how Whiteness reproduces itself within these different areas in academic and social settings. To address these areas of concern, Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007) framed Whiteness from a position of “the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage” (p. 390), in order to frame how the discussion of Whiteness in their study addressed the sociocultural norms and expectations that both reinforce and allow Whiteness to continue to exist and shape dynamics and relationships between White individuals and individuals of Color. This understanding of the implications Whiteness has on individuals of Color, and on a broader social scale can also then be applied to better understanding how Whiteness theory addresses the power dynamics and social issues that exist due to Whiteness.

This focus on understanding how Whiteness addresses power dynamics and social issues can also be approached from an internally focused lens of research. Hartmann,

Gerteis, and Croll (2009) completed an empirical assessment of Whiteness theory in an attempt to examine how aware White individuals were of their own Whiteness and the power and privilege associated with their Whiteness. As Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009) explained:

Consistent with Whiteness theories, we find that White Americans are less aware of privilege than individuals from racial minority groups and consistently adopt Color-blind, individualist ideologies. However, we also find that Whites are both more connected to White identity and culture as well as more aware of the advantages of their race than many theoretical discussions suggest. (p. 403)

The findings from Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009) suggest that it is not a hidden concept or misunderstood social implication that White individuals have different access points of power and privilege within our society, but rather that many White individuals adopt a more internal and individual worldview in comparison to individuals of Color, which in itself reinforces the elements of privilege and social status awareness discussed by Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009). The main issue that is raised by Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009) in their study is a concern about how to address and potentially teach Whiteness theory and Whiteness studies to college students as well as attempting to address how to foster discussions about these issues with the broader population in the United States.

Attempting to address the elements of privilege and power that are tied to Whiteness, Nicols (2010) examined how we can approach and potentially teach a method of critical Whiteness theory on college campuses. This work pairs well with work from Owen (2007) that encouraged the need to move towards a critical theory of Whiteness as

a means of better understanding and dismantling the power structures and social dynamics that exist in our society that allow Whiteness to remain so prevalent and impactful in our culture. According to Nichols (2010), the main issue with attempting to address Whiteness with White students pertains to their focus on victimization and racial tokenism. As Nichols (2010) explained:

White students working within this paradigm often rely on racial tokenism as proof of their antiracism, touting their acquaintances and friends of Color, while the majority of their choices indicate comfort with segregated spaces. For these students, experiences with “race” are defined solely in terms of encounters with people of Color. (p. 2)

By framing their interpretation of what it means to be “anti-racist” in this manner, White students are actually reinforcing their Whiteness and their privilege tied to Whiteness by embodying the victimization of individuals of Color within their own framework of how they present themselves as “anti-racist” individuals. This standpoint also reinforces the social tendency for White individuals to take Colorblind approaches to interactions as well as social issues (Nichols, 2010, pp. 3-5), which limits the ability to engage in meaningful conversations and discussions about issues tied to race due to an inherent barrier constructed from the mental framework that is formed by White individuals who have embodied this positionality as a result of their underlying privilege.

Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007), Hartmann, Gerteis, and Croll (2009), and Nichols (2010) used Whiteness theory to create and address the connections Whiteness has to power and privilege, and also focused on the need to dialogue about these issue, while also addressing the concerns Whiteness presents from a point of positionality; for



individuals who identify as either White or as an individual of Color. These studies pertaining to Whiteness also articulated just how many social and individual barriers and assumptions exist within our society revolving around race. Drawing from this area of literature, this dissertation will attempt to build on the notion of critical Whiteness studies as a means of addressing specific and concrete ideas and social norms that help to enable Whiteness to be so prolific in reach and impact within our society. In order to address Whiteness within this study, the dissertation will be using Fisher's (1970) narrative paradigm in conjunction with analysis of meta-narratives and counter-narratives in order to better understand and position the impact Whiteness has on the narratives and experiences of African American individuals in higher education in the United States.

### **Narrative Paradigm**

The next theme that will be discussed in this literature review pertains to research that uses Fisher's (1970) Narrative Paradigm, as well as an exploration into the specifics of Fisher's paradigm. This paradigm draws from the work of Burke, especially *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* from 1966, *A Grammar of Motives* from 1969, and *A Rhetoric of Motives* from 1969. Fisher's (1970) Narrative Paradigm asserted that we are symbol using and symbol understanding beings (we use language and objects to reinforce social status and standing), who also happen to use signs and stories as a means of communicating with one another (create interpretations of similarity and difference), and also to understand our world and where we fit into our world (where we fit in society). Meaning, that the narratives and stories that individuals use to express themselves, and also to interpret and position themselves in the world can be used to understand how social norms, positionalities, and other influential factors

impact and shape individual narratives.

For this dissertation, Fisher's (1970) Narrative Paradigm is used to analyze the narratives of African American undergraduate students and faculty to better understand and interpret the influence that Whiteness has had on particular individuals. Fisher's (1970) Narrative Paradigm is also used to address broader themes and areas of concern that exist on college campuses in the United States pertaining to Whiteness and other racially tied issues. The Narrative Paradigm allows for researchers to focus on specific elements of experience that exist within individual narratives, and to draw connections to similar experiences that are shared by others through their own narratives. Specifically, by using the Narrative Paradigm to identify sign or symbols of the silencing influence of Whiteness on individuals interviewed for this dissertation, a better understanding of how these different experiences are unique to the individual, but also connected to one another can become more clearly articulated.

Fisher (1970) laid out four fundamental elements required to view communication from a rhetorical perspective, and to be able to view human interaction as a narrative process. These elements exist at different levels within all narratives, with some elements being more present or more readily accessible than others. For Fisher (1970) there must be:

1. Rhetorical discourse that influences actions and ethical approaches
2. The rhetorical discourse or interaction must create an 'image' that can be value-interpreted
3. The rhetorical communication must relate to both subject matter and purpose
4. Rhetorical discourse functions to affect the life of an image which may be

expressed as a proposition, proposal, or cause (pp. 131-132)

Fisher (1984) refined his fundamental elements and reframed this narrative approach to communication as a symbolic use of words and actions to convey meanings, which are in turn interpreted by other humans who understand, interpret, and express their own symbolic understanding of their world through their own experiences. As Fisher explained, “By ‘narration’ the researcher refers to a theory of symbolic actions-- words and/or deeds-- that have a sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them,” (Fisher, 1984, p. 2), or the fundamental assertion that all interactions are pieces of our individual story and identity, which is constantly expressed by us, and interpreted by others.

This concept of a constant expression and interpretation of signs, symbols, and stories as a means of identification and communication continued to be refined by Fisher (1985) in order to better address ongoing discussions and concerns that were raised regarding the paradigm's ability to be applied to issues pertaining to individual identity, as well as how it could be used for research addressing social issues tied to race, class, and gender. Fisher (1985) repositioned the narrative paradigm as a means to address the concepts of knowledge, truth, and reality, which he references as primary points of concern of the rhetoricians Plato and Socrates (Fisher, 1985a, p. 74). Later that same year, Fisher crafted a response to some critiques of the narrative paradigm when he stated, “The narrative paradigm is meant to reflect an existing set of ideas shared in whole or in part by scholars from diverse disciplines, particularly those whose work is informed by or centers on narrativity,” (Fisher, 1985b, p. 347). This response to critiques was meant to help reaffirm the notion that the Narrative Paradigm allows for a more

complete understanding of the external factors that help to shape and guide any particular event of discourse, meaning that all interactions and means of expression are not only shaped and guided by external forces and stimuli, but also that our roles and interpretations of those interactions and discourse situations are shaped by external forces and social factors as well.

The Narrative Paradigm then, in essence, can be viewed as a meta-theoretical approach to understanding the human communication process (Fisher, 1989), as well as serving as a meaning for better understanding and critiquing that factors in a society that influence how discourse and social narratives are understood, expressed, and positioned among one another in a cultural sphere of interaction (Fisher, 1999). This acknowledgement of social influence by Fisher (1999) allows the Narrative Paradigm to be used in conjunction with the work of Foucault (1980) for this dissertation, as Foucault's work often emphasized the role that social and individual elements of power and knowledge played on an individual's identity and their ability to participate and be recognized in the social sphere. This approach also allows for the narratives of those interviewed within this study to be understood through these three themes, but also through the eight topic areas that are going to be examined further below. Since this dissertation focuses on the racial issues linked to Whiteness and the silencing power Whiteness holds in higher education in the United States, the first topic area to be addressed in this literature review will be works using critical race theory. Critical race theory serves as a bridging point between the three themes for this study and the eight topic areas, as works cited above use critical race theory as a framing mechanism for better understanding how race, Whiteness and narratives currently exist and are used

within higher education. Critical race theory also provides a direct lens for understanding how race and racial issues tied to Whiteness are viewed and understood by those who are negatively impacted, and often silenced, by Whiteness in higher education in the United States.

### **Critical Race Theory**

Research on how critical race theory (CRT) is currently being used in investigating and addressing Whiteness in higher education was explored in order to provide theoretical framing for the level of importance and impact this study offers. Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that is used within the social sciences that uses the principles of critical theory to examine elements of society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race and power (Arai & Kivel, 2009). There are two main propositions that are asserted by CRT that must be accepted in order to apply and use critical race theory as a methodological framework for investigation and analysis. Critical race theory proposes that issues of White supremacy and racial power are maintained over time and are often reinforced by cultural norms and expectations, and, CRT work has investigated the possibility of achieving racial emancipation and anti-subordination by transforming how we view and understand race and racial norms and expectations within our society (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995).

Critical race theory, therefore, provides a means of countering how Whiteness can be viewed and understood in higher education in the United States. The foundation of CRT supports the assumption of the social creation of realities and the intersection between daily lived experiences and methods for which individuals negotiate those experiences (Crenshaw, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995). Critical race theory positions the

social dynamics of difference, racism, and Whiteness in a manner in which social norms and constructions of identity, power, and relationships can be analyzed and understood in order to explain how one's lived experience(s) support or challenge social constructions of reality.

Arai and Kivel (2009) explored how critical race theory can be paired with social justice perspectives in order to better understand and analyze social perceptions on Whiteness, difference(s) and (anti) racism. Specifically, Arai and Kivel (2009) explained how an exploration of past and existing research can be used to understand and adapt how we address elements of race, class, and difference within our undergraduate classrooms, universities, and research projects (Araj & Kivel, 2009, p. 459). The explanation of the pairing of critical race theory and social justice perspectives also offers another manner in which to take existing research to shape how current research can address unanswered questions regarding race, identity, narrative and counter-narrative analysis, and positionality in higher education.

Helping to frame the concepts presented by Arai and Kivel (2009) is the work completed by Duncan (2005) that investigated the narratives and inequality issues that exist within the educational system in the United States that are tied to racism, classism, and sexism. The emphasis by Duncan (2005) revolved around how narrative study can be used with critical race theory to interpret the power dynamics and levels of inequality that exist in the United States educational system due to:

Emphasis on placing the stories that people of Color tell of their experiences at the center of analysis, critical race theory (CRT) is an especially useful tool for examining how socio-temporal notions of race inform the naturalization of

oppression and the normalization of racial inequality in public schools and society. (p. 94)

Duncan (2005) explained that the underlying construction and power systems that existed when African American undergraduate students and faculty became a part of the mainstream educational system in the United States still exist in contemporary education, and in many situations have become more perpetuated and reinforced due to social dynamics and social norms that exist in higher education (Duncan, 2005, pp. 96-99). This emphasis placed on narratives within Duncan (2005) builds off of the work completed by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) regarding the use of stories and counter-stories to better apply critical race theory in educational settings.

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) addressed power concerns in the education system regarding individuals of Color, and also acknowledges a misrepresentation and silencing of individuals of Color in the educational system in the United States. As Solórzano and Yosso (2002) explained, “The authors challenge the intercentricity of racism with other forms of subordination and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of Color,” (p. 23). Solórzano and Yosso addressed a two-pronged concern pertaining to education research: a lack of accurate representation of the positionalities of individuals of Color, and a silencing cycle that occurs within educational research where work and stories created by/for individuals of Color is underrepresented, misinterpreted, unacknowledged, or ignored. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) argued that using narrative methodologies with critical race theory allows researchers and resulting research to address five main themes that Solórzano and Yosso

denoted in past and existing research regarding racial issues within the United States educational system (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, pp. 25-27):

1. Addressing the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination
2. Challenging the dominant ideology in education
3. A commitment to social justice
4. Addressing the centrality of experiential knowledge
5. Offering a transdisciplinary perspective

These five themes were originally explored by Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000), where they examined racial microaggressions and campus racial climates pertaining to college students. Both the Solórzano and Yosso (2002) and the Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) position critical race theory as a theoretical approach that should be used in conjunction with other approaches to better address current issues regarding race in the educational system in the United States. This complementation approach was used by Solórzano and Yosso (2002) and Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) and framed critical race theory as a theoretical framework for investigating issues of race, culture, and leadership roles and norms in higher education. Due to the clear connections that can be made between research using critical race theory and research focusing on racial issues in higher education and the narratives pertaining to racial issues in higher education, the next thematic area to be addressed will be research looking at how meta-narratives are framed and positioned in higher education. Particular emphasis will be given to how existing research can be used to guide how this study will investigate the impact Whiteness has on African American individuals in higher education, with focus given to



the narratives of those interviewed for this study in comparison to the dominant (meta narrative) that guides the racial climate in higher education in the United States.

### **Meta-Narratives**

Moving beyond a surface understanding of the influence Whiteness has within society in the United States can be completed by exploring meta-narratives. Meta narrative research helps to provide a better foundation for understanding how White norms and cultural assumptions impact African American individuals in higher education. The framing and use of meta-narrative in this dissertation will be pulled from the work of Jean-François Lyotard (1984). Lyotard's (1984) framing of the meta-narrative focused on the social structures of dominant viewpoints and positions, and the influence those positionalities had on individuals or groups who fell outside of those power structures. Meaning, for research and studies that would apply this framework to research regarding race and racial influence in higher education, the position of the meta-narrative often falls into the space occupied by White individuals and individuals who benefit from the existence of Whiteness. For this dissertation, metanarratives are framed in critical theory terminology, specifically drawing from postmodernism, defining a meta-narrative as a narrative about narratives of historical meaning, experience, or knowledge, which offers a legitimization of thoughts, ideas, or assumptions pertaining to an individual, a social group, a race, a class, or other socially framed identity marker, through the anticipated completion of a master idea or concept.

Georgakopoulou (2006) discussed how narrative analysis could be used to identify small elements within individual narratives that connect to one another in order to create a larger understanding of shared experiences and identities between groups of

individuals. Georgakopoulou (2006) used the approach of “small stories” as a means of deconstructing meta-narratives into smaller pieces in order to better understand what connects the “pieces” of the large “meta-narrative” together. This method, as Georgakopoulou (2006) argued, allows for narratives of difference or disconnect to be identified or better understood in that, “small stories should be central to the intensification of a constructive dialogue between narrative inquiry and narrative analysis around issues of identity,” (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 128). Georgakopoulou (2006) also discussed the theoretical framing of narrative analysis as one that allows researchers to focus on identity management, creation, and connection. Using these three points as reference (identity management, creation, and connection) would allow a researcher to better understand how and why individuals either identify with a popular narrative or embrace the opinion or identity that aligns against (counter) the popular or “meta-narrative” in a given culture. Meaning, that within this dissertation, the deconstruction of meta-narratives into small elements could help to show the points where individual identities break away from the meta-narrative and become a counter-narrative or unique individual narrative.

Continuing the investigation on meta-narratives and their influence on individual’s identity management and role expression, Grant and Simmons (2008) examined the mentoring roles and styles embraced by African American faculty and graduate students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). While Grant and Simmons (2008) specifically focused on female African American faculty and graduate students, the study explained how the findings and analysis can be cross applied to other individuals who fall into minority standing in higher education institutions. Grant and

Simmons's (2008) major finding was the large influence that the cultural norms at predominantly White institutions served in framing the expectations placed on the mentoring and teaching styles and identities of faculty and graduate students of Color (Grant & Simmons, 2008, pp. 508-511). The resulting positioning that is created by these norms and assumptions as predominantly White institutions directly place individuals of Color in the counter-narrative frame, in that their physical identity and positionality place them in opposition of the dominant narrative. As a result, regardless of how well an individual might adapt or create an expression of cultural views and norms that align with the majority, their cultural framing of the meta-narrative created at an institution still places faculty and graduate students, and students of Color at predominantly White institutions, and to some extent, all higher education institutions, in the counter due to the cultural framing of higher education that is held in the United States.

This framing of an overarching cultural assumption, or "meta-narrative" within higher education is furthered by Milner IV (2010) and Mitchell and Miller (2011), with focus given to emphasis on how race and narrative inquiry could be used to better understand how educators study and understand their own approaches to classroom management and student engagement, while Mitchell and Miller's (2011) chapter focused on the need to shift our conversations regarding how we frame and understand roles and expectations of women of Color in higher education. Both Milner IV (2010) and Mitchell and Miller (2011) called for a better understanding and discussion around the influence that predominantly White institutions and historically White framed viewpoints of education have on students, faculty, and staff of Color in higher education. Without understanding how broader social and cultural norms help to frame and support

meta-narrative and social frameworks on college campuses, while also placing individuals of Color in a silenced or counter-narrative position, this study and future studies in this area can not accurately address the continuing challenges and limitations faced by African American faculty at higher education institutions in the United States.

### **Counter-Narratives**

Counter-narratives often provide individuals and researchers with another identifier or standpoint with regard to experiences and events. However, what is the dominant narrative, or understanding the positionality that is granted and supported by an individual falling within a meta-narrative can not be clearly understood without exploring individuals who fall into the classification of being within the counter-narrative. Counter-narrative research helps to provide a better foundation for understanding how White norms and cultural assumptions impact African American individuals in higher education. Counter-narrative research is also necessary for investigation due to the research providing a complementary approach and lens of critique and analysis to meta-narrative research pertaining to the influence of Whiteness in higher education.

Perspectives that run opposite or counter to the presumed order and control are counter-narratives. These narratives, which do not agree with and are critical of the master narrative, often arise out of individual or group experiences that do not fit the master narratives. Counter-narratives will therefore be defined in this study as narratives exist in relation and in order to counter or challenge existing dominant or overarching narratives that exist at a group, social, or cultural level. Counter-narratives act to deconstruct the master narratives, and they offer alternatives and challenges to marginalization and to the dominant White discourse in educational research. For this

dissertation, the definition that will be used for counter-narratives will draw from the overarching view of counter-narratives currently being used in the current field of research, a narrative that challenges historically based oppression and isolation of particular individuals and groups within a society. As the name implies, counter-narratives exist as a positional identifier/standpoint that is, in tension standpoint and what is resistant are not, of course, static questions, but rather are forever shifting placements.

Stanley (2007) focused on the clash of meta-narratives and counter-narratives in the academic journal review process, arguing that faculty and academics who identify as African American often embody the counter-narrative perspective in the submission process, and in turn face difficulties not experienced by their White colleagues. Stanley (2007) furthered the stance of counter-narratives being needed and beneficial in higher education, due to the ability counter-narrative analysis offers to researchers to identify and address issues of bias and discrimination in higher education, and in society as a whole. Stanley's work can be tied to the work of Erler and Kowaleski (2003), which explained that counter-narratives are important because counter-narratives provide, for example, multiple and conflicting models of understanding social and cultural identities. Counter-narratives also challenge the dominant White and often predominantly male culture that is held to be normative and authoritative. Such counter-narratives in higher education by women faculty members and faculty members of Color might suggest that differences exist for them in their academic experiences that are distinct from those of majority White faculty members.

Stanley (2007) highlighted that while these counter-narratives are needed and help to offer diverse perspectives, the work on the individuals who are contained within these

counter-narratives often face more abrasive and rude comments, slow turnaround in the review process, and often receive rejection from journals more frequently than their White colleagues (Stanley, 2007, pp. 17-19). These struggles also carry over into other areas of faculty life, as Stanley (2006) explained when she addressed how faculty of Color can break the silence at predominantly White institutions. Stanley (2006) focused on common narratives and themes shared by faculty of Color, and the struggles and challenges that were shared among the participants of the study. The key issue that Stanley (2006) raised is the compacted issue that is faced at most universities in the United States, “When the silence is broken and faculty of Color do choose to speak, many of us are not yet prepared to listen to the narratives. Even more problematic, we often remain unsure what to do with these data,” (Stanley, 2006, p. 702). Stanley (2006) also references an underlying struggle that faculty of Color face that is uniquely tied to the positionality of being in the counter to the master or meta-narrative, a constant comparison and assessment against the dominant narrative, or more plainly, a constant comparison and evaluation against White colleagues (Stanley, 2006, p. 703). This comparison influences campus and department climate, tenure and promotion, and also influences underlying issues of discrimination that still exist in higher education in the United States. All of these challenges and comparisons are framed through thematic analysis and shared experiences, and can be better understood, applied, and tied to the guiding analytical approach of this study through a deeper understanding and exploration of work that has used Fisher’s (1970) Narrative Paradigm.

### **Power and Knowledge**

Understanding the importance of narratives can be better examined within this

dissertation by looking at research regarding power and knowledge, with particular attention given to the work done by Foucault (1982) pertaining to power, knowledge, and biopower. This theme also serves as a lens for helping to shape the theoretical framing for the methodology and data analysis of this study. The main construction of the relationship between power and knowledge in existing research, and the manner in which this relationship will be framed for this study are the same, power and knowledge are intrinsically related to one another in society due to fact that power, and those in power, often dictate who has knowledge as well as who has access to particular knowledge bases (Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 1982). Research focusing on the influence of power and knowledge asserts that those who do not have the ability to gain or be granted power also do not have the ability or means to gain or assess the knowledge necessary to address social issues or change their sociocultural standing or status. This conceptual frame of power can also be applied to who can share their narratives, experiences, and opinions, and how the sharing and acknowledgment of those narratives and ideas exist and unfolds within our society. By better understanding how power and knowledge shape how narratives function in our society, we can then, for this dissertation, use the social construction of power and knowledge to better understand how Whiteness shapes how narratives and experiences of African American undergraduate students and faculty are shaped, ignored, and silenced in higher education in the United States. This approach also illustrates how Foucault's work would take the primary narrative approach from Fisher, and allow social aspects of power and knowledge structures and dynamics to be used to better understand how social power dynamics and the framing of public and personal knowledge help to influence and shape how and when individual narratives are

recognized and acknowledge versus when individual narratives are silenced or ignored. By using Fisher's narrative paradigm and Foucault's concepts of power and knowledge in conjunction with one another for the analysis of the narratives collected for this dissertation, the power dynamics at play from an individual and social level can become clearly identified within individual narratives, thus allowing for deeper analysis of the silencing influence of Whiteness to be identified within individual narratives and across the interview data set collected for this dissertation.

Understanding the relationship that power and knowledge share is addressed by Foucault (1982, 1980) regarding how we as individuals understand ourselves as subjects in the world, and how our relationships and positionalities in turn shape the power and knowledge we have and have access to in our lives. This issue that exists in trying to understand this relationship between power and knowledge is, as Foucault (1982) explained, "While the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations which are very complex" (p. 778). While the relational aspect of our lives are constructed and understood on a more direct and concrete manner, the power dynamics that help to shape and guide those relationships and the interactions that result from our positionality in society are difficult to break down into smaller, identifiable pieces. Foucault (1980) positioned this struggle with identifying power dynamics within relationships within the struggles (challenges) we commonly face in our lives. As Foucault (1982) explained:

Generally, it can be said that there are three types of struggles: either against forms of domination (ethnic, social, and religious); against forms of exploitation which separate individuals from what they produce; or against that which ties the



individual to himself and submits him to others in this way. (p. 781)

This would mean that if we can better understand the manner in which a particular struggle(s) shape our relationships, we can then better understand how power and knowledge help to shape our understanding of the struggle(s) as well as how we approach addressing or resolving the struggle(s).

This concept of addressing struggles and resolving issues that we face in our relationships and from a societal level can be understood through Hall (2001) who framed this power and knowledge dynamic specifically through the lens of discourse and discourse analysis. As Hall (2001) explained, “Critical discourse analysis as a method brings together the theoretical understandings of critical discourse theory to analyze social contexts as well as the language of research participants’ accounts,” (p. 72), meaning that the social contexts that frame how power and knowledge are used and understood within a society can be deconstructed through the language and discourse patterns that are used by individuals. Hall (2001) asserted that this type of approach allows for a deeper understanding of how individuals interpret, understand, and express their understanding of their position within a culture or situation through the approach of discourse and story, which allows for them to not only critique their positionality, but also allows individuals and researchers to better understand how language and communication patterns and contexts are rooted in power and knowledge based dynamics and situations. This concept then, of using discourse and narrative/story as a means of better understand power implications and knowledge structures within sociocultural settings, helps to create connections to narrative analysis and meta and counter-narrative considerations for this dissertation, and also helps to create connections to auto-

ethnographic interpretations and analysis that will be presented in this study. Not only can Foucault's (1982) notions of power and knowledge be used on a broad scale to assess how social constructions of power and knowledge shape our culture and higher education, but the concepts of power and knowledge can also be used to look at specific areas of research pertaining to higher education in the United States where Whiteness has an impact on how African American narratives, identities, and ideas: areas of leadership, investigations of classroom and college climate, and research pertaining to how Whiteness creates a culture of invisibility.

