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I'll Choose Which Hill I'm Going to Die on: African American Women Scholar-Activists in the White Academy

Muriel Elizabeth Shockley
Antioch University - PhD Program in Leadership and Change

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I'LL CHOOSE WHICH HILL I'M GOING TO DIE ON:

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN SCHOLAR-ACTIVISTS IN THE WHITE

ACADEMY

MURIEL ELIZABETH SHOCKLEY

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program
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This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:

I'LL CHOOSE WHICH HILL I'M GOING TO DIE ON: AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN
SCHOLAR-ACTIVISTS IN THE WHITE ACADEMY

prepared by

Muriel Elizabeth Shockley

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Leadership and Change.

Approved by:

_____
Elizabeth Holloway, Ph.D., Chair   date

_____
Philomena Essed, Ph.D., Committee Member   date

_____
Alan Guskin, Ph.D., Committee Member   date

_____
Stacy Blake-Beard, Ph.D., External Reader   date

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Abstract

This study explored the complexities of African American women scholar-activists' lived experiences in predominately white institutions of higher education. Existing scholarship on African American women's experiences in the academy locates these academicians in predominately white research universities and liberal arts colleges (PWI's) as well as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU's) and focuses on the tenure process, recruitment and retention, evaluation, student relationships, career satisfaction, mentoring, survival strategies, and administrative leadership. Overwhelmingly the foci of the research are the challenges African American women scholars face and the concomitant strategies employed to militate the consequences. Less apparent are the ways African American women scholar-activists act as catalysts for transformational societal, institutional and individual change. A review of the literature revealed that scholarship on African American women faculty as change agents remains sparse; absent is a grounded theory study focused on the processes related to the embodiment of transformative agency of African American women in predominately white institutions proposed in this study. The electronic version of this Dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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Chapter I: Introduction

None of us was "lowed to see a book or try to learn. They say we git smarter than they was if we learn anything, but we slips around and gits hold of that Websters's old blue-black speller and we hides it till' way in the night and then we lights a little pine torch and studies that spelling book. We learn it too.
Jenny Procter, former slave

Young missy Betty like me and try larn me readin' and writin' and she slip to my room and have me doin' right good. I larn the alphabet. But one day Missy Jane cotch her schoolin' me and she say, 'Niggers don't need to know anything,' and she lams me over the head with the butt of a cowhide whip.
Susan Merritt, former slave

Two significant events occurred in 1850, the graduation of Lucy Stanton from Oberlin College and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. The first occasion is notable because Stanton became the first African American woman to graduate from a four-year college course, the ladies' course, in the United States. The second event occurred two weeks after her graduation when legislation was passed which required all U.S. citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves. Stanton's impassioned graduation address to her class, "A Plea for the Oppressed" spoke directly to the inhumanity of the institution of slavery and called for collective action foreshadowing the role that African American women would play in higher education in the United States over the next 160 years. Stanton stated,

> The Anti-Slavery pulse beats faintly. The right of suffrage is denied. The colored man is still crushed by the weight of oppression. He may possess talents of the highest order, yet for him is no path of fame or distinction opened…the freedom of the slave and the gaining of our rights, social and political, are inseparably connected, let all the friends of humanity plead for those who may not plead …Mother, sister, by thy own deep sorrow of heart; by the sympathy of thy woman's nature, plead for the downtrodden of thy own, of every land. Instill the principles of love, of common brotherhood, in the nursery, in the social circle. Let these be the prayer of thy life. (Foner & Branham, 1998, pp. 221-222)

Stanton's graduation speech preceded a lifetime of teaching and social activism. Twelve years later Mary Jane Patterson became the first African American women to earn a B.A., the gentlemen's course, "two hundred years after a white male, forty years after a black man, and

nearly twenty-five years after three white women received the B.A. from Oberlin in 1841"
(Evans, 2007, p. 25). The achievements of these women and the other African American women
graduates who followed are significant not only because of attainment in a hostile environment
but because of the role they played as change agents, both in higher education and in society.
Sklar (2007) argues, "They participated in the construction of a new African American female
character, and identity in which many would build throughout their lives. In their gendered
activism, they connected public and private to become agents in the work of emancipation
[emphasis mine]" (p.325).   It was the embodiment, practice, and concomitant processes of this
legacy in the present which was of interest to me, this intersection of gender and race that
informs the contribution of black feminist scholar-activists as the second decade of the new
millennium begins.

It is undeniable that black women scholars have been foundational in racial "uplift," yet
contributions to systemic transformational change, both in the academy and in other institutions,
have gone largely unnoticed. Although the contributions of early scholar-activists, such as Fanny
Coppin, Lucy Moten, Frances Watkins Harper, Margaret Washington, Mary Church Terrel,l and
Julia Cooper might be recognized as trail blazers whose "efforts…[helped to produce] the
women and men who held the torch of freedom and literacy for black people from the mid-
nineteenth century through the 1950's and beyond" (McKay, 1997, p. 13), the lived experiences
of the majority are unknown as "western academe has relegated the experiences of black women
to the realm of the exemplar" (John, 1997, p. 59) . Evans (2007) argues despite the barriers to our
presence in the Ivory Tower, the contributions of Black women scholars "complicates ideas of
what an academic should do or be [and] by raising questions of how human and civil rights are
intertwined with educational access scholarly research, pedagogy, and community service, black

women academics have significantly contributed to the annals of human thought" (p. 2). This history is inextricably linked to the social justice projects of the last century.

Purpose of the Study

The propose of this study was to explore the complexities of African American women scholar-activists' lived experiences as change agents in the academy in the 21st century. More specifically, it centered black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) as defining frameworks in the professional/personal lives of the women interviewed and sought to uncover the ways these women embody and understand leadership and change in the academy. It is particularly important in this historical moment, dangerously being touted as a "post racial" era since the first term of Barack Obama's presidency, that we continue to illuminate the subaltern knowledge possessed by African American women in the academy. In the early 21st century the academy remains contested terrain, reflective of meta-cultural manifestations of racism, sexism, and classism. Lewis (1997) interrogates hegemonic knowledge production as represented by institutions of higher education in the United States by arguing:

> Educational systems reflect the values and practices of the larger society. If the larger society is sexist, racist, and based on economic, cultural, and historical inequities, it is unrealistic to expect educational systems to be devoid of these inequities. Educational system, after all are the formal institutionalized, systematized vehicles through which the larger society socializes youth. (p. 42)

Rutledge (2002) warns "color-blind ideology is on the rise and it suggest that race need not be considered salient…in other words, contemporary racism is deemphasized [which] makes it even more critical that the voices of African American women be heard regarding their experiences in the academy" (pp. vii-viii). The intersection of race and gender collide in potent visible and invisible ways. Myers (2002) contends "African American women live in a society

that devalues both their sex and their race" (p. 5) and the "chilly" climate is well documented (Carter & O'Brien, 1993).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, in 2007, African American Women comprised 2.7 % of the full-time faculty and instructional staff in degree granting institutions, and of the 173,395 full professors in degree granting institutions, African American women numbered 2,193 (Statistics, 2008). Recent scholarship illuminates struggles related to Black women's experiences in the academy (Benjamin, 1997; Garner 2004; Green, 2001; James & Farmer, 1993; Mabokela & Green, 2001; Myers, 2002) and focuses on tenure, retention, evaluation, student relationships, career satisfaction, mentoring (Evans & Cokley, 2008; Green, 2001), survival strategies (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005), and administrative leadership (Baraka, 1997). The scholarship locates these academicians in predominately white research universities and liberal arts colleges (PWI) as well as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU). Absent from the current literature is a grounded theory of the ways African American women scholar-activists act as catalysts for transformational societal, institutional, and individual change. hooks (1994a) was asked, "Do you feel that you as a black woman are changing things in the academy?" She replied,

> Black women change the process only to the degree that we are in revolt against the prevailing process. However the vast majority of black women in academe are not in revolt-they seem to be as conservative as other conservatizing forces there! Why? Because marginalized groups in institutions feel so vulnerable. (hooks, 1994a, p. 233)

I am interested in the revolt and its impact, in agency and voice: in effect, the ways in which we initiate and participate in the decolonization the academy. The inquiry focused on faculty, not administrators or others whose leadership is positional, thereby centering the interrogation on the ground and extending the leadership construct from Leadership (big L) to leading (little l).

Significance of the Study: Why African-American Women's Leadership in the Academy

This study is interdisciplinary, simultaneously located in the fields of Leadership Studies and Women's Studies. The examination of the lived experience of African American scholar-activists as change agents in the academy is largely unexamined in the leadership literature. Likewise, leadership as a construct and, therefore, leading by African American women in higher education is under-theorized in the current feminist discourse. Feminist scholars Suyemoto and Ballou (2007) argue,

> There are voices missing from both the experience of leadership and the discussion of its meaning…we must find a way to include the missing voices directly, both through fostering participation in traditional leadership areas and learning from the meaning of leadership in less privileged, more diverse contexts. (p. 40)

This section briefly interrogates leadership studies in terms of race and gender and women's studies in terms of leadership to illustrate the significance of this inquiry.

Troubling Leadership Studies

There is a proliferation of Leadership Studies Programs in higher education on the undergraduate and graduate level (Brungardt, 1996; Brungardt, Gould, Moore, & Potts, 1997; Jackson & Perry, 2008; King & Ferguson, 2010; Rost, 1991; Rost &Baker, 2000). Jackson and Parry (2008) suggest this is a "good time to be studying leadership" and note the "spectacular growth in interest in leadership" which begs the questions whom should we study and in what contexts should they be studied and who decides what constitutes leadership studies (p. 9). The leadership construct is deeply rooted in Western intellectual and philosophical traditions. Since antiquity the paucity of representations of women and people of color as leaders has resulted in scholarship that is foundationally white and male. Although there is a burgeoning literature on

leadership and gender, much of it is essentialist, normed on the experience of white women (Helgesen, 1990; Wilson, 2004).

The impact of both gender and race has gone largely ignored in mainstream leadership scholarship. Patricia Parker (2001) asks the question "Whom should we study to learn about leadership in organizations of the 21st century?" The identities of subjects studied during the industrial paradigm (Rost, 1991) of leadership scholarship is clear—white men and, in the last two decades, white women. The industrial paradigm of leadership which dominated the 20th century was "rational, management oriented, male, technocratic, quantitative, goal-dominated, cost-benefit driven, personalistic, hierarchal, short term, pragmatic and materialistic" (p. 94), and the theory that was produced was race neutral. With few exceptions the bourgeoning literature on gender and leadership (Eagly & Johannesen Schmidt, 2001; Helgesen, 1990, 1995) is primarily essentialist in nature, viewing women as a binary category, and normed on the experience of white women.

In *Race, Gender, and Leadership: Re-Envisioning organizational leadership from the perspectives of African American women executives*, Patricia Parker (2005) builds on the work of Ella Bell and Stella Nkomo (Bell, Denton, & Nkomo, 1993; Bell & Nkomo, 1992/2001; Nkomo & Cox, 1989; Nkomo,1993) and breaks new ground. Her work which emerged from her dissertation (1997) and subsequent research (Parker, 2001; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996) critiques prevailing leadership theory and articulates new theory that emerges from the lived experiences of African American women executives in dominant culture organizations. She cautions that "race neutral theorizing" produces leadership models which "reinforce a traditionally (white, middle-class, heterosexual) masculine model as the symbolic ideal for leadership practice [while] popularized feminist critiques of the gender exclusive masculine leadership model reinforce a

white middle class feminine ideal that paradoxically excludes the leadership experiences of women of different races and class statuses" (Parker, 2005, p. 1).

Parker (2005) delineates the current leadership scholarship as traditional white male leadership and feminine white female leadership. She asserts that the female advantage so eagerly embraced by white women in response to the maleness of leadership studies also serves to silence African-American women's voices/experiences as well as those of other people of color. She contends that gender/race neutral stances, such as those taken by cultural feminists, only serve to replicate the status quo. This critique also takes place in the field of organizational studies (Grimes, 2001; Nkomo, 1992). The construction of leadership as masculine or feminine operates within the epistemological stance that produces the binary, linear, and either/or paradigm thinking that pervades western philosophy. Parker (2005) suggests that "in the twenty-first century, leadership theorizing should reflect the interplay and struggle of the multiple discourses that characterize postindustrial society" (p. 92) and that the study of African American women's leadership has a great deal to offer the field.

African American women's leadership should be studied in multiple organizational contexts. Thus the experience of African American women in predominately white institutions of higher education can reveal new knowledge about leading and leadership.

Troubling Women's Studies

Leadership as an intentional site of inquiry has been largely unexamined in the visible feminist discourse though a nascent literature (Blackmore, 2006; Chin, 2004; King & Ferguson, 2011; Lott, 2007) exists which begins to explicate the nexus of leadership and feminism. My experience as a student of leadership and change confirms the gap. As I began my PhD program, I was dismayed and disheartened to find few texts mentioning feminist and leadership in the

same paragraph. While attending a session of the National Women's Studies Association Conference in November 2009, during Q&A I commented and asked a question of M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty, both esteemed feminist women of color scholar-activists. First I spoke of my felt isolation in my chosen field of leadership and change as a woman of color and activist. I then noted that although their session could be read as a discourse on leadership and scholar/activism, the word leadership or leading was never uttered. I questioned the absence of the word leadership and urged us to claim space in the leadership discourse for fear of what will happen if we do not, given the growth and influence of leadership programs in the academy. For the remainder of the conference, women stopped me and commented on my question and said it resonated with them. This anecdotal evidence suggests the research I propose which couples leadership and feminist thought complicated at the intersection of race and gender in the academy is fertile ground for study.

Not only has the study of leadership been absent in feminist scholarly literature but also it lacks a presence in the women's studies classroom. Despite leadership literature, which unpacks the impact of gender in the leadership construct and considers "ways women lead," there is a difference between "women" and leadership and "feminist women" and leadership. Woman does not equal feminist and the "presumed valuing of so-called feminine- related skills has not led to much of a change in the gender of organizational leaders" (Lott, 2007, p. 23). Chin (2004) comments "although the theories and models on feminism and leadership exist, there has been little study of the intersection of the two" (p. 1), while Jolna (2009) reveals the absence of leadership in the feminist classroom stating "in most of the 652 women's studies programs in the United States, "women and leadership" is not offered as a course or area of concentration" (p. 2).

Explanations for the disconnect between leadership studies and feminist theorizing have been posited. Blackmore (2006) argues the contested nature of both feminism and leadership and problematizes the relationship between the two.

> Leadership and feminism are conceptual categories that emerge out of contestation over meaning, the conceptual categories themselves being part of a web of interconnections of social power. Leadership, social justice and feminism are highly contested notions, politically, epistemologically and ontologically…each concept is difficult to define, as it has been produced discursively out of, and in turn represents, a particular set of economic, political and social relations, and therefore marked by temporal discursive shifts. (p. 185)

Eagly (2007) recalls the status of women during the second wave of feminist mobilization when few women held public or private leadership positions and asserts, "because leadership had been largely a privilege of men and feminism focused on women…the study of leadership did not have much salience" (p. xvi). Suyemoto and Ballou (2007) found the lexicon of leadership problematic for many feminist women who were reluctant to identify as leaders and denied leadership despite behavior and intentions that in other contexts would be considered leading. Similar to my observations at the National Women's Studies Association Conference, in discussions on feminist leadership, Suyemoto and Ballou (2007) recall one woman commented, "We organized …"We met…" "We planned… [they note] … what was not evident in her discussion was "I led…" or even "I…" (p. 40) Noting feminist women may "resist the unspoken assumptions within the language of "leader," the implied hierarchy in the language leaders and followers "[contributes] to a decontextualized hierarchical approach that resists feminist values" (p. 41).