### **Leadership in Higher Education**

Building on the concepts of power and knowledge, and how those concepts help to frame how Whiteness influences individuals in higher education, it is important to understand how Whiteness helps to shape and influence leadership and leadership roles and expectations in higher education. Research focusing on leadership in higher education helps to articulate how racial issues and silencing has a negative impact on classroom and college environments for both students and faculty, and also helps to frame how leadership and faculty/instructor roles are framed, negotiated, and presented within higher education. This vein of research creates connection points between Whiteness, and how leadership in higher education is often framed through a lens of the majority, which often results in the silencing or isolation of those who are not in the majority. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be using research regarding leadership in higher education and the practices and norms pertaining the leadership in higher education to focus on how these norms and practices silence the narratives and experiences of African Americans and create an othering (distancing or alternative

treatment of an individual in a negative manner due to perceived differences between the individual and oneself) or invisibility tendency for African American individuals in higher education.

Faculty can be viewed as leaders on their campuses through their teaching practices and with the service to their university and their surrounding communities, on top of how they are viewed in their research communities based off of their work and research. Eagan and Garvey (2015) examined all three of these areas (teaching, service, and research) by looking at the connections between race, gender, sources of stress, and productivity in the areas of research, teaching, and service. As Eagan and Garvey (2015) explained, the three primary areas of emphasis for college professors generally fall into research, teaching, and service, and these elements can be used as a framework to better understand how stress can either positively or negatively impact faculty leadership and success. Eagan and Garvey's (2015) study found that stress due to discrimination has particular negative salience for faculty of Color, while stress due to family obligations significantly and positively correlated with faculty's adoption of student-centered teaching practices and participation in civic-minded activities, (Eagan & Garvey, 2015, p. 936). The problem that this social expectation presents on college campuses is an overburdening of faculty of Color, which limits their abilities to engage with and interact with other faculty and students in similar manners to their White colleagues, which in turn limits their potential impact and representation on campus. Due to the social expectations and extra issues that are faced by faculty of Color, their experience, expertise, and ability to relate to and help students and colleagues are limited and silenced by the extra norms and expectations placed on them for their position at their

institution.

Another key finding from Eagan and Garvey's (2015) study was that African American and American Indian faculty members recorded stress at almost thirty-three percent higher rates compared to their White colleagues, and faculty of Color as a whole produced research at a significantly lower rate compared to their White colleagues, (Eagan & Garvey, 2015, p. 936). This finding helps to further illustrate how the extra norms and expectations that are placed on faculty of Color in higher education create harmful results in not only social and teaching aspects of their jobs, but also negatively impact their ability to complete research and engage with their campus and surrounding communities. Overall, Eagan and Garvey's (2015) study illustrated the different leadership effectiveness levels and stress levels experienced by higher education faculty, and the implications, both positive and negative, which result from the current climate that exists in higher education. These implications can also be examined further by looking at how these additional norms and expectations that are placed on faculty of Color negatively impact how they view their jobs and how long they stay in particular roles or at particular institutions.

Griffin, Bennett, and Harris (2013) focused on differences in tenure, advancement, and professional success as they are related to race and gender differences in higher education faculty. While this work draws from Griffin, Bennett, and Harris' (2011) study on gender role differences in Black faculty, Griffin, Bennett, and Harris' (2013) study took a deeper look at how African American faculty negotiate leadership roles and expectations while also working on advancing in their careers. As the results of the study indicated, "faculty perceive race and gender influencing their evaluations for

academic advancement, with key gender distinctions in discourses about teaching and service in relation to professional success,” (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013, p. 489).

Griffin, Bennett, and Harris (2013) noted that race seemed to take on a more noticeable influence on evaluations compared to gender, but both areas still had strong influences.

Griffin, Bennett, and Harris (2013) also indicated a noticeable difference between the experiences of men and women in the study, which was highlighted when the researchers noted, “Black women appear to experience demands in these domains as more emotionally and physically taxing than their male counterparts, adding strain to the tenure and advancement process,” (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013, p. 489). Overall, both of the research studies by Griffin, Bennett, and Harris (2013, 2011) articulated a noticeable difference in social norms and expectations that guide the leadership roles and responsibilities that are embodied and expressed by faculty in higher education, with extra stress and difficulty being noted for faculty of Color.

Serving as a connecting point of theoretical frameworks and conceptual ideas between the studies listed above is the study from Griffin and Reddick (2011). Griffin and Reddick’s (2011) work specifically focused on how Black faculty deal with mentorship and leadership expectations while working at predominantly White institutions. The study indicated that racism and sexism influence how Black faculty members mentor in unique ways, primarily relating to the levels of openness of the faculty and manners in which Black faculty interact with their students both within and outside of the classroom (Griffin & Reddick, 2011, p. 1032). Griffin and Reddick’s (2011) study also found that Black women experience more pressure to be more nurturing and supportive in their leadership styles with colleagues and students, while

Black men are expected to be more detached and direct in their leadership styles (Griffin & Reddick, 2011, pp. 1045-1049). Griffin and Reddick's (2011) study not only reaffirms social norms and stereotypes of gender norms, but also shows other latent power dynamics that exist in higher education pertaining to racial issues that are also addressed in other themes within this literature review (Meta-Narrative, Counter-Narratives, and Power and Knowledge).

While the studies discussed above primarily focus on leadership roles and expectations in higher education, they also address an underlying thematic element of competing narratives within higher education faculty. Specifically, understanding how primary narrative structures (meta-narratives) within higher education dictate how individuals either match or go against the social and cultural expectations of faculty; based upon race, class, and gender (Griffin & Reddick, 2011). The studies also acknowledge positions and elements of silencing or othering of African American individuals with higher education, which can also be framed through the concept of invisibility (Eagan & Garvey, 2015). Invisibility is framed as the social and cultural tendency to become marginalized, silenced, or overlooked in a social, public, or cultural setting, and is often framed from a racial position due to the influence dominant White narratives and norms play in higher education. Therefore, research regarding invisibility will be examined in the next section in order to create connections between the themes that have been discussed up to this point in the literature review.

### **Invisibility**

As stated above, invisibility is framed as the social and cultural tendency to become marginalized, silenced, or overlooked in a social, public, or cultural setting, and

is often framed from a racial position due to the influence dominant White narratives and norms play within our society. For this dissertation, I specifically looked at invisibility and invisibility research from a narrative and social perspective, with emphasis placed on research relating to higher education. The concept of invisibility is investigated within this dissertation in order to view how invisibility is being framed and addressed regarding race and identity in higher education. Invisibility also creates a connecting point between the themes of leadership in higher education, meta-narratives, counter-narratives, the narrative paradigm, and race in higher education by serving as a bridging point for understanding how elements of silencing change into the concept of invisibility in each of these previously discussed thematic areas. Invisibility moves from isolated instances of silencing, which are often discussed when addressing leadership and racial norms, and focuses on long-term tendencies of isolation that often become socially constructed and maintained within particular cultural populations and settings.

Andersen (2001) examined invisibility through a cross reference of intersectionalities with race, class, and gender in order to better understand what areas need to be focused on to better restructure how we address silencing and invisibility in our culture. As Anderson (2001) explained, race, class, and gender are all key markers that help us to identify where invisibility and isolation of individuals occur, but also serve as a means of understanding how our society is structured around these concepts as a means of perpetuating the cycle of invisibility in our culture. What Anderson (2001) explained in this study is that it is not just the concepts of race, class, and gender that identify why individuals feel invisible or silenced in social situations, but rather that the manner in which our society frames, discusses, and addresses issues of race, class, and

gender that functions as a means of creating a cultural dialogue and expectation around these concepts, which in turn, help to allow silencing and feelings of invisibility to persist in our society.

Another area of concern regarding invisibility as it relates to race pertains to the limited amount of research and discussions that exist regarding the experiences of students of Color and the pedagogical approaches of professors of Color in the classroom. As Hendrix and Wilson (2014) explained, the majority of research regarding invisibility in the classroom focuses on isolated instances or topics and situations that lead to limited engagement and discussions, but does not focus on broader overarching issues pertaining to racism, classism, or sexism. In order to address these concerns, Hendrix and Wilson (2014) proposed using aspects of muted group theory and standpoint theory as a means of better understanding who is heard in communication education and through which standpoint or position the information and discussions are framed (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014, pp. 414-418). This collection of approaches may help to address not only the apparent gaps in the research in this area, but may also provide alternative methods to better understand how undergraduate classrooms become framed and positioned between students and faculty, and may also allow faculty and researchers to more clearly identify methods to address silencing and invisibility that occur in higher education undergraduate classrooms.

The concepts addressed by Hendrix and Wilson (2014) build upon ideas that were presented by Hinton (2010) regarding how to build community in undergraduate classrooms and on college campuses, specifically focusing how to address students and community members that fall on the margins, with particular emphasis placed on Black



female faculty and their struggles to survive and succeed in higher education due to the marginalization they face (hooks, 2014). As Hinton (2010) suggested, Black women have been historically marginalized within most predominantly White institutions and historically this has been viewed in a negative light, due to the impact it has on workplace relationships, classroom and student relationships, and tenure and workplace satisfaction (Hinton, 2010, pp. 396-398). When connecting this to the classroom, the tendency exists that the more difficult, and in some cases hostile, the work environment or campus climate is for an individual who falls on the margins within a university setting, the more negative or detached the relationships and engagement will be within the classroom. Hinton (2010) suggested that using Black Feminist Theory (hooks, 2000; hooks, 1989) to examine these experiences and to provide a proper context for analysis of these issues may allow for a better understanding of the positionality of the individuals that fall on the margins, and provide an entry point for better addressing and resolving these issues in the higher education setting.

Understanding the manner in which the edge or margin is framed as it pertains to race, identity, and invisibility in higher education is also key to better understanding how the concept of invisibility plays out in the classroom. As Rollock (2012) explained, “racialised others occupy a liminal space of alterity; a position at the edges of society from which their identities and experiences are constructed,” (Rollock, 2012, p. 65), meaning that the social constructs of race and othering that exist in broader society are often pulled into university and classroom settings, and in turn help to frame classroom expectations, environments, and roles. Rollock (2012) argued that critical race theory can be used to better understand how complex this issue is in a variety of contexts:

I make use of the critical race theory tool of chronicling (counter-narrative) to help demonstrate the complex, multifaceted and often contradictory ways in which ambitions for race equality often represent lofty organizational ideals within which genuine understanding of racism is lacking. (p. 65)

By researching this issue from an intersectional perspective, Rollock (2012) argued that a clearer picture of where these issues overlap and create power structures and dynamics in social, university, and classroom settings can be articulated, identified and addressed.

Anderson (2001), Hendrix and Wilson (2014), Hinton (2010), and Rollock (2012) addressed an underlying issue pertaining to silencing of African American narratives in undergraduate classrooms, the marginalization of students of Color from both a broader social level as well as the smaller classroom level. This connection helps to articulate just how prevalent the concept of invisibility is within our culture, and helps to frame how important it is to understand how classroom climate impacts students and faculty in higher education. It is with this in mind that the next theme investigated in this literature review examined current research relating to race and classroom climate within the realm of the silencing of African American narratives in higher education.

### **Classroom Climate**

Understanding classroom climate in higher education settings helps to identify the link between race, identity, and culture as it pertains to creating undergraduate classrooms and colleges where identities and representations are free to be expressed, and understanding how society and social structures limit the ability for narratives to be shared and expressed. This theme is also connected to the themes of invisibility and race in higher education due to the issues of invisibility and race being areas of concern and

opportunity within the learning environment of higher education. Classroom climate as a theme also serves as a bridging point to the next theme of research that will be addressed, college climate, as it focused on specific issues that need to be addressed within undergraduate classrooms that can often be drawn upon and referenced on a larger university scale.

As listed above, Griffin and Reddick's (2011) work focused on how Black faculty navigate and adapt to mentorship and leadership expectations while working at predominantly White institutions. Griffin and Reddick's (2011) study indicated that racism and sexism influence whether and how Black faculty members mentor in unique ways, primarily relating to the openness and manners in which their interactions with their students both within and outside of the classroom (Griffin & Reddick, 2011, p. 1032). Griffin and Reddick's (2011) study also found that Black women experience more pressure to be more nurturing and supportive in their leadership styles with colleagues and students, while Black men are expected to be more detached and direct in their leadership styles (Griffin & Reddick, 2011, pp. 1045-1049). When pulling these concepts into the classroom environment, the study found that Black faculty often devoted more time before and after class to their students, and attempted to create more personal and genuine connections with their students in comparison to their White colleagues (Griffin & Reddick, 2011). This collectivist approach to student relationships focuses on the concept of student-centered faculty, or faculty that place a high value in their construction of classroom environment and relationships with students as a means of promoting learning and positive community within a classroom setting.

Connected to this concept of relational awareness and classroom environment is

the study by Guiffrida (2005) that focused on how African American undergraduate students defined what it meant for faculty to be student-centered, an approach that is referenced by Griffin and Reddick (2011). Guiffrida (2005) indicated two primary areas of concern for African American undergraduate students regarding classroom environments and mentoring: African American undergraduate students often do not see White faculty as potential role models or mentors, and African American undergraduate students often feel that faculty at predominantly White institutions as culturally insensitive (Guiffrida, 2005, pp. 701-702). The issue that is created by these findings is a disconnect between students and faculty, as well as a disconnect between students, which in turn harms the classroom climate and makes the potential for hostile tendencies, silencing, and invisibility higher than in undergraduate classrooms that are more open, supported, and connected due to mentoring and cultural sensitivity potential from faculty. As Guiffrida (2005) suggested, faculty in particular need to be aware of how they present themselves in their undergraduate classrooms, due to the large impact their own persona and personal narratives and identity can have on the classroom environment (staying inclusive with their language, not marginalizing individuals or groups that may be in the minority in the classroom with their own stories, experiences, and examples).

Building off of the concepts of persona and personal narratives, Slay and Smith (2011) investigated how faculty construct their personal identities and how narratives can be used to better understand how different identities and cultural structures are negotiated and potentially stigmatized within classroom environments. The main issue presented by Slay and Smith (2011) is the struggle that exists for individuals that do not fall into the majority in an organization, specifically in higher education. Understanding how this

relationship between identity and classroom climate plays out is explained as:

Professional identity construction under conditions of stigmatized cultural identity presents an interesting puzzle. Professional roles are defined as prestigious and provide the role holder with autonomy and, often, a degree of privilege. However, stigmatized persons are often accorded little prestige and/or privilege because their identities are tainted. (Slay & Smith, 2011, p. 85)

This relationship helps to illustrate the struggle that exists for individuals that do not fall within the majority culture in a classroom or college setting, as their narrative or identity is inherently placed as counter to the dominant/majority narrative. This competition between narratives and expected roles is also explored by Warren (2001), through an investigation on the performative dimensions of race in the classroom environment. As Warren (2001) explained, race and racial roles and expectations are constructed and negotiated in each communicative interaction (Warren, 2001, pp. 98-101), which means that as a result of this phenomena, the struggle that exists in the classroom is that you are dealing with multiple interpretations of race, racial expectations, and role expectations that are not concrete interpretations, but rather fluid understandings and illustrations of where an individual is at with their worldview at a particular point in time.

Research on classroom climate as it relates to race and identity addresses a larger issue pertaining to African American narratives in undergraduate classrooms, the influence of college campus climate on students of Color from both a social and classroom level. Research regarding classroom climate also refers to "othering" and how students of color are sometimes singled out to speak on behalf of their cultural group, regardless of the situation (i.e. tokenism). This connection of classroom to college level

implication helps to articulate how important and investigation into these issues is for our students and faculty of Color in higher education and extends the concept of silencing beyond the classroom into a realm of application on a campus and societal level. It is with this in mind that the last theme investigated in this literature review will examine current research relating to race and college climate within the realm of how Whiteness fosters the silencing of African American narratives in higher education.

### **College Climate**

The final topic that will be discussed in this literature review pertains to college climate, specifically looking at how college climate functions as an overarching influence on classroom climate, silencing, and culture due to the role Whiteness holds within higher education, while also exploring issues related to institutional racism (Leonardo & Grubb, 2018) within higher education within the United States. This theme also creates a larger view the theme of classroom climate, as it allows for a broader understanding of college climate and university level implications and situations to be understood, addressed, and acknowledged in this study. This theme also draws upon a larger application of the research questions presented in chapter one pertaining to the silencing of African American narratives in undergraduate classrooms in higher education in the United States by allowing connections between campus climates, norms, and roles to be disseminated and connected to themes, ideas, and concepts that are addressed at both the micro (classroom) and macro (societal) levels (Flintoff, Dowling, & Fitzgerald, 2015).

Continuing the discussion of the implications of individuals being pushed to or framed as being on the margins in a particular culture or group setting, Thompson and Dey (1998) explored how being pushed to the margins creates different courses of stress

from African American faculty that is often not experienced by their White colleagues.

As Thompson and Dey (1998) explained:

The role of faculty as scholar is one of asking questions, investigating issues, and discussing and challenging world views. That role is intensified for African American faculty, because the prevailing community worldviews of the academy itself are frequently challenged by African Americans' presence in it. (p. 324)

While expectations may be stated as being the same for all faculty, cultural expectations and challenges for faculty of Color intensify the challenges and stressors placed on faculty of Color in higher education. This struggle and increased stress is often linked to a representational issue as expressed by Thompson and Dey (1998), “African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans constitute between 20 and 25% of the U.S. population, yet fewer than 10% of the academic positions are held by members of these groups,” (Thompson & Dey, 1998, p. 326), which creates a token situation wherein faculty of Color are often the only faculty of Color in departments, and in turn, feel more pressure to do well as they are often subjected to and viewed as representative of their race and culture in social and organization settings and evaluations (Bradley, 2005; Eagan Jr & Garvey, 2015; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Griffin, Bennett & Harris, 2013; Hinton, 2010; McCray, 2011; Stanley, 2006; Wilder, Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Tokenism then, is a perceptual, psychological, and behavioral state imposed upon persons with visible racial/ethnic or gender distinctions in a work environment, and consequences of tokenism include isolation, loneliness, visibility, distinctiveness, representativeness, role encapsulation, stereotyping, stereotype threat, and attributional ambiguity (Niemann, 2016). Similar connections are also drawn in the

study pertaining to students, due to the overwhelming majority of college faculty and students being White, students of Color often face struggles similar to faculty of Color (i.e. performance, participation, engagement, etc.) compared to their White counterparts (Thompson & Dey, 1998). While Thompson and Dey (1998) focused on African American faculty as a whole, more stress and challenges faced women of Color in faculty positions in higher education in the United States.

Turner and Gonzalez (2011) addressed this phenomena of increased stress and challenges for women of Color in higher education, by focusing on the roles race and gender play in framing and constructing expectations and normative roles for faculty of Color in higher education. Turner and Gonzalez (2011) draw upon the work completed by Turner, Gonzalez, and Wood (2008) that examined themes and research areas regarding faculty of Color in higher education over the last twenty years. As Turner and Gonzalez (2011) explained, since most of the research regarding racial issues in higher education focus on the positionality of faculty and students of Color, it is important to look at where the themes in research from that last twenty years point towards as major areas of concern: the working lives and relationships of faculty of Color, and the conditions that exist at predominantly White institutions that reinforce concerns connected to identity issues for faculty of Color (Turner & Gonzalez, 2011, p. 199). Turner and Gonzalez (2011) found that there were three key areas that faculty of Color turned to for support at predominantly White Institutions, and three key areas of concern and challenges that existed for faculty of Color at predominantly White institutions. The three areas of support were: social support groups, other faculty of Color, and campus administration (Turner & Gonzalez, 2011, pp. 203-206). The three areas of concern and



challenges were: White superiority, campus climate, and racism (Turner & Gonzalez, 2011, pp. 203-205). These areas of concern and support help to frame the ongoing struggle that exists on a variety of college campus here in the United States, and parallels the work completed by Victorino, Nylund-Gibson, and Conley (2013) that examined the influence of campus climate on racial issues and tensions in higher education.

Victorino, Nylund-Gibson, and Conley (2013) addressed how the racial climate of a college campus influence the overall satisfaction of faculty at four-year Colleges and Universities in the United States. While Victorino, Nylund-Gibson, and Conley's (2013) explained, "a large body of empirical research at the individual level of analysis has documented the marginalization and job dissatisfaction of women and racial/ethnic minorities in the academy," (p.769), this particular study attempted to isolate specific elements that exist on college campus, linked to race, that create dissatisfaction in employment and have a negative influence on teaching, advising, and research roles and responsibilities. Victorino, Nylund-Gibson, and Conley's (2013) study found three main areas to group and discuss racial climate issues on college campuses in order to better understand the influence race plays on college campuses: campus racial climate among students, campus racial climate among faculty and staff, and campus racial climate among students, faculty, and staff (Victorino, Nylund-Gibson, & Conley, 2013, pp. 773-776). Understanding how these different areas of focus overlap with one another provides a more detailed picture of how racial issues influence not only faculty satisfaction, but also the satisfaction and interactional norms that exist between students, faculty, and staff on college and university campuses.

## Summary

The literature review in this chapter highlighted the existing research relevant to the study of the influence of Whiteness on silencing African American narratives in higher education in the United States. Critical race theory provides a contextual framework for the exploration of racial issues not only within higher education, but also within our society on a broader level. This allows critical race theory to be applied to research regarding race in higher education and leadership in higher education as a means of creating connections between broader social concerns and the issues present in higher education that are being addressed and investigated by this study. Research regarding the role of Whiteness in higher education helps to establish an understanding of how Whiteness is currently being discussed and framed within research, while also using the existing themes and focal points of Whiteness theory and Whiteness research as a critical lens for narrative collection, analysis, and interpretation within this study via the themes of meta-narratives, counter-narratives, and the narrative paradigm.

In order to create connections across narrative gathered from participants, and to allow connections to be articulated to other experiences and areas of research, the dissertation will examine the narratives for references to struggles or issues regarding power and knowledge, invisibility, classroom climate, and college climate, in order to create detailed articulations of participant experiences, while also drawing connections to not only the experiences of other participants, but larger issues currently facing not only individuals in higher education, but issues facing all of us on a social scale (i.e. the #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter, #EmbraceTheAwkward). All of the themes articulated above were identified with relation given to the three research questions

guiding this dissertation:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

These themes also create connections between the current work that exists in this area, while also making it possible to extend the conversation and trajectory of research in this area into new avenues of analysis and investigation.

### **Preview of Methodology**

In chapter three I will be discussing the methodological approaches used for this dissertation. I used semi-structured open-ended interviews with participants to collect the data set of narratives for this dissertation. To analyze the collected narratives I used thematic coding to complete the narrative analysis and content analysis of each participants responses. I also used autoethnography as an overlay perspective for interpretation and analysis of the collected data from an alternative positionality.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

*“What does it mean when I say that 'I don't see race?' It means that because I learned to see no difference between 'White' and 'Color,' I have White-washed my own sense of self.*

*It means that I know more about what it is to be a White person than what it is to be Asian, and I am a stranger among both.”*

*Michi Trota*

#### Overview of Methodology

Investigating how the narratives of African American faculty and African American undergraduate students helps to better understand the influence Whiteness has in higher education in the United States was completed in this dissertation through a narrative based research approach that was rooted in face-to-face interviews and content analysis of those interviews. This dissertation used semi-structured, open-ended participant interviews as a means of gathering and constructing participant narratives to analyze the silencing power of Whiteness on African American individuals in higher education in the United States. I decided to use interviews to gather experiences and narratives from participants due to narrative analysis providing a rich means of viewing and interpreting not only the individual experiences of those interviewed for this dissertation, but also as a means of being able to more clearly identify and articulate connections that exist across the individuals interviewed. The dissertation used content analysis to analyze the responses from the participant interviews. Content analysis is “any

of several research techniques used to describe and systematically analyze the content of written, spoken, or pictorial communication; such as books, newspapers, television programs, or interview transcripts” (Vogt, 2005, p. 59). I looked for “elements of individual instances or general patterns” (Reinard, 2008, p. 304) across the interview transcripts. The method of qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). Rhetorical criticism has a particular focus to understand interactions and interpretations in that:

Our answer lies in a postulate that must be found at the foundation of any system of rhetorical criticism. That postulate is that there will be a correspondence among the intentions of a communicator, the characteristics of his discourse, and the reactions of his auditors to that discourse. This postulate is justified by the fact that to deny it is to deny the possibility of language, as we ordinarily understand the term. (Black, 1980a, p. 16)

This understanding allows for a deeper explanation of power dynamics at play within undergraduate classrooms and how the power dynamics created by Whiteness shapes and silences the narratives and experiences of African American individuals in higher education in the United States. Then I looked for “elements of individual instances or general patterns” (Reinard, 2008, p. 304) across the interview responses in order to create themes and draw connections back to the research questions for this study:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in

higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

I also used autoethnography as a methodological approach to better identify the positionality that I took to this study, while also providing an entry point for interpretation, analysis, and discussion regarding how Whiteness silences the narratives of African American individuals in higher education in the United States.