Despite these concerns feminist women do lead and are having conversations about conceptualizing the nature of feminist leadership. During her tenure as president of the Society for the Psychology of Women, Division 35 of the American Psychological Association (2002-

2003), Jean Lau Chin's presidential initiative was Feminist Leadership. The project, Feminist Visions and Diverse Voices: Leadership and Collaboration, was an internet dialogue to "define, discuss, and dissect the central constructs of feminist and leadership in which 100 women participated on 15 discussion boards" (Chin, 2007, p. 2). The year-long project resulted in an edited volume Women and Leadership: Transforming Visions and Diverse Voices (Chin, 2007), and the web dialogue is archived at www.feministleadership.com. In her presidential address at the end of her tenure Chin (2004) concludes, "The scant coverage of feminist leadership styles [has] implications for feminists, women leaders, men and future leaders [and] the promotion of a social agenda and empowerment found in feminist principles contributes a dimension to leadership styles that has not been explored" (p. 7). This investigation took place in the field of psychology. I argue that leadership studies, both academic programs and on-going scholarship, need to engage in this discourse. This study adds to the nascent feminist discourse on the meaning of feminist leadership in the 21st century while centering a feminist framework in the field of leadership.

Theoretical Framework: U.S. Black Feminist Thought

My philosophical framework aligns with women of color feminist scholars who have reformulated and deepened our understanding of the complexities of power, privilege, oppression and resistance (Collective, 1982; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 1981; hooks 1989, 1990; Lorde, 1984). Theorizing black feminism in the United States has a long intellectual genealogy. Roots of late 20th and 21st century U. S. Black feminism can be found in the 19th century writing of Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), who "across her body of work…[exposed] how power conspires to erase dissent, silence the marginalized and render alternative views unthinkable" (May, 2009, p.17). Cooper's *A Voice from the South* is acknowledged as the first

full length black feminist book in the United States, her prescient language, " the colored woman of today occupies…a unique position in this country …she is confronted by both a woman questions and a race problem and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both" (Cooper, 1892, p. 134) was echoed 85 years later by the Combahee River Collective (Collective, 1983), a radical black feminist group of women who found it "difficult to separate race from class and sex oppression because in our lives they most often are experienced simultaneously" (Collective, 1983, p. 275). The development of an articulated U.S. Black epistemology became more visible in the late 1970's and early 1980's.

In Separate Roads to Feminism, Roth (2004) argues that there were distinct feminist mobilizations during the 60s and 70s. She challenges the common characterization of second wave feminism as a white women's movement and debunks the "whitewashing" that colors historical accounts and results in a conceptualization of *undifferentiated* feminism. This is a significant shift. Roth theorizes that the lived experiences of women of color in a structurally unequal society led women of color to choose to organize and theorize as feminists of color along the lines of race/ethnicity in organizations distinct from so- called mainstream white feminist groups. Situating women of color feminist activism of the era as a response to white women's racism erases the proactive stance of these mobilizations. She explores the separate feminisms that developed, focusing on the plurality, and contends that scholarship has generally failed to capture the genuine complexity of feminist mobilizations in this era.

Rather than locate women of color's organizing as a reaction to white feminist racism, Roth suggests that Black, Chicana, and White efforts were organizationally distinct movements (p. 3). Most importantly, her work debunks the notion that first came White and then Black/Chicano feminisms. Instead, she suggests simultaneous development and emergence from

the nationalistic struggles and, in the case of radical white feminism, from the new left. The white-washing of the second wave has resulted in scholarship that describes organizing and theorizing by white middle-class women as the de-facto model of feminist mobilizations and concomitantly that feminism was solely centered on organizing around issues of gender. This was not the case for Black and Chicano feminists who began to articulate the notion of intersectionality in similar though differentiated ways (pp. 127-128). The mobilization efforts that occurred during the second wave were born of specified locations and community ethos, and organizing from within was the norm. She states that a purpose underlying her entire study of "organizationally distinct racial/ethnic feminisms is to put front and center the question of what it means to organize women across social divides of race, ethnicity and class" (p. 220). Her work demonstrates that the groundwork was laid by the late 1970s for women of color activists to use the knowledge and organizing skills rooted in their own communities to engage in-group theorizing.

Collective efforts in the early 1980s to articulate a U.S. black feminist epistemology are represented by the publications of *This Bridge Called My Back* (Moraga & Anzaldâua, 1981) and *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (B. Smith, 1983). Both of these collections of essays and poetry were born by the collective efforts of women of color in the United States to create and speak their own feminist truths about their own feminist lives and in relationship to each other. These collections chronicle the complex struggle for cross-issue coalition building as well as theorizing the lived experiences of women of color. These conversations did not occur in a vacuum, did not spontaneously appear—feminists of color, theorizing/organizing, albeit bounded by community, laid the fertile ground for the work of the 1980s and on. The narratives in *This Bridge and Home Girls* illuminate how these women, already experienced in community based

efforts, struggled to articulate difference and experience in a way that was both expansive and inclusive, born both of women of color with access to the academy as well as differentially situated women of color.

U.S. Black feminist thought is fluid, continues to evolve, and places black women's lived experience in the center of inquiry. From the work of Cooper to hip hop feminism (Durham, Pough et al., 2007; Hernâandez & Rehman, 2002; Morgan, 1999), "which complicate[s] black feminist thought in critical ways [and bridges] the generational gap" (Morgan, 2007, p. 478), this framework positions African American women as agents of knowledge, rejects additive notions of oppression, and validates an alternative epistemological system. Illuminating the danger of essentializing the African American women's experience—while acknowledging collectivity, U.S. Black feminist thought reveals identity as fluid and unfixed and "is a site of critique that challenges monolithic notions of Americanness, womanhood, blackness or for that matter black womanhood" (V. Smith, 1998, p. xv). The prefix United States is an important descriptor as the notion of *black* and the notion of a *black feminist* epistemology becomes problematic when examined through a transnational feminist lens. Kim (2007) critiques black feminist epistemology, as developed by Collins (1990, 2000), that suggests her analysis homogenizes black women: that it is essentialist in nature, characteristic of reductionism, and americocentric .
[1]These are the same claims made by women of color in the US about white women's theorizing

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[1] The critique as delineated by Kim references the first edition of Collins' Black Feminist Thought, published in 1990, the second edition was published in 2000. In the second edition Collins makes significant revisions that address some of the concerns voiced by her critics. It is obvious that her thinking has been influenced by the transnational discourse that took hold in the eleven years between publication dates. She has added a chapter on U.S. black feminism in transnational context and states in the preface to the revised edition, "This volume says much more about nation as a form of oppression. Incorporating ideas about nation allowed me to introduce a transnational dimension…we must recognize that U.S. black feminism participates in a larger context of struggling for social justice that transcends U.S. borders. In particular, U.S. Black feminism should see commonalties that join women of African descent as well as differences that emerge from our diverse national histories. Whereas this edition remains centered on U.S. Black women, it raised questions concerning African-American women's positionality within a global Black feminism (p.xi)

in the late 20th century. These critics who include African and British black scholars contend that the epistemology "represents the application of a particular U.S. black feminist knowledge and worldview to interpret the diverse histories and lives of black women everywhere and in the process cultural, and political differences are erased" (Kim, 2007, p. 111). Reynolds (2002) interrogates black feminist standpoint theory on several grounds and asks what defines a collective black experience: at whose expense are the versions of black women's lives formed and what are the differences between the lived experiences of black women and the accounts that are born in the academy. She asserts that only certain depictions of black women are the grounds for theorizing, resulting in an essentialist notion of black womanhood. She argues black feminist standpoint theory grounds those experiences in oppression and deprivation, with the specificities of the historical location of African American women privileged. She suggests, "in spite of the differences and diversity between black women, black feminist valorize a discourse of global connection that is formed on notions of a black women's collective history" (p. 596).

These critiques have merit if African American women's standpoints are used to define and understand the experiences of Black women on a global basis. In this articulation, specific to the United States, African American women's experiences are directly tied to the experience and residual impact of the middle passage and slavery that begat a different worldview from other women of color who have experienced colonialism and /or live in other Eurocentric environments. Rather than an epistemology rooted and fixed in victimhood, as suggested by Reynolds (2002), the specificity of the African American historical experience has birthed a way of knowing born out of individual and collective strategies to resist enslavement of the body and mind in this particular geographic location. Taking into account the differential experiences of African American women, U. S. Black feminist thought represents an epistemology born of the

distinctive African American experience and "specializes in formulating and rearticulating the self-defined standpoint of African American women" (Collins, 1989, p. 747) Audre Lorde points out, "it is axiomatic that if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others-for their use and to our detriment" (1984, p. 45).

This project is not a purely intellectual endeavor and relies on deconstructing the formulations of who is an intellectual and who produces knowledge and for whom. U.S. Black feminist thought challenges hegemonic knowledge production by "challenging the very terms of intellectual discourse itself" (Collins, 2000, p.15). U.S. Black feminist thought exists in the context and, because of the collective wisdom and lived experience of African American women outside the wall of academe, it is inclusive of the "ideas of Black women not previously considered intellectuals—many of whom may be working class women with jobs outside academia-—as well as those ideas emanating from more formal, legitimated scholarship" (Collins, 2000, p. 16). The formulations that comprise Black feminist thought can be found on the schoolyard, at church, at the beauty shop, on the subway, and in music on the radio. Although a divide between the validated knowledge systems and grassroots lived experience has been articulated in relationship to feminist and postmodern theories as framed by the academy, this is less the case with U.S. Black feminist thought as a paradigm. Scholar-activist Beverly Guy Sheftall speaks directly to the "access" question; when asked in an interview (Ofori-Atta, 2010) , "How can non-academics and non-activists gain access to knowledge about black feminism?" she replied,

> I think that disjuncture between the academy and the community is more blurred when it comes to black feminism, because there are many black feminists who don't confine their work to the academy. People know who bell hooks is. When Ntozake Shange wrote her play, she did that as a community service. When Michelle Wallace wrote Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman, she did that as a journalist. When Paula Giddings wrote *When and Where I Enter*, she was not in the academy. We need to remember that

the pioneering women of this movement often operated outside of the academy and outside of political movements. (para. 16)

Collins (2000) identifies four dimensions of Black feminist epistemology that excavate subjugated knowledge and validate alternative knowledge claims: lived experience as a criterion of meaning; the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims; the ethics of caring; and the ethic of personal responsibility (pp. 257-266). This epistemological practice of connected knowing is born of Afrocentric conceptions of community. This specifically Afrocentric community is theorized by Borum (2005) as a "space":

> where people actually have face-to-face contact in all their human diversity and variation, both the good and respectable as well as the bad and disrespectful, and over an extended period of time. It represents a place, both physical and spiritual, where lives entail engagement, participation, reciprocity, and accountability: Community folks actually argue and debate with their doctors, teachers/professors, ministers, lawyers, and administrators as expected of a community. Everyone is accountable to everyone else. (p. 706)

The first dimension, lived experience as a criterion of meaning, makes concrete experience the basis for knowledge claims. Collins (2000) asserts, "For most African American women those individuals who have lived through the experiences about which they claim to be experts are more believable and credible than those who have merely read or thought about such experiences" (p. 257). The second dimension, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, affirms that meaning-making in this frame comes not from the authority of one voice but through reciprocity and dialogue and through contact and engagement rather than separation and isolation: "for Black women, new knowledge claims are rarely worked out in isolation from other individuals and are usually developed through dialogues with other members of a community" (p. 260). The ethics of caring, the third dimension, emphasizes an interrelated triad, which is embodied as a thread in the African American community and African American women's experience: the embracing of personal expressiveness, the use of emotionality, and the

possession of empathy. These represent the necessity to meld heart and intellect. Personal expressiveness is highly valued and refers to the embrace of individuality within the context of community, much like the distinctiveness of each member's role in a jazz band, unique but playing in concert, while taking turns. Emotionality, another aspect of the ethics of caring, assumes authentic communication is not void of passionate expression; its presence is a crucial attendant to any valid knowledge claim distinct from the Eurocentric notions of rationality void of emotion. The ethic of personal responsibility underscores the inseparability of a knowledge claim from the individual's "character, values and ethics" (Collins, 2000, p. 265) that makes the claim. The fullness of an individuals' humanness and their core beliefs matter while conversely objectivity, abstraction, and rationality valued in positivistic worldviews take a back seat to one's ownership and connection to the knowledge claimed. In this space connected knowing dictates "Neither emotion nor ethics is subordinated to reason. Instead, emotions, ethics, and reason are used as interconnected, essential components in assessing knowledge claims…values lie at the heart of the knowledge validation process such that inquiry always has an ethical aim" (p. 266). Ladson-Billings (2000) translates Collin's four tenets in "the vernacular…What have you been through? What are you talkin' about? How do I know you care and, by the way, who are you? (p. 270).

U.S. black feminist thought rejects binary and static characterizations of Black women and articulates an intersectional analysis. An "analytical strategy" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 4) intersectionality is used to explain social phenomena in the context of constructions of hierarchal power and "provides an interpretive framework for thinking through how intersections of race and class, or race and gender, or sexuality and class…shape any group's experience across specific social contexts" (Collins, 1998, p. 208). At its core an intersectional analysis places the

multiplicity of individual and group identity in the context of systems of power by unpacking "relations of domination and subordination, privilege and agency, in the structural arrangements through which various services, resources, and other social rewards are delivered; in the interpersonal experiences of individuals and groups; in the practices that characterize and sustain bureaucratic hierarchies; and in the ideas, images, symbols that shape social consciousness" (Dill & Zambrana, 2009, p. 5).

Intersectionality operates at individual and societal/structural levels. For example, at an individual level an intersectional identity is someone who is African American, female, bisexual, and middle class; these intersectional attributes lead to specific and unique expressions of identity and lived experiences in the context of societal and structural matrices. This individual is also located within socially defined groups: race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, of which all have intragroup variations. Intersectionality uncovers and allows for the similarity and dissimilarity in experience within group and complicates identity "because these systems permeate all social relations, untangling their effects in any given situation…remains difficult" (Collins 2004, p. 11). Although everyone has an intersectional identity, e.g., an individual is female, white and gay or another is disabled, male and Latino, Collins (1998) suggests there is danger in undertheorizing the construct because these identities do not produce equivalent consequences in the power hierarchy and "if all oppressions mutually construct one another, then we're all oppressed in some way by something—oppression talk obscures actual unjust power relations" (p. 211). Crenshaw (1991), whose critical race theory scholarship laid the groundwork for intersectionality as a construct, articulates the significance of how we make meaning of the identity gestalt, by suggesting "this project's most pressing problem, in many if not most cases, is not the existence of the categories, but rather the particular values attached to them and the way

those values foster and create social hierarchies" and offers the following example, which

reflects the difficulty identified by Collins.