### **Research Paradigm**

This dissertation combines elements of three qualitative methodologies (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell & Miller, 2000) in order to address the topics of how Whiteness silences the narratives of African American individuals in higher education in the United States, while also examining if there is a difference in the influence of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education between how the narratives of instructors and students are impacted. The first is open-ended, semi-structured, face-to-face interviewing (Kvale, 2008), which was selected in order to allow me to gain information from interviewees that was rich in content and depth, while also allowing for some further exploration into individual experiences of interviewees in case a topic arose during the interviews that was not anticipated by the research ahead of time. Content analysis (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004) was selected as the second methodological

approach due to content analysis allowing a focus on identifying key similarities and differences within and between the narratives collected, while also providing a means to gather and identify key experiences and examples of the silencing power of Whiteness that were present in the data set, and will be discussed in the data analysis section. The final methodological approach selected for this dissertation was autoethnography, primarily to serve as a reflective component for me to view not only their role in the research, but also to allow opportunities for reflection about the different experiences and viewpoints that are expressed regarding the silencing power of Whiteness that exist within this dissertation paper (Trahar, 2009). Below is an overview of each of the selected methodological approaches. In the section that follows, an explanation of why each methodology was selected for this study, as well as an explanation as to how each methodology will be used in the dissertation process is explained.

### **Open-Ended In-Depth Interviews**

The first method that was used for this research study will be in-depth open-ended face-to-face interviews. The selection of open-ended, semi-structured interviews is based on the identification of a need for a methodological approach that would allow for more depth and richer collection of narratives and experiences from individuals that could not be gained from a survey or focus group (Creswell & Poth, 2017). By completing the semi-structured, open-ended interviews, the hope is to gain more insight into the experiences and positionalities of the individuals who complete the interviews.

The ten interviews, which took sixty to ninety minutes, were meant to garner deeper narratives and themes that can not be accurately or effectively gathered with the survey. As McMillan and Schumacher (2006) explained, “In-depth interviews are open-

response questions to obtain data of participant meanings -- how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives,” (p. 350), which would allow richer descriptions of interviewee experiences and positionalities pertaining to the influence of Whiteness, which is the focus of this dissertation. As Kvale (2008) explained:

In an interview conversation, the researcher asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived world, about their dreams, fears, and hopes, hears their views and opinions in their own words, and learns about their school and work situation, their family and social life. The research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. (p. 1)

It is this depth of conversation and “viewing” into the lives and experiences of the interviewees (Style, 1988) that is needed for this dissertation, in order to complete an in-depth analysis of interview data, there needs to be a rich depth of material, or in this case, conversational data, to analyze.

When gathering data on the silencing influence of Whiteness, I needed to hear how Whiteness has influenced the participants for this study in their own words, in order to be able to understand their positionality, and in order to be able to reflect on how different participants had connections and differences to one another, as well as to reflect from an autoethnographic standpoint on how my experiences were similar or different to participant experiences due to the influence Whiteness had my positionality. Considering that I am, a straight, White, heterosexual male, who happens to work in higher education in the United States, I may have a different interpretation and manner in which I approach



this topic compared to others who may be completing research and studies in the same research area. However, I also acknowledge the fact that while I may have a different interpretation, approach, or viewpoint towards the topic of this study, the need to better understand and address the ideas and issues of Whiteness that will be discussed throughout this dissertation should be viewed as universally beneficial to all individuals who are impacted by this area of research, which is all of us.

The interviews for this study followed a semi-structured interview guide approach. This semi-structured and open-ended approach allowed the interviews to take on a more conversational and narrative style, allowing the interviews to flow in a narrative framework. This style of interview allowed for an easier application of thematic and content analysis, and should allow the research to find deeper and more consistent themes and exemplars across the interviews.

### **Autoethnography**

Applying an autoethnographic approach to this research concerning the influence of Whiteness in higher education in the United States allowed me to be reflexive of the points of power and privilege I have experiences and viewed as a straight, White, male, while also exploring how my identity and social positionality is tied to, shaped by, and constructed in relation to individuals of Color in the same fields and situations as myself (Case, 2007; McIntosh, 2007; McIntosh, 1988; Rothenberg, 2008; Solomona, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Wise, 2011). Meaning, autoethnography offered not only a means of connecting the other methodologies used in this study through a reflective personal lens (Adams & Holman-Jones, 2011; McIlveen, 2008; Warren, 2011), but also a clearer and more direct analysis of the social and cultural influences that shape how

Whiteness silences the narratives of African American individuals in undergraduate classrooms and on college campuses in the United States (Wise, 2012; Wise, 2010). Autoethnography also offered a more narrative-based means of analyzing the potential differences that exist in the influence of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education between how the narratives of instructors and students are impacted (Hill, 2014; Latz, 2012; Pennington, 2007).

Autoethnographic work focuses on a personal reflection of the research in connection to the work and research being conducted. Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) explained that in doing autoethnographic work, “we confront ‘the tension between insider and outsider perspectives, between social practice and social constraint’” (p. 1), placing the research both within and outside of the research as a means of personal reflection and contextual understanding of the role of the researcher within and apart of the social issue being addressed. Autoethnography acknowledges power and positionality and places the researcher within or in connection to the individuals, populations, or events being examined and analyzed. Autoethnography values this positionality as a means of connection and analysis for the researcher that can not be established through other methodological approaches. As Adams, Jones, and Ellis (2015) explained:

Autoethnographers value the personal and experiential in their research. This includes featuring the perspective of the self in context and culture, exploring experiences as a means of insight about social life, and recognizing and embracing the risks of presenting vulnerable selves in research. (p. 103)

This helps to articulate that autoethnography offers a positionality in this study to embrace and acknowledge the contextual and cultural influences on both myself as a

researcher and on those who will be completing the interviews.

### **Research Paradigm Rationale**

The blending of the three methods listed above for the framing of the paradigm for this dissertation is meant to serve as the creation of a comprehensive approach to addressing Whiteness in higher education. These three approaches were selected due to the depth of analysis that is offered by each method. These research methods were also selected due to how each method complements the other approaches, and also addresses potential shortcomings of the other methods being used. By blending elements of interviews, content analysis, and autoethnographic work, the dissertation hopes to create a better understanding of how Whiteness silences the narratives of African American individuals in undergraduate classrooms in higher education in the United States.

### **Setting and Participants**

This research study was completed by using face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were ninety minutes in length. All potential participants were gathered via a convenience sampling approach by sending an email out to all individuals at a small, public, Midwestern community college, who self-identify as African American members of the African American student group or African American faculty group on campus. The college used in this study has two primary campus locations and serves over 8,000 students each year, with 39% of those students being full-time. The demographic breakdown of the college in 2017 was 87% White, 10.0% were Black, 1.3% were Hispanic, 1.1% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% were Native American/Alaska Native, and 0.2% were individuals with Nonresident Status.

The recruitment email stated that the researcher was seeking individuals who

would be interested in completing a ninety minute interview regarding their experiences with Whiteness in their educational or career journeys (see Appendix A for a draft of the email). Five African American faculty and five African American undergraduate students were interviewed for this study in order to have a large enough of an interview pool to complete a detailed thematic content analysis of the participant responses. Details about the interview participants can be found in the tables below

Table 3.1

*Demographics of Faculty Participants*

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Years Teaching	Years at Interview Site
Francis	48	Male	20	18
Gabe	51	Male	26	26
Hailey	47	Female	17	7
Isis	35	Female	11	11
Jada	39	Female	15	9

Table 3.2

*Demographics of Student Participants*

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Year in College	Employment Status
Anthony	19	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student
Brianna	19	Female	Freshman	Part-Time Student Full-Time Waitress
Cameron	22	Male	Sophomore	Full-Time Student Full-Time Mechanic
Destiny	28	Female	Sophomore	Part-Time Student Full-Time Receptionist
Elijah	20	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student Full-Time Retail Sales

**Data Collection Method**

This dissertation used open-ended, semi-structured interviews to gather data from the participants for analysis. The open-ended, semi-structured interview approach used in this dissertation is guided by the methodological framing of this approach presented by Kvale (2008). As Kvale (2008) explained, “A semi-structured life-world interview attempts to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives. This interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena,” (pp. 10-11). For the sake of this dissertation, the interviewees will be reflecting on the silencing influence Whiteness has presented or currently presents within their lives, and will discuss this phenomena during the interviews. For the interviews, there were a total of fifteen questions prepared in advance of the interview to be used for all of the interviews.

The interviews were designed to take ninety minutes and followed a question structure and protocol that is explained in more detail in the following section.

### **Interview Questions and Protocol**

The interviews for this study were completed using the interview question guide in Appendix B. These questions were pilot tested for clarity and fluency with three different individuals. After each pilot test, questions were modified, refined, and reordered, and follow-up questions were created in order to arrive at the list you see in Appendix B. The goal of the pilot testing was to ensure the interview questions helped to address the research questions for this study, while also providing room for stories and experiences to be openly expressed by the interviewees of this study during the interview process.

All of the interviews for this study were set up with the interviewees at least one week in advance via email correspondence. Interviewees were also provided a copy of the interview questions once an interview date and time were confirmed to allow interviewees the option to reflect on the questions that would be asked ahead of time, and to attempt to ease any potential concerns or apprehensions about questions that may have existed for the interviewees for this study. All of the interviews occurred in a private study room where the interviewer and interviewee would not be disturbed and would have the privacy to discuss in-depth about any topics that arose during the interview process. All of the interviews were recorded on a digital tape recorder by the interviewer (with a computer recording serving as a backup in case the tape recorder fails), and then manually transcribed into a word document. The researcher also had the list of questions for the interview present, and a notebook available so field notes about particular

responses or pieces of the interview could be noted and time marked in order to be reviewed later. The interviewer also made sure there was a timer clearly displayed between the interviewer and the interviewee as a means of attempting to help keep the interview focused and on time in order to respect the time given by the interviewee to participate in the interview for this study. All of the interviews started with the researcher thanking the interviewees for their participation in the study, and asking if there were any questions about anything covered in the communication between the researcher and the interviewee leading up to the interview before any of the interviews began. From there the interviewer started the tape recorder and time and proceeded to work down the list of interview questions previously provided to the interviewee. All of the interviews ended with the interviewer asking if the interviewee had any questions about the study and if the interviewees would like to stay updated on the progress of the dissertation. The interviewer would then conclude each interview and once again thank each interviewee for their participation in the study.

### **Data Analysis**

In order to analyze the data collected for this study, the analysis focused on three areas in order to analyze the data collected from the interviews. The first analysis format focused on thematic coding, looking for overarching themes that were present in the interview transcripts. The second area of analysis will focus on the analysis of the narratives, stories, and experiences presented by the individuals who participate in the face-to-face interviews. The third method of analysis will use aspects of content analysis to draw connections between the themes present in the coding process and the narratives and stories identified in the interview transcripts in order to identify exemplars from the

data sets.

### **Thematic Coding**

For this study, the data collected from the interview transcripts will be analyzed for eight themes. The themes of race, racism, Whiteness, White privilege, discrimination, and silencing were pulled from survey and interview themes used in existing literature on Whiteness and the racial climate in higher education in the United States (Cabrera, 2014; Gillborn, 2015; Reay, Davies, David, & Ball, 2001; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), while the themes of support and mental health emerged during the interview process as shared experiences among the interviewees for this study. The definitions and guidelines for each other these themes is provided below and is also included in the codebook for this research.

**Race.** Instances pertaining to race refer to any direct or indirect reference to an individual's racial identity. This reference can pertain to the individual being interviewed or a reference to the race of another individual being discussed by the interviewee. The concept of race often refers to a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society (hooks, 2006). For the sake of this dissertation, the term race focuses on how an individual identifies themselves from a racial perspective, as opposed to focusing on how they may be identified on a societal level.

**Racism.** Instances pertaining to racism refer to any direct or indirect reference to racist comments, ideas, or situations heard or experienced by the interviewee or individuals that the interviewee is referencing. For the framing of this study, racism is viewed as the belief in the superiority of one race over another. Racism, especially when



deeply rooted on a social level, often results in antagonism, discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their perceived or identified race or ethnicity (McWhorter, 2005). The concepts of power and prejudice will also be addressed within this area, as those concepts often are used to explain how racism occurs and is upheld within our American culture (hooks, 2006).

**Whiteness.** Instances pertaining to Whiteness refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual either being White or being a Non-White person (Roediger, 1991). This dissertation defines Whiteness for this study as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin (Leonardo, 2002). These characteristics, in turn, create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race.

**White Privilege.** Instances pertaining to White privilege refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual being a non-White person (hooks, 2006). The concept of White privilege refers to the societal privilege that benefits people whom society identifies as White beyond what is commonly experienced by non-White people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances (DiAngelo, 2018).

**Discrimination.** Instances pertaining to Discrimination refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the unjust or

prejudicial treatment of different socially constructed categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, class, age, or sex (Stanley, 2006). The concept of discrimination is often referenced in research as the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction towards, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong (Eagan Jr. & Garvey, 2015). This often becomes expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of hierarchy or othering of a particular individual or group.

**Silencing.** Instances pertaining to silencing refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to engage in situations or conversations with other individuals, or were barred from participation in situations, or had their ideas or participation discredited due to their race, class, age, or sex (Milner IV, 2010). The concept of silencing is often referenced in research as the differences in the treatment or consideration of a person(s) based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong (Mitchell & Miller, 2011). This often becomes expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of either and in-group or out-group or restrict the amount of power certain individuals or groups have in certain situations (Foucault, 1980).

**Support.** Instances pertaining to support refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to seek services or engage in conversations with other individuals about their personal or professional concerns, or were barred from support services due to their race, class, age, or sex (Milner IV, 2010). The concept of support is often referenced in

research as pertaining to emotional, personal, or professional support, depending on the context being addressed and the type of interaction that is occurring, and can also be linked to the feeling of being accepted or isolated within a work or educational environment.

**Mental health.** Instances pertaining to mental health refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to seek services or engage in conversations with other individuals about their personal or professional concerns, or were barred from support services for their emotional or mental well-being (Harley, 2008). The concept of mental health is often referenced in research as pertaining to emotional, mental, personal, or physical help/support that is meant to help an individual feel comfortable or supported in their experiences and day-to-day activities.

While other thematic areas and sub-themes emerged later in the analysis, the analysis started with these thematic areas as they reflect themes and points of discussion that exist in current research regarding silencing and Whiteness in higher education. By coding in this manner, the codebook (see Appendix C) and codesheet (see Appendix D) created for the analysis allows more fluidity to be acknowledged between themes, and helps to limit the potential bias of attempting to define a particular element of a response or data set into a hyper-defined position or experience.

### **Narrative Analysis**

Once coding for themes is completed, the second step in the analysis process will be identifying narratives that are present in the interview transcripts. This method will allow a focus on both the sharing and recounting of narratives that occur during the

interview process of the study, which will help identify narratives and key elements of the narratives, stories, and experiences shared, but also allows for the individual participants to reflect on their experiences and stories during the process as well. The reflective nature that narrative analysis offers allows for a depth of understanding that could not be gathered from thematic analysis alone, due to narrative analysis allowing for a closer investigation of the who, what, where, when, and why that helped to shape, create, and maintain the narratives and identities that are understood and expressed by the participants in this study.

### **Content Analysis**

The third step in the analysis process was a deep content analysis to draw out connections between the themes identified during the thematic analysis and the narratives drawn out from the interview responses. Content analysis allows for connections between persuasive strategies and social structures that influence narratives and identities of individuals and how those influences and identities play out on college campuses to be identified and analyzed. Content analysis also presents the opportunity to use autoethnographic methods to draw connections between my experiences and my personal narrative with the experiences and narratives identified in the data sets to draw larger comparisons and observations pertaining to the influence of Whiteness in higher education in the United States.

Content analysis was used to analyze the transcripts from the interviews. Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text (Berelson, 1952; Black, 1980a; Black, 1980b; Budd, Thorp, & Donohew, 1967; Lindvist, 1981;

McTavish & Pirro, 1990; Tesch, 1990). Content analysis can be used to analyze, categorize, and generalize large amounts of data (Macnamara, 2005). Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). As Krippendorff (1980) explained:

As a research technique, content analysis involves specialized procedures for processing scientific data. Like all research techniques, its purpose is to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of ‘facts,’ and a practical guide to action. It is a tool. (p. 21)

Content analysis allowed the identification of “elements of individual instances or general patterns” (Reinard, 2008, p. 304) across the responses from the individuals who participated in the face-to-face interviews. As Krippendorff (2004) explained, understanding how content analysis allows for a deeper investigation of themes and narrative connections compared to other methodological approaches allows for a richer understanding of the individuals being investigated and, allows for a more direct and clear connection of thematic analysis and explanation of exemplar findings from a particular population by researchers while also allowing for more concrete findings and stronger levels of coding reliability (Krippendorff, 2011). This style of analysis will allow for an easier application of thematic coding and analysis of connections and similar elements within the interview transcripts, and allowed the research to find deeper and more consistent themes and exemplars across the interviews.

### **Institutional Review Board Approval/Interview Schedule**

This dissertation gained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval on October

28th, 2018. Once approval was received the researcher contacted the research office at the campuses of investigation in order to share the IRB approval and to send out the participant recruitment email. The email was sent out on October 31st, 2018, and the researcher began to set up interviews once responses to the recruitment email were received. All of the interviews were completed between November 10th, 2018 and November 21st, 2018.

### **Preview of Chapter Four: Results**

The next chapter will unpack the interviews and explain the findings from coding the five faculty interviews and the five student interviews. The chapter will be structured to address the three research questions in order:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

Chapter four will first unpack the experiences and insights from the faculty interviews, then will unpack the experiences and insights from the student interviews, before addressing how the findings from the interviews can be used to inform and improve teaching and community practices in higher education.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

*“Because Whites are not socialized to see ourselves collectively, we don't see our group's history as relevant. Therefore, we expect people of Color to trust us as soon as they meet us. We don't see ourselves as having to earn that trust.”*

***Robin DiAngelo***

#### Overview of Results

The interviews conducted for this study were completed in order to gain insight into the experiences African American faculty and students on the interview site campus have had with Whiteness during their educational journey. The goal of these interviews was to collect stories and experiences from the interviewees that would help identify how Whiteness has negatively impacted the interviews, and provide a means of identifying and addressing elements of Whiteness in order to reduce or remove the negative impacts Whiteness has on college campuses in the United States.

This chapter outlines the results of the interviews by sharing experiences from the student and faculty interviewees, comparing those experiences to my own experiences in my educational journey, and offering points of insight and analysis in order to address the research questions for this study, and to frame the discussion in chapter five regarding how to move forward and use the data from this study to begin to combat and address the often toxic climates in higher education that Whiteness has helped to form and support.

### **Framing the Results**

In order to distinguish any difference in theme prevalence between the narratives of African American undergraduate students and African American faculty, the coder used a present/absent indication of themes (race, racism, Whiteness, White privilege, discrimination, silencing, support, and mental health), as well as a frequency count to determine how themes and topics and the prevalence of certain themes and topics reflect experiences that are shared across the interviewees in this study. This allows for direct comparison of experiences between each narrative, and allows for connections to be identified as well. This approach also allows for a direct analysis and discussion of the still prevalent issue of Whiteness in higher education, and the negative impact Whiteness has on African American undergraduate students and African American faculty. The results section will address the themes and topic areas as they relate to the research questions for this study:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

Completing the thematic analysis within the scope of each research questions allows the



analysis of data to more directly link the themes to answering each research question, while also allowing the interrelationships between the themes and research questions to be more clearly identified.

### **African American Faculty Coding Results**

The first subset of interviewees examined for this study was the African American faculty members interviewed for this study. The five faculty members interviewed for this study have all been teaching in higher education for over ten years, with two of the faculty members (both of the male interviewees) having over twenty years of experience teaching in higher education. The faculty interviewed for this study have been at their current institution for at least seven years, with the longest length at their current institution being twenty-six years. The age range for the interviewees was thirty-five to fifty-one. Two of the interviewees identified as male, and the other three identified as female. These details can be viewed in the table below, which also contains the pseudonyms that each interviewee selected to be used for their name in this study.

Table 4.1

*Demographics of Faculty Participants*

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Years Teaching	Years at Interview Site
Francis	48	Male	20	18
Gabe	51	Male	26	26
Hailey	47	Female	17	7
Isis	35	Female	11	11
Jada	39	Female	15	9

**Coded Themes**

There are eight themes that were identified as present in all of the interviews with the five faculty members interviewed for this study. Those themes are: race, racism, Whiteness, White privilege, discrimination, silencing, support, and mental health. These eight themes are used to identify specific examples and experiences discussed by the faculty members in their interviews that provide insights for addressing RQ1:

Research Question 1: How can the narratives of African American faculty provide examples and insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

These eight themes are discussed in more detail below, with specific examples from faculty interviews to highlight the theme being discussed, as well as reflections from the interviewer on their positionality and experiences that relate to the thematic areas and

experiences that are discussed between the interviewer and the interviewees for this study.

**Race.** Instances pertaining to race refer to any direct or indirect reference to an individual's racial identity. This reference can pertain to the individual being interviewed or a reference to the race of another individual being discussed by the interviewee. The concept of race often refers to a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society (hooks, 2006). For the sake of this dissertation, the term race focuses on how an individual identifies themselves from a racial perspective, as opposed to focusing on how they may be identified on a societal level. Race was discussed in-depth by all five faculty members interviewed for this study.

One of the main ways race was discussed in the interviews pertained to how race often became not only a means of identification for faculty to create connections within their workplaces, but also functioned as a means to address social issues both in and outside of the classroom on their college campus. As Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained, "Being a Black faculty member in a department full of White colleagues was hard, but I had other Black professors seek me out and have me get involved in their things, their meeting." When I asked how that made him feel, Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) elaborated that, "I didn't have that my first two years teaching. At my old university I felt isolated. Here, even with no one else in my department being Black, I still have colleagues that keep me involved and welcomed in other ways." This idea of community bonding and creating relationships with others was also discussed by Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018)

when he was reflecting on how the school has changed over the years he has taught. “I was the third Black man hired here, and was the only one who taught in my department until about fifteen years ago,” Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) reflected, and added that, “If I would not have made friendships with other Black faculty on campus, this place would have been hell. You can’t imagine what it is like to feel so alone in a place where you are surrounded by people.” He was right, I can not imagine what that must have felt like, since every place I have taught at has been welcoming and supportive of me as a teacher and member of the community. My experiences have been drastically different from the experiences of Francis and Gabe, but the understanding that there are social issues that need to be addressed in higher education was shared between all of us, and was discussed in-depth by the three female faculty I interviewed for this study.

Others interviewed for the study discussed how race not only functioned as an identifying marker for them in their careers, but had a major impact on how they were viewed during their educational journeys. Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) discussed how even when she was just starting school, her race was often used to distinguish her from her classmates. “There were a lot of times that teachers would try to group all of the Colored kids together to work,” Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “and it often felt like they did that so they could focus more on the White students in class. I really felt like I didn’t get help in school until I got to high school.” This notion of being separated and ignored was also discussed by Isis. “I hardly ever did assignments or studied with my White classmates,” Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained, “It’s not like there weren’t people to

work with. It almost felt like they were afraid of me because of my skin, and not just students, teachers too." I personally had a hard time trying to relate to this experience, since I often had teachers reach out to me in classes and try to have me work with others who could help me better understand course concepts and materials. Honestly, my frame of reference is what prevented me from relating to many of the interviewees, until I met with Jada for her interview. "Growing up I hardly had any other Black students in my school, other Colored kids really. That really made it hard for me to talk to the White kids in my classes," Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, and added that, "Truly, I couldn't relate to the White kids. They came from different parts of town. Had nice clothes. Looked like the teachers. They didn't know me or how hard it was for me to be there, because they didn't have to know."