> Consider the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill controversy. During the Senate hearings for the confirmation of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, Anita Hill, in bringing allegations of sexual harassment against Thomas, was rhetorically disempowered in part because she fell between the dominant interpretations of feminism and antiracism. Caught between the competing narrative tropes of rape (advanced by feminists) on the one hand and lynching (advanced by Thomas and his antiracist supporters) on the other, the race and gender dimensions of her position could not be told. This dilemma could be described as the consequence of antiracism's essentializing Blackness and feminism's essentializing womanhood. But recognizing as much does not take us far enough, for the problem is not simply linguistic or philosophical in nature. It is specifically political: the narratives of gender are based on the experience of white, middle-class women, and the narratives of race are based on the experience of Black men. The solution does not merely entail arguing for the multiplicity of identities or challenging essentialism generally. Instead, in Hill's case, for example, it would have been necessary to assert those crucial aspects of her location that were erased, even by many of her advocates-that is, to state what difference her difference made. (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1298)

It is this unexamined interstitial space of difference that intersectional analysis as an

interpretive framework and U.S. Black Feminist thought can help articulate in the context of

African American women scholar-activists' lived experience in the academy.

Critical Race Theory

I also utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an interpretive framework (Solorzano &

Yosso, 2002; Yosso & Villalpando, 2001). CRT recognizes the central role of race and racism in

perpetuating hegemonic structures. As a result of the critique of Critical Legal Studies (CLS) that

the impact of race and racism was being ignored in leftist legal discourse, legal scholars of color

formulated CRT in the 1970s. It has become a framework used to illustrate and unearth the fixed

nature of racism in the field of education since the mid 1990s. At its core CRT challenges the

liberal notion of colorblindness, which re-inscribes injustice, recognizes the permanence of

racism in the United States, and situates race and racism at the center of inquiry. CRT pivots the

discourse on racism from one focused on individual acts of aggression to one that considers

white supremacy in all its systemic manifestations a fundamental aspect of American culture CR. Valdes (2002) argues "Taken holistically, CRT posits that beliefs in neutrality, democracy, objectivity, and equality are not just unattainable ideals, they are harmful fictions that obscure the normative supremacy of whiteness in American law and society" (Valdes, Culp et al., 2002, p. 1) . Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) challenge the liberal multicultural paradigm in education and argue that "critical race theory in education, like its antecedents in legal scholarship is a radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms" (p. 62). Furthermore, despite the cloak of liberalism in the academy, "Critical race researchers acknowledge that educational institutions operate in contradictory ways, with their potential to oppress and marginalize coexisting with their potential to emancipate and empower…. [And CRT] recognizes that multiple layers of oppression and discrimination are met with multiple forms of resistance" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26).

Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw (1993) articulated six unifying themes that have defined CRT:

1. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is endemic to American life.

2. Critical race theory expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy.

3. Critical race theory challenges a historicism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law. . . Critical race theorists . . . adopt a stance that presumes that racism has contributed to all contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage.

4. Critical race theory insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society.

5. Critical race theory is interdisciplinary.

6. Critical race theory works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression. (p. 6)

Variations of CRT are now present in various disciplines, primarily women's studies and ethnic studies, and include Latina/o Critical Race Studies (LatCrit), Critical Race Feminism (CRF), and Tribal Critical Race Studies (TribalCrit) scholarship focused on centering race in these discourses (Yosso, Villalpando et al., 2001). Munoz (2009) articulates the difference in CRT when applied to educational settings from other CRT frameworks as one which "simultaneously attempts to foreground race and racism in the research as well as challenge the traditional paradigms, methods, texts and separate discourse on race, gender, and class by showing how these social constructs intersect to impact communities of color" (p. 63). CRT in educational research is a social justice project and values the received knowledge of people of color. It utilizes personal narrative, storytelling, testimonies, and parables to give voice to experience. Of particular significance is the use of counter-storytelling "a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (Yosso, Villalpando et al., 2001, p. 95). D. Smith, Yosso, and Solorzano (2007) insist, "we cannot avoid the discussion and critique of race, racism, gendered racism, and power relationships in higher education" (p. 22). The proposed study focused on the experiences of African American women scholar-activists in predominately white institutions and is concerned with the issues aforementioned and is intended to contribute to the critique.

Intersectionality and Method at the Postmodern Turn

I utilized grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Grounded theory provides systematic and thorough procedures to explore complex phenomena. According to Charmaz (2006) constructivist grounded theory is "Interpretive theory [which]

calls for the imaginative understanding of the studied phenomenon. This type of theory assumes emergent, multiple realities; indeterminacy; facts and values as linked; truth as provisional; and social life as processional" (p. 126). The epistemological locations that black feminist thought and critical race theory inhabit are not incongruent with grounded theory; rather they pivot/enrich/extend current applications. Adele Clarke (2005, 2007), whose innovation and situational analysis drive original grounded theoretical methodology into postmodernity, argues "focused feminist GT [grounded theory] and SA [situational analysis] research need to engage the intersectionalities of theories of gender and of domination, along with class, race, and other identity issues in their local, situated, contextualized specificities" (2007, p. 345). Likewise, "critical race methodology in education uses the trans-disciplinary knowledge and methodological base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, law and other fields to guide research that better understands the effects of racism, sexism and classism on people of color" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 27).

Researcher's Location: "That's a Big Word for a Black Girl"

Several years ago I was sitting in the lobby of a five star hotel in Orange County, CA between sessions at a bridge tournament, the only African American in sight, not an unusual occurrence in my daily life. I struck up a conversation with several fellow bridge players seated near me. It was relaxed and cordial; I can't remember what we were talking about. As I recall, it was not anything too deep or profound. I made a comment and suddenly the white man sitting next to me said, "That's a big word for a Black girl." I was stunned, partly because one should never forget that racial and gender micro-aggressions (Davis 1989, Howard-Hamilton, 2003) come when you least expect them and partly because I had momentarily forgotten that racial and gender micro-aggressions come when you least expect them.

When I arrived in the lobby, I was a well-dressed African American woman in my late forties, a faculty member at Goddard College, a reasonably accomplished bridge player, and a PhD candidate. My command of the English language and my ability to cobble together intelligible and charming small talk has never been questioned. In fact, I excel at it—you can take me anywhere, and, yet, in a second an expression of gendered racism had attempted to reduce me to a "girl" who was miraculously "articulate." If only for a moment, I was reminded once again as an African American woman—never forget.

I was born a teacher and a student. I know organically that learning is an act of liberation and teaching an act of love. The act of learning has been both emancipatory and subversive for marginalized people engaged in struggles of liberation. My lived experience as a woman of color, a Black feminist educator, and social justice activist informs my conviction that "education … is the practice of freedom" (hooks, 1994a). In this paradigm both teacher/learner and learner/teacher are social change agents, digesting and interrogating existing bodies of knowledge while making new meaning, challenging hegemonic knowledge production (Giroux & McLaren, 1994), and contributing to a more just world by translating thought into progressive action . This requires an engaged and transformative pedagogy that is rooted in relationship, authenticity, risk-taking, curiosity, courage, dialogue, disciplinary border-crossing, intellectual rigor, intentionality, emotional connectivity, and critical reflection. What I have to offer my students, my colleagues, and my institution is myself. The multiplicity of my entwined identities—my gendered self, my raced self, my classed self, my sexual self, my intellectual self—gives me voice and power.

My chosen area of inquiry is deeply personal, grounded in a lifetime of lived experience in predominately white communities, organizations, and the white academy. I am a 55 year old,

African American feminist, bisexual woman who is currently partnered with a man. An only adopted child raised in a middleclass home, a child and grandchild of academics. In my lifetime I have identified as Negro, Black, Afro-American, and African-American, as heterosexual and bi-sexual. I've been a Wall Street analyst, commune member, violence against woman movement activist, psychotherapist, researcher, and academic. My survival has depended on my ability to speak everybody's language while excavating, rewriting, and claiming my own.

These experiences have been influenced by my intersectional identities. At two years of age, in 1959, my family moved to Evanston, IL, where my father became the first African American tenured professor at Garret Theological Seminary, Northwestern University. The majority of my childhood education took place in classrooms where I was the only African American child, and my subsequent undergraduate experience at Smith College and graduate school experiences at Antioch University, Santa Barbara (AUSB) in a master's program and now Antioch's Leadership and Change Ph.D. program followed the same pattern, as have my other professional experiences. As adjunct faculty at AUSB for nine years, I was one of only a handful of faculty of color, and for the last seven years I have been a faculty member at a small progressive liberal arts college in the second whitest state in the United States—Vermont. In each of these settings, I have felt and witnessed the often painful, yet courageous efforts, of my colleagues as they/we individually and collectively embody a commitment to social justice and change in the academy and the world, facilitate change, all the while resisting the death of our spirits. Hong (2008) eloquently reminds us:

> If the university wields the norm of excellence and objectivity in order to exclude and marginalize black feminists, this is also the terrain on which we struggle to reimagine the university as a site where different kinds of epistemological, methodological, and intellectual projects, as represented in black feminism, might emerge. Such projects challenge, rather than reproduce, the norms of the university. (p. 107)

This research attempts to illuminate some of the processes of that project.

Chapter II: Literature Review: Ain't I a Woman:

Leadership, Gender, and Race Interrogated

To clearly understand the unique position of African American women in the white academy, their challenges and successes and their concomitant ability to effect change, several bodies of literature were explored. This review first looks at the leadership literature and considers the absence of people of color, African American women specifically. The second section briefly reviews literature on gender and leadership, again with a focus on race. Finally, the third section considers the literature on African American women in the academy.

The Canonical Vacuum

Burns (1978, 2003) and Gardner (1995) introduced revolutionary concepts to the field of leadership studies. Burns advanced the theory of transformational leadership, and Gardner, the notion of the leader as storyteller. Yet, these innovations exist in a vacuum. The foundational leadership literature of the late 20th century failed to consider the impact of the intersectionality of gender, race, and class on the leadership construct, suggesting matrices of oppression (Collins, 2000) and that one's socio-political identity holds no salience in the social construction of leadership. However, race matters, sexual and gender orientation matters, class matters, and gender matters to leadership. Fletcher (2002) reflected this stance and suggested that social identities are significant:

> The principles of new leadership are generally presented as if the social identity of the actor is irrelevant. At a practice level, we all know this is untrue…our interpretation of events is always contextual and is influenced by many factors including the social identity of the actor…A white man slamming his fist on the table during a meeting is perceived quite differently from a man of color –or any woman- doing the same thing. We filter behavior through schema that influence and determine what we see, what we expect to see and how we interpret it (Fletcher, 2002, p.4)

Gardner's (1995) position displayed indifference as he explains how he limits his inquiry:

I have not concerned myself with contemporary revisionist critiques of leadership-leadership as collective, leadership as instigated by the audience, rather than by the nominal leader; leadership on the part of those who have been relatively "without voice" or "without a place at the table", or a deconstructionist or postmodern critique that would question the entire legitimacy of talk about leadership. I have little sympathy for those who challenge the "great person" theory of leadership but then invoke unspecified "forces of history" in its place. (p. 295)

If, as Burns (1978) suggested, leadership is "the reciprocal [italics added] process of mobilizing, by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and follows" (p. 425), then relationship becomes central in this construction of leadership. Reciprocity implies relationship; however, relationship is a social process and mediated in part by member identity. The politics of personal and group location and the concomitant impact on leadership as a social construct cannot be ignored. Chen and Veslor (1996) argued that it is an imperative that "leadership researchers and practitioners recognize the legitimacy and importance of social identity group" (p. 287). Ashcraft and Allen (2003) wrote about the importance of interrogating disciplinary textbooks. They suggested that these texts have political implications and codifying ramifications, particularly regarding race and organizational studies. They believe

texts are legitimate objects of analysis because they disseminate a field's canon of knowledge (Altbach, 1991; Kuhn, 1970; Litvin, 1997) and define the legitimacy of topic areas that mirror the field's research (Litvin, 1997, p. 189). In this sense, textbooks discipline undergraduate and graduate students with respect to the field's dominant theories and interest. Accordingly, we argue that "whether or how our foundational texts address race is a theoretical and political matter, with ramifications that extend far beyond the classroom. (p. 7)

In light of this argument Bass' (1990, 2008) coverage of Black leadership in the last two editions of his handbook (long considered a "bible" of leadership studies) is alarming. In the section titled "Constraints on Blacks as Leaders in America," Bass led with the statement:

"Lower rates of achievement and leadership can be attributed to possible personal in-born deficits [emphasis mine] or to educational or cultural deprivation" (p. 740). He echoed the debunked *Moynihan Report* (Moynihan, 1965; Rainwater & Yancey, 1967) statement, "The Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which . . . seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male" (Moynihan, 1965, Chapter IV, para. 3), when he states that black girls are expected to mature earlier than white girls and "even as preschoolers. Black girls may already be required to carry considerable responsibility for younger siblings. Early on they are exposed to strong dominant mothers as role models (p. 740).

Bass (1990) then suggests that despite being extreme "joiners" African Americans do not take on leadership roles unless it is about an issue that concerns them,

> Although white Americans tend to be addicted joiners of groups and associations, black Americans are even more extreme in this regard…Concrete, visible issues, such as the right to vote, the integration of schools, and the lack of access to public accommodations, have mobilized black followers. But when these concrete issues are resolved and when only more amorphous or less visible issues remains such as whites-only school board membership, leadership and organization become blunted and the willingness of individuals to serve as followers decline (Davis, 1982). Without salient black issues, blacks are less likely to assume leadership roles even when they form a sizable proportion of the membership of an organization. (p. 740)

Finally he considered the possibility that the cognitive abilities of African Americans might present a barrier to leadership.

> It was concluded that leaders need to be more intelligent (but not too much more so) than those that they lead. Whatever the reason, blacks score lower on these of general cognitive ability. Although over 30 percent of whites score in the 108 to 134 IQ range, only 3.3 percent of blacks do so . . . more intellectually demanding jobs tend to employ proportionately fewer blacks. (Bass, 1990, p. 740)

The newest edition (2008) is not much better. Bass suggests, "Black supervisors of Black subordinates …may have to be able to converse fluently in street language (Ebonics or Black

English" (p. 959) and in acknowledging Malcom X's leadership he notes one of his mobilizing messages was that "*colored races* [emphasis added] were in the majority in the world" (p. 958). Taken at face value and in the absence of any counter narratives, an uninformed reader may take his portrayals as fact. Although this is not representative of other mainstream texts, that these representations of African Americans exist in the literature that is read by students of leadership at all is of great concern.

A critical reading of mainstream leadership literature revealed the absence of African American women represented in any meaningful way and "highlights the revealing quality not just of what is said, but rather of what is left out, contradictory, or inconsistent in the text… deconstruction offers a provocative technique for analyzing hidden assumptions" (Riger, 1995, p.735). Clearly "definitions and theories of leadership matter a great deal…they both validate and reproduce particular world views" (DeRuyver, 2001, para. 16). Nevertheless, I believe the future relevance of the field rests on our ability to expand our vision of what defines the canon. It is a question of inclusion—of what is significant and to whom it is a question of power and privilege.

Congruent with the need of scholars within the dominant framework to expand the methodologies they use to study leadership, scholars also need to expand their idea of what extant scholarly work counts as research on leadership.

> Disciplinary blinders are evident, for example, when one compares the scant number of pages devoted to African American leadership reported in Bass' Handbook … to the book length bibliography on African American leadership recently published by Ronald Walters and Cedric Johnson. In this instance, Bass's Handbook functions as a legitimating tool for a particular canon of Leadership Studies. (DeRuyver 2001, para. 32)

Nkomo (1992) critiqued the state of organizational studies by using the fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes* as a metaphor to illume the presence/absence of race in what is

considered relevant scholarship. Her parallels are relevant to the current zeitgeist in leadership

studies, and although the focus is race, I would argue that it is applicable to other dimensions of

difference.

> Although the emperor, his court suitors, and his tailors recognize that he is naked, no one will explicitly acknowledge that nakedness. Even as the innocent child proclaims his nakedness, the emperor and his suitors resolutely continue with the procession. Similarly, the silencing of the importance of race in organizations is mostly subterfuge because of the overwhelming role of race and ethnicity in every aspect of society . . . the emperor is not simply an emperor but the embodiment of the concept of Western knowledge as both universal and superior and white males as the defining group for studying organizations. The court suitors are the organizational scholars who continue the traditions of ignoring race and ethnicity in their research and excluding other voices. All have a vested interest in continuing the procession and not calling attention to the omissions. (p. 488)

The search for scholarly work about African American women's leadership has taken me

far afield from traditional leadership studies. A search in the leadership journals yielded paltry

results—yet this is not because the foundation for such scholarship does not exist. White (1999)

in the introduction to the revised edition of *A'rn't I A Women* contrasted the availability of

information about African-American Women since the first edition published in 1985.

> the eve of the twenty-first century, things have changed. New source material on black women has been unearthed and historians are using it in inventive ways. History books on African-American women have multiplied and a new language now expresses the difference between black men and women, and black women and white people. We now understand that race, class, gender, sexuality, and other identity variables do not exist independently . . . A body of writing now allows us to determine the legacy of the black woman's enslavement. (p. 4)

So we must ask why there is such a dearth of publication in the leadership field and

perhaps more importantly what do we have to learn by inclusion of subaltern voices. According

to Chemers (1997), good empirical research on women in leadership did not begin until the

1970s. He suggested that academic researchers took a stance of inattentive neutrality and that the

male researchers were not interested in questions about women and leadership.

Walters (1999) addressed the lack of scholarship about African American women's leadership.

> The dominance of men in African American leadership is clear; however, historically Black women have always played a more important role in their community's leadership than have White women in American leadership. …In spite of this there is relatively little research on the leadership work of Black women. As Walton writes, "The literature on black female activism, whether in civil rights or the political struggle, tends to be biographical, descriptive and more historical than analytical. These studies offer little theory and few generalizations" (1994b:252; on this point see also Braxton 1994b). [emphasis mine] Beverly Allen states the problem this way: "leadership theories are rarely generalizable to women and minorities. . . . The result has been an unfortunate lack of understanding of the importance and role of female networks for community leadership" (1997:61). Research on African American women as leaders is therefore an area ripe for theoretical and empirical work. (pp. 75-76)

Things have improved since Walters wrote *African American Leadership* (1999); Robnett (1997), Bell & Nkomo (2001), Parker (1996, 2005), and more recently King & Ferguson (2010) offer theory; however, their work still exists at the margin of leadership mainstream scholarship. Moreover, Walton's (1994 as cited in Walters, 1999) observation falls short since much of the foundational leadership literature is based on biography, personal narratives, and case studies (Bennis 2003; Burns, 1978; Gardner 1995). The narrow sample employed by mainstream scholars when utilizing these techniques raises questions of exclusion. Narratives, biographies, and case studies about the leadership of African American women are plentiful if one looks in the right places. Biographies about and autobiographies by African American women that could add to the leadership discourse are plentiful and include the lived experience of African American women from various locations, e.g. Shirley Chisholm, Angela Davis, Elaine Brown, Ella Baker, and Condoleezza Rice (Brown 1992; Bumiller, 2007; Chisholm, 1970; Davis, 1974; Ransby, 2003). According to Boulais (2002),

> The idea of using literary forms such as metaphor to study leadership is not new. Throughout history, written works such as essays, parables and epics have been utilized as tools to further the understanding of effective leadership principles, according to

Ayman (1993)… English (1994) stated that biographies and other life stories could also be used to teach leadership because of three essential elements. First, these works focus on context therefore helping the reader define the true meaning of leadership. Secondly, biographies draw on the realness of the characters in order to maintain the complexity and emotion involved in leadership. Thirdly, the same complexities can be utilized as a tool for the discussion and teaching of moral leadership (p. 157).

As Chemers (1997) suggested, mainstream leadership literature that represents accepted scholarship has not always been achieved via rigorous scientific means.

Combining armchair theorizing with informal observation, business professors Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985) studied 60 private sector and 30 public sector leaders of outstanding reputation. The methods of selection were a bit haphazard, relying on people identified in business magazines or news reports, and the sample was decidedly biased in the direction of the middle-aged, White, male managers found at the helm of most large American organizations. Bennis and Nanus acknowledged at the outset of their monograph that their approach was quite far from a scientific methodology. (p. 18)

The more recent work of Burns (2003) and Bennis (2002) continued this trend: Burns' work showcased individuals, such as Elizabeth I, Washington, and Jefferson, and there is not one African American woman who qualifies as a Geek or a Geezer in Bennis' work titled *Geeks and Geezers*. Scholarship that includes the lived leadership experiences of African-American women, as well other unheard voices, is available and would broaden our understanding of the leadership construct.

You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman: Doing Gender—Doing Leadership—Doing Race

Our understanding of gender has deepened over the last two decades (Ridgeway, 2004). Once thought of as roles learned primarily from family relationships, the construct is now understood to also represent entrenched systemic practices that codify inequality between women and men on an institutional level. Gender enacts itself on individual, cultural, and institutional levels, buttressed by hegemonic cultural beliefs, and its effects are compounded when combined with race. According to Ridgeway (2004) "like other multilevel systems of

difference an inequality such as those based on race or class, gender involves cultural beliefs and distribution of resources at the interactional level and selves and identities at the individual level" (p. 511). However, Ridgeway argued for the centrality of gender as the most salient variable in social relational contexts because "compared to the advantaged and the disadvantaged in systems of race and class, men and women come into contact with each other with greater frequency and often on more intimate terms" (p. 511). Eagly and Karau (2002) also contended that sex is "the personal characteristic that provides the strongest basis of categorizing people even when compared with race, age, and occupation" and characterize gender roles as "consensual beliefs about the attributes of women and men" (p. 574). However this stance universalizes the construct "woman" and is problematic. Ridgeway (2004) also pointed out that " given the cultural resources and power available to members of dominant groups, the descriptions of women and men that become inscribed in these simple, abstract, cultural categories are ones that most closely describe white, middle-class, heterosexual men and women, if anyone" (p. 513), yet ignored the implications in her analysis. Despite the advances made since the 1970s as more women entered traditionally male arenas, research shows that gender roles are firmly embedded in our cultural psyche. "The perception of women in general and women managers as gender stereotypically feminine, communal, and unlike ideal depictions of managers, is strong, pervasive, and resistant to change" (Chemers, 1997, p. 141).

The literature on tokenism and status beliefs helps to tell the story of women, black and white, and leadership. Kanter's seminal work of the 1970s *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977) revealed the unique location of women in the male-dominated corporate world. Her work was important in several ways: she proposed a theory of tokenism that explained the environmental barriers to advancement women experience in corporations, and she moved away

from the intra-psychic explanation that women feared success as an accepted theory at the time

(Hogue, Yoder et al., 2002). Kanter (1977) suggested that it was "rarity and scarcity, rather than

femaleness per se, that shaped the environment for women" (p. 207). Kanter found that tokens

experienced increased visibility, which comes with a cost. Thus, Kanter took a structural

approach to problems of women in the corporation and a concomitant numeric approach to

mitigating barriers to women in the corporate world.

> The life of women in the corporation was influenced by the proportions in which they
> found themselves [emphasis mine]. Those women who were few in number among male
> peers and often had "only woman" status became tokens: symbols of how-women-can
> do, stand-ins for all women. Sometimes they had the advantages of those who are
> "different" and thus were highly visible in a system where success is tied to becoming
> known. Sometimes they face the loneliness if the outsider, of the stranger who intrudes
> upon an alien culture and may become self-estranged in the process of assimilation. In
> any case, their turnover and "failure" rate were known to be much higher than those of
> men…women's turnover was twice that of men. (p. 207)

Yoder (2002) built on Kanter's (1977) tokenism research by considering the differential

contextual impacts of gender construction for women and men, conceptualizing gender as an

influential status variable. She contended that "counting proportions is not enough" (p. 3).

Although Kanter's work on tokenism focused on women, her theory was simply structural in

nature. If individuals were a numeric minority in an organizational setting no matter their

identity (male, female), they would experience the token effect. Yoder found Kanter's proposed

solution—add more women and stir—simplistic. According to Kanter, more women in the work

setting militates against the token effect; in this scenario the problem was not that they were

women—the problem was that there were so few women. Yoder observed that Kantor's research

on tokenism was gender neutral and questioned that neutrality in subsequent studies. Acker

(1990) shared this critique of Kanter's work when she recognized that Kanter identified gender

as a salient feature of organizational life but opted to focus on organizational structure.

Identifying the central problem of seeing gender neutrality, Moss Kanter observes: "while organizations were being defined as sex-neutral machines, masculine principles were dominating their authority structures"…In spite of those insights, organizational structure, not gender, is the focus of Moss Kanter's analysis. In posing the argument as structure or gender Moss Kanter also implicitly posits gender as standing outside of structure, and she fails to follow up her own observations about masculinity and organizations . . . The specificity of male dominance is absent in Moss Kanter's argument even though she presents a great deal of material that illuminates gender and male dominance. (Acker, 1990, p. 143)

Yoder conducted a series of studies (1983, 1984, 1985, 1996, 2001) that explored tokenism impact in a variety of settings. One of her more significant findings was that men did not experience the same negative token effects when in a numerical minority in female dominated work environments (Yoder & Sinnett, 1985). White male tokens experienced what has been called the "glass escalator" effect as opposed to the "glass ceiling" effect. The glass ceiling refers to the invisible barriers to advancement that women face; conversely men employed in traditionally female professions, e.g. nursing, elementary school teaching, librarianship, and social work do not experience the same constraints and experience the structural advantages necessary to advance their career mobility: the glass escalator effect (Williams, 1992).

Using Kanter's work as a springboard, Yoder's work for the next two decades focused on deepening our understanding of how gender impacts tokenism. Yoder (2002) argued that tokenism in the workplace is a gendered phenomena, experienced differently by women and men. She contended, "Kanter . . . concentrated at the level of the job itself- looking at the gender composition of specific work groups- without taking in consideration the broader societal context in which the groups operate" (p. 3). This observation is significant. Despite the groundbreaking nature of Kanter's work, she failed to take into account the socio-political status of women in her

analysis. Her work on tokenism illuminated the problems women might encounter in the corporate world; however she did not speak to the intersection of race and gender.

Yoder contributes to our understanding of the role of status as it relates to tokenism. Most relevant is her work on the intersection of race, ethnicity, and gender on tokenism and status. Status refers to the hierarchical positioning of the group characteristics that make one a token, "status beliefs are shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups such as those based on gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation" (Ridgeway, 2001, p. 637).

Status –Expectation States Theory "holds that individuals make judgments about each other on the basis of status characteristics (ability, age, gender, race). This gives rise to expectations about the other's performance capabilities. These performance expectations in turn influence behavior in the interaction" (Manstead & Hewstone, 1995, p. 637). Expectation states research has demonstrated that when people interact in regard to collective goals, status beliefs shape the enactment of social hierarchies among individuals, affecting influence and leadership [emphasis mine] (Ridgeway, 2001, p. 638). Yoder (2002) concluded, "tokenism is far from a neutral process" (p. 5). She and colleagues surveyed and interviewed African American and white women firefighters about their work experiences. Her most significant finding was the following:

> As the percentage of White men increased in Black Women's firehouses, African American women reported less encouragement from team members to seek promotion, less favorable reactions to their own promotions, less social discussions with teammates, less perceived acceptance as a colleague, less acceptance by coworkers families, and less shared leisure time…Parallel correlations between the proportion of White men and negative outcomes were not found in the survey data from White women firefighters. (Yoder, 2002, p. 5)

Additional consequences that highlight the impact of gender/race on the tokenism process were the differential stereotyping experiences of African American and white women

"stereotyping of Black women as self-reliant resulted in withheld assistance. Stereotyping for white women involved images of fragility that were reinforced with paternalistic over protection, Thus African- American women typically felt over-burdened; white women, under-burdened" (Yoder, 2002, p. 5). In other words, the negative impacts of tokenism are heightened when race and gender are combined characteristics of the token group.

Leadership Theory and African-American Women: In Search of Low-Hanging Fruit

The history of Black women in the United States is a narrative about leadership. Black feminist epistemology (Collins, 2000) was borne out of the experience of resisting the impact of slavery as well as cultural artifacts from Africa. Parker (2005) directly related these resistance strategies to the emergence of a specific leadership style of African-American Women. The experience of having survived and resisted the degrading, violent, and brutal institution of slavery resulted in leadership development that cannot be gained by a corporate training program.

There is a direct connection between Black women's leadership in the activist tradition found in Robnett's (1997) research on women's leadership in the civil rights movement and black women's leadership in more formal organizations; both are rooted in the historical legacy of resistance to oppression and the concomitant skills and strategies that have made survival and thriving possible. Parker (2005) eloquently illuminates this legacy.

> When viewed as cultural tradition, African American women's history of survival, resistance and change can be seen as leadership knowledge communicated from generation to generation. This idea is not unlike that which underlies traditional theories of leadership and nepotism in business (Bellow, 2003). European-American cultural narratives emphasize leadership traditions being passed down father to son. The rites of passage that ensure some middle- and upper-class White men privileged positions of leadership at the top of America's corporations and institutions are socially constructed as the standard for success in the traditional leadership literature (cf., Kotter, 1982; Mintzberg, 1973). The experiences and knowledge that have, as Hine and Thompson

(1998) noted, "enabled Black women to shape the raw materials of their lives into an extraordinary succession of victories" (p. 5) have been ignored and unexamined. (p. 90)

Much of African-American women's leadership has been expressed via resistance and empowerment (Giddings, 1984; Guy-Sheftall, 1995; Hill Collins, 1990; Hine & Thompson, 1998; Hull, Bell-Scott, & Smith, 1982; Smith, 1983). Despite the prevailing stereotypical images of African-American women that have proliferated since the middle passage, those of mammy, sapphire, and jezebel (Collins, 1990), we have continued to resist our own as well as our people's annihilation. When Sojourner Truth asked, "ain't I a woman," she challenged the construct of womanhood and took her place at the table. When Septima Clark challenged the male-dominated civil rights leadership asking Martin Luther King to "not lead all the marches himself, but instead develop leaders who could lead their own marches," she exemplified "black women's style of activism [which] reflects a belief that teaching people how to be self-reliant fosters more empowerment than teaching them how to follow" (Collins, 2000, pp. 218-219). In the African American community leadership, both positional and unrecognized, has largely been birthed, developed, and embodied via grass roots activist efforts (Robnett, 1997). Clark's statement mirrors Ella Baker's (1972) "I have always thought what is needed is the development of people who are interested not in being leaders as much as in developing leadership in others" and represents a value that appears in African American women's conceptualization of leading and leadership, teaching self-reliance and empowerment" (p. 345).