*Autoethnographic reflection.* Gabe was right, I can not imagine what that must have felt like, since every place I have taught at has been welcoming and supportive of me as a teacher and member of the community. My experiences have been drastically different from the experiences of Francis and Gabe, but the understanding that there are social issues that need to be addressed in higher education was shared between all of us, and was discussed in-depth by the three female faculty I interviewed for this study. I was also really struck by the last part of Jada's statement, "didn't have to know". I personally do not need to know the experiences of others to live my own life, but by not even trying to understand where others were coming from or what they were experiencing in their own lives, I drastically limited my ability to interact with and understand other individuals as I was growing up. This lack of awareness or willingness to understand or learn about different experiences and backgrounds was very noticeable when I started to

code for experiences related to racism in the interview transcripts.

**Racism.** Instances pertaining to racism refer to any direct or indirect reference to racist comments, ideas, or situations heard or experienced by the interviewee or individuals that the interviewee is referencing. For the framing of this study, racism is viewed as the belief in the superiority of one race over another. Racism, especially when deeply rooted on a social level, often results in antagonism, discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their perceived or identified race or ethnicity (McWhorter, 2005). The concepts of power and prejudice will also be addressed within this area, as those concepts often are used to explain how racism occurs and is upheld within our culture (hooks, 2006). Experiences were expressed by all five faculty interviewees pertaining to a variety of situations relating to racism in their educational journeys and in their current roles as faculty members.

All five faculty members interviewed for this study spoke about a particular memory they had of a situation where they experienced blatant racism in a public setting, but nothing was done by anyone else involved in the situation. Both of the male faculty interviewee (Francis and Gabe) discussed situations from their pre-college education experiences, while two of the female faculty interviews (Hailey and Jada) discussed situations that happened while they were in college. Isis was the only faculty member interviewed that discussed a situation that occurred while employed at her current job. All four other faculty member did indicate that they had experienced racist situations both in college and in their careers, but did not discuss specific instances at their current school.

Francis and Gabe both had to deal with situations from their teachers that made it very difficult for them to succeed, or even participate in the classroom. “I had a teacher in

third grade tell me I was a dumb nigger and would never accomplish anything,” said Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) who also explained, “not only that, that man never helped me and if I ever did things right, he never said anything close to praise.” A similar experience of a direct attack from a teacher was discussed by Gabe regarding his time in high school. “I had one lady teacher who would openly call on Black kids because she thought we didn’t read for class or know anything,” Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) explained and continued that, “and even if you did know the answer, she just said it was a coon getting lucky.” Both Francis and Gabe had a hard time going into detail about these experiences, but kept coming back to how the language used by their teachers growing up really showed them how much racism was impacting their schooling.

When I was having these interviews with Francis and Gabe, we discussed how even though the language used in classrooms changed a lot in the twenty year gap between their schooling and mine, there is still the underlying tone and expectation that if you are a student of Color, you better be ready for the harsh language Francis and Gabe experienced. “I have kids of my own now”, said Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018), “and I fear the first time they come home and ask why people act differently with them than with their White friends. I shouldn’t have to think about that happening, but I do.” It is this expectation that there will be situations of overt racism in the lives of individuals of Color that reinforce why the issue of Whiteness needs to be addressed, and this focus on language used in a racist manner continued in the interviews with the female faculty interviewed for this study.

As I stated above, the female faculty interviewed for this study did not focus on

their education journey up to high school, but on their experiences with racism in their college years, both as students, and as faculty members. Hailey and Jada both discussed experiences that happened during their undergraduate work that made them question wanting to go into teaching in higher education. “I had a professor tell me that no one would respect a Black chemist in the same way as a White chemist,” said Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018), “It won’t matter how good you are he said, you will still be Black.” I could not believe how forward that faculty member was with Hailey, but she said that it happened a lot throughout her undergrad, since that faculty member was her teacher for multiple classes. Jada also had a faculty member make very direct racist comments to her in class. “I was told a Black woman couldn’t do the same level of work as a man because of my ethnic upbringing,” explained Jada (2018, November 20), “and that my culture would skew my viewpoint as a researcher.” I asked both Hailey and Jada how they responded to these situations, and they both said they turned to their parents, who helped them to realize that succeeding would be the only way to move past these experiences. Success however, did not prevent Isis from experiencing racism during her master’s program. “I was the top student in my cohort, but I had a committee member who felt that my ‘Black approach’ didn’t work in our field,” explained Isis. (2018, November 12), “and that I might be a smart Black woman, but not smart enough for my theories to stick.” All three of the female faculty interviewed also acknowledge similar, but less direct situations happening while they were younger, but stated that these particular experiences are the ones that they share with their students who come to them to talk about their struggles.

***Autoethnographic reflection.*** Having the ability to take negative experiences and



use them as a means of connecting with students is a powerful means of combating Whiteness, but these faculty members should not have to, and they admit, some of their colleagues do not share their personal struggles with students out of fear of painting a scenario where they will never escape racism. The problem that these experiences clarify is just how strongly ingrained Whiteness is within our higher education system, and just how often it influences our interactions. While individuals who benefit from Whiteness may not realize how it unfolds in a daily capacity, our colleagues who have to work through the negative impacts of Whiteness have a lot of experiences that help to show how big of an issue Whiteness is in higher education in the United States. When I think about how hard it would be to deal with these types of situations, I can not place myself in the position of the interviewees for this study. I have never experienced the negative impact of racism personally, my wife has not experienced it, and our children most likely will not experience negative outcomes from racism due to the privilege we get from being White and the benefits we gain from Whiteness.

**Whiteness.** Instances pertaining to Whiteness referenced in the interviews addressed any reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual either being White or being a Non-White person (Roediger, 1991). This dissertation defines Whiteness for this study as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin (Leonardo, 2002). These characteristics, in turn, create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race. Experiences were expressed by four faculty interviewees pertaining to a variety of situations relating to

Whiteness in their educational journeys and in their current roles as faculty members. Two of the faculty members interviewed focused more on their experiences with Whiteness as college students (Francis and Isis), while two other faculty members interviewed (Gabe and Jada) focused on experiences they have had in their current positions.

Francis had an experience in the second week of his freshman year of college that made him want to quit school. "Someone had spray painted 'Whites only' onto all the drinking fountains in our dorm, and spray painted the same on all the bathrooms and laundry rooms. "Our floor leader tried to play it off as a practical joke," explained Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018). When I asked him what happened his response left me speechless for a few minutes. Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) recalled, "One of my friends went and bought sandpaper and started trying to scrub all the paint off places. He got arrested and charged with vandalism, and nothing happened to the three White kids who spray painted everything." I asked him if he thought they got away with it because they were White and Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) said he did because, "The kids were White, our hall leader was White, and all the cops involved were White. They got a free pass and my friend almost got kicked out of school. Being White kept them out of trouble. I almost quit school right there." Francis was able to directly pinpoint that the fact that there was a shared race between the students who spray painted "Whites only" and all authority figures involved reflected a commonality that allowed their Whiteness to prevent punishment, while it created a situation for his friend where, since he was a Black student, put him in harm's way due to the White norms surrounding the situation and the

Whiteness based culture on his campus.

While not as hard striking as Francis's experience, Isis had a situation occur in her sophomore sociology class that she identified as race creating a cultural divide in the class. As Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained, "All of the students of Color sat by one another in the class, but our professor never walked by our side of the room or really ever answered our questions in class. He really only stayed by us when he gave out exams." When I asked Isis how she felt about the situation Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained that, "He had different standards for the White students. He worked with them more in class and hardly watched them when he gave assessments. It was like he didn't trust the Colored kids in his class." The example Isis discussed in her interview reflects a similar concern that was present in Francis's interview reflection, a cultural hierarchy based upon race that was guided and reinforced by the norms of Whiteness on their respective college campus.

While all five faculty members did have negative experiences with Whiteness during their college careers, Gabe and Jada stressed that they have had more negative experiences with Whiteness since they have become faculty members. Gabe's experience was during his faculty orientation at his current university. Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) explained, "During my faculty orientation the person covering material never once discussed any of the organizations designated to faculty or students of Color. When I asked for the information, they told me I would have to find it myself." I asked Gabe if maybe that could have been a result of a timing issue in the orientation process, but Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) clarified that, "It wasn't a lack of time, it was not caring to show it to us. He said it

existed but I had to find it. He showed us the lunch schedule rotation but not when the different faculty group pages were." Similar to the situations discussed by Francis and Isis, this experience Gabe had reflected another time where Whiteness allowed a White individual to control or shift a situation to benefit themselves, while not allowing an individual of Color to participate or engage in a beneficial manner.

Jada reflected on an experience that involved a situation in a professional learning community, and how that experience caused her to change how she approached discussing university standards in her classes. As Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, "During one of the earlier PLCs I did on campus, I had a White faculty member complain about how often we talk about addressing race in the classroom. When I pushed back on her comment, the group got aggressive towards me and said I needed to respect her viewpoint." When I asked her how she responded to that reaction from the group, Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) said, "I tried to defend my own stance, but all of the other members said they felt I was attacking them since I was the only person of Color in the group. That I was taking out my frustrations on them." All of these experiences discussed by these faculty members had me questioning how these types of situations can still occur and had me worrying about how often they actually happen.

***Autoethnographic reflection.*** While I can remember my first year of college being stressful, mainly due to being away from home and having to do everything for myself for the first time, I did not have any negative experiences that made me want to completely quit college. I would like to think that we have a fairly open-minded viewpoint on tolerance and equity in higher education in 2019, but apparently that is not

the case in a lot of situations on our campus based off of the responses from the interviewees. These experiences of Whiteness and the social norms and expectations surrounding Whiteness help to guide how the layers of race, racism, and Whiteness work with and within one another to reinforce a social standard of separation and barriers. The unique aspect of these experiences is that all the faculty members discussed the scenario by framing it through how the White individuals involved were treated in a more positive manner than their non-White classmates and colleagues. When looking at experiences that were coded as being examples of White privilege, the experiences reflected upon by the faculty focused on the negative treatment of people of Color, where the White individuals involved in the situation were either not impacted or actually praised for their actions. When I think about it, this type of passiveness is something that I have also done in past situations, and I am ashamed that I did not do anything to help or advocate for my colleagues.

**White privilege.** Instances pertaining to White privilege that were discussed in interviews referred to direct or indirect references to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual being a non-White person (hooks, 2006). The concept of White privilege refers to the societal privilege that benefits people whom society identifies as White beyond what is commonly experienced by non-White people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances (DiAngelo, 2018). Three of the faculty interviewees addressed a variety of situations where White privilege negatively impacted their educational journeys. The same three faculty interviewees also stated that White privilege negatively impacts and/or creates barriers and difficulties in their current

roles as faculty members, but there were three very clear examples of White privilege discussed in the faculty interviews.

The first situation that reflected White privilege was a research project Francis was on that became hostile with relation to one of his colleagues. "I can remember there was a member on the research team I really respected when we started due to the amount of work he has done in our field, like, really solid research," said Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018), "but his attitude towards me was much more direct and mean compared to others on the team." I asked Francis if he could explain this a bit more and Francis explained that, "He would make comments regarding my work ethic or my schooling, but would praise others for coming to him with questions about things. If I came with questions he would talk down to me." I tried to relate to how difficult the situation must have been, since I had also experienced some difficult research situations during my master's program with a colleague, but the situation for Francis was more challenging than it first sounded.

As I kept asking him to reflect on the situation, Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained, "There was a point about three weeks in where I asked him what the problem was, and he explained that he felt I resented his treatment of my colleagues on the project because he spent more time working with them." I asked Francis how that response made him feel and he stated, "I said I didn't feel that way, and he responded that he didn't want someone who resented working with White people on the project, and that he would like me to step away from the work and let him keep working with the rest of the team." Francis then went on to explain that while he went to his dean regarding the situation, nothing was done since there was no "proof" that

discrimination had occurred and because he had no evidence of this conversation happening. Looking at this experience, Francis experienced different treatment than his White colleague on the research team, but also from his dean when he tried to report and resolve the situation. This lack of engagement and lack of believing what is being shared by the faculty members interview also occurred in the other two examples coded for this theme.

The second situation that reflected White privilege was an experience Gabe had with a counselor on campus when he was trying to help assist some of his students. Gabe was discussing a time he had went to the counselors office with two of his students (who were also Black) to try and help them resolve some issues with getting their course materials. "No one at the bookstore had an answer for me so I went with them to the counselors office since they were talking to that office about getting their books," Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) explained, "The problem was that regardless who I tried to talk to they acted like they were busy, and when I tried to get someone else to help the office assistants would go and help someone else." I asked Gabe to explain what he did when he noticed the counselors helping other individuals who had showed up after he did with his students and he explained that, "I called them out on it. Said we were there first. And the response I got was that I needed to calm down and wait my turn or they would call security." Eventually, the counselors helped them, Gabe explained, but not until everyone else in the area was helped first. "They helped about ten other people before us, and I didn't think about it right away, but back in my office later I realized we were the only people of Color there the entire time." Gabe was not sure if what happened was because he and his students are Black, but this situation clearly

shows that they were not helped and were treated unfairly than all the other individuals who were looking for help from that counselor office that day.

The third situation that reflected White privilege was a situation Hailey found herself in at a conference with some more senior faculty from her institution. “I was trying to check into our hotel and my card wasn’t scanning. I tried to explain I was there for an academic conference but the clerk kept giving me funny looks and being really rude,” Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained. I asked Hailey if she could explain the interaction more and Hailey said, “She kept asking who made the reservation and what conference it was. After about fifteen minutes everyone else who was with me was checked in and I was still dealing with this woman.” I asked Hailey how the situation was resolved and she said it really was never solved until the next day. “I had to stay in someone else's room that night because she refused to check me in or get a manager. The next day I went down to the desk and a different clerk helped me check in,” Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained. In asking for more specifics about those she was traveling with for the conference Hailey revealed she was one of two females and the only individual of Color from her institution on the trip. While Hailey did not assert that she was treated differently due to her race or her gender in this situation, she was clearly treated in a different manner than her colleagues who were at the same hotel and interacted with the same clerk as her.

**Discrimination.** Experiences were expressed by two faculty interviewees pertaining to a variety of situations of discrimination in their educational journeys and in their current roles as faculty members, but two really stood out as clear examples of discrimination. Instances of discrimination ranged from conversations to situations and



experiences where individuals were treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different socially constructed categories of people on the grounds of their race, class, age, or sex. The concept of discrimination is often referenced in research as the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction towards, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong (Eagan Jr. & Garvey, 2015). This often becomes expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of hierarchy or othering of a particular individual or group.

The first situation that pertained to discrimination was an experience Francis had during his master program with some of his classmates and one of their faculty members for a research methods course. "I had a professor in college that was known for being harder on Black students. He would tell us he was trying to push us to be better than our White peers thought we were," said Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018). I asked Francis how this made him feel and he said he had mixed feelings about the experience. "I understand what he was trying to do, that he wanted us to push ourselves and be able to stand up to the pushback we got from our peers," said Francis, "but the way he went about it was wrong. He graded us harder and was harsher to us in class than our White peers." Looking at this experience Francis shared I found myself wondering how this situation came to happen and how the impact and response from students may have been if the faculty member was White. The other experiences discussed by the interviewees up to this point pertained to situations where White individuals impacted them in a negative manner, but this is the first instance coded for this study that involved another Black individual causing harm to another through

discrimination.

The second situation coded as an example of discrimination was an interaction Isis discussed from her first year teaching with a support staff member on campus. Isis shared that she and a few of her colleagues were trying to gather materials from different organizations on campus to create a resource document to share with their students, but there was a particular individual who never would respond to her emails or data requests, but would respond if someone else emailed her. “It was about two weeks of me trying to get a response from this person before I went in to her office to talk to her and try to get the materials that I needed,” explained Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018), “but the woman would not give them to me saying ‘someone else already got them’ and then left her office and didn’t come back!” I asked Isis if she tried to talk to this woman again or if she reported the situation to anyone. “I told the others working with me on gathering the materials and they said they had no issues with her, and that she needed to be reported. So I reported her, but she still works at our school,” said Isis, “the really frustrating part about this whole situation is that even now when I see her on campus or try to say hi she ignores me or makes an effort not to make eye contact.” Just like the situation Francis experiences, Isis had someone who clearly treated them differently than others, and it had a negative impact on her working situation and continues to create a negative working environment when Isis has interactions with this individual.

Both of these examples articulate just how directly the actions of an individual can create a negative environment and discriminate against individuals in a variety of situations. One way that the literature for this study explains that discrimination can occur

is the restriction of an individual's ability to participate or engage in a social, educational, or workplace setting (Stanley, 2006). This idea of limited engagement or access is coded in the next theme of silencing, as this is a specific form of discrimination that appeared in the interview transcripts.

**Silencing.** Instances pertaining to silencing identified in the interviews referred to any conversations, situations, and experiences where interviewees were limited from being able to engage in situations or conversations with other individuals, barred from participation in situations, or had their ideas or participation discredited due to their race, class, age, or sex (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Experiences were expressed by all five faculty interviewees pertaining to a variety of silencing situations in their educational journeys and in their current roles as faculty members.

The first experience coded for silencing pertained to an experience Francis had in one of his undergraduate classes. “I talked about this a bit before, but I had a teacher who never called on anyone except his three favorite students. Didn’t matter what we were covering or how long you waited, he wouldn’t call on you,” said Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018). When I asked how that worked for the class Francis added, “Those kids, his favorites, were the only White kids in the class. There were twenty-five of us in a class on African American history and he only called on the White students. I couldn’t believe it.” The teacher of this class had removed the ability for others in the class to speak by not calling on them or engaging them in class. In education, we understand that this can naturally happen as we increase class sizes, but in this instance, the professor removed the ability for students to speak and engage with one another in the classroom setting, silencing the rest of the class.

Gabe had similar experiences to the one Francis had, but his reflection focused more on his classmates than his teachers. “Throughout my undergrad I had a hard time interacting with my classmates. Not many people talked to me. I was at a predominately White school and many times was the only Black student or Colored student in a class,” explained Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018). I asked him how often this happened and Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) said, “In almost all my classes. It might have been due to me not talking a lot, but I felt really uncomfortable at times, like people did want to talk to me or have me there.” Gabe’s experiences from his undergraduate show how the environment on his college campus made it difficult for him to even interact with his White classmates, but also showed a sense of discomfort or discontent for him being there as a Black student.

Another faculty member who had an impactful experience that was coding for silencing from their undergraduate work was Hailey, who discussed her experiences with a particular student leader on her college campus. “We had a Black girl on our campus that was really vocal about other Black students getting involved in events, and would openly call out people she knew for not being at events,” explained Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) , “Eventually it got to the point where I had to try and avoid her on campus because of how awkward she made any interaction I had with her.” When I asked Hailey to explain how this impact her and other students she knew on campus Hailey shared that, “It made it really hard to want to be involved in anything because if you missed even one event she got in your face, so my friends and I stopped going to things. It was sad but we just couldn’t deal with her.” Unlike the experiences Francis and Gabe had in college, Hailey’s experience involved another Black student

silencing other students of Color and creating a hostile environment on campus. This concept of a hostile campus environment was discussed by other faculty members interviewed as well, but Isis and Jada reflected on hostile situations that occurred during their careers as faculty members.

While others focused on experiences from their undergraduate years in their interview responses, the situation that Isis experienced that discussed silencing pertained to a faculty training day that happened a few years ago. The event Isis discussed during her interview was meant to be a training session on promoting equity and support opportunities for students of Color on the college campus, but the event quickly became polarized between some White faculty and faculty of Color at the event. “There were about five or six White faculty that felt they were already doing everything they needed to be doing to help support students of Color and felt that the event was ‘a waste of time’,” explained Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018), who continued with, “This led to quite a few arguments at the start, and by the end no one was responding to the presenter. It went from being a training session to basically a lecture in about ten minutes.” Isis also discussed how she remembered a fair number of faculty leaving the training session early, and how there were discussions among some of the Black faculty on her campus about the negative outcome of the training, but nothing was ever shared or discussed on a university level about the situation. “It felt like people were trying to ignore the fact that it happened, like it didn’t matter that faculty on campus were openly against trying to change how they promote equity and support their students,” explained Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018). This lack of engagement or willingness to discuss equity concerns on campus stopped all

conversations that were occurring around the issues being discussed at the faculty training. Jada had a similar experience pertaining to a lack of willingness to discuss racial and equity concerns on campus within her former department.

The last experience coded for silencing pertained to the overall experience Jada had with her department colleagues at her previous institution. As Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, “Anytime I would try to talk about concerns I had about my Colored students within my department the conversation would get shut down or I would be told that ‘it sounds like a diversity and equity office issue’ and the conversation would move on.” When I asked Jada to explain how often this happened Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) said, “Literally anytime I brought up race, or equity, or concerns I had everyone else would try to talk over me or say that was an issue for another time. I felt isolated, like I had no one I could turn to.” This climate of silencing eventually caused Jada to leave that particular institution and start teaching where she is currently employed. Her experiences with silencing not only impacted her, but all of her students at her former school, as she ended up leaving as a result of her negative experiences.

All of the experience shared by the faculty interviewees from this study provide an understanding of different levels and types of silencing that can occur on college campuses. All of the shared experiences have clear elements within them that help to show how Whiteness impacts college campus culture, and in turn, provided a means for the silencing to occur in these experiences. While this may be a negative aspect of college climates, it does also offer a means of support and mental health awareness, which were two unplanned themes that emerged from the interview process.

**Support.** While the six coding themes listed above were identified and used in this dissertation due to their existence in research used to frame this study, the theme of support emerged from the interview process. Conversations around support concerns and experience began to emerge early on in four of the five faculty interviews, and was addressed to some degree by all five faculty members interviewed for this study. The concept of support is often referenced in research as pertaining to emotional, personal, or professional support, depending on the context being addressed and the type of interaction that is occurring, and can also be linked to the feeling of being accepted or isolated within a work or educational environment. Experiences were expressed by three faculty interviewees pertaining to support they received in their educational journeys and in their current roles as faculty members, but three examples of experiences from the interviews clearly articulate this theme.

Gabe spoke about not having a support system, and how he often felt lost his first few years of college, until he found a counselor on campus who helped him find the resources he needed. “I went to school almost six hours from home and didn’t know anyone on campus, so the first couple of months were really lonely. I mean, phone calls only do so much. I really had no one there for me,” said Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018). When I asked him how he was able to cope and settling into things Gabe explained that, “I wasn’t really comfortable until a school counselor helped me find some groups for first year students that looked interesting. And he made sure I went by following up. Best thing I could have done,” explained Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018), and continued that, “Having someone help me find people to spend time with and to help me find resources on campus made my college experience so much

better. If I wouldn't have had that, I don't know what I would have done." This experience seems so simple at face value, but had a lasting impact on Gabe's experience at his undergraduate school and for his career long-term.

Similar to the experience Gabe had, Hailey struggled to find people to spend time with outside of an academic setting, explaining that she really did not have a social support system during her master's program. "I always had an easy time talking to people in class or when working on projects, but there were not a lot of people I spent time with outside of class, and that was hard at times," explained Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018), and add that, "I really didn't have a support system or anyone close to me until someone brought me to a graduate student event on campus and I met other grad students of Color." When I asked Hailey to explain how things changed after that event and Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) said, "I actually had people to spend time with and not focus on school, you know, actually be a person outside of who I wanted to be as a scholar. That was so refreshing, and it made my program so much more enjoyable." Hailey needed a network of friends who knew what she was going through, but who also would help her to relax and feel comfortable on her campus and comfortable not spending all of her time working on coursework. Jada had similar struggles when she first came to campus. "I met everyone in my department for the first time almost a month after I started teaching, and the department really wasn't that welcoming. Everyone just kind of likes to do their own thing and work on their own," explained Jada (2018, November 20). When I asked her how she found a way to engage with other faculty members, Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) shared that, "I actually had someone sit down next to me at lunch one day and ask if I



was new. We got to talking and now I have been having lunch with her every day for the past few years.” I asked Jada how that faculty member has helped to shape and change the interactions and social group on campus and Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) said, “I have met so many people because of this woman. It was a chance encounter and now I have about fifteen to twenty people I see on a regular basis around campus. It’s amazing.” This one interaction, just like the experiences shared by Gabe and Hailey, helps to illustrate how large of an impact a support system can make for people, and provides a lens for helping address a means of helping people solve, or at least cope with the negative aspects of their campus that impact their job as a faculty member in higher education.