African-American women's leadership has always "hidden in plain view" (Franklin, 2002). Black women scholars and practitioners have been talking and writing about leadership for quite some time, contributing insights mainstream scholars would write about, only much later and usually without being aware of, let alone acknowledging, Black women's scholarship. In the Fall 1988 edition of *Sage*, a currently out-of -print scholarly journal on Black Women,

Coeditors Patricia Bell-Scott and Beverly Guy-Sheftall asked the question "what does it mean to

be a leader." Their critique of leadership scholarship concluded the field has the tendency to

study heads of nation and that leadership is sometimes equated with "successful manipulation,

the exertion of brute power, and fame [and exists] within the narrow confines of a single

discipline, with little or no attention to the inherent biases or limitation of the field" (Bell-Scott

& Guy-Sheftall, 1988, p. 45). Their critique precedes Rost (1991) who states "leadership

scholars need to develop an academic presence as an interdisciplinary field…looking at

leadership through the lens of a single discipline has not worked well in the past and will not

work any better in the future" (p. 182). They concluded,

> The study of leadership in American scholarship has been reduced on large measure to "the life and times of great white men" and a few elite women or people of color. The personal influence exerted in private or informal groups such as community networks remains virtually unexplored. Given the cultural biases of class, race and gender privilege and the limitations of the existing knowledge base, it is no surprise that only a handful of African-American women leaders have been acknowledged in American history (p. X)

During a 1987 conference *Courage to Lead: Major Challenges Facing Black Women*

Today, sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs,

conference participants defined leadership as "the empowerment of human beings to claim

ultimate fulfillment" (Hall & Gray, 1987). Acknowledging the impact of the intersection of race

and class, they asserted,

> The leadership work of Black American women must be explored on order to provide needed role modeling for young women; to assist women in developing strategies for individual and collective empowerment; *to assist in coalition building and team work within Black communities, and across cultural, gender, and class lines as well as globally* [emphasis added] (p. 3)

Findings from the conference were the following:

- Leadership is not always positional;

- Leadership is collective as well as individual;

- Leadership development is lifelong;

- The family and African-American communities are important forums for the development and practice of leadership;

- Both popular culture and the Black community share the responsibility for writings the wrongs of racism/sexism;

- Black women must expect to experience racism/sexism as part of their lives, but take responsibility for creatively overcoming the barriers;

- Black women want to be considered on their own terms, not just in comparison to others;

- Black women often define leadership as a "lifestyle"; it is the way they conduct their day-to-day business and personal lives;

- African-American women must assist in eliminating long-term feelings of powerlessness within the society; and

- African-American women, as well as other Americans, share a set of human rights that transcend biological/racial/gender differences. (p. 11)

African-American Women in the African American Leadership Literature

Narratives of Black women's leadership are not only missing from mainstream leadership literature but also from scholarship on Black leadership in general. Although Walters (1999) mentioned women in his seminal work *African-American Leadership*, he devotes a scant two pages to their leadership in this 315 page work. As previously cited, Walters did suggest,

> Research on African American women as leaders is . . . an area ripe for theoretical and empirical work. First and foremost, we must determine whether there are gender-based differences in terms of issues or leadership styles. We know there is not as much of a gender gap in African American mass opinion or voting behavior as there is in the White community, but this may not hold at the leadership level. But, as things stand now, we simply do not know and this is an area clearly in need of study, ideally from a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. (p. 76)

In the 242 pages of Gordon's (2000) *Black Leadership for Social Change*, there is no specific mention of black women's leadership and no entry under women in the index. In the chapter titled Social Movements and Black Leadership, Gordon profiles individuals and organizations of import, and not one woman is mentioned. Similarly, Marable's (1998) *Black Leadership* does not have a section, paragraph, or reference in the index that enlarges our understanding of African American Women's contribution to furthering the aims of Black leadership. Gaines (1996) acknowledged the long tradition of leadership by Black women by stating:

> during the early 1890s, black women journalists, intellectuals, novelists, and reformers were contributing their own visions of racial uplift, calling for women's leadership as vital to race progress, a view that clashed with a male-dominated vision of race progress within a patriarchal political culture. (p. 4)

The Feminization of Leadership

Parker (2005) interrogated both the *Great (White) Man theory of Leadership* and the *(White) Feminine Vision of Leadership* and asserts that both have a philosophical stance that is race-neutral. She contended that the "prevailing vision of feminist leadership is one the reinforces symbolic images of white, middle-class American women, which in effect silences women of different ethnicities, races and class statuses" (p. 9). The literature represented by the "female advantage" (Helgesen, 1990) privileged the feminine over the masculine gender construct. It is the reverse of Henry Higgins's lament "why can't a woman be more like a man" and suggests that if women ruled, the world it would be a better place (Loewe, Lerner et al., 1956). Helgesen (1990) insisted "what distinguishes the women's view of the big picture, however is that it encompasses a vision of society—they relate decisions to their larger effect upon the role of the family, the American educational system, the environment, even world

peace (p. 25). Wilson (2004) insisted we must close the leadership gender gap by developing the

following:

> A new definition of " leader"—one that looks and sounds like a woman too—and we've got to set up structures (institutional and societal) that will allow this newly defined leader to go to work …and we need to end once and for all, women's deal with society to be the sole caretakers. As we all know, it has gone on for centuries, this 'agreement' that we derive power from the private realm, leaving the public sphere to men. This deal was institutionalized by the church fathers of the sixteenth century, when the twin mantles of 'True Womanhood" and holiness became linked to our roles as mothers. Women would shape the democracy, by raising children; men would control industry and government. Women would be kept far from the nasty business of running the world, ensuring our purity and ethics would be passed to subsequent generations. (pp. 24-25)

This is not the historical legacy of African American women in the United States; there

was no struggle to free themselves from the Cult of True Womanhood (Welter, 1966).

Most problematic is the essentializing of woman in this leadership construct. A

byproduct of the cultural feminism of the 1980s and 1990s, this addition to the leadership

literature privileged the feminine qualities, for example caring and cooperation, exemplified by

Gilligan's ethic of care (1982, 1988) and "women's ways of knowing" (Belenky, 1986;

Goldberger, Tarule et al., 1996). Feminist theory is not monolithic and is generally divided into

liberal, radical, socialist, cultural and multicultural, postcolonial, and postmodern

epistemologies. Cultural feminism initially emerged in the 19th century alongside liberal

feminism and "focused on non-rational, intuitive aspects of life and the special qualities that

were presumed to make them different from or superior to men" (Enns, 1997, p. 76). Cultural

feminists would agree that sexism and oppression is caused by "the devaluation of traditional

feminine qualities and the overvaluation of masculine values and patriarchy, [and that] the goal

of feminism should be to revalue women's traditional strengths so that women can infuse society

with values based on cooperation" (Enns, 1997, pp. 75-76). The cultural feminist construction of

leadership subtly serves to reinforce the masculine model by falling into the binary trap of

dichotomous thinking. One is either a masculine leader or a feminine leader; these locations are in opposition, however, still normed by the masculine.

Billing and Alvesson (2000) found the notion of feminine leadership "misleading and risky in terms of gender equality" (p. 144). A more problematic result of the female advantage stance is the failure of this literature to recognize these constructions of gender as representative of the dominant white western views of gender. Thereby failing to "acknowledge that notions of feminine and masculine are social, cultural and historical products, constructed according to racial and sexual ideologies that conscript women's and men's embodied identities" (Parker, 2005, p. 10). Historian Elizabeth Higginbotham (1982), asserted,

> A narrow definition or womanhood has never reflected the lives of Black or other racial minority women, or those of many white working class women in the United States. Instead, these women, who often fail to conform to "appropriate" sex roles, have been pictured as, and made to feel, inadequate-even though, as women, they possess traits recognized as positive when held by men in the wider society. (p. 95)

Parker (2005) suggested, "The predominant vision of feminine leadership is implicitly based on the ideal White Woman (p. 8); stereotypes of black women stand in contrast to those of the universal woman. In oft-cited research, Weitz and Gordon (1993) surveyed white college students on their perception of images of black women and found that they differed significantly from those of women in general. The students were asked to select traits from a list that characterized American women in general and select traits that characterized Black women. Traits selected for American women included intelligent, sensitive, emotional, and kind; black women were characterized as loud, aggressive, argumentative, and bitchy. The research found that "the traits selected for American women in general are overwhelmingly positive, while the picture drawn of black women is far more negative. For example, 45% characterize women in general as intelligent but only 22% characterize black women this way" (Weitz & Gordon,

1993), p. x). Their findings are empirical evidence that the iconographic stereotypical images of

black women that have been well documented: mammy; sapphire, the domineering castrator of

men; jezebel, highly sexualized and promiscuous; and mule (Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981, 1992;

Simms, 2001; Turner, 2002) are still embedded in the national psyche.

> From the mammies, jezebels, and breeder women of slavery to the smiling Aunt Jemimas
> on pancake mix boxes, ubiquitous Black prostitutes, and ever-present welfare mothers of
> contemporary popular culture, negative stereotypes applied to African- American women
> have been fundamental to Black women's oppression…Moreover, while Black women
> historians, writers, and social scientists have long existed, until recently these women
> have not held leadership positions in universities, professional associations, publishing
> concerns, broadcast media, and other social institutions of knowledge validation… this
> historical exclusion means that stereotypical images of Black women permeate popular
> culture and public policy. (Collins, 2000, p. 5)

These are not images of the distant past—they are enacted and embodied in the present

with real life consequences. A recent study (Donovan, 2011) of white college students'

perceptions of Black women found some feminine traits continue to be racialized and supported,

"the Matriarch/Sapphire stereotypic image of Black women discussed in Black feminist literature

[which] portrays Black women as working-class, tough, strong, domineering, and loud, as well

as lacking in concern and sensitivity" (p. 8).

In a discussion of raced and gender based stereotypes, Bell and Nkomo (2001), recounted

the "critics in the black community [who] focus on Oprah's over-the-top caretaking, her

solicitation of her public's woes and hardships ignoring her accomplishments and characterizing

her as a modern-day Mammy" (p. 249). Allen (1996) wrote of her experience as an

"outsider/within" (Collins, 1986)—an African-American women in the academy. She lamented,

> I tend to hide emotions like anger, frustration, or disappointment because I don't want to
> be seen as a militant, a hypersensitive Black, a hysterical woman, or a domineering
> Sapphire [emphasis mine]. My awareness of the taboo is so strong that I spent a lot of
> time debating whether or not to report here that I cried when I was stripped of my duties.
> (p. 266)

The embedded nature of these denigrating stereotypes suggests that while white women must overcome barriers due to gender stereotypes and gender status beliefs, which are racialized through notions of (middle class) whiteness, Black women, too, are uniquely located at the crossroads of gender/race.

African American Women and the Ivory Tower

African American women have a long history of participation in and contribution to the academy. The intersectional identities of African American women produce conditions that devalue "both their sex and their race" (Myers, 2002, p. 5). This results in the experience of gendered racism, the ways in which race and sex, "narrowly intertwine and combine under certain conditions into one, hybrid phenomenon" in the context of everyday racism (Essed, 1991, p. 31) "the integration of racism into everyday situations through practices that activate underlying power relations" (Essed, 1990, p. 50). Johnetta Cole, President of Spelman College, poignantly reminds us that "in our country where second-class status is assigned to black folks and to women … the last image that many Americans would have of an African American woman is that of an intellectual, an academic, a college president, a person of the academy" (1997). A growing body of research (Turner, Gonzalez et al., 2008) exists which illuminated the impact intersectional identities have on African American women in the academy and the ways in which these factors impede professional and personal achievement. Edited volumes of narratives (Benjamin, 1997; Berry & Mizelle, 2006; James & Farmer, 1993; Mabokela & Green, 2001) enriched the scholarship and gave voice to the lived experience of African American women scholars in the white academy. A review of the literature reveals that scholarship on African American women faculty as change agents remains sparse and absent. This is a

grounded theory study focused on the processes related to the embodiment of transformative agency of African American women in predominately white institutions proposed in this study.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 1991, the 11,460 African American women who were full-time faculty accounted for a mere 2.2% of full-time faculty nationwide. This included all ranks: professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, and other faculty. African American women comprised only 5.2% of all female full professors and .8% of all full professors (male and female). The latest figures available from 2007 reveal the insignificant change in the numerical presence of African American women in the professoriate since 1991. In 2007, 20,148 African American women of all academic ranks accounted for 2.8% of full-time faculty, 2,193 African American women comprised 4.7% of all female full professors, and 1.3% of all full professors (male and female) (Statistics, 2008). These figures must also be read in light of the fact that almost half of African American faculty teaches at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), thereby making the percentage that teach in predominately white institutions less significant. The relatively small number of African American women in the academy has implications for their own ability to thrive as well as the impact on the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students of color. Research shows a direct correlation between the presence of faculty of color and the ability to recruit and retain students of color (Patitu & Hinton, 2003).

Despite over 30 years of affirmative action aimed at increasing the numbers of women and people of color in higher education, the problem of recruiting and retaining women, and particularly women of color, in the academy persists (Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Turner et al., 2008). The academy remains primarily white and male. A conventional explanation is that there are not enough women and people of color in graduate programs to eventually populate faculties. This is

known as a "pipeline problem" (Evans & Cokley, 2008), and it holds true for people of color. Hughes and Hamilton (2003) state , "the number of African American's receiving doctorates still is so small that if every one became a faculty member this would have a negligible effect on the proportion of African Americans in the professoriate" (p. 97). The same reasoning does not explain the struggle for women and African American women who experience a "double burden" (St. Jean & Feagin, 1997). Trower and Chait (2002) suggested that for women and people of color there is a "leak in the pipeline."

> The lack of success invites another hypothesis: that the pipeline is not the basic problem. In fact, even if the pipeline were awash with women and minorities, a fundamental challenge would remain: the pipeline empties into territory women and faculty of color too often experience as uninviting, unaccommodating, and unappealing. For that reason, many otherwise qualified candidates forgo graduate school altogether, others withdraw midstream, and still others doctorate in hand- opt for alternative careers. In short the pipeline leaks. (p. 34)

The challenges facing African American women in the academy in the 21st century are consistent with those articulated over the last 30 years. The lack of any meaningful improvement in the experience of African American women in the academy begs the question posed by Patitu and Hinton (2003), "has anything changed." Fifteen years after Phelps (1995) wrote about issues of "racism, sexism, isolation, alienation, tokenism, discrimination, role expectations, unsupportive environments, lack of mentoring and networking opportunities, tenure, and promotion issues and difficulties in conducting research" (p. 256), the impact of African American women in the academy research shows these conditions remain (Gregory, 2001). African American women are consistently in the lowest ranks of the professorate, clustered in particular disciplines, such as education and the social sciences, resulting in an "academic apartheid" (Contreras, as cited in Gregory, 2001). In addition to departmental segregation, studies find that African American women faculty's unique location has significant impact on

their ability to work at their full capacity in the academy. The findings of a 1999 study (Gregory, 2001) of 384 African American women faculty indicated they were promoted at a slower rate; advised larger number of students, taught more, served on more committees, conducted less research, published at a lower rate, were left out of collaborative projects, lacked mentorship, and had less access to resources. Bowie (1995) found that for African American women to succeed in the academy, they must have access to and master information technology. Cooper (2006) lamented, "What is not found is literature- on satisfied, well respected, and widely published black women faculty" (p. 3).

The lexicon used to describe the institutional environment and lived experience of African American women in the academy is recurrent and telling. Stanley's (2006a) list included multiple marginality, otherness. Living in two worlds, the academy's new cast, silenced voices, ivy halls and glass walls, individual survivors or institutional transformers, from border to center, and navigating between two worlds" speak clearly to the specific locations experienced by faculty of color and specifically African American women in the academy (p. 3). Harley (2008) metaphorically named African American women in predominately white institutions the "maids of academe," and equated teaching with childcare; research and scholarship with fieldwork; and service with housework. Although all faculty positions, exclusive of race and gender, may entail some of these duties, Harley asserts that due to the "plantation mentality" where institutional and systemic racism and sexism intertwine in visible and invisible ways, African American women experience these faculty roles in different ways from their colleagues. In her work on the relationship between a black female ontology and survival in the white academy John (1997) reiterated the plantation analogy:

> Both [the academy and the plantation] structures reify, in content and form, the ideology of the power elite; both stand as seemingly self-sufficient entities yet are…totally

dependent in the labor each exploits… the black woman in the antebellum context facilitated the existence of the planters' family and the survival of her own, so the contemporary black female academic and activist poised between the ideal culture of America's rhetoric and the real culture of her double jeopardy has a pivotal role. Who has an angle of vision that can view social reality from high and low places in the configuration. (p. 59)

The culture of the academy reifies and reflects the gender and racial hierarchies embedded in United States culture which according to Trower and Chait (2002) can "prove to be a formidable and intractable force" (p. 36). Kawewe (1997) stated,

American colleges and universities claim they pursue excellence in academia, which is reflected by meritocracy and is measured in the categories of teaching, research, and service. The reality is that universities reflect a universal patriarchal model of administration, education, research, evaluation, and distribution of power. Molded on the pattern of Western male dominance, American institutions of higher education mirror the values of racism and sexism inherent in Western traditions. What this implies is that the processes of employment, retention, and tenure are shaped by the racist and sexist choices and preferences of the most dominant and powerful group in academia. (p. 246)

This maintenance of the status quo has had an undeniable impact on African American women's ability to thrive in higher education. Gordon's (1999) more contemporary metaphor illuminates the irony and danger the academy presents for people of color, specifically African American women.

I do my intellectual research in a "hood" …the "hood" is a very dangerous place. You can be ambushed and assaulted. You can be robbed or have your possessions stolen. You can be shot in a "drive-by" shooting. You can get caught in the cross fire of different warring gangs. You are recruited and can even be forced to join these gangs for your own safety… the streets are dangerous and the gangs are unrelenting, unforgiving, and revengeful. The gangs of the 'hood have histories, reputations, and identifying attributes that demarcate the territories that they uphold and guard. Being a good citizen and trying to play it safe is not enough. There are always those who are in power and others who are constantly trying to change the rules to the extent that they can acquire power and control. And displace their rivals. You can be killed and never know where the bullet came from….the 'hood in which I work is not populated by inner city Black, Latino. Or poor Anglo youth…My 'hood is populated with middle class white males and increasingly, white females…the hood I work in is the Academy. (p. 407)

Systemic Racism

Hughes and Howard-Hamilton (2003) suggested that systemic racism is "the most serious obstacle faced by African American women in higher education" and de facto segregation persists (p. 99). Systemic or institutional racism is defined here as "the network of institutional structures, policies and practices that create advantages and benefits for Whites, and discrimination, oppression and disadvantage for people from targeted racial groups" (Wijeyesinghe, Griffin et al., 1997, p. 93). A salient feature of this dynamic is the invisibility of its embodiment and implied understanding that the advantages are actually available to all. This is reflected in the hiring of faculty and individuals for leadership roles that reflect the majority demographic, the notion that those African American women in the academy are exemplars (Myers, 2002), the authority of African American women faculty being challenged and dismissed by students in the classroom, the lack of mentoring and networking opportunities for African American women to militate the "old white boys'" network that exists (King, 1995), lower salaries, and the notion that the tenure process is race/gender neutral.

African American women are not a monolithic group; despite within group differences, persistent themes occur throughout the literature regarding their experiences in predominately white institutions. The literature is replete with references to feelings of isolation experienced by African American women faculty and suggests that achieving a critical mass is crucial (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003; Myers, 2002; Phelps, 1995). Hughes and Howard- Hamilton (2003) stated, " A critical mass exists whenever there are enough individuals from a particular group that they feel comfortable participating in conversations and enough that other students see them as individuals rather than as spokespersons for their race" (p. 96). The presence of a critical mass is important for many reasons; it mitigates the tokenism effect, supports increased recruitment

and retention of African American faculty and students, and helps to remove some of the systemic barriers that exist, such as a lack of a support system.

The impact of being the only or one of a few African American women in a department, or institution, results in specific types of pressure. Harley (2008) suggested African American women faculty in predominately white institution's experience race fatigue and are "over extended, undervalued [and] underappreciated … [and are exhausted] just knowing that because you are the "negro in residence" that you will be asked to serve and represent the "color factor in yet another capacity" (p. 21). Patitu stated this "lone wolf environment" may increase the marginalization of the faculty member (p. 90). Phelps (1995) found both positive and negatives aspects to being the sole or one of few African American women in a PWI; she noted these aspects are "often intertwined…making it difficult to clearly distinguish the advantages from the challenges" (p. 256). Being the sole African American woman in a department may result in colleagues treating you as special and being asked to consult on diversity issues and serve on committees based on identities of race and gender. These requests may on face value be validating; however, an ultimate outcome is usually overload and burnout and time taken from research activities that can impact tenure attainment and promotion.

Research also indicated that embarking on academic careers may place African American women in the position of choosing between family and community commitments and career (Turner, 2002). These competing demands have a deleterious impact on the psyche of African American women pursuing an academic career. Phillips and McCaskill (1995) suggested, "The academy bifurcates our pursuits into two paths—focused (or tenurable) and scattered (or irrelevant). It pits us in an adversarial relationship that opposes home, family, neighborhood, church, and culture … [and] focused, relevant academic projects" (p. 1015). They go on to argue

that as we resist this binary by claiming and honoring our well-roundedness and the choice to live in family and community "the body of black female intellectual endeavor [is] on a course that collides head-on with academic culture" (p. 1015).

Baraka's (1997a) discussion on collegiality reminds us that African American women in Eurocentric academic environments experience the impact of white normativity. Ward (2008) defined white normativity as the unseen but felt "cultural norms and practices that make whiteness appear natural, normal and right [these] ways of thinking, knowing and doing … naturalize whiteness and become embedded in social and institutional life" (p. 564). Baraka identified differences in communication styles, different attitudes toward emotion, differences in belief about equality and the African American orientation of affiliations vs. the Eurocentric orientation individuality as sources of tension that African American women must cope with in PWIs where white supremacy is the unspoken norm. White normativity functions to organize social space to promote and privilege white cultural values and social practices while simultaneously disadvantaging, disparaging, and dissuading all non-white cultural values and social practices. African American women in PWIs contend with the dynamic of invisibility/hypervisibility. Concomitant with white normativity is the hyper-visibility that impacts faculty and students of color. Hyper-visibility is a concept that scholars have used to describe what happens in white normative contexts. It describes the experience of people defined as others, i.e., other than white, heterosexual, middle class males. These others experience being hyper-visible to their white peers, and their actions are over-scrutinized and marginalized as non-normative even when they are engaged in the same or similar actions as their white peers. Not only can this impact their successful movement through institutional hoops, the negative psychological and physical impact of these stressors has been documented (Hughes & Howard-

Hamilton, 2003). Baraka (1997a) suggested African American women in predominately white institutions have the experience of the "paradox of under-attention and over-attention" (p. 242) and Brandon (2006) wrote about the same phenomena as being "seen, not heard" (p. 168).

Micro-aggressions are "conscious, unconscious, verbal, nonverbal, and visual forms of insults directed toward people of color …these diatribes are pervasive, often covert, innocuous, and nebulous…thus difficult to investigate. This causes tremendous anxiety for those who experience this racist psychological battering (Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 23). These micro-aggressions, experienced as "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991), can have dire impacts on those who experience it. Everyday racism "connects structural forces of racism with routine situations in everyday life…and links ideological dimensions of racism with daily attitudes and interprets the reproduction of racism in terms of the experience of it in everyday life" (Essed, 1991, p. 2). Essed suggests despite the innocuous sound of the language "everyday" that "the psychological distress due to racism on a day-to-day basis can have chronic adverse effects on mental and physical health" (2001, p. 1).

Tenure and Promotion

Many find the tenure process arduous; African-American women faculty in predominately white institutions face specific challenges. Although men and women of minority groups are less likely to be tenured than whites, this especially holds true for African American Women (Trower & Chait, 2002). A 1995 study found African American women attained tenure at a lower rate than African American men (Singh, Robinson et al., 1995). The review of the literature is instructive when reviewing the relationship among race, gender, tenure, and promotion. Evans and Cokley (2008) examined the impact of racism and sexism on research productivity and career advancement of African American women and suggested there are

distinctive barriers they face due to intersectional identities. Research shows that African American women are asked to serve on more committees, mentor more students, and are marginalized when research interests are not considered mainstream, all of which impacts the tenure process. In addition, the lack of sponsorship for research and being excluded from collaborative research efforts hampers their progress (Gregory, 1999, 2002). The illusion that tenure is based on meritocracy rather than being a highly politicized process adds to the cognitive dissonance experienced when accomplished African American women scholars struggle with the tenure process. African American women voice concerns about higher expectations, unwritten rules, conflicting information, and absence of mentoring (Paitu & Hinton, p. 86). They find that promotion and tenure procedures are ambiguous, inappropriate, unrealistic, or unfairly weighed and have experienced "emotional and psychological abuses" (Gregory, p. 129). This idea supports the notion that the tenure process is a game that has to be played by a set of unwritten rules which are known by or told only to a particular set of people, based on race and gender. Because the game is not openly acknowledged, neither are the unwritten rules. Cries about differential treatment within the game have little effect. When there is a lack of acknowledgment of a formal game, there are no formal rules to disseminate or follow (Cooper, 2006, p.116).

African American women also report the "revolving door syndrome" phenomenon (Blackwell, 1988). This occurs when an individual is employed by an institution, begins the road to tenure for four-six years, is evaluated unfavorably, and then leaves. This dynamic can happen to individuals at several institutions until they decide to leave higher education for other types of employment. One study (Gregory, 1995) found the turnover rate for African American women to hover around 47%. In her research about tenure and African American women Patitu (2003)

surfaced issues of conflicting information, unwritten rules, lack of direction and mentoring, and nitpicking or triviality.

Publishing is a requirement for tenure, and often research interests of African American women, which may center on issues of gender, race, and class of communities of color, are devalued by colleagues and journals. In a 2003 study (Dixon-Reeves, 2003), over half of the new African American PhDs stated their primary research interest pertained to race and ethnic issues (Dixon-Reeves, 2003). Stanley (2007) interrogated the review process and its gatekeepers and suggested the need "to break the cycle of master narratives," thereby opening the door to new knowledge (p. 14). The lack of research productivity and concomitant publishing is often cited as the reason for denying tenure (Evans & Coakly, 2008)

Mentoring

Research demonstrates how the lack of mentoring for African American women hinders their success in the academy (Holmes & Hintn-Hudson, 2007; Phelp, 1995; Stanley, 2006a). According to Myers (2002) "Isolation and lack of effective mentoring processes are direct influences in these low promotion and tenure rates as well as low retention rates among African American women in academia" (p. 7). Mentors help to translate the unwritten rules of the academy (Jarmon, 2001), unpack the research process (Burgess, 1997; Evans & Cokley, 2008), and help to mitigate the isolation experienced. Locke (1997) suggests that "mentoring is key to breaking the glass ceiling among African American women … [and that] many African American women cite having a mentor as key to their career development" (p. 345). One strategy employed to mitigate the absence of sufficient mentoring opportunities is the creation of containers of support via peer mentoring. "Research shows that non-tenured women faculty and faculty of color were virtually without mentoring, except for the mentoring relationship they

pursued with each other" (Myers, 2002, p. 10). Holmes and Rivera (2004) suggested this approach, which is increasingly used by feminist and scholars of color, "fosters a more egalitarian approach to academic relationships and is void of hierarchy [where the] emphasis is placed on empowerment and learning" (p. 16). Over a ten year span Fries-Britt and Kelly (2005) "retained each other," enabling each to achieve success. In a study which utilized scholarly personal narrative as method (Nash, 2004), these scholars described how their initial advisor-advisee relationship began when one was a graduate student and each became an intentional and committed container to support the growth and success of the other over time. During the tenure of this relationship, Fries-Britt and Kelly progressed from untenured professor to tenured and doctoral student to tenure track professor. Although their common identity as African American women was not a guarantee that a significant and mutually beneficial connection was formed, they maintained that "our identities as African American women enhanced our ability to relate to each other, and it added to the soulfulness and nature of our collaboration" (p.237). They identified the experiences of vulnerability and trust as foundational aspects of their interaction, which enabled them to flourish personally and professionally.

Formal and informal connections among African American women have long served as a conduit to resist oppression and give voice to common lived experience in the face of white supremacy (Collins, 1990, 2000). Taking the form of sororities, professional organizations, and women's clubs (sometimes referred to sister circles), these relationships foster self-actualization and empowerment. The Sisters Mentoring Sisters (Sisters) program is an innovative program framework implemented in a predominately white research university in Florida and focuses on breaking through the "concrete ceiling" experienced by African American women in the white academy (Green & King, 2001). Several aspects of the program are unique; the program is open

to all women at the university across rank; it is based on the Africentric principles; and unlike traditional structured leadership development programs that rely on organizational development, trainers, and experts, "any member of the project's sisterhood may function at any given time as a counselor, guide, teacher, coach, friend, advocate, motivator, sponsor, or advisor" (p. 159).

Teaching

Despite a deep commitment to and love of teaching reported by African American women in the academy, research showed that they experience double jeopardy even in the classroom.

> Evidence of systemic racism . . . can be found in the classroom when students question, query, challenge and dismiss the intellectual ability of an African American faculty member. In all of these situations, no amount of experience is enough to prove that she is highly capable when the group comprises people who do not look like her. (Hughes & Howard-Hamilton, 2003, p. 99)

King (1995) revealed the battle scars that result from "student animosities, weariness, exhaustion, a sense of exploitation, and a need to be wary and watchful in student interactions" (p. 19). She explored the nature of African American women's authority in the classroom and described the relational stress African American women faculty deal with in their experience with students, both white and of color. Her research revealed the projective nature of student perceptions of African American women faculty. Four projective patterns that resulted from the dissonance students experienced when they encountered an African American woman as the authority in the classroom were identified: 1. The too-good mother, 2. The degraded authority, 3. The exception to my race, and 4. The ally in marginality. In an effort to heal she stated, "restoring my personhood, humanity and sustaining wholeness in the face of damaging race-gender scripts internalized by students is first and foremost" (p. 16).

As a strategy to negotiate intersectional identities and "preserve [her] professional identity" Harris (2007) employed a strategy to support the respect she felt she is due and does not receive based on her gendered and race identity (p. 62).