*Autoethnographic reflection.* When I think back to the support I received while I was working towards my undergraduate degree, I had a lot of friends and family members who had been to college who could help me with questions I had. I completely related to Hailey’s experiences, as I also struggled with this balancing act when I started my masters, and once I found people to support me I was able to balance things in a much healthier manner. Thinking about how important and helpful it was for me to fellow graduate students support me during my studies reminded me how I have had multiple faculty members who had been at the institutions where I was starting as a new teacher who have helped answer questions or guide me in the processes on campus, and how helpful that was in my first few years teaching. I did not realize how privileged I was to have those experiences until Jada started discussing how she never really had someone welcome her into the school where she teaches, and the difficulties that created for her. When you are not privileged to benefit from the overall structure of the cultural system

on your college campus, it makes it that much harder to make connections and become comfortable, which can take a devastating toll on a person, both physically and mentally.

**Mental health.** Similar to how the theme of support, concerns and experiences regarding mental health emerged from the interview process. Conversations around mental health concerns and traumatic experiences that impacted the mental, social, and academic well-being of current faculty began to emerge early on in two of the five faculty interviews, and was addressed to some degree by all five faculty members interviewed for this study. The concept of mental health was often referenced in the interviews with focus points pertaining to emotional, mental, personal, or physical help/support that was meant to help an individual feel comfortable or supported in their experiences and day-to-day activities. Experiences were expressed by all two faculty interviewees pertaining to mental health concerns in their current roles as faculty members.

The first experience relating to mental health that was shared in the faculty interviews was shared by Hailey, who discussed how she can find herself feeling depressed and isolated a lot of time on her campus due to the lack of outreach and opportunities to connect with other faculty of Color. “I remember I had moments those first few years where I felt really low and sad and didn’t really want to do a whole lot. Some of those days it was hard to come to work,” said Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) and she added that, “I don’t think people realize the different struggles you go through when you are a person of Color working with almost all White colleagues. Sometimes you just can’t connect the way you want to.” I asked Hailey how she ended up being able to find help with her situation and Hailey (personal

communication, November 19, 2018) said, “I walked into the counselor’s office one day and asked if they had a support group for faculty on campus and I ended up going to the meeting. I felt off, but there were actually a lot of people there.” This was not a really surprising response for me to hear, as I attended a support group during my master’s program to help deal with some struggles I was going through. Similar to how Hailey was looking for support, I was also just looking for other people who were experiencing similar things to me as a way of knowing I was not the only one struggling, but also as a means of trying to find ways to better deal with things I was struggling with.

Concerns around mental support and having a social support network to help when you when you are feeling overwhelmed or struggling was also discussed by Isis, who discussed an experience she had with one of the social workers on her campus that helped her find resources for herself, and in turn, be able to advocate for and share those resources with her students. “I remember I was really depressed and having a lot of bad thoughts. So I set up a meeting with a counselor on campus to try and get some help, not knowing if they could really do anything,” said Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) , and she added, “That meeting was so helpful. He explained a lot of faculty and students used services on campus, but there were still people that needed help but did not know where to look or who to ask for help.” When I asked Isis how that experience helped her better deal with things she was struggling with Isis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) said, “It helped to put things in perspective for me, and helped me be more open with myself and my students about how it is ok to struggle and ask for help when you need it.” The willingness Isis had to be vulnerable not only in our interview, but also how she allows herself to be vulnerable and open with her students is really eye

opening concerning how we often discuss mental health in the United States. Isis has taken this opportunity to take her struggles and make a positive impact on her students and on her campus.

*Autoethnographic reflection.* Due to the environments that exist on their college campus and former college campuses, the faculty interviewed for this study shared experience that help articulate why mental health concerns continue to be a growing issue to address in higher education in a variety of ways. While these faculty may not currently work at schools who perceive a mental health threat as a result of the campus climate that has been shaped by the overarching reach of Whiteness, experiences coded in all eight themes listed above show how Whiteness is creating a toxic mental health climate on college campuses (Harley, 2008). These concerns addressed in the faculty interviews also were articulated in many of the student interviews, which will be explored below after a brief summary of the finding from the faculty interviews.

### **Addressing Research Question #1**

Based off of the coded responses from the faculty interviews, I can speak more directly to how these shared experiences help to address research question one for this study. Again, the first research question is:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

The faculty interviews showed a large amount of silencing for all five on the interviewees throughout their educational journeys and careers that can be linked to how Whiteness functions and exists in higher education in the United States. This silencing

occurred in a variety of ways throughout not only the educational journeys of the faculty members interviewed, but how the silencing continues to occur in their professional careers.

The experiences shared by the faculty interviewees for this study contained clear examples of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States, with specific examples of how Whiteness both historically and currently is impacting African American faculty in a negative capacity in our country. While the experiences of all the faculty interview were unique from one another, the similarities seen between the experiences is clear, and overwhelmingly negative. Whiteness has created a barrier and a social climate in higher education that harms African American faculty in a variety of ways that are not only articulated within the experiences of those interviewed for this study, but are explained and discussed in the research that helped to shape the design of this study.

The negative experiences discussed in the faculty interviews help to create a list of themes and experiences that can be identified and addressed within the higher education climate. Since the experiences discussed in the interviews are almost all negative (except for the support and community that results from the negative elements and influences of Whiteness), it seems vital that these findings be discussed on a broader scale to see just how far reaching these experiences extend within higher education. I would assert that, based off of the data from this study, that there are many other faculty on this campus and many other campuses in the United States that share similar experiences, and possess insights into how we as an educational community can start to address and resolve the negative influence that Whiteness is having in higher education in

the United States.

### **African American Students Coding Results**

The second subset of interviewees examined for this study were the African American students who were interviewed for this study. The five students interviewed for this study have an age range of nineteen to twenty-eight. Three of the interviewees are currently freshman, while the other two are sophomores. Three of the interviewees identified as male, and the other two identified as female. Over half of the students who attend the college where interviews were conducted work full-time jobs on top of being students, which has led the school to be referred to as a “commuter campus.” While this may be a unique situation that creates a different context for individuals being interviewed for this study compared to other schools where future research may occur, the life experiences and daily requirements of the students interviewed help to shape their narratives, and are important to consider and understand in order to provide context to the experiences they share and how those experiences and daily requirements may differ from their peers on campus. The details for each student interviewee can be viewed in the table below, which also contains the pseudonyms that each interviewees selected to be used in place of their name for this study.

Table 4.2

*Demographics of Student Participants*

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Year	Employment Status
Anthony	19	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student
Brianna	19	Female	Freshman	Part-Time Student Full-Time Waitress
Cameron	22	Male	Sophomore	Full-Time Student Full-Time Mechanic
Destiny	28	Female	Sophomore	Part-Time Student Full-Time Receptionist
Elijah	20	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student Full-Time Retail Sales

**Coded Themes**

There are eight themes that were identified as present in all of the interviews with the five students interviewed for this study. Those themes are race, racism, Whiteness, White privilege, discrimination, silencing, support, and mental health. These eight themes are used to identify specific examples and experiences discussed by the students in their interviews that provide insights for addressing RQ2:

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

These eight themes are discussed in more detail below, with specific examples from student interviews to highlight the theme being discussed, as well as reflections from the interviewer on their positionality and experiences that relate to the thematic areas and experiences that are discussed between the interviewer and the interviewees for this study.

**Race.** Instances pertaining to race in the interview process refer to any direct or indirect reference to an individual's racial identity. This reference can pertain to the individual being interviewed or a reference to the race of another individual being discussed by the interviewee. The concept of race often refers to a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society (hooks, 2006). For the sake of this dissertation, the term race focuses on how an individual identifies themselves from a racial perspective, as opposed to focusing on how they may be identified on a societal level. Race was discussed by all five students interviewed for this study.

The first experience coded for race was shared by Anthony, who shared how his race became an identifying marker for him when he entered a new school district in middle school. "I remember moving to a new school in seventh grade, having a hard time. I wasn't sure if it was because it was a small town, or that there were only like five other Colored kids in my grade," explained Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018). I asked Anthony if he could talk about what he remembered a bit more and Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018) said, "I felt like I was isolated because I was Black. Like the first few weeks at lunch nobody would sit close to me, and no one talked to me in class. All I had were my parents at home." Similar to the



experience Anthony shared, Brianna discussed how she struggled when she started high school in a new district. “I was really excited at the start. New school, better support for soccer. But outside of soccer, and even on the team, I didn’t really connect with anyone,” said Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). I asked Brianna to talk a little more about this experience and Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) said, “Every other girl on the soccer team was White. Most of the kids in my classes were White. The whole town was basically White. My family stood out, and people didn’t seem to like things there that didn’t fit in.” This sense of not fitting in or being different due to their race exemplifies work focusing on the limiting impact that race can have for individuals in new settings and environments (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995), but also shows an opportunity for race to function as a support mechanism for individuals. This exploration of race as a vehicle for connection and support is analyzed through the experiences of Cameron, Destiny, and Elijah, the other three students interviewed for this study.

Cameron, Destiny, and Elijah discussed experiences related to their race that allowed them to connect with other students when they started attending college on their campus. As Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “It is a lot easier to try and talk to other Black people on campus than it is to talk to White students or faculty. A lot of my classmates who are White don’t get why that is, but my friends on campus do.” When I asked Cameron to explain that comment a little more Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “White people don’t deal with the same bullshit as Black people most days, you just don’t. I can’t relate to you because you don’t deal with what I do. My Black friends do.” This sense of connection

and shared experiences and struggles was also discussed by Destiny. “I have never really been close to a White person. I mean, I have had teachers and coaches I liked, but all my good friends are also Black. I feel I can trust them with things,” Destiny explained (2018, November 20), and added, “it would be nice if being Black in college wasn’t a big deal but it is. Some people avoid looking at us or even talking to us, so we have to stick together.” Again, these experiences illustrate race as a mean of connection for the students interviewed, a means of finding support and people to talk to on campus. “I have never had a White student come up and try to talk to me, but I have another Colored student come up to me at least once a week. There is something we share that lets us do that with one another,” explained Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018). Cameron, Destiny, and Elijah all also discussed how their identity on campus is tied to these groups of other Black students they spend time with, specifically as a means of dealing with or avoiding negative interactions that have and can happen to them on campus.

**Racism.** Instances pertaining to racism in this study refer to any direct or indirect reference to racist comments, ideas, or situations heard or experienced by the interviewee or individuals that the interviewee is referencing. Racism is viewed as the belief in the superiority of one race over another. Racism, especially when deeply rooted on a social level, often results in antagonism, discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their perceived or identified race or ethnicity (McWhorter, 2005). The concepts of power and prejudice will also be addressed within this area, as those concepts often are used to explain how racism occurs and is upheld within our culture (hooks, 2006). Experiences and situations were expressed by four of the five student interviewees pertaining to a

variety of situations relating to racism in their educational journeys.

When discussing negative experiences in their educational journeys, two of the student interviewees, Anthony and Brianna shared experiences they had that were coded as racist situations within a classroom setting (Arai & Kivel, 2009). “I had a student call me a stupid ass nigger in the fifth grade. I was so mad, and hurt, but really I was shocked that someone said that right in the middle of class,” explained Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018). When I asked Anthony what happened after the student said that Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018) explained, “The teacher took him out of the class but he was back in school the next day. He didn’t even get detention. They said ‘he didn’t know what it meant’. He knew what it meant, that’s why he said it.” This lack of responding to a clearly intentional racist action was also present in a situation shared by Brianna in her interview. “In high school I had someone write ‘stupid Black bitch’ on my locker. I remember crying in the office when I called my mom, but they never really did anything about the situation,” said Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). I asked Brianna if she remembered what the administration did do to respond to the situation and Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) explained, “All they did was paint my locker and say ‘we will look into it’. Nothing ever happened with it, but more girls had it happen to their lockers that year.” Again, this situation shared by Brianna illustrates a clear lack of engagement or attempt at addressing racist situations in a school setting. Allowing these types of actions to go unaddressed creates a climate that fosters and allows racism to exist.

Two other students interviewed for this study, Destiny and Elijah, discussed

experiences where racism functioned as a barrier for them in their educational journeys. “In one school I went to growing up there was a ‘hood section’ where basically all the Colored students sat for lunch. It wasn’t a real thing, but people knew about it in the school and no teachers ever talked about it,” said Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018). When I asked her about what happened if someone did not sit in their “correct” area of the lunchroom Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, “People would mess with your lunch, push you, or threaten you. Both Black and White kids. The teachers always just turned away or left the cafeteria when things happened.” While this situation clearly shows a lack of willingness to address a clearly racist situation, it also clearly shows how race and racist thought created a barrier for Destiny at her school.

Elijah also had an experience when racism functioned as a barrier, but his experience was in the classroom. “I had an English teacher throughout high school that made seating charts for his class. No big deal. But I noticed my sophomore year that he designed them with all the Black students at the back of the room,” explained Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018). When I ask Elijah if he thought that was due to name order or some other potential reason Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018) explained that it was not a mistake when he said, “Nah man. My last name starts with an L. Dude didn’t care if you couldn’t see either. You sat where he put you or you got kicked out. He wanted us all together for whatever reason.” Just as Destiny expressed a situation where she was restricted in what she could do, Elijah had an instructor who limited the ability for students of Color to engage effectively in the classroom. All of these actions, rooted in race, also help to illustrate how White norms

and an overarching influence of Whiteness helped to create a negative environment for the students interviewed for this study.

**Whiteness.** Instances coded as pertaining to Whiteness from the student interviews addressed any reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual either being White or being a Non-White person (Roediger, 1991). This dissertation defines Whiteness for this study as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin (Leonardo, 2002). These characteristics, in turn, create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race. Three student interviewees discussed situations relating to Whiteness in their educational journeys.

The first experience coded for the theme of Whiteness was an experience Anthony had in high school with an English teacher. “I had an English teacher who hated how I wrote and talked and was always correcting me in class. One time he told me to stop talking like I was from ‘the hood’ and speak like an educated person,” explained Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018). When I asked Anthony how he responded in that situation Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018) said, “I told him he couldn’t talk to me that way and he pulled me out of class and he told me he was the authority figure in the room and I had to do what he said or face consequences.” Anthony’s experiences showed how his teacher was trying to force him to fit a Whiteness fueled norm of proper speaking, and challenged who Anthony is as a person, since his speech is a part of his individuality.

Brianna shared an experience similar to the experience Anthony had, but her

experience was with a guidance counselor she was meeting with to discuss applying to colleges. “I remember meeting with my guidance counselor and telling her I wanted to go to college and her just giving me this ‘you got to be kidding me’ look,” said Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). When I asked Brianna how she responded to that reaction Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) said, “I didn’t understand why she reacted that way so I asked if she had concerns and she said ‘people with your background don’t normally go to college’. I was so pissed off, I just walked out.” Just like the experience Anthony had, Brianna had a situation where a White individual in a position of authority tried to impose their perspective of what was correct onto her. Both of these examples help articulate how Whiteness shapes cultural norms and what is acceptable in an academic setting.

Cameron also had an experience that showed an influence of Whiteness in high school with one of his classmate when they were working on a group project. “In my senior capstone English class I had a group member tell me I needed to stop talking ‘Black’ and talk in a way people would understand so we wouldn’t get a bad grade on our project,” explained Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018). When I asked Cameron if he could explain what happened a bit more Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) said, “She said I was talking like a thug and that I didn’t sound smart. I have always talked that way and still do, and I’m in college so I obviously am not stupid.” All three of these experience showed situations where each student interviewed had someone attempt to have them change their way of speaking or their expectations in order to meet what the other person felt was acceptable. All of these experiences also help to illustrate how Whiteness helps to foster a culture of privilege for

White individuals in educational settings.

**White privilege.** Instances pertaining to White privilege that were discussed in student interviews referred to direct or indirect references to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual being a non-White person (hooks, 2006). The concept of White privilege refers to the societal privilege that benefits people whom society identifies as White beyond what is commonly experienced by non-White people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances (DiAngelo, 2018). Three students stated that aspects of White privilege negatively impacts their college experience and creates barriers and difficulties in their current college setting.

The first experience coded for the theme of White privilege was an experience Cameron had while he was attending orientation on his college campus. “I can remember this White girl walking in on her phone and being super loud. She just grabbed her stuff and sat down still talking on her phone not caring about anything else going on around her,” said Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018). When I asked Cameron how he felt about the whole situation Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) said, “If I would have done that, as a Black male, someone would have at least confronted me, and I probably would have been asked to leave.” When I asked Cameron if anything happened to that girl he said he did not remember anyone every talking to her, but that she did not even stay for the whole event. Cameron’s reflection on the event illustrated his own understanding that if the individual involved in the situation were an individual of Color, things would have been handled differently.

Destiny also had an experience with another student that illustrates how White

privilege negatively impacts students of Color on her college campus. “There was this White girl in one of my classes who was openly talking with her friends about how she hated how loud Black girls were and that we just sounded stupid and shouldn't even be at school here,” said Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018), and she added, “She also would make comments like this during class and my teacher never did a thing. He just moved on and ignored her anytime she said something racist.” When I asked Destiny if she ever brought the situation to someone’s attention she said she did not because she did not think anything would happen and she was worried it would somehow come back to hurt her in the long run. Destiny’s experience showed how a culture of White privilege had created a negative expectation for her on her campus, and created a sense of fear if she were to ever speak out in situations where she felt attacked or uncomfortable.

While Cameron and Destiny shared experiences that pertained to the White privilege held by students they interacted with, Elijah discussed an experience pertaining to White privilege that involved one of his instructors and how he treated students in his class. “I had a teacher who said he had open office hours, but anytime I tried to set up a meeting he was always busy. I told one of my friends about it and she said those were his ‘White student’ hours,” said Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018). When I asked Elijah what he meant by that Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018) said, “He never met with Black students during his set aside hours. We always had to set up meetings at different times, and the times always sucked.” I asked Elijah if he ever talked to someone about the situation and he said he did not because he felt nothing would happen since it was a White professor who had been at the school for



almost thirty years. Elijah's experience, just like the experiences of Cameron and Destiny, shows how White privilege makes it very difficult for students of Color to be successful and comfortable in a higher education setting, and how there are many times where they are treated differently and discriminated against.

**Discrimination.** Experiences were expressed by all five students interviewees pertaining to a variety of situations of discrimination in their educational journeys. Instances of discrimination ranged from conversations to situations and experiences where individuals were treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different socially constructed categories of people on the grounds of their race, class, age, or sex. The concept of discrimination is often referenced in research as the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction towards, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong (Eagan Jr. & Garvey, 2015). This can often become expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of hierarchy or othering of a particular individual or group.

The first experience coded for the theme of discrimination was an experience Anthony had in middle school in one of his science class. "I had a science teacher in middle school who never helped me with homework, or any of my friends. But he spent so much time helping the White kids in our class," explained Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018). I asked Anthony if he could explain how this happened and Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018) said, "He would say others asked first or that we could just find the answer in the book. He never really explained anything to me or my friends, which made it hard to do well in his class." I

asked Anthony how he handled the situation and he said he told other teachers, but nothing really happened, but he was able to get help from a different science teacher. Although Anthony was able to find help from another teacher, the actions of his science teacher and the school's lack of response to the situation illustrates an environment that allows this type of discrimination to happen and continue.

Brianna also discussed an experience in middle school where she was discriminated against, involving a situation on her basketball team. "I had a coach in middle school who halfway through the season pulled all three of us Black girls out of the starting roster, and really limited our minutes and he never explained why," said Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). I asked Brianna how she responded to the situation and Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) explained, "My mom called him and his reason was 'us having lower grades' which made no sense since I had a perfect GPA. My mom even called the principal, but she didn't do anything as said 'the coach had final say'." I asked Brianna if things ever got resolved and she explained that things changed once the playoffs came around, but she stopped playing basketball until high school because she did not want to play for that coach ever again. Similar to Anthony's experience, the school's lack of response to the situation illustrates an environment and general attitude about these types of situations that allow this type of discrimination to occur.

While Anthony and Brianna shared experiences that were short term situations, Cameron discussed a problem he faced throughout high school involving one of his football coaches. "We had a coach that worked with all of the lineman on the team, but he was always really blunt and kind of aggressive to the Black players on the team," said

Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018). I asked Cameron if he could be more specific and Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “He always told us we had to play tougher to prove we belonged on the field. That he had a White coach screw him over and he wasn’t going to let the same thing happen to us.” Cameron also talked about how the coach often referred to the Black players on the team as “his boys” and got into a few physical confrontations with other coaches when they were yelling at “his boys.” I can remember how some of my football coaches in high school got protective of the specific players they worked with, but not to this degree, or in a manner that created a divide between players of different races.

While Anthony, Brianna, and Cameron discussed experiences they had in middle school and high school, Destiny shared a difficult situation she was in during her first semester of college. “I had a teacher that always took off points on my speeches because I ‘didn’t talk proper’ or when I would use slang or examples from growing up in Africa until I was fourteen,” said Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018). When I asked Destiny if she could explain how these comments happened Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, “She would tell me I needed to talk more like a White person so people could understand me. That my style of speaking sounds uneducated and wrong and was not how Americans spoke.” I asked Destiny if she ever reported the teacher and she said she was afraid it would somehow impact her grade, and that when she told some of her friends about the situation that they thought it was not even worth trying to report the teacher because the school would not do anything about it anyway. Destiny’s experience illustrates how an environment and general attitude on a college campus can create a scenario that fosters a negative thought process for

individuals impacted by discrimination, which was reflected in the response Destiny received from her friends.

Elijah also discussed a situation he experienced his first semester in college, and his experience also involved a faculty member at his college. “I had a math teacher who always took off points when I didn’t show my work on assignments in class, but I had a friend in the class who always did his work with me and never got docked points,” said Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018). I asked Elijah if he ever tried to talk to the teacher about the situation and Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018) explained, “I showed him our assignments next to each other multiple times and he actually threaten to report me for cheating. I tried to talk to my advisor about it as well but I don’t think she ever did anything.” I asked Elijah if this ended up impacting his grade in the course and he said it did not because he scored well enough on tests but he was still mad that the teacher got away with it. Again, this is just another example of blatant treatment of a student in a manner different from his peer, solely on the basis of the students being of different racial backgrounds.

*Autoethnographic reflection.* The student experiences shared in this dissertation showed that while educators are often considered to be proactive on issues regarding equity and diversity, there are still individuals who create negative environments for students in educational settings. Thinking about how I approach my own class design, and my own classroom management, these responses made me wonder if any of my policies, assignments, or materials for my courses created barriers or levels of disconnect for my students. Some of the experiences shared also illustrate a tendency for individuals negatively impacted by situations to develop a negative outlook on being able to speak

out or address concerns they may have. This lack of engagement or silencing that can occur is explored further in the experiences discussed below.

**Silencing.** Instances pertaining to silencing identified in the student interviews referred to any conversations, situations, and experiences where interviewees were limited from being able to engage in situations or conversations with other individuals, barred from participation in situations, or had their ideas or participation discredited due to their race, class, age, or sex. Experiences were expressed by two student interviewees pertaining to a variety of silencing situations in their educational journeys and in their current and past college classes.

The first experience coded for silencing was an experience Brianna had in one of her larger lecture-style classes during the second week of classes. “I had a professor who kicked people out of class for being disruptive. Makes sense, except she was way worse on the Colored students in class,” explained Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). When I asked Brianna to explain what she meant by being worse on the Colored students Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) said, “She would kick you out for asking someone next to you a question, she kicked a guy out for sneezing. She wouldn’t let anyone ask questions either. You couldn’t learn nothing.” I asked Brianna if anything changed as the semester went on and Brianna said things actually got worse, that she would lock the doors so if you were late you could not even get in. While this experience shows and overall silencing and limiting of participation for the whole class, there is a noticeable difference in how students of Color were treated by this professor compared to their peers, leading to even more silencing and limiting of the learning potential for those students.

The second experience coded for silencing was an experience Destiny had with one of her professors in the Political Science department during a class where they were discussing the history of marginalized groups being able to vote in the United States. “I remember we were listening to the lecture and the professor asked what people knew about the voting changes in the country. I wanted to talk about my grandparent’s experiences, but she called on everyone except me,” said Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018). When I asked Destiny if she got to discuss anything about her grandparent’s experiences in class that day Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018) said, “I tried to say my grams had told me about her own personal struggles and the prof blew me off. Said we had to ‘move on to finish the chapter’. Then she hardly talked about the Black struggles for voting.” Destiny also added that this was a common trend in the class, that the professor would shut down the conversation and ignore students trying to ask questions or engage with others and just lecture.