> One demon I have battled is the lack of respect a few white students have shown me within and outside the classroom by not addressing me by my professional title. Since the beginning of my career I have been in the precarious position of defining and defending my professional identity because of my race and gender. Therefore, as I approached graduation for my doctorate I determined it would be in my best interest to be addressed as Doctor Harris when occupying space in the academy. (p. 57)

Pope and Joseph (1997) highlighted another problem: student harassment. Their work revealed African American women faculty were more likely to experience student harassment and less likely to report it. In a survey distributed to 200 African American women faculty, 54% reported experiencing harassment in the last 12 months. The harassment was 90% verbal (name calling, questioning authority, cursing, and disrespectful behavior), 8% physical threat, and 2% sexual harassment. Verbal harassment included comments, such as, "Bitch go back to Africa," "Black Bitch," "I don't want a colored teacher," and "You are here because of affirmative action" (p. 256). Important to note is the coupling of the words bitch and black. In 1977 a sex discrimination case that considered whether use of the word bitch when employed by a man was considered prejudice found for the plaintiff. The plaintiff's argument was based on the definition of bitch, a female dog in heat, seeking insemination and "judged by the cultural standards of the time, such a dog is considered lewd: one of the meanings of bitch when applied to a women" (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, p. 142). The hyper-sexualization of the African American woman has resulted in enduring stereotypes, which question her morality. Bell and Nkomo (2001) state the problem clearly, "when the word *black* is combined with the word *bitch*, it relegates a black women to a profoundly inferior position, grounded in the devalued status of being both black and female. It is a poignant reminder of her societal status, despite outstanding performance"

(p. 142). The harassment encountered by these women resulted in psychological, emotional, and physical symptoms including a sense of helplessness and/or powerlessness, vulnerability, depression, fear, anxiety, paranoia, anger, headaches, nervous stomach, and disordered sleep.

Although there has not been a great deal of research which articulates the relationship between student evaluations of teaching and the intersection of gender and race, what research which does exist is telling. Studies found that faculty of color, and particularly African American faculty, received overall lower rated evaluations of their teaching than white faculty. A faculty member reports,

> The complaints are never-ending, voluminous, and contradictory. I talk too loud or not loud enough. I walk too close to people and make them nervous. If I look at students, they are nervous. If I do not look at them they are angry. If I call on them I am picking on them. If I do not call on them, I have a personal vendetta against them…When I talk to students in an attempt to ascertain what I do that is so different from the other professors teaching the same section…they admit I do no more in class than their white male professors…the only difference appears to be that I am a Black female. (P. Smith, 1999, pp. 162-163)

Thompson and Dey (1998) found that women experienced greater levels of stress than men and that the stress levels of African American women faculty were even greater; "one of the greatest contributors of stress in two areas where greater stress is experienced- time constraints and overall stress—is[simply] being an African American woman" (p. 340). In a recent study, researchers found a significant positive relationship between the experience of gendered racism and global psychological distress for African American women (Thomas et al., 2008)

Survival Strategies

Numerous researchers suggested strategies to support the survival of African American women in the white academy; they are both individual and institutional. Henry and Glenn (2009) suggested making connections through mentorship, both formal and informal; involvement in professional organizations; spirituality, use of technology to overcome the lack of critical mass;

and utilization of institutional programming if offered as options. Gregory's research (1999, 2001) suggested numerous ways that African American women might mitigate challenges faced in the academy; this research is representative of the type of actions suggested in other research (Stanley, 2006b).

- Learning how to say "no" to a request when saying "yes" would detract from one's research and offering sound reasons for one's decision;

- Learning who one's friends are and are not, whom one can trust and whom one should avoid, all the while remembering to listen more than speak;

- Finding a mentor in one's field of expertise with whom one can feel comfortable and share common interests;

- Building a coalition among colleagues in and outside of one's department and institution for the purpose of seeking advice, sharing information, and collaborating;

- Making oneself visible and active in one's communities of reference;

- Thinking one's battles through and choosing them carefully; and

- Learning how to succeed quietly to facilitate being seen as a team player rather than a threat to one's peers. (p. 134)

Some of these suggestions are paradoxical in nature. Among these choices are instances where one's natural inclination to exercise voice and agency might need to be muted for survival, for example listening more than speaking, good advice for anyone in some situations but in this particular instance this strategy may have a silencing effect. Likewise "learning how to succeed quietly" though it may be strategic, it may also have a silencing effect, particularly in an environment where African American women experience invisibility. Bey (1995) focused on self-development and suggested seven strategies initially introduced by Gardner: develop a

maturing system to allow for continuous innovation, be willing to transfer the results of change

to long-term purposes, link the lifelong learning process to self-discovery, accept the risk of

failure in order to learn, maintain mutually fruitful relations with other human beings, develop

habits of thinking that are useful in new situations, and take action on matters that are important.

Acting as Change Agents

Despite the challenges faced by African American women in the academy and the bleak

picture that evolves from the literature, many women have and are claiming their space in the

academy and hold deep belief in their ability to impact the environment in radical ways. Though

arduous "the task is to continue to work as change agents without burnout, physical illness,

psychological stress and spiritual bankruptcy" (Harley, 2008, p. 34). African American women

bring to the academy a long tradition of self and community empowerment. Angela Davis

argued,

> If the presence of increasing numbers of black women within the academy is to have a
> transforming impact on both the academy and on communities beyond the academy, we
> have to think seriously about linkages between research and activism, about crossracial
> and transnational coalitional strategies, and about the importance of linking our work to
> radical social agendas (Davis & James, 1998, pp. 230-231)

Thomas' (2001) research is an important contribution to understanding African American

women scholar—activists and their location as change agents within the white academy. She

noted that although there is suggestion that "social change [is important to [to women of color

scholars]… the significance of social change among women of color scholars has not been

examined in depth (p. 82).

Cress, co-author of a study on race and ethnicity in the professoriate (1997), reported

findings from the study and stated "faculty of color are consistently more likely than white

faculty to be motivated in their careers by the opportunity to influence social values and social

change . . . manifested in the faculty's commitment to community service and in their goals for undergraduate" (Astin et al., 1997, para. 7). This is consistent with Antonio's (2002) findings that faculty of color were "75% more likely than white faculty to pursue a position in the academy because they draw a connection between the professoriate and the ability to affect change in society [and] are more likely to take personal responsibility for applying their talents to the cause of social change" (p. x). Thomas' qualitative research (2001) with a mixed race group of women focused on understandings of academic career success and illuminated a distinctive difference between the African American and Latina academics and the white women interviewed. She began to establish a connection between academic career satisfaction and a commitment to social change for women of color academicians in predominately white institutions. In the 60 interviews she conducted, African American and Latina women frequently cited acting as a social change agent as an indicator of career success while only one white woman did so. One of her African American interviewees stated:

> I can't separate career success from personal success. In fact, one of the struggles for me here is being able to walk my talk. The most important thing to me is having a certain integrity between what I'm trying to accomplish with my students and my classes . . . and who I am as a person. That has to do with making a difference, with working . . . struggling to make a more just world, a more socially and environmentally just world. (p. 85)

> Another respondent suggested that her presence brought change to the system.

> Making a difference; embracing a concept of community; being a change agent; fundamental change, not surface, not window dressing . . . but fundamental change . . . I'm the troublemaker who gives other people the courage to say what they were really thinking…that things are just not right. I don't mind taking the flack. So, I'm out there to try to change things for other people. I had people who did that for me . . . I think I do make a difference. (pp. 85-86)

Thomas' work intended to "show how the commitment to social change is both a part of 1) how these woman define academic success for themselves and 2) what keeps them in academe" (p. 84). Tyson (2001) also articulated her location in the academy as a scholar-activist:

> As a sister in the academy, the sum of who I am as a teacher, researcher, and activist makes it possible for me to continue to breathe a breath of life into my work: A breath of life that sustains pedagogy ground in critical consciousness, a research agenda grounded in an epistemology of cultural specificity and an activism grounded in emancipatory action. (p.148)

Davis (1999) utilized the plantation metaphor employed by Harley (2008) and John (1997) but pivoted its meaning. Drawing a parallel between the plantation kitchen and the academy as contested spaces for African American women, she advanced the notion of the power of the "kitchen legacy" as a transformative metaphorical space for African American women.

> The kitchen provided a space within which black women during and after slavery transformed their oppression into resistance and transformed an institution of white dominance. Like the Southern plantation kitchen, the Academy is a historically located space of racialized and gendered oppression and domination. (Davis, 1999, p. 370)

This kitchen table space is similar to the space hook (1990) invited us to. She distinguished between being marginalized and recognizing the power that conscious location at the margin can bring and identifies the margin as a "site of radical possibility, a space of resistance… a space of radical openness . . . it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternative, new worlds" (pp.140-150). Davis (1990) suggested the legacy of the kitchen can be used to "redefine [our] importance in the domain of whiteness . . . transform students and faculty . . . and . . . define and inform experience through provocative scholarship" (p. 372). In spite of and because of our outsider/within status (Collins) in the white academy Hoke (1997) recognized the

"potential for social change" as African American women initiate" individual and collective acts

of resistance" in the academy (p. 299). It is here in this interstitial space where our power lives.

> When the African American woman enters the halls of predominately white institution, she must bring with her a sense of self located firmly in the traditions of her ancestors, who prepared the way for her. Her objective must always be clearly focused on the strengthening of her community. She is needed, as Harriet Tubman was needed, to have courage in alien territory and to be tough in the presence of threats to African American dignity and expression. She along with all similarly positioned African American and well- intentioned people of other races, has to confront repressive systems and behavior when she sees them. She must develop an immunity to the discomfort of whites and the hostility directed toward her by thinking of herself as a change agent for a more humane world. (Baraka, 1997a, p. 322)

Chapter III: Method

Empirical research can take a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method form. A quantitative approach asserts, "Reality …is stable, observable and measurable" (Merriam, 1997, p. 4), while the qualitative research paradigm attempts to understand " the meaning people have constructed, that is , how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p.6). Multidisciplinary in application, as well as multi-method in nature, qualitative research takes an "interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter . . . qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meaning people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). I conducted a qualitative study using grounded theory method (GTM) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Specifically, I used a constructivist approach to GTM[2] as described by Charmaz (2000, 2006). Schatzman's dimensional analysis, a systematic approach to "parts, attributes, interconnections, context, processes, and implications" of an experience (Schatzman, 1991, p. 309) was used to analyze the data and propose theoretical matrices grounded in the data (Bowers, 1988; Kools, McCarthy et al., 1996; Schatzman, 1991; Schatzman & Strauss,1973).

Qualitative inquiry allowed me to capture the richness of African American women scholar-activists' unique meaning making in the context of their locations as change agents in the academy while I also explored thematic patterns and social processes that emerged from their collective meaning.

> grounded theory researchers are interested in patterns of action and interaction between and among various types of social units (i.e., 'actors'). . . . They are also much concerned with discovering process- not necessarily in the sense of stages or phases, but of

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[2] In agreement with Bryant and Charmaz (2007), Grounded Theory Method (GTM) refers to the method and Grounded Theory (GT) refers to what results from using the method (p.3.)

reciprocal changes in patterns of action/interaction and in relationship changes of conditions either internal or external to the process itself. (p. 278)

As a method, grounded theory provides systematic and thorough procedures to explore complex social phenomena. Rooted in the sociological tradition of symbolic interactionism, grounded theory's primary aim is theory development Blumer, 1969 (Mead & Morris, 1934). It is not the testing of theory, but the construction of theory, that is grounded in the experience of those living in the phenomena studied. In this study, I was not solely interested in the creation of theory—but the recovery of accessible and useful theory —theory that was grounded in the experience of the participants and that is, therefore, authentic and relevant. Strauss and Corbin suggested that not every grounded theory will have practical application; commitments to our social world "carry responsibilities to develop or use theory that can be of service…" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 281). To be of service, hooks (1994b) reminds us that "any theory that cannot be shared in everyday conversation cannot be used to educate the public" (p.64).

This inquiry lies at the intersection of gender and race and, as such, is framed as a social justice project and at its core emancipatory. Charmaz (2005) suggested GTM lends itself well to studies centered on social justice projects and can illuminate "how inequalities are played out at interactional and organizational level" while shedding light on "how, when, and to what extent participants construct and enact power, privilege, and inequality" (p. 512). This was the aim of the study. In this Chapter I discuss the methodological fit of grounded theory and feminist methods, paying specific attention to the evolution of GT and epistemological tensions with feminist method. I then turn to a detailed discussion of method, including sampling procedures, participant selection, interview preparation, data analysis, and criteria for assessing a GT study. Finally, I consider ethical considerations that are relevant to the implementation of this research.

Methodological Fit: Epistemological Tensions

As the qualitative landscape continues to evolve, new tensions invite us to deepen our inquiry while remaining committed to "study human experience from the ground up, from the point of interacting individuals who, together and alone, make and live histories that have been handed down to them from the ghosts of the past" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1063). Olesen (2007) suggested "grounded theorists have much to learn from reflexive feminist research . . . [while] feminists have much to learn from newer formulations of grounded theory" (p. 428). This section explores the separate and complex developmental strains of GTM and feminist research and considers their potential mutually beneficial convergence at the postmodern turn.

Over the last three decades feminist researchers have challenged the hegemonic ontological assumption that there is an objective reality as well as the embedded claims of ownership and control of knowledge construction by dominant research paradigms. Feminist research is not monolithic but "variegated and emergent" (Olesen, 1994). At the approach of the new millennium, feminist qualitative research is highly diversified, enormously dynamic, and thoroughly challenging to its practitioners, its followers, and its critics. Competing models of thought jostle, divergent methodological and analytic approaches compete; what once were clear theoretical differences (Fee, 1983) are now blurred boundaries (Olesen, 1994, p. 215).

Despite the multiplicity of feminist qualitative research epistemologies (e.g. standpoint, empiricism, postmodern), commonalties exist. Reinharz and Davidman (1992) identifed the themes central to the feminist research paradigm, such as being trans-disciplinary, creating social change, striving to represent human diversity, and seeking an interactive stance with participants and the audience of readers. These themes resonate with me as a feminist researcher; in this study I have strived to assimilate these values in the research process.

At the heart of the feminist research landscape is the notion of reflexivity (Fine, 1994; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding, 1986, 1991; Hartsock, 1998; Olesen, 1994;Reinharz & Davidman, 1992; Ribbens Jane, 1997; Riger, 1995; Miller et al., 2002; Wolf, 1996). Distinct from the positivistic notion of researcher objectivity, reflexivity makes explicit the complex and symbiotic relationship between researcher and subject, researcher and data, and researcher and meaning-making. By acknowledging the impact/import of a researcher's received knowledge and lived experience on inquiry, reflexivity requires mindfulness and an awareness, which unpacks and consciously examines that relationship throughout the research process.

Reflexivity means reflecting upon and understanding our own personal, political, and intellectual autobiographies as researchers and making explicit where we are located in relation to our research respondents. Reflexivity also means acknowledging the critical role we play in creating, interpreting, and theorizing research data (Mauthner and Doucet 1998, p.121).

Additional feminist values (Brabeck, 2000; Brabeck & Brown, 1997; Brabeck & Ting, 2000; Freyd & Quina, 2000; Worell & Johnson, 1997; Worell & Oakley, 2000) that informed my research practice include a) valuing collaboration, b) emphasizing mutuality and reciprocity in the research process, c) paying attention to power dynamics: individual, organizational, and societal, d) valuing personal narratives, e) paying attention to language use: choice of terms, f) recognizing the power of self-definition, g) viewing the research participant as the expert, h) recognizing the importance of social context: local, state, national), and i) having a social justice orientation. These stated values at first glance might appear to be incongruent with the objective stance of the researcher utilizing classic grounded theory analytic strategies. Adhering to the belief that results should evolve from the setting, grounded theory requires that researchers set aside all preconceived ideas. Even basic variables like sex, class, and race are included in

grounded models only if they appear to be significant during the research process. Glaser

(1978), in particular, had little use for "issue-oriented" research that is "positional, selective, one-

sided, non-varied, moral and non-comparative" (p. 163).