Both of these examples illustrate how individuals in positions of power on this college campus actively silence or limit the amount of communication or engagement that their students can have. This silencing and limiting, based off of these shared experiences, seems to be even worse for students of Color. While students of Color are struggling with different faculty, staff, and student related issues on this campus, the students interviewed for this study dear share experiences where they received support, in a variety of ways, that has helped them cope with and address some of the struggles discussed in the above sections.

**Support.** Conversations and coded themes around support concerns and

experience emerged in three student interviews. The concept of support is often referenced in research as pertaining to emotional, personal, or professional support. Depending on the context being addressed and the type of interaction that is occurring, instances that were coded for this theme can also be linked to the feeling of being accepted or isolated within a work or educational environment. While I often had support from my family and my professors when I started college, the students interviewed for this study who had experiences of support found support with other classmates of Color, both in high school and here on their college campus. There were two students who discussed situations in their educational journeys where they needed support and assistance from others.

Anthony discussed an experience he had in high school, where some of his classmates helped him find ways to deal with a very rude, and in many cases, mean teacher he had for a math class his senior year. “My Calculus teacher in high school was always really harsh with his feedback to me. Always saying things like ‘How do you not understand’ or ‘Your classmates get the material, why don’t you?’ He always made me feel so dumb,” explained Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018). When I asked Anthony to share how long this went on for Anthony (personal communication, November 13, 2018) said, “This went on for a few weeks, and then I broke down after school one day. I had some friends in the class who say what had been happening and they took me to the counselor.” Anthony explained that his friends made him share everything that had happened with the counselor, and the counselor had him transfer to a different section and the teacher was written up for his actions. Unlike many of the other instances discussed by the students interviewed for this study, action was taken against

the individual causing harm to a student.

Another experience that was coded as an experience with support was an experience Brianna had when she was struggling with being away from home to attend college. "I'm the first in my family to go to school. This was the place I could afford. I'm four hours from home, and I had a hard time at first since I'm really close to my family, especially my younger sister," explained Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). I asked Brianna how she was able to overcome her difficulties with being homesick and Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) said, "My roommate took me to a freshman event on campus. I ran into girls I knew from high school. I didn't think anyone I knew was going here, and I started to spend time with them, which really helped." Brianna also explained that when she started to spend time with the girls she knew from high school she was relieved to find out some of them were also struggling with their transition into college. I shared with Brianna that I went through a similar experience when I started college, and Brianna felt that this was something most students must go through when they start college, and that colleges should try to help ease the transition as much as they can for new students.

*Autoethnographic reflection.* Both of the experiences shared by the students interviewed for this study that were coded for this theme help show that while Whiteness may be creating an overarching negative climate for students of Color in higher education, there are still a large number of support mechanisms and opportunities available to students to help them address aspects of their daily life that are causing difficulty. While I personally have not struggled with any of the forms of racism, discrimination, or silencing that the students interviewed for this study have, I can relate



to their need for support in order to be able to cope with challenges and struggles, those that are expected and those that are not expected. Thinking about how I feel I would have responded to all of these concerns and barriers the student interviewees have experienced in their academic journeys, I would have needed the help and support they have sought out. One area of experience that emerged from conversations regarding support received by these students was discussions related to mental health struggles for these students, which is discussed in my depth below.

**Mental health.** Conversations around mental health concerns and traumatic experiences that impacted the mental, social, and academic well-being were discussed in four students interviewed for this study. The concept of mental health was often referenced in the interviews with focus points pertaining to emotional, mental, personal, or physical help/support that was meant to help an individual feel comfortable or supported in their experiences and day-to-day activities. These supportive activities sometimes included professional help, but were often tied to personal relationships with other individuals of Color struggle with similar situations or experiences.

The first experience coded for the theme of mental health was Brianna's experience seeking out help for her depression on campus. "I struggled a bit with depression in high school, but things got real bad when I started college. I was never on meds or anything but I knew I needed to fix things, but I couldn't find where to go" explained Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018). I asked Brianna how she eventually was able to get help and Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) said, "We had someone come and speak in our class and I talked to her after class was over. I told her what I was dealing with and she walked me to her office." Brianna

also explained that she had tried to find resources online and by asking some of her professors, but she either could not find the information or had faculty tell her that she could find the information online. Brianna's experience dealing with depression was very different than what I experienced during my undergraduate years. Information was available all over my college campus and there was an entire building devoted to students services, which made it easy for me to find help. I had a hard time not thinking about what may have happened if Brianna's one teacher did not have the counselor come in to talk to her class that day.

Similar to Brianna's, Cameron discussed how he struggled seeking out help for his anxiety and testing struggles on campus, due to his fear of being judged. "I've always had a hard time with tests and I get really stressed when a class is test heavy. I always talk to my teachers, but my parents never had me do alternative testing in middle or high school," said Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018). I asked Cameron how he dealt with tests growing up and Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, "I didn't. I would do so bad on tests, but I had teachers that would help me. When I started here, since I didn't have a testing services letter, I got no help. I actually almost dropped out at midterms." When Cameron shared he almost dropped out, I asked him what changed his mind. Cameron explained that one of his teachers told him to set up a testing appointment with disability services, and that is what helped things change. "I didn't want to do it myself because I felt so dumb. Like, people would judge me for not being able to take the test like a normal person," explained Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018), and he added, "But getting testing help and being able to take a test alone was so great. I don't stress out as much now and can do the test

for as long as I need." Again, the actions of one instructor made a lasting impact on a student, but if Cameron's teacher would not have told him to seek help, his story would be very different.

Similar to the experiences Brianna and Cameron shared, Destiny talked about a positive experience she had with one of her professors, who talked to her about her struggles and helped support her in getting assistance on campus. "I was having a really hard time in one of my classes, so I set up a meeting with my professor. When I met, with my professor I ended up breaking down in her office. I was a mess," said Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018). I asked Destiny how her professor reacted to her being so vulnerable with her in her office and Destiny (personal communication, November 20, 2018) said, "She was real sweet. She said I didn't need to worry so much and said she struggled a lot when she started school too and that there were people on campus who could help me. She really helped me." Destiny also explained that when she told her friends about how this instructor helped her, some of her friends went to her, even though they were not in any of her classes, asking if that professor could help them find help for their struggles. This situation, just like the situations for Brianna and Cameron, shows how one individual can make a large impact on another person.

Elijah also talked about a positive experience he had with one of his professors, and how when his professor opened up about her own mental health struggles, he felt comfortable asking her to help him find resources. "One of my speech teachers talked about the different resources for students on campus and really stressed the mental health people on campus, saying she still uses them as a faculty member," said Elijah (personal

communication, November 21, 2018). I asked Elijah how his teacher opening up about her mental health made him feel and Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018) explained, "No one talks about that in my family, so having a teacher talk about it in class, it was odd to me. But it made me realize that anyone can need help, and that she could help me get help." Elijah explained that he had wanted to go in to be assessed for concerns he had about his mood and the stress he was dealing with from school and work but did not want his family to find out. He said that when he talked to his teacher after class that day, he went in for his appointment and talked to his counselor about how to bring up the topic of his mental health with his family.

Due to the environments that existed in their middle schools and high schools, and the environment on their college campus, the students interviewed for this study shared experiences that help articulate why mental health concerns continue to be a growing issue to address in higher education in a variety of ways. While these students were able to find help, the manner in which they received help and support were isolated instances, which happened within an environment when most other individuals did not help or support these students. The experiences of these students regarding mental health, and the experiences coded in all eight themes that are listed above show how Whiteness is creating a toxic, and in some cases, hostile climate on college campuses. An overall lack of support, knowledge and access of and to resources, and a general sense of a lack of concern from faculty were experienced by the students interviewed for this study, which should never happen on a college campus. The concerns expressed by the student interviewees' mirrored experiences addressed and discussed in the faculty interviews, and will be summarized in more detail below.

## **Addressing Research Question #2**

Based off of the coded responses from the student interviews, I can speak more directly to how these shared experiences help to address research question two for this study. Again, the second research question is:

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Similar to the faculty interviews, the student interviews for this study showed a large amount of silencing for all five on the interviewees throughout their educational journeys that can be linked to how Whiteness functions and exists in higher education in the United States. The experiences shared by the student interviewees for this study contained clear examples of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States, with specific examples of how Whiteness both historically and currently is impacting these students in a negative capacity. While the experiences of all the student interview were unique from one another, the similarities seen between the experiences is clear, and overwhelmingly negative. Whiteness has created a barrier and a social climate in the education system in the United States that harms African American students in a variety of ways that are not only articulated within the experiences of those interviewed for this study, but are explained and discussed in the research that helped to shape the design of this study

## **Informing and Guiding Our Practice**

Understanding the experiences of our colleagues and our students is vital in order to ensure that our field and our classrooms are supportive and inclusive of all individuals.

If the results of the interviews for this dissertation have articulated anything, it is that there are multiple areas that need to be addressed in order to improve the educational climate in the United States for African American students and faculty. This approach of reflective analysis aims to address the final research question of this study:

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

Reflecting on the experiences of both the student and faculty interviewees of this study that are detailed above, and identifying specific manners in which these narratives and experiences can inform and shape our teaching practices and educational climates must happen in order to attempt to resolve the issues presented in the interviews by the participants of this study.

While the experiences discussed above reflect the specific instances of the interviewees, multiple student and faculty interviewees discussed conversations and experiences other individuals they know have had that reflect similar experiences to the ones shared by the interviewees for this study. Based off of the transcripts from the interviews, there are five different areas to discuss pertaining to the influence of Whiteness in higher education: racially charged language in our classrooms, racially charged language on our college campuses, isolation of African American faculty, isolation of African American students, and addressing how we can let individuals whose voices have been silenced be heard on our campuses and in our classrooms. While there may be other areas that could be addressed regarding Whiteness in higher education on a broader scale, these are the main areas to address that emerged from the interviews for

this study.

### **Racially Charged Language in Our Classrooms**

One of the first concerning experiences that became noticeable across multiple individuals interviewed for this study was how every interviewee, both faculty and student interviewees, reflected on either a personal experience or an experience they witnessed where an individual was exposed to racially charged and, often times racist, language within education classrooms. By allowing this type of language to exist within our classrooms, we create what Foucault (1980, 1982) described as a “power deficit” for those who are being targeted by the language. The language creates a situation when power and agency are removed from individuals of Color in the classroom space, and creates a hostile and toxic environment that becomes reinforced by White individuals in the room who either engage in the language use, or choose not to do anything about the negative actions taking place. As Elijah (personal communication, November 21, 2018) explained, “Sometimes it feel like classes are set up to limit my chance to speak. Like how folks talk or their words are meant to restrict my participation. Both students and teachers do it, and it sucks.” We now have situations where we enable the language we use and our daily interactions to create struggles for those who lack the ability to control the conversations in our space

### **Racially Charged Language on Our College Campuses**

All of the individuals interviewed for this study also reflected on experiences, either a personal experience or an experience they witnessed, where racially charged language was used outside of a classroom environment on their college campus or while they were in middle school or high school. Specifically looking to how racially charged

language exists on our college campuses, we have in a sense, created what Hall (2001) describes as a “discourse of oppression” where the language we use and the culture that is framed as a result of our language isolates particular individuals while creating a power divide between those who are limiting others with their language and those who are limited by the language being used. As Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “Most White people have no idea how much hate speech I hear on a weekly basis on campus. You all have no clue, and you don’t do nothing about it either. How can you?” Cameron’s reflection points out the two sides of this issue, most of the individuals in positions of power or authority on his campus (72% of faculty and staff identify as White) are not directly impacted in a negative way by the campus culture, so they are unaware of the issues and have no real sense of urgency to address areas that need to be fixed. The result of these toxic classroom and campus environments is a need or a creation of isolation for African American faculty and students.

### **Isolation of African American Faculty**

One of the resulting implications of a racially charged environment, either in a classroom or on a college campus as a whole is the tendency for individuals to either be isolated by conditions they are exposed to, or in some cases, individuals seek isolation as a means of escaping or removing themselves from the hostile situation or environment. These racially charged climates cause faculty members, as Eagan Jr. and Garvey (2015) explained, to either seek out support from others experiencing similar struggles or reduce the amount of engagement the faculty members have with hostile or toxic environments. The approach discussed by Eagan Jr. and Garvey (2015) was reflected in the interview with Francis. “When I first started teaching I would eat my lunch in the faculty lounge,



but I stopped after a few weeks because I could not take the language and conversations some of the faculty in there were using,” explained Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018). When I asked Francis to explain these experiences in more detail Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) explained, “When you hear people talk about you in the way I heard these people talk about me, about other Black colleagues of mine, it was just better to eat in my office and avoid subjecting myself to it.” Having a climate that forces individuals to avoid spaces that are meant to be safe spaces due to hostile language or hostile climates should not happen in any environment, but our faculty interviews showed us that this is actually a common occurrence on their college campus. The same can be said about the experiences of the student interviewees of this study showing how isolation happens to students on their campus.

### **Isolation of African American Students**

Faculty members were not the only interviewees to reflect on situations where they felt isolation or sought out isolation as a means of avoiding uncomfortable or hostile situations. All five of the student interviewees had experiences where they had personally felt targeted because of their race and they sought out a safe space to escape the perceived threat, or experienced a situation where they felt isolated on campus or in their classes due to their race. As Jackson and Moore (2006) explained, the levels of support and openness that exist on college campus can be directly correlated to how comfortable and engaged students of Color are on their college campuses and within their classes. The student interviewees for this study expressed concerns about the manner in which White students of Color are treated in their classes and how students of Color are treated on their campus. As Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) explained, “You

kinda stick to your group of people. It's safer that way. You don't have to worry about being alone or someone saying or doing something to you." The environment on this campus, and the fear and reservation that has been cultivated within the community of Colored students and faculty is the result of Whiteness being allowed to shape the climate on this campus without the campus community realizing how detrimental the climate on the campus has become. While it may be difficult to address and change, looking to the experiences of those negatively impacted by the campus culture, and letting their stories and voices be heard, is the simplest and most practical place to start. This approach would move beyond addressing counter-narratives as Bamberg (2004) suggested, and would allow campus communities to examine the specific issues on their campus that are impacting the college culture and shaping the experiences and opportunities of their students, faculty, and staff.

### **Letting Silenced Voices be Heard**

One of the last aspects of each interview for this study was taking time to allow the interviewees to add or discuss anything they felt compelled to add or say within the interview that was not covered by the interview questions. Each interviewee took time to add at least something to the interview here, and most of the interviewees added comments or experiences pertaining to wanting more inclusion or opportunities on their campus for their concerns and needs to be addressed. The interviewees wanted to move past what Brown (2006) framed as collecting identities as a means of change, to using their experiences as a means of engaging and addressing issues that need to be resolved and discussed on their campus, which is what this dissertation aims to do. As Jada (personal communication, November 20, 2018) explained, "Talking about these issues is

a good start, but we need to engage with one another to make change. It can't just be Black faculty and students of Color talking about how to fix things. Everyone needs to be involved." That is what needs to happen, and what will be discussed in chapter five, as I articulate how the findings from this study will be used to start addressing Whiteness and other negative aspects of the college climate on this campus, and other college campuses across the United States. It is time to move beyond just talking about Whiteness, and begin to dismantle the influence it has in higher education.

### **Preview of Chapter Five: Conclusion**

As the results of the interviews with African American faculty and students indicate, not only is Whiteness creating negative, and in many cases, toxic workplace and learning environments in higher education, but Whiteness is also causing many individuals of Color to leave higher education in a variety of capacities and in a variety of ways (i.e. leaving teaching positions, leaving specific colleges, dropping classes, not graduating, etc.). The specific examples given in the interviews by the participants of this study will guide the framing and discussion that will occur in chapter five, where the author will address specific areas of concerns brought up within the interviews, and overviews areas that can be addressed within higher education to reduce and/or eliminate the negative impacts of Whiteness. Chapter five will start with an overall reflection on the dissertation process, pulling out key takeaways and learning experiences for the researcher. The chapter will then discuss key connections found to current research before delving into discussions around how to address particular aspects of Whiteness that need to be resolved in higher education from policy, stakeholder, and education perspectives. Chapter five will conclude with observations and suggestions about how to

move forward with this research and within this research area, how the results will be shared and used, and some final thoughts on this research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

*“The customary way for White people to think about the topic of race—and it is only a topic to White people—is to ask, “How would it be if I were Black?” .....*

*The way to approach it, I think, is...to seriously consider what it is like to be White.”*

*Fran Lebowitz*

#### **Review of Research Topic and Research Questions**

As stated in chapter one, while the landscape of higher education has changed drastically in the United States since entering the 20th century, what has not changed during this time is the presence of Whiteness in higher education, and the complications and difficulties Whiteness causes African American faculty and students, particularly when the silencing power of Whiteness is considered and explored. Due to the noticeable shifts that have occurred in higher education demographics and the still prevalent issue of Whiteness in higher education, I designed this study to attempt to see how large of an impact Whiteness has on African American faculty members and students on my college campus. For this study, I used the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing

power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

These questions were used to help shape the literature review in chapter two, which helped me to write and focus on particular areas of research to orient this study. These research questions also helped me decide on using an interview based research method, in order to gain rich narratives and experiences from the interviewees. The interview process was explained in chapter three, with all communication samples and interview and coding templates for the study being available in the appendices at the end of this paper. Chapter four discussed, in detail, the results and findings of this study, and this chapter will provide some conclusions and closing remarks on the findings of this study, and the process as a whole from my perspective as a researcher.

### **Reflection on Dissertation Process**

During this entire research process, I have found myself, in many instances, shocked by how blatant and common the reach of Whiteness has become in higher education in the United States, and just how bad the experiences have been for many of my colleagues and students. I have found myself talking to friends, family, and other academics about this dissertation and have seen how shocked many of the White individuals I interact with are about the results, while many of the individuals of Color I discuss this dissertation with have often reinforced my findings, and in some cases, have shared their own similar stories (some even more eye-opening than the ones contained in this dissertation). One thing I have tried to keep reflecting on throughout this process is

my own experience and position as it relates to the material, not just to try and ensure my accuracy and to limit my bias in my analysis, but in order to try to better understand and engage what it means to be a straight, White, male in the 21st century who researches how Whiteness impacts our society.

My past approaches have honestly been limited, trying to screen information through the experiences of others, or trying to reflect from my own position, or trying to disconnect from the subject. None of those approaches work, because none of them truly acknowledge the complex relationship the Whiteness creates for all of us in society, and the fact that no one can truly understand the position and lived experiences of another individual because they have not lived that individual's life. Instead, this research has challenged me to reflect on my own Whiteness, what I have gained and what I may have been unaware of, while also understanding how Whiteness not only harms others, but shapes almost every aspect of our society in 21st century America. While this dissertation has been humbling in a variety of ways, it has reinforced my concern for addressing Whiteness in higher education and has shown me how many different areas must be addressed in order for change to happen in our classrooms, on our campuses, and in our culture as a whole.

### **Whiteness is rampant in higher education**

The first reflection I had from this process is just how much of a negative impact Whiteness is having in higher education in the United States, and just how widespread of an issue Whiteness has become. In conversations with the ten interviewees for this study (five faculty members and five students), as well as in conversations I had with other individuals who are faculty members and students on campus, it became noticeable that

there is a clear shared understanding that there are racial issues that exist on campus. As Gabe (personal communication, November 15, 2018) explained, “Colored folk on campus know things are wrong. So do the White people here. The difference is that the ways things are right now doesn’t hurt anyone who is White, so you all don’t do anything about it.” Faculty members discussed how there is a disproportionate representation of individuals of Color in staffing and in the students who complete their degrees on campus. “There still are not a lot of Black people on campus, and we don’t even have a lot of Colored kids graduating,” Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “all we focus on is the total graduating number, but we miss so many students of Color who end up not finishing because they aren’t supported and don’t have people that look like them to help.”

Students interviewees discussed how there needs to be more conversations and actions taken regarding how to address concerns about race is viewed, discussed, and addressed on campus and within classrooms. As Brianna (personal communication, November 14, 2018) explained, “No one who is White understands what we go through. You don’t have to talk about it, but it needs to be talked about. You are the first White person here who has asked me about how things need to change.” These conversations and the experiences I have had and witnessed on multiple campuses in my career as an educator lead me to believe that this ongoing issue needs to be addressed in order to reduce the negative impact Whiteness has on many individuals on our college campuses, and hopefully, will allow us to mitigate or remove the power Whiteness has on our college campuses, and in our American culture.



### **Whiteness creates a culture and system of silencing African American narratives**

Another concern that I have had growing throughout this process is the overwhelming feeling that a large number of individuals who live in the United States are either uncomfortable or unable to adequately talk about race and racial issues. While I have had numerous conversations about race with students, faculty, and staff on the college campuses where I have been a student and a faculty member, these conversations have not always been easy to start or even engage in with others. Francis (personal communication, November 12, 2018) touched on this difficulty when he explained, “It isn’t easy for us to talk about these things with one another, yet along with White people. Most of the time you all get so mad and defensive, which causes even more problems. So we just don’t talk.” Outside of academics, there are very few individuals I have been able to have conversations with regarding racial concerns in higher education, and in our culture as a whole, regardless of their race, class, gender, or occupation. The literature discussed in this paper highlights how difficult it is for our culture to discuss or even address race within our culture, and just how stressed racial issues have become in higher education (hooks, 2006).

If the interviews articulated anything clearly, it was that the experiences of the students mirrored the experiences of the faculty members interviewed for this research. The experiences and concerns are almost identical, even though we have moved almost forty years ahead as a culture from when some of the events happened, the institutional racism (Leonardo & Grubb, 2018) experienced by the faculty members interviewed is still being experienced in similar ways by the students who we interviewed for this dissertation. Whiteness has also created a culture in which advocates and allies also fall

silent in the face of adversity. I have seen and experienced countless situations where I saw colleagues being shut down and silenced, in passive and aggressive manners, and I have done nothing. I may not have been aware of that when the events were happening, but I am very aware of it now, and I am both angry at myself, and determined not to let these types of actions happen again in my presence. Whiteness is everyone, and it is time to find ways to embrace the uncomfortable and confront these situations and concerns when they arise. Whiteness is a major issue in our society that needs to be addressed, and research like this study and the work discussed throughout this paper need to happen in order for us to have a chance to resolve the influence Whiteness has in our culture and on college campuses and our college classrooms.

### **These studies and conversations are vital for progress**

Throughout this research, I have received a rather mixed response from individuals when I tell them what I am doing for my research. While many individuals of Color have expressed an overall positive response to my willingness to engage with my own Whiteness and discuss how Whiteness needs to be contained within higher education, many White individuals who I have told about my research have felt that the issue was either not as big as I was framing it, or that it was not something that a White scholar should address due to the privilege I hold as a White person. Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) discussed her own experiences that were similar to mine regarding having White scholars address racial concerns in our country. “You come from a position that has benefited from racial divides from centuries, and most people don’t want to acknowledge the historical flaws we have as a country,” Hailey (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “people take it as a personal attack,

rather than understanding that you are not saying they are a bad person, but that the system itself is racist and needs to be changed.” While the five faculty members I interviewed, and the five students I interviewed for this study were grateful to engage in the conversations we had, there were multiple times throughout this process where I had White colleagues tell me that this work was not going to solve anything, or that I should leave this work to “people who are harmed by the system.” When colleagues have challenged my work, I have felt a mixture of feelings ranging from being hurt, angry, disappointed, and motivated. I also reinforced why I felt this work was important and why these conversations need to happen, even if not everyone believes in the work I am doing. These mixed interactions have reinforced, to me, just how vital this type of work is, because even just discussing the idea of attempting to address racial inequalities in higher education often created discomfort or pointed and defensive reactions from White individuals I have spoken with throughout this process.

### **What I learned about my own positionality**

To say this process has been a humbling experience would be an understatement. I have lost track of the amount of times I have had to catch myself allowing my Whiteness to cloud my interpretation of an interview or an interaction, and have had to be very intentional about understanding how my positionality and my Whiteness has influenced my approach to this research in the past, and how this dissertation has changed how I will be addressing racial issues in higher education moving forward. Even when completing my coding and content analysis for this study, I did not notice the use of the term “Colored” by two of the interviewees as a shocking occurrence until my defense. This is a term that has been used for decades to demean and degrade individuals, and I

did not even notice how the interviewees in this dissertation were using it in their own words to describe their experiences. This highlight just how indoctrinated and passive my awareness of Whiteness has made me become to certain situations, experiences, and language. I need to make sure I stay present and connected to the work I am doing, while also making sure I acknowledge that my experiences and interpretations may be different from others, and that is ok. These different positions and interpretations will allow for a more holistic viewing of the issues I am trying to address, and will hopefully allow for deeper conversations around these issues and more complete considerations of all of the elements influencing my research and the context in which my work occurs.

### **How I reaffirmed why I am doing this research**

The entire process of completing this dissertation has reinforced how committed I am to doing this type of research and advocacy work, and has helped me develop a more critical approach to how I will be approaching my work in the future. I lost track of the conversations I had with my wife when I came home from interviews feeling deflated about how difficult experiences are for students and faculty of Color in higher education. While these feelings helped me better understand my own positionality and comprehension of issues regarding Whiteness in a clearer frame of reference, they also helped to show me that this research is important and needs to continue to happen.

It may be hard to discuss, analyze, or in some cases, even acknowledge how hard this work is, but this type of research has the potential to help so many people in a variety of ways. Regardless of how difficult or daunting the task may seem at the time, to address and resolve the influence of Whiteness, doing nothing is not an option, and the work I am doing continues to challenge me, but also reinforce that I need to keep researching and

advocating for change. As the phrase goes, nothing changes if nothing changes, and how we view, understand, discuss, and address Whiteness needs to change, and this is just the start of my journey to try and help foster that change.

### **Connection to Literature Review**

When thinking about how this study will be discussed, presented, and used as a means of starting to address Whiteness in higher education, I find myself reflecting on how the approaches that will be used to share the information contained in this study need to reflect the ideas and concerns that were discussed in the literature review for this study. There are clear aspects of this study that connect to findings that were discussed in the literature review, but there were also instances of items coded from the interviews that provide a new lens for how to move forward with this research. I believe it is important to address both of these areas in order to see where this study connects to existing research while also providing a means of expanding research regarding the influence of Whiteness in higher education into new areas.

### **Connection to Literature Review Themes**

In order to discuss how findings from this study connect to themes and topics discussed in the literature review, it is important to reflect back on what those themes and topic areas are for this study. The three guiding themes for the literature review for this study were: race in higher education, Whiteness, and the narrative paradigm. These themes were identified as the guiding themes due to their prevalence in almost all of the literature that is used and cited in this study. These three areas are also used as themes for this research study since they are overarching broad concepts and areas of research. The three thematic areas were supported by eight topic areas that bridge across all three themes

for the literature review. Those topic areas are: critical race theory, meta-narratives, counter-narratives, power and knowledge, leadership in higher education, invisibility, classroom climate, and college climate. These topic areas functioned as specific focus areas that reflect more direct aspects of the influence on Whiteness compared to the broader themes listed above. The topic areas discussed in the literature review are what I will focus on here to highlight, once again, how this study builds upon and connects to the existing work in this area.

**Critical race theory.** Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that is used within the social sciences that uses the principles of critical theory to examine elements of society and culture as they relate to categorizations of race and power (Arai & Kivel, 2009). The foundation of CRT supports the assumption of the social creation of realities and the intersection between daily lived experiences and methods for which individuals negotiate those experiences (Crenshaw, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995). These lived experiences were highlighted in the responses from the African American faculty members and students interviewed for this study. Their interviews highlighted situations of inequity and isolation (i.e. department meetings, lunchroom dynamics, class seating charts, etc.) as a result of race (Duncan, 2005), and the unequal power dynamic that are at play due to underlying racial tensions on their college campus (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). These issues, as well as other concerns discussed by interviewees for this study, will allow the results to be used as a means of engaging in conversations around how we can address the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination on college campuses while challenging the dominant White ideology in higher education.

**Meta-narratives.** The goal of meta-narrative research regarding race is to help provide a better foundation for understanding how White norms and cultural assumptions impact African American individuals. For this study, exploring the Whiteness meta-narrative focused on the social structures of dominant viewpoints and positions on my college campus (i.e. how White norms are what guide and dictate almost all interactions on campus), and the influence those positionalities had on African American faculty members and students who fell outside of those power structures (Lyotard, 1979). By looking at experiences that highlighted influences of Whiteness, and the clash of lived experiences of the interviewees and myself, I was able to find specific examples from each interview that showed how different individuals experienced the same or similar struggles on campus that resulted from Whiteness (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Grant & Simmons, 2008). This analysis also allowed me to highlight norms on my college campus that are rooted in Whiteness (Milner IV, 2010; Mitchell & Miller, 2011) and how these norms allow me to focus on how to address changing our “meta-narrative” on campus to be more representative and inclusive of everyone who is part of our campus community.

**Counter-narratives.** Counter-narratives often provide individuals and researchers with another identifier or standpoint regarding experiences and events. However, one must understand the dominant narrative and the positionality that is granted to individuals within the meta-narrative in order to understand the experiences of individuals who fall into the classification of being within the counter-narrative. Perspectives that run opposite or counter to the presumed order and control are counter-narratives. These narratives, which do not agree with and are critical of the master narrative, often arise out of individual or group experiences that do not fit the master

narratives (Stanley, 2007). Within this study, experiences shared by interviewees that showed different approaches, understandings, and interactions in educational settings in comparison to their White peers help to highlight the discrimination that occurs on my college campus, and shows the experiences of those with non-dominant or counter-narratives to those who fall within the White meta-narrative (Stanley, 2006). The collection of lived experiences that I gathered from the ten interviewees for this study creates a means of comparing different positionalities that exist in higher education (Erler & Kowaleski, 2003) while also allowing for these shared experiences to open dialogue about how to address racial issues on my college campus through narrative sharing (Fisher, 1970). There were multiple times during this process that I could not relate to the experiences being shared by faculty and student interviewees, and that is the point. I do not share these experiences, and without having these types of conversations, this disconnect of awareness about how much Whiteness influences African American individuals on my college campus would only continue to go unaddressed.

**Power and knowledge.** Understanding the importance of narratives helps to give examples of how power and knowledge are understood, used, and shared on my college campus (Foucault, 1982). The problem that exists in many aspects of society is that power and knowledge are intrinsically related to one another in society due to the fact that power, and those in power, often dictate who has knowledge as well as who has access to particular knowledge bases (Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 1982). This was highlighted in the interviews when faculty and student interviewees would discuss experiences where they were unaware of meetings or services that were available to them, or when their ideas or ability to participate in conversations and events was limited due to them not being in a



position of power or authority, or not being recognized by those who were in positions of power or authority. The problem with trying to reduce and eliminate this power gap is that the social contexts that frame how power and knowledge are used and understood are often dictated by those who control the language and discourse patterns in a culture or organization (Hall, 2001), which for this study are those who are in positions of power on my college campus, most of whom are White. This highlights an underlying issue that was addressed in some of the interviews for this study, that in order to resolve some of these situations, those in leadership positions need to recognize the issues being addressed and be willing to engage in conversations and planning efforts to address these areas of discrimination and inequality.

**Leadership in higher education.** It is important to understand how Whiteness helps to shape and influence leadership and leadership roles and expectations in higher education. Understanding leadership in higher education helps to articulate how racial issues and silencing has a negative impact on classroom and college environments for both students and faculty, and also helps to frame how leadership and faculty/instructor roles are framed, negotiated, and presented within higher education. As all of the faculty interviewees alluded to, they are in a leadership role as teachers on campus, but their ability to address issues that influence their leadership capacities are limited by social and cultural norms on campus (Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013). This leads to increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, and a feeling of disconnect from colleagues, students, and their college community (Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2011). The problem African American faculty and staff face is that norms and values associated with leadership roles on campus are dictated by Whiteness and the White norms that result

from its influence (Griffin & Reddick, 2011). This limits that ability for individuals to participate and engage in conversations and leadership meetings, and ultimately limits or silences discussions around racial issues that otherwise would happen if a more open understanding of leadership roles and norms existed.

**Invisibility.** Invisibility is often framed as the social and cultural tendency to become marginalized, silenced, or overlooked in a social, public, or cultural setting, and is often framed from a racial position due to the influence dominant White narratives and norms play within our society (Anderson, 2001). While race, class, and gender are all key markers that help us to identify where invisibility and isolation of individuals occur in our society (Anderson, 2001; Hendrix & Wilson, 2014), racial separation was what was stressed by the faculty and student interviewees for this study. As a result, participants in the study reflected on numerous instances or topics and situations that lead to limited engagement and discussions inside and outside of classroom settings. These experiences highlighted that there is a strong need to focus on how to build community in undergraduate classrooms and on college campuses, specifically focusing how to address students and community members that fall outside of the dominant group/meta-narrative (Hinton, 2010; hooks, 2010; hooks, 1989), while also highlighting a clear need to focus on white students and faculty learning to be culturally sensitive and help to create conducive learning environments. The experiences shared also illustrate how the social constructs of race and othering that exist in broader society are often pulled into university and classroom settings (Rollock, 2012), and in turn help to frame classroom expectations, environments, and roles for faculty members and students on our college campuses.

**Classroom climate.** Understanding classroom climate in higher education settings helps to identify the link between race, identity, and culture as it pertains to creating undergraduate classrooms and colleges where individual identities are free to be expressed, and understanding how society and social structures limit the ability for narratives to be shared and expressed. Whiteness influences how faculty members interviewed navigate and approach interactions with students in their classrooms (Griffin & Reddick, 2011), and shapes how undergraduate students defined what it meant for faculty to be student-centered (Guiffrida, 2005). The experiences shared by faculty member interviewed also highlights how faculty construct their personal identities, and how their narratives can be used to better understand how different identities and cultural structures are negotiated and potentially stigmatized within classroom environments (Slay & Smith, 2011), especially since these identities and narratives are evaluated through the overarching cultural norms at the college. The way race and racial roles and expectations are constructed on my college campus and negotiated and evaluated in each communicative interaction that faculty and students of Color have (Warren, 2001), with other individuals of Color and with White individuals on campus. How individuals understand their identity and role within a classroom also occurs outside of the classroom on campus.

**College climate.** Looking at how college climate functions as an overarching influence on classroom climate, silencing, and culture due to the role Whiteness holds within higher education helps to create a broader understanding of college climate and university level implications regarding Whiteness (Bradley, 2005; Eagan Jr & Garvey, 2015; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005). The climate on my campus illustrated a strong tendency

for African American faculty members and students to be pushed to the edges of classrooms and conversations (Grant & Simmons, 2008), which is not an experience that is often shared by their White peers (Griffin, Bennett & Harris, 2013). While expectations may be stated as being the same for all faculty, cultural expectations and challenges for faculty of Color intensify the challenges and stressors placed on faculty of Color in higher education (Thompson and Dey, 1998), and the same can be said for students of Color.

The variety of ways that this study connects to research that already exists helps to illustrate how important this research is, as well as how large of an issue Whiteness has become in higher education and in our culture as a whole. The results of this study not only highlight concepts from the literature review, but extend on them in ways that provide strong methods for how to move forward with this line of research. Addressing the implications of this study and how I plan to share and move forward with this line of research will be outlined in various sections below.

### **Study Implications**

While conducting the interviews for this study, and while I was coding the interview transcripts, I kept finding myself wondering what implications would come from this study. What areas of our society could this study help to address? How would I approach using the information shared by the interviewees and the findings from analyzing those interviews to try and address those areas? These questions led me to identify three primary areas where this information could be used to try and address concerns and provide a means for starting to change how Whiteness exists in higher education. Those areas were the implications this study can have pertaining to higher

education policies, how stakeholders could be impacted by the findings of this study, and how the educational climate in higher education takes on a new view when applying the findings from this study to discussing what our colleges and our classrooms are meant to look like and do in higher education.

### **Policy Implications**

When exploring how this research can impact policies, I can think of two specific policies on my campus that need to be addressed as a result of this study, and one broad policy/training concerns that should be addressed on college campuses nationwide. The first policy I would like to focus on is part of our college strategic plan (which was implemented at the start of this academic year) that states, We value a culture of caring and mutual respect for all students and all employees, and we value equity and inclusion campus-wide for all constituents. While the intent of the strategic plan, there is very little information about how to report instances of discrimination, how individuals handle and follow-up on the report of discrimination, and there is not a clear articulation of repercussions for individuals who are found to be discriminating against others on campus. There are four ways in which the campus attempts to ensure we are supporting the strategic plan:

1. Support a welcoming and safe environment for our students and employees.
2. Recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty and staff that reflect our community and students.
3. Invest in development opportunities for faculty and staff.
4. Promote the value of free speech and diverse voices and viewpoints.

However, there are no specifics for how these four focus areas will be enforced, supported, or implemented on our campus. Truthfully, strategic plan is designed to ensure individuals employed by our college make ethical decisions, which is a great focus. Sadly, the strategic plan is only ever briefly discussed at faculty, staff, and student orientations when you first come to campus, and maybe once or twice a year on faculty retreat days.

The second policy I would like to address pertains to the required diversity training faculty and staff are expected to complete as part of their employment. While diversity and equity training sessions are offered at all faculty and staff retreats on our campus, they are often offered at the same time as multiple other session options, and are not very well attended. The school does constantly send out information about optional sessions individuals can attend outside of our retreat days, but equity and diversity issues should be addressed on a consistent basis with all members of our campus community, especially when the results of this study are considered. I would love to sit down with the administrators that plan our retreat sessions to develop a better schedule that would allow everyone to attend these sessions, rather than limiting participation due to too many options being provided. The content of the diversity and equity sessions offered is solid, but few individuals have the opportunity to attend the sessions due to the current design of the schedules being used.

### **Stakeholder Implications**

It may sound cliché to say that everyone is impacted by this research and that everyone is a stakeholder in this conversation, but in reality, we all are stakeholders and we are all impacted in one way or another by Whiteness and the culture and situations it

cultivates and reinforces (Andersen, 2001). For me, this study allows me to focus on three specific groups on my campus, which are the same stakeholder groups this information could help on other campuses: faculty, staff/administration, and students (Case, 2007). Yes, there may be other stakeholder groups impacted, but these are the three groups most directly impacted by the findings of this study.

To start, faculty need to be able to understand what is impacting their ability to be effective educators, colleagues, and researchers (Eagan Jr. & Garvey, 2015). This does not mean they need to be aware of all of the positive and negative aspects of campus climate and culture that shapes their role on their campus. However, they should be aware of how the results of this study, and the environment on campus, can help them reframe how they approach interacting with students and colleagues, and perhaps how this study can influence their own practices. Faculty members have the most direct contact with students, and we need to ensure our practices are supportive and do not isolate or harm any of our students. The same can also be said about how we interact with our colleagues, as we try and support and help them in similar ways.

Our staff and administrative members on campus should take the results of this study to heart, especially when looking at the multiple instances where students referenced a lack of awareness of support networks and the often negative treatment they received when they sought out support services (Frankenburg, 1993; Franklin, 2007). While staff and administrative members of college communities may not have as much interaction with students as faculty members do, they often are in charge of decisions and policies that have lasting impacts on both faculty members and students. There needs to be more transparency and communication between administration and staff members

with faculty and students about services and policies on campus, in order to ensure that all individuals are being served in the highest capacity possible. I also feel that the findings of this study may lead to a reevaluation of how staff and administration members, especially new hires, are trained to work with other community members on campus, especially our students.

This study showed that the students we educate and serve on our campus need more support from everyone at the university, and need to be given more opportunities to engage in conversations about issues and situations that impact them on an academic and personal level (Hill, 2014; hooks, 2014; hooks, 2006). Throughout all of the student interviews, there was a general consensus that students did not have opportunities to help shape the environment on their college campus. “Most of the time, we don’t know when you all are talking about things. You know, meetings or forums. And most of the time, they conflict with when we have class,” Cameron (personal communication, November 19, 2018) explained, “You keep talking about how we can change things and what we have experienced, but nobody else ever hears what we have to say since we aren't there.” Our students are the primary stakeholders on our campus, and if we are not serving them in ways that are helping them succeed in their academic and personal lives, we need to reevaluate what we are doing on our college campuses. I would love to bring this research to the attention of different student groups on my college campus, to see what their reactions are, and see if they have any ideas of what can be done to help address the issues brought up during the student interviews for this study. These three stakeholder groups; faculty, staff and administration, and students, I believe hold to most potential to create change on campus, and that is where I would like to start working to make this



research have meaningful implications on my college campus, by working with these groups to make change.

### **Educational Implications**

Looking at the different policies that could be addressed at my institution and potentially other institutions, as well as looking at who is all impacted by this research, I am left wondering how this research can be used to shape my teaching, the educational environment on my college campus, and how this could be used to open up discussions about educational issues relating to this study on other college campuses. I have always tried to focus on having inclusive and reflexive practices as a teacher, but this study has highlighted that not all educators take that approach. By continuing to focus on what I can do in my classroom and as an advocate on campus, I want to take the results of this study and use them to craft more intentional ways of addressing systemic issues of Whiteness across my college campus, and across other college campuses as well. Two ways I would like to do this are by partnering with our student advocacy group on campus to develop training programs and opportunities for individuals to be more aware of their own biases and to allow individuals to become more supportive of others on campus. I would like to do something similar with the individuals on campus who help design and implement our faculty development days.

Within my classroom, I need to be more reflective on how I am approaching teaching and be more open about talking to students about what may be going on in their lives that could be impacting them. If this study has taught me anything, it is that I need to be more open to talking with my colleagues and with my students. I thought I had a fairly open communication policy, but in reflecting about my practices throughout this

study, I came to realize I really did not. I do not really know what is going on outside of an academic setting with hardly any of my colleagues and I rarely have my students just openly talk about what is going on in their lives. I need to be more aware of this, and I have already tried to start changing how open my communication is with others and how I approach preparing for and teaching my classes. I have changed the examples I use in class and the authors I draw from to help frame class discussions. I am also working on redesigning my courses, so that in future semesters there is a more inclusive representation of positionalities and backgrounds in the shoulders on scholars I stand on in my classes. I hope this will help to break down some barriers that may exist as a result of my past approaches, and I hope this will allow me to be a more compassionate and supportive colleague, researcher, and teacher.

On my college campus, we need to work harder to make students aware of different educational resources that can help them be successful in the classroom. This can range from improving how we market and offer tutoring and advising services, to how we market and support the use of our counseling and career services on our campus. The goal we discuss constantly on our campus is that we want every student to succeed and reach their highest potential, and if we are not helping students be aware of and use services that are specifically designed to help them accomplish that goal, we are failing to serve our students.

Opening up discussions and other channels of communication about issues pertaining to Whiteness, and other areas that are creating negative, disproportionate, and sometimes hostile environments on our campus also needs to start. There was a push last year from our student leaders on campus to hold more open forums with all community

members on campus to start discussing concerns individuals had on campus, but those meetings were sparsely attended. I would like to see an attempt to reach out to all members of our college community via email or survey to see what issues they still see present on campus, and to try and address any equity and diversity concerns that exist on campus (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll, 2009; Hendrix & Wilson, 2014). From there, I would advocate for the creation of multiple town hall style meetings, with each meeting focused around a specific issue or two that were identified from the survey. This I believe would help to start to open up communication about various issues across our campus, and provide a means for everyone to have their voice heard.

### **Limitation of Methods**

While every effort was made to address any potential limitations in methodological approaches in order to address limitations with other approaches, there are still some areas of potential limits that need to be addressed. While there may be other areas of limitations pertaining to this study, there are three that will be addressed in this section. Those three areas are: the potential bias I bring to the study, how thematic coding can miss themes and narratives, and the limits of content analysis.

### **Potential Biases towards Study**

Coming into this study I had to come to terms with understanding that my past experiences and my positionality were going to impact how I approached completing this work. It is impossible for me to remove myself from my own Whiteness and how Whiteness in the broader scope influences and shapes how I view the world and how I interpret my past experiences. My experiences also shape how I understand and interpret

how Whiteness influences my colleagues and students in higher education. As a result, there may be themes that were missed, narratives that were not clearly identified or fleshed out, or potentially connections that were not made due to my own positionality and approach to this process. Regardless of how reflexive and unbiased I may attempt to be with this study, there is always the potential and likelihood that something was missed or influenced due to my own positionality and the mental framework I brought into this study. There also may be limitations due to the positions that are held by those involved in the study, since I am a White male and the individual interviewing African American participants, there may be different response given by the participants or different interpretations of responses due to the differences that exist between me and those participating in the study that may not exist if someone else were conducting the interviews.

### **Thematic Coding may miss Themes/Narratives**

While thematic coding allows for broad themes to be identified within a data set, by having individuals identify the themes within this study can cause particular themes or narratives to be missed in the analysis portion of this dissertation. This is the largest drawback presented by this approach, especially due to the content area for this study due to how rich and in-depth the topic of the influence of Whiteness is with regard to how Whiteness silences individuals in higher education. While every effort will be made to address this issue, it is still possible that elements may be missed.

### **Limits of Content Analysis**

Content analysis may be the best fit for these artifacts for analysis, but some

limitations still exist in this method application. Content analysis is a purely descriptive method. It describes what is there, but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern ('what' but not 'why'). Content analysis can only draw on what is available within the text, and can only make observations off of the available material:

One challenge of this type of analysis is failing to develop a complete understanding of the context, thus failing to identify key categories. This can result in finding that do not accurately represent the data.

(Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278)

This means we can not draw claims of how individuals reached their positionality or why their responses to the survey or interviews were what they were. For the aspect of content analysis, the research can only draw from what is in the resulting text from the survey responses and the interview transcripts. Similarly, the content of the survey responses and interview transcripts only reflect the experiences of those who completed the survey and interviews, which may not reflect the reality of themes and experiences of individuals who did not complete the survey or interviews, or the experiences of individuals who fall outside of the scope of this study.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Thinking about how I would like to move forward with conducting more research in this area, I am aware that there are some aspects of the study that I could and should change and adapt in order to improve the process of data collection and analysis. I would also want to expand my research to include more individuals contributing to the research and I would like to start looking at other historically marginalized groups in higher

education. While there may be other areas to consider, the four areas listed below are where I plan to start expanding on the research that will continue from this dissertation.

### **Research involving African American Faculty**

The first area I would like to continue with this research is looking deeper into how Whiteness impacts African American faculty in higher education. The faculty members interviewed for this study highlighted a variety of areas on campus where they experience negative situations related to Whiteness (i.e. departmental meetings, university meetings and training sessions, in social and public spaces on campus, etc.), which reinforced the findings of literature referenced in the literature review for this study (Arai & Kivel, 2009; Bradley, 2005; Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Grant & Simmons, 2008; Gregory, 2001; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2013; hooks, 2006; Rooks, 2006; Slay & Smith, 2011; Stanley, 2006; Turner & Gonzalez, 2011). The interviews with the faculty members for this study also helped me to identify specific areas of opportunity to address issues on my campus (i.e. more open faculty meetings, more public meetings, having cross-departmental meetings, etc.), while also challenging how well I understand my own positionality in relation to the experiences shared by the faculty interviewed for this study (i.e. I was very unaware of a lot that was going on on my campus).

I would like to conduct more face-to-face interviews with African American faculty members, and potentially hold focus groups to expand on the research I started with this dissertation. I think gathering more experiences on an individual level would allow me to get more depth from the interviewees in future studies, while holding focus groups could potentially allow interviewees to reflect and share experiences that they may not share in individual interviews. I would also like to craft questions around how

faculty members view their colleagues and what other faculty and staff members on campus can do to help address and resolve issues of Whiteness. I actually had one of the faculty interviewees for this study ask about potentially collaborating about how race impacts faculty development, which is another area I would like to examine from a faculty perspective if that opportunity is still possible next fall.

### **Research involving African American Students**

The second area where I would like to continue with this research is looking into how Whiteness impacts African American students in higher education. The students interviewed for this study highlighted a variety of areas on campus where they experience negative situations related to Whiteness (i.e. in classrooms, in meetings with faculty and staff, in social and public spaces on campus, etc.). The experiences shared by the student interviewees reinforced the findings of literature referenced in the literature review for this study (Cabrera, 2014; Franklin, 2007; Guiffrida, 2005; hooks, 2006; Jackson & Moore, 2006; Rooks, 2006; Stanley, 2006), and showed me that there is a lot of work that needs to be done with our students on campus in order to start addressing some of the concerns brought up in the interviews.

I would like to conduct more face-to-face interviews with African American students on campus, and potentially hold focus groups to expand on the research I started with this dissertation. I believe that gathering more experiences on an individual level would allow me to get more depth from the interviewees in future studies, while holding focus groups with students would allow interviewees to reflect and share experiences that they may not share in individual interviews. I would also like to design new questions that allowed students to address what other faculty and staff members on campus can do,

or are currently doing, to help address and resolve issues of Whiteness. I think it is important to not only use the findings of this study to highlight issues students identified, but to also use it to identify areas and individuals on campus who are already working to address these issues, which would also allow students to become involved in advocating for solutions to issues of Whiteness on campus.

### **Research involving Other Historically Marginalized Groups in Higher Education**

While this dissertation focused on the impact that Whiteness has on African American faculty and students in higher education, there are other groups that are historically marginalized and negatively impacted by Whiteness in the United States. As work cited in the literature review explained, experiences of marginalization, isolation, and being treated differently than one's peers is not an experience that is isolated as occurring only for African American individuals, but in fact, occurs for almost every non-White individual in some capacity in higher education and in society as a whole (Eagan Jr. & Garvey, 2015; Griffin, Bennett, & Harris, 2011; Hendrix & Wilson, 2014; hooks, 2006; Milner IV, 2010; Mitchell & Miller, 2011; Rollock, 2012; Rooks, 2006; Slay & Smith, 2011; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Stanley, 2006; Turner & Gonzalez, 2011). The understanding that Whiteness' influence extends to all individuals is why I feel it is important to interview individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, in order to identify shared experiences and potentially isolate ways in which different racial and ethnic groups experiences both similar and different forms of oppression, isolation, and negative climates as a result of Whiteness.



### **Research involving Whiteness/Whiteness Framing**

Beyond continuing research to look at how Whiteness negatively impacts individuals in higher education and in our culture as a whole, I would like to take a more meta-level look at how Whiteness and how we frame discussions and research around Whiteness impacts the study and analysis of what Whiteness is understood to be and do. Many of the articles addressing Whiteness in the literature review try to establish a position or framework for how the author or authors understand and approach Whiteness studies (DiAngelo, 2018; Green, Sonn, & Matsebula, 2007; Hartmann, Gerteis, & Croll, 2009; Nichols, 2010; Stanley, 2006; Warren, 2001; Warren, 1999), and this is something I want to explore further after defending this dissertation. I believe it is important to look at how Whiteness influences and shapes different areas of higher education (i.e. administration, staff, faculty, students, public stakeholders, etc.) in either similar or different ways. By looking at the overlaps that exist, as well as the differences, I believe a clearer picture of how Whiteness functions in higher education can be articulated, which in turn, should help to make any efforts to reduce or eliminate influences linked to Whiteness.

### **Plans for Communicating the Results**

The underlying question that I have had written down on my desk as I have been working on this dissertation has been how I plan to use, share, and hopefully publish the results of this study. While the more obvious answers I have come up with revolve around presenting my research at conferences and trying to publish my findings, I also want to try and find a more applied and interactive means of using this research to try and address Whiteness in higher education. This is where I have found myself thinking about

trying to put together workshops and training sessions to help individuals recognize their own positionality and provide a platform for anyone involved in education to discuss concerns related to Whiteness and other issues that need to be addressed in education. I have also thought about how I could potentially write a book reflecting on this process and what it means to be a White scholar who tries to address issues of Whiteness in education. All of these different areas seem realistic to me, but some of them are definitely easier to accomplish in a short time period compared to others.

### **Conference Presentations**

One of the first things I would like to do after completing this study is to look deeper into the data and reach out to other individuals who do research in this area in order to try and outline and submit to conferences. Specifically, I would love to try and present this research at the National Communication Association Conference, the Diversity Abroad Conference, or The National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE), due to the specific interest groups at those conferences that focus on the type of research I am working on. I feel that it is important for me to share and present the findings from my study, and to engage with other scholars who are doing work in this area. This would not only help refine and connect my research to work being done by other scholars, but could also open up opportunities for collaborative research with other, while also allowing discussions around the issues discussed in my research to take place in a supportive and collaborative environment.

### **Paper Publication(s)**

Another way I plan on sharing this research is by submitting the results for publication in a few different journals, such as Communication Education,

Communication Teacher, Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, or the Journal of Education Research. I say a few different journals because I believe the findings from this study can be split up into multiple smaller papers, specifically looking at the different ways Whiteness influences both faculty members and students, and looking at how Whiteness shapes classroom environments. In conversations I have had with some of my colleagues, I have decided that I would like to submit for publication in both communication and education journals, as the work for this study can be applied from both lenses.

### **Campus Workshops and Training Opportunities**

When I think about more practical and hands-on ways to use this information, I find myself wondering how I could either design workshops and training opportunities or partner with existing groups on college campuses to add new elements to their existing workshops and training opportunities. On my current campus, we only hold two required training/work days each year for faculty, and there is often only one session over the course of an entire year that focuses on equity and diversity issues and concerns. I would like to partner with the equity and diversity center on my campus to try and design and plan workshops around different issues discussed in this study (i.e. Whiteness, racism, sexism, silencing, etc.) and work in a collaborative manner to implement those workshops.

I also feel that this work could be used to design training sessions and opportunities for organizations outside of an educational setting. While a professional learning community format may be a good way to work through concepts discussed in this study, I see the same issues that were brought up by the interviewees occurring

outside of academic settings (i.e. workplaces, stores, restaurants, public interactions, etc.). I would love to try on my experiences as a corporate trainer to design training programs for managers and employees to help them recognize and address their own biases while also helping to train them to identify and foster ways to address concerns and barriers while creating supportive and positive workplace environments.

### **Book on Addressing Whiteness as a White Scholar and Educator**

One aspect of potential discussion and reflection on this process and on the need to address Whiteness that has become a growing area of interest throughout this dissertation for me is the idea of writing a book that reflects on what it means to be a White scholar who researches the influence of Whiteness in higher education and in society as a whole. While this is not a new concept, since there are many Whiteness scholars who have written books on their journeys (Howard, 2016; Kendall, 2012; Wise, 2012), positionalities, and on their processes for conducting and analyzing research, I keep thinking about how I can participate within and add to the conversations occurring with these types of books. This would help me not only reflect on my positionality and the process of this dissertation, but would allow me to broaden my scope regarding how to discuss and address the influence Whiteness has within our culture.

### **Final Thoughts**

Throughout the interviews, coding, and writing for this dissertation, I have found myself reevaluating how I approach teaching. I have become more reflective of the decisions I make in my classrooms and in my course preparations. I have become more aware of my own assumptions and struggles with my own Whiteness, and have become more vocal with other White individuals to challenge their own Whiteness and White

Privilege, both within and outside of education. Personally, this research has given me a deeper sense of being critical and more aware of my own privilege in a way that allows me to be a more open and honest educator compared to where I was personally and professionally before I started this dissertation.

Throughout this entire process, I have found myself having moments where I have had to take a step back and just let everything I have been doing with this research sink in. I am passionate about the work I am doing, and I truly believe we can resolve all of the issues tied to Whitenesses influence in higher education in the United States, but I can not let myself get bogged down or too deeply rooted into the specifics of my work, because I feel that causes me to lose focus of the big picture of what I am trying to address with this research. Yes, it is a big issue to address, but you need to be able to understand the big picture, even while you are trying to address a specific area. I will continue to take this lens as I continue to work to address and resolve the power and influence Whiteness has in higher education in the United States. This dissertation, for me, is just the start of what I plan to do and where I plan to go with my research and how I plan to address Whiteness throughout my career as a researcher and as an academic and educator.

When I started this process I was so worried about saying the right thing or addressing the right issues that I did not focus on how being an effective and supportive researcher would allow me to have the “right” conversations and to focus on the “right” issues. I need to continue to challenge myself to embrace the oftentimes uncomfortable situations where I need to advocate and support my colleagues and students who are being harmed by the system Whiteness has created on my college campus. Whiteness

impacts all of us, in either positive or negative ways, and I believe we need to address and remove the negative, if we are to have any chance of creating college campuses that are safe and supportive for everyone, and if we as a culture are going to be able to move in a direction that allows us to address the areas of society that limit and harms our family, friends, and fellow members of society.

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**APPENDIX A****RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

Hello Faculty and Students,

My name is Keith Bistodeau and I am currently working on a research study with Dr. Trish Harvey that is exploring the silencing influence that Whiteness has on individual who self-identify as African American on your campus and am looking for individuals who would be interested in meeting me for a ninety minute interview. For those unfamiliar with the term, Whiteness refers to the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin, which in turn create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race. The goal of this study is to identify areas in which Whiteness is silencing the experiences, ideas, contributions, and identities of African American individuals and to come up with strategies and actions plans to address these issues.

Any individual who decides to participate in this study will have their identity protected, and no information about the interviewed participants will be shared to persons not directly affiliated with this dissertation. Your personal information will also not be shared with other individuals who participate in the study. If you have any questions about the study detailed above please feel free to email the Lead Research, Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or the Student Researcher, Keith Bistodeau at [kbistodeau01@hamline.edu](mailto:kbistodeau01@hamline.edu). All email correspondence will be kept confidential.

Sincerely,

**Keith C. Bistodeau, M.A.**

*Student Researcher*

## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### **Demographic Questions**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your self-identified race/ethnicity?
3. What is your education level?
4. What is your employment status?

#### **Main Interview Questions**

1. What type of school/university are you affiliated with?
2. What is your role/position at that school/university?
3. How would you describe the climate at your school/university?
4. How would you describe the racial climate at your school/university?
5. Have you experienced situations of racial tension at your school/university?
  - a. If so, please explain.
  - b. Can you tell me more about those experiences?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
6. Have you experienced situations of racial tension during your education journey?
  - a. If so, please explain.
  - b. Can you tell me more about those experiences?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
7. One of the newer methods of addressing racial issues in education is addressing how Whiteness influences educational settings. Are you familiar with this term/concept of Whiteness?
  - a. Regardless of response, define how Whiteness is used in this study and ask for the interviewees response to that definition and framing.
  - b. How do you feel about that definition/initial reaction?
  - c. Do you think it reflects situations that occur at your school?
    - i. If so, can you explain why you feel that way?
8. Do you think Whiteness is an issue at your school/university?
  - a. Please tell me more.
  - b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
9. How do you think Whiteness influences the climate at your school/university?
  - a. Please tell me more.

- b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
10. Do you think Whiteness needs to be addressed at your school/university?
- a. Please tell me more.
  - b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
11. Do you think Whiteness has created a silencing culture at your school/university?
- a. Please tell me more.
  - b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
12. Do you think Whiteness has caused silencing for you in your career/jobs?
- a. Please tell me more.
  - b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
13. Do you think Whiteness has cause silencing for you in your educational journey?
- a. Please tell me more.
  - b. Do you have specific examples?
    - i. How did you feel in that/those situation(s)?
    - ii. How did you react in that/those situation(s)?
14. Do you have any suggestions for this study?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add/say?
16. Do you have any questions for me?

## APPENDIX C

### CODEBOOK

This codebook is designed to help you in the process of coding faculty and student interviews pertaining to the influence of Whiteness in higher education. The research questions that are guiding this study are listed here:

Research Question 1: How can the counter-narratives of African American faculty provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 2: How can the counter-narratives of African American undergraduate students provide insights to address systemic issues of the silencing power of Whiteness in higher education in the United States?

Research Question 3: How can the experiences of the interviewees be compared and contrasted in order to inform our practice and guide how we can address the silencing power of Whiteness?

Each variable is defined based on how it is being addressed in this study.

Please only use the definitions in this codebook when coding the speeches. You may be familiar with other definitions or descriptions of the words, but those definitions are not applicable to this study. In order to code each interview, please follow the instructions provided below. Even if you are familiar with coding materials, please read and use the following instructions as the primary methods for coding the speeches.

#### Instructions

This is a study exploring how the systemic issues and silencing power of Whiteness influence the narratives and experiences of African American faculty and students in higher education in the United States. By exploring differences and similarities of experiences among the interviewees, this study hopes to understand and better address issues of Whiteness in higher education in the United States, and provide a framework for discussing and presenting potential solutions to this ongoing issue. Your job as a coder for this study is to read the transcripts and identify the presence or absence of various concepts and ideas that pertain to the overarching research questions for this study. The rest of this codebook will provide you with the important definitions to use when coding the speeches. The definitions are part of the key variables in this study, and you should take the necessary time to be familiar with the terminology before beginning to code the interviews. After each definition is provided, instructions will be provided as to how to locate those themes in the interviews. Please follow the provided directions.

Each coder will be assigned an individual number. Please indicate that number on the line.

*Identify if the interview being analyzed is that of a faculty member or of a student.  
Identify the interview number being analyzed on the line provided.*

#### General Instructions

Before beginning the next portion of coding, take time to familiarize yourself with each speech you are coding. Please make sure you read the directions for each different line of coding as seen on the coding sheet. Use the terminology on the coding sheet as a

guide to locate all the terms and instances in the speech where the following themes occur.

### **Themes**

Coders will indicate the presence or absence of the following themes. A brief description of all themes will be given for clarity. Indicate on the form which terms are used in the speech. Topic: The coding method for this particular aspect of the speeches is aimed at addressing how the speaker framed their topic throughout their speech. Meaning, how many times is the topic directly, or indirectly referenced in the speech. While the topic may be implied by the title of the speech or the sources used, direct statements or indirect references to the topic within the speech can be used as a persuasive mechanism.

#### **Race.**

Instances pertaining to Race refer to any direct or indirect reference to an individual's racial identity. This reference can pertain to the individual being interviewed or a reference to the race of another individual being discussed by the interviewee. The concept of race refers to a grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society, and for the sake of this dissertation, the term race focuses on how an individual identifies themselves from a racial perspective.

Ex: I identify as an African-American male/I identify as a Caucasian Female.

Ex: That would not happen to a White person/We get group together because of our skin.

#### **Racism.**

Instances pertaining to Racism refer to any direct or indirect reference to racist comments, ideas, or situations heard or experienced by the interviewee or individuals that the interviewee is referencing. For the framing of this study, racism is viewed as the belief in the superiority of one Race over another, which often results in antagonism, discrimination and prejudice towards people based on their perceived or identified race or ethnicity.

Ex: They wouldn't let us in to the meeting because we are black.

Ex: I remember growing up a being called a crow, a monkey, and a coon.

#### **Whiteness.**

Instances pertaining to Whiteness refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual being White. This dissertation defines Whiteness for this study as: the socially constructed set of characteristics and experiences that are attached to the socially constructed White race and White skin, which in turn create a concept of racial superiority and social norms that can be linked to the White race.

Ex: They have the privilege of never being harrassed by the police.

Ex: I have to prove myself more in class because teachers think Black kids are lazy.

**White Privilege.**

Instances pertaining to White Privilege refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the individual being a Non-White person. The concept of White privilege refers to the societal privilege that benefits people whom society identifies as white beyond what is commonly experienced by non-white people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.

Ex: White privilege means you can speak well without people being "surprised."

Ex: I end up talk for all Black kids in my class, but I'm just one person.

**Discrimination.**

Instances pertaining to Discrimination refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either treated differently, or saw others being treated differently due to the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different socially constructed categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, class, age, or sex. The concept of discrimination is often referenced in research as the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction towards, a person based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong. This often become expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of hierarchy or othering of a particular individual or group.

Ex: Hearing or being subjected to inappropriate jokes/comments pertaining to one's identified race.

Ex: Not receiving the means to observe cultural holidays that do not fit into the college or company daily/weekly schedule.

**Silencing.**

Instances pertaining to silencing refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to engage in situations or conversations with other individuals, or were barred from participation in situations, or had their ideas or participation discredited due to their race, class, age, or sex. The concept of silencing is often referenced in research as the differences in the treatment or consideration of a person(s) based on the group, class, or category to which the person is perceived to belong. This often become expressed in actions or words stated towards or about an individual or group that creates a sense of either and in-group or out-group or restrict the amount of power certain individuals or groups have in certain situations.

Ex: I always get talked over by the guys in my classes.

Ex: At departmental meetings I get overpowered by my white colleagues.

**Support.**

Instances pertaining to support refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to seek services or engage in conversations with other individuals about their personal or professional concerns, or were barred from support services due to their race, class, age, or sex. The concept of support is often referenced in research as pertaining to



emotional, personal, or professional support, depending on the context being addressed and the type of interaction that is occurring.

Ex: Hearing or being subjected to inappropriate comments about an individual's need to talk about emotional concerns or stressors at work.

Ex: Not receiving time off to deal with a death in the family, or receiving comments due to taking time off for similar situations.

Ex: Not receiving the same training or university support for research as their colleagues.

### **Mental Health.**

Instances pertaining to mental health refer to any direct or indirect reference to conversations, situations, and experiences where individuals were either limited from being able to seek services or engage in conversations with other individuals about their personal or professional concerns, or were barred from support services for their emotional or mental well-being. The concept of mental health is often referenced in research as pertaining to emotional, mental, personal, or physical help/support that is meant to help an individual feel comfortable or supported in their experiences and day-to-day activities.

Ex: Experiences of people belittling a mental health diagnosis.

Ex: Not receiving or having access to mental health services at work or school.

Thank you for your help with this dissertation. If you have any questions for me at any point, please contact me:

Sincerely,

Keith Bistodeau, *Student Researcher*  
kbistodeau01@hamline.edu

**APPENDIX D****CODESHEET**

Code Sheet for Coder # \_\_\_\_\_

Interview #: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty/Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Noteworthy Quotations (List Page and Line #'s):

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Each coder should identify the presence or absence of a particular thematic code within each analyzed interview transcripts. Coders should also indicate how many times they identified particular themes occurring within each transcript. If there are particular passages/quotations that the coder feels should receive extra attention, they should be indicated in the space above by page(s) and line(s) number(s).

## Topic Areas for Thematic Coding

Theme	Present or Absent	# of Occurrences
Race		
Racism		
Whiteness		
White Privilege		
Discrimination		
Silencing		
Support		
Mental Health		

## APPENDIX E

## CONSENT FORM

*Informed Consent to Participate in Research***Hamline University**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The Principal Investigator (the person in charge of this research) or their representative will provide you with a copy of this form to keep for your reference, and will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. This form provides important information about what you will be asked to do during the study, about the risks and benefits of the study, and about your rights as a research subject.

- If you have any questions about or do not understand something in this form, you should ask the research team for more information.
- You should feel free to discuss your potential participation with anyone you choose, such as family or friends, before you decide to participate.
- Do not agree to participate in this study unless the research team has answered your questions and you decide that you want to be part of this study.

*Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can refuse to participate or withdraw at any time.*

**Title of Research Study:** Addressing how Whiteness silences African American narratives in Higher Education in the United States through Narrative Analysis

**Principal Investigator, Hamline affiliation/title, phone number(s), and email address:**

Trish Harvey, Associate Professor of Education, 651-523-2532, tharvey03@hamline.edu

**1. Who is funding this study?** Not Applicable

**2. What is the purpose of this study?**

To identify how the narratives and experiences of African American Faculty and Undergraduate Students can help address the systemic issues of Whiteness that exist in higher education in the United States.

**3. How many people will most likely be participating in this study?**

10 (5 faculty and 5 undergraduate students)

**4. What will be done if you take part in this research study?**

You will be asked to participate in one ninety minute interview with the primary student investigator regarding your experiences with Whiteness in your life, specifically focusing on your experiences in an education setting or environment. This interview will be recorded and the recording will be transcribed and stored on the primary investigators computer for the duration of the study.

- **Screening to determine eligibility for the study:**
- You must be a member of either the African American Faculty group or the African American student group on one of the Anoka Ramsey Community College campuses, and you must also self-identify as African American to participate in this study.

**5. What is your time commitment to the study if you participate, and the duration of entire project?**

Your time commitment to this study is limited to the email correspondence to express interest in participating in the study, setting up the interview, and the one sixty minute interview with the primary investigator.

**6. What are the possible discomforts and risks?**

By participating in this study, there is a chance of emotional stress or discomfort due to the topic areas that will be discussed during the interview process. Please contact the

Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532, or the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau at [kbistodeau01@hamline.edu](mailto:kbistodeau01@hamline.edu), to discuss this if you wish. If you feel you need to contact someone in health services, please contact the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau at [kbistodeau01@hamline.edu](mailto:kbistodeau01@hamline.edu), who will help you find the correct person to contact. It is possible that the confidentiality of your participation in this study may be lost, but every possible precaution will be taken by the research team to prevent this from happening.

**7. What are the possible benefits to you and/or to others?**

By participating in this study you are helping to identify experiences and situations where Whiteness has had a negative impact on you and your educational journey (either as a student or faculty member). Your participation will help the researcher identify areas that need to be explored in higher education in order to reduce the impact Whiteness has in higher education, both at your institution (through direct application of actions and policy changes) and at other higher education institutions (via publications and training opportunities) in the United States.

**8. If you choose to take part in this study, will it cost you anything?**

There is no cost for participation in this study.

**9. Will you receive compensation for participation in this study?**

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

**10. What if you decide that you do not want to take part in this study? What other**

**options are available to you if you decide not to participate or to withdraw?** Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Hamline University. You are free to refuse to participate in the study, and your refusal will not influence your current or future relationships with Anoka Ramsey Community College or with any instructors or staff at Anoka Ramsey Community College. Your

decision to not take part in this study will also not have any negative impact on your relationship or grades in courses with any of the researchers for this study.

**11. How can you withdraw from this research study and who should you call if you**

**have questions?** You are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation in this research study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits for which you may be entitled. If you wish to stop your participation in this research study for any reason, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532, or the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau at

[kbistodeau01@hamline.edu](mailto:kbistodeau01@hamline.edu). You should also email the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau, for any questions, concerns, suggestions, or complaints about the research and your experience as a participant in the study. In addition, if you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Lisa Stegall, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Hamline University at [IRB@hamline.edu](mailto:IRB@hamline.edu). Your decision to not take part in this study will also not have any negative impact on your relationship or grades in courses with any of the researchers for this study.

**12. Are there any anticipated circumstances under which your participation may be terminated by the investigator without your consent?**

The Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey, and the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau, will not remove anyone from the interview pool unless they do not meet the interviewee requirements, or unless the interviewee self-selects to opt-out of participation in the study.

**13. How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?**

All email correspondence between the Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey or the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau and the interviewee will be stored on the Student Investigator's laptop, which is password protected, and only the Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey, and the Student Investigator, Keith Bistodeau, have access to the contents

of the laptop. All interviewees will be given a pseudonym for this study, and all interview transcripts and data used in the final paper will use only this pseudonym. All transcripts will be contained on the primary researcher's laptop and will be labeled with the pseudonym of the interviewee. All copies of consent forms will be scanned into the Student Investigator's computer to be stored, and all hard copies will be destroyed. Once the study is complete, all digital recordings of the interview will be deleted from the Student Investigator's laptop, but the transcribed transcripts will be kept on the Student Investigator's laptop for future analysis of results/future studies. It is possible that the confidentiality of your participation in this study may be lost, but every possible precaution will be taken by the research team to prevent this from happening.

**14. Will the researchers benefit from your participation in this study?**

The researchers will gain no benefit from your participation in this study beyond the publication and/or presentation of the results obtained from the study, and the invaluable research experience and hands-on learning that the student will gain as a part of their educational experience. The research from this project is considered public scholarship and as a result the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository.



## PARTICIPANT COPY

### Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Printed name of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Voice Recording Consent:

As a part of your participation as a volunteer in this scientific research investigation, you will be recorded during the course of this experiment. Any recording of your performance (without your name or likeness revealed) may be shown to educational audiences, such as conferences. Your consent to be recorded is independent of your consent to participate in this investigation. If you have any questions about this consent, you can contact Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532. By signing below, you hereby give permission for any voice recordings made during the course of this research study to be also used for educational purposes. Your identity will not be revealed if the voice recordings are used for any of the above purposes.

Printed Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## INVESTIGATOR COPY (Duplicate signature page for PIs records)

### Signatures:

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

Printed name of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person obtaining consent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this Form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Printed Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Voice Recording Consent:

As a part of your participation as a volunteer in this scientific research investigation, you will be recorded during the course of this experiment. Any recording of your performance (without your name or likeness revealed) may be shown to educational audiences, such as conferences. Your consent to be recorded is independent of your consent to participate in this investigation. If you have any questions about this consent, you can contact Principal Investigator, Trish Harvey at [tharvey03@hamline.edu](mailto:tharvey03@hamline.edu) or 651-523-2532. By signing below, you hereby give permission for any voice recordings made during the course of this research study to be also used for educational purposes. Your identity will not be revealed if the voice recordings are used for any of the above purposes.

Printed Name of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX F**  
**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3.1 Demographics of Faculty Participants

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Years Teaching	Years at Interview Site
Francis	48	Male	20	18
Gabe	51	Male	26	26
Hailey	47	Female	17	7
Isis	35	Female	11	11
Jada	39	Female	15	9

Table 3.2 Demographics of Student Participants

Interviewee Pseudonym	Age	Identified Gender	Year in College	Employment Status
Anthony	19	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student
Brianna	19	Female	Freshman	Part-Time Student Full-Time Waitress
Cameron	22	Male	Sophomore	Full-Time Student Full-Time Mechanic
Destiny	28	Female	Sophomore	Part-Time Student Full-Time Receptionist
Elijah	20	Male	Freshman	Full-Time Student Full-Time Retail Sales

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