Is it possible or necessary to integrate this statement with my identity as a Black feminist

researcher who used grounded theoretical strategies? How did I reconcile this when embedded in

my examination is an acute awareness of, and interest in, the impact of gender, race, class, and

sexual orientation on the narratives of the research participants as well as the impact this lens has

on how I read the data? Central to my query regarding the appropriateness of utilizing grounded

theoretical strategies as feminist researchers are ontological, epistemological, and, therefore,

methodological considerations.

My struggle to reconcile these positions reflects the continued evolution and dynamic

state of grounded theory application and strategies as well as the discursive nature of qualitative

inquiry in the new millennium. Grounded theory itself is subject to change and interpretation.

Annells (1996) reminded us that it is "vital to recognize that the method [grounded theory] is

subject to evolutionary change with differing modes resultant and is therefore not static in regard

to philosophical perspective, fit with a paradigm of inquiry, and research process" (p. 391). A

brief review of the progression of GTM theorizing is valuable as its movement mirrors the

ruptures to hegemonic knowledge production provoked by feminist, queer, postcolonial, and

scholars of colo

Since its discovery with the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967), what constitutes GTM has been highly contested terrain while simultaneously

becoming one of the most widely used methods of qualitative inquiry, "surpassing ethnography"

(Morse, 2009, p. 13). Glaser and Strauss' work revolutionized and legitimized qualitative inquiry in an era when the zeitgeist proscribed,

> Mid century positivist conceptions of scientific method and knowledge stressed objectivity, generality, replication of research, and falsification of competing hypotheses and theories…Positivism led to quest for valid instruments, technical procedures, replicable research designs and verifiable quantitative knowledge. (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 4-5)

Star (2007) recalled her reading of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* when she was a student at the University of California at San Francisco as "a manifesto for freedom from the sterile methods that permeated social sciences at the time" (p. 77). In response to the hegemony represented by positivism and a desire for validation of qualitative inquiry, Glaser and Strauss (1967), while at the University of California, San Francisco co-created a container for "systematic qualitative research" and positioned qualitative inquiry as not merely descriptive, but explanatory. The paradox, as Bryant and Charmaz (2007) suggested, is that they "simultaneously positioned themselves against the quantitative orthodoxy and whether or not they were aware of it, offered a way of mimicking this orthodoxy: the same but different" (p. 33). By the early 1990s, Glaser and Strauss' ideas about GTM diverged; however, Charmaz (2000) stated "despite their differences both their positions remain imbued with positivism, with its objectivist underpinnings" (p. 510). Yet their collaborative work birthed a revitalization of the qualitative landscape, and their students and their students' students continue to extend their work. Innovations include those of Leonard Schatzman (who worked with Strauss): dimensional analysis, a less mechanistic alternate analytic approach for the generation of grounded theory; Charmaz (a student of both Glaser and Strauss): constructivist grounded theory and, most recently, Adele Clarke (a student of Strauss): situational analysis, the innovation that decidedly takes GTM to the postmodern turn.

The discourse continues as researchers subscribing to postmodern and constructivist epistemological paradigms explore philosophical fitness with grounded theory methodology. Wuest (1995) suggested that there is a nexus between grounded theory and postmodern feminist epistemology. Charmaz (2000) explored the difference between objectivist and constructivist methods of grounded theory and opened the door for "researchers starting from other vantage points—feminist, Marxist, phenomenologist—[to] use grounded theory strategies for their empirical studies." She asserts, "constructivist grounded theory celebrates firsthand knowledge of empirical world, takes a middle ground between postmodernism and positivism, and offers accessible methods for taking qualitative research into the 21st century"(p. 510). Annells (1996) concludes,

> classic grounded theory . . . is philosophically critical realist, and modified objectivist in perspective, with a resultant slant towards theory generation that is post positivist in inquiry paradigm. However, when it is relativist, subjectivist, and dialectical, grounded theory method has an evolving fit to the constructivist paradigm of inquiry. (p. 396)

Hall (2001) called for enhanced rigor in grounded theory methods by incorporating reflexivity and relationality. She contended that "arguments advanced by a number of authors about the movement of grounded theory toward a more reflexive and constructivist approach (Annells, 1996; Charmez, 1990; Wuest, 1995) do not fit with descriptions of grounded theory that have been advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1994, 1998)" (Hall, 2001, p. 270) .

Clearly, traditional "grounded theory methods have come under attack from both within and without" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 509). Yet, a closer examination of Strauss and Corbin's theory illuminates values that may be consistent with the feminist research paradigm. Strauss and Corbin (1998) recognized that "researchers utilizing grounded theory have undoubtedly been influenced by contemporary intellectual trends and movement, including ethnomethodology,

feminism, political economy, and varieties of postmodernism" (p. 276). They suggest variables,

such as gender; race and class are entered, analytically, as conditions.

> The procedure is to ask, what is the influence of gender (for instance), or power, or social class on the phenomena under study? - then to trace this influence as precisely as possible, as well its influence flowing in reverse direction. Grounded theory procedures force us to ask for example: What is power in this situation and under specified conditions? How is it manifested, by whom, when, where, how, with what consequences (and for whom or what)? Not to remain open to such a range of questions is to obstruct the discovery of important features of power in situ and to preclude developing its further conceptualization? Knowledge is, after all, linked closely with time and place [italics added]. (p. 276)

In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined objectivity as "openness, a willingness to

listen and to 'give voice' to respondents, be they individuals or organizations" a statement

consistent with feminist values (p. 43). Finally they recognized the professional knowledge and

personal experience that researchers bring to their work, which they call *theoretical sensitivity*.

Theoretical sensitivity consists of disciplinary or professional knowledge, as well as both

research and personal experiences, that the researcher brings to his or her inquiry. "The more

theoretically sensitive researchers are to issues of class, gender, race, power, and the like, the

more attentive they will be to these matters" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 280) However these

analytical conditions and theoretically sensitive researcher stances still fail to fully embrace the

messiness of situated knowledge in the postmodern.

> What was center is now decentered; what was margin and border is now taking center stage…what was marked formerly by the firm and rigid shapes of a Eurocentric geometry is now the fluid, shape-shifting, image of chemical flux and transformation, as margins move to the center, the center moves to the margins, and the whole is reconstituted again in some new form. (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1063)

Clarke asserted Straussian grounded theory in some ways had one foot in the postmodern

but in general "grounded theory was recalcitrant against the postmodern in its lack of explicit

reflexivity, oversimplification, singular 'basic social process,' and framing of variation as

negative cases" (Clarke, 2007, p. 369). Via situational analysis Clarke's (2005) intent was to reground grounded theory and "further enable, sustain, and enhance [the] shifts represented by Charmaz's constructivist GTM…towards interpretive, constructivist" with the addition of "relativist and perspectival understandings" (p. x). This cartographic innovation adjunctive to constructivist method adds breadth, depth, circularity and fluidity to the analytic process by mapping the human and non-human relationships in the research arena, mapping the social worlds in which the relationships exist, and mapping the positions taken and negotiated by the actors in the research arenas. Critical to Clarke is the uncovering of once silenced voices and meaning that have been distorted. As a result of these enhancements, Feminist researchers have increasingly utilized grounded theoretical strategies (Davidson, 1995; Delois, 1994; Hill & Thomas, 2000; Kushner & Harrison, 2002; Wuest, 1998, 2000, 2001; Wuest & Merritt Gray, 1999, 2001) and found them compatible with feminist and social justice research values, by problematizing "gender, it's production, enactment, and performance along with race, class and sexual orientation in material, historical and cultural contexts" (Olesen, 2007, p. 426).

I utilized Charmaz's (2000, 2005, 2006) constructivist approach in this study. This moved the method away from its positivistic roots and emphasized the studied phenomena rather than the methods of studying it. Constructivist grounded theorists take a reflexive stance on modes of knowing and representing studied life. That means giving close attention to empirical realities and our collected renderings of them: locating oneself in these realities (Charmaz, 2006. p. 509). I did not come to this study tabla rasa or value free. I brought with me tacit knowledge gained through personal and professional lived experience. The multiplicity of my identity is salient to the research process. I am an African-American woman; 55 years old; a faculty member at a small, predominately white college in rural Vermont; a licensed psychotherapist; a

feminist; and a social activist. These facts, among other personal descriptors, held meaning

relevant to the research process and its outcome. Attention was paid to them. I identity with

Black feminist thought, and with this identification comes a particular epistemological stance,

worldview, and way of knowing.[3] Denzin and Lincoln (1994) asserted it is essential to take into

account,

> the personal biography of the gendered researcher, who speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways. (p. 23)

 I spent considerable time exploring the impact my identity had on the research process.

What is the impact on participant responses? How did my lived experience impact the way in

which I saw, read the data? These considerations were integral to the research process and are

particularly relevant to feminist researchers. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) noted the personal

relationship Glaser and Strauss had with the focus of their initial research, which led to the

writing of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). The illness and subsequent death of

Strauss' mother spurred his interest in death and dying; Glaser joined the research effort after the

death of his father. I have a personal stake in the focus of this study, and locating myself as

researcher and participant in the social arena in which the research dynamics occur was essential.

Audre Lorde (1984) was not speaking of research methodology when she wrote, "the masters

tools will never dismantle the master's house." Her potent comment was an indictment of white

feminist academics' failure to include the lived experiences and voices of poor women, women

of color, and lesbians in the feminist discourse as well as a clarion call for justice. Lorde's

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[3] Black is as important a descriptor as feminist. It acknowledges the critical contribution made by women of color who challenged second wave/mainstream feminist essentialism. Their contribution illuminates the intersectionality of gender, race, class and sexual orientation and broadens the scope of feminist analysis to include issues of power/control and privilege/oppression across multiple dimensions of identity.

statement is germane to the continually contested and emergent nature of qualitative inquiry in the new millennium. Lincoln and Denizen (2005) divided the historical development of qualitative inquiry in the United States into eight "moments"[4] which, though distinct, overlap and live in the present. We are situated in the eighth moment, *the fractured future*, and it is a compelling time to be deeply involved in the qualitative process. It is a "politically charged environment" where "class, race, gender and ethnicity shape inquiry," and the clarion call for justice "asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversation about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom and community" (pp. 3-18).

Design of the Study

GTM is an iterative process and "is based around heuristics and guidelines rather than rules and prescriptions" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 17). This study began with broad interest about the change processes that occur when African American women scholar-activists are present in the academy. As the study progressed, the systematic collection of data and concomitant coding, analysis, and interpretation acted as a feedback loop. Questions continued to evolve and be discovered throughout the process as I returned to the data. Ultimately the theory emerged directly from the data and was firmly based in the lived experience of the participants.

This section includes discussions of the following: sampling procedures, participant selection, interview process, data preparation (recording, transcribing, data collection) and analysis, and criteria for assessing a GT. Strauss and Corbin (1998) told us "the research question in a qualitative study is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studied"

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[4] Denzin and Lincoln (2005) provide a complete discussion of the eight moments of inquiry; the traditional (1900-1950), the modernist (1950-70), blurred genres (1970-1986), the crisis of representation (1986-1990), postmodern or experimental (1990-1995), postexperimental inquiry (1995-2000), the methodologically contested present (2000-2004) and the fractured future (2005 -).

(p. 41). This study began with a foreshadowed question: in this case broadly, how do African American women scholar-activists understand themselves as change agents in institutions of higher education.

Participant Selection

Purposeful sampling guided the participant selection process. In this case I was interested in uncovering the meaning and processes leading for African-American scholar-activists who identify with Black Feminist Thought in predominately white institutions of higher education. I used the snowball sampling technique, "an approach for locating information-rich key informants" (Patton, 2002, p. 237). Snowball sampling is a widely used method of non-probability sampling commonly employed when a population with specific characteristics may be difficult to identify as an established group. The researcher initially identifies a few individuals with the desired characteristics to interview and then asks those individuals whom they know who possesses the same characteristics and might be willing to participate in the research; subsequent research participants are asked to do the same and so on. The snowball effect is realized as the sample grows organically with each set of referred research participants and is accumulative. The technique utilizes social networks and respondent participation in the research process. A critique of snowball sampling suggests it is not an effective strategy to identify a broad representative sample. In this case I am interested in a specific population, African American women academics who identity as feminist. Given the small number of African American women in the academy, the additional descriptor: feminist, which further limits the population, and the desire embedded in the research to identify a community of practice, the use of the sampling strategy was appropriate.

The initial participants were culled from colleagues who identify as feminist African-American scholar, as well as several women I met at the National Women's Studies Association conference through the Women of Color Caucus in 2009 and 2010. I asked my initial contacts for names of other individuals who might like to participate. Several of the participants sent out group emails to women they knew who either agreed to be contacted by me or contacted me directly. This yielded a total of 18 women who participated in the study. The age range of the 18 women interviewed was 30-70 years. The disciplines represented by the participants were located in the social sciences and the humanities. Eighteen different institutions were represented, and five of the participants teach in the same institution. They also teach at other predominately white institutions. In the latter case the women spoke about their experiences in both institutions. The types of institutions where they were employed are as follows: Research I, state and city universities, and private liberal arts colleges. Geographically, urban, suburban, and rural institutions were represented.

Data Collection, Preparation, and Analysis

In this method, data collection and data analysis go hand in hand. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) "data collection should be followed immediately by analysis…the questions that arise by making comparisons among incidents become guides for further data gathering" (p. 207). This is known as the constant comparison method of data analysis.

Interviewing. I conducted 18 interviews. Seventeen interviews were conducted by phone, and one was conducted in person. Although my preference would have been to conduct all of the interviews in person, physical and financial constraints precluded me from doing so. The phone interviews yielded rich data, and I found no detriment to the process by using the phone. The interviews were conducted in three informal sets: the first three interviews were

conducted in the fall of 2011, the second group of six interviews in the winter of 2012, and the

final set of nine interviews in the late spring of 2012. These informal groupings allowed for the

constant comparative method to deepen the analytic process by giving me the opportunity to

deeply consider the meaning of each set of interviews and build on each as the research

progressed. The interviews were each approximately 60 minutes in duration, were audiotaped,

and then transcribed by an outside transcriber. I asked two broad open-ended

questions/statements in each interview. I began with the following: talk to me about your

experience as an African American woman in a predominately white institution. The second

question asked of each participant was as follows: what impact, if any, do you believe your

presence has on the environment in which you work? As each interview proceeded, I followed

up with probing questions appropriate to the participant's unfolding story. Occasionally during

the interviewing phase there were instances when a participant introduced an idea that was

especially unique and that was echoed at a later time by another participant. After a newly

introduced concept was verified a couple of times, I would intentionally ask a question about the

concept in subsequent interviews to test the concept. For example, when I noticed that at least

three participants mentioned intra-racial complexities in the context of the white academy, I

wondered whether this resonated with other participants and specifically framed an additional

question in subsequent interviews. While questioning it was important not to force the data into

preconceived categories. According to Charmaz (2006), not only do the "wrong questions fail to

explore pivotal issues or to elicit participants' experiences in their own language [but that] such

questions may also impose the researcher's concepts, concerns, and discourse upon the research

participant's reality from the start" (p. 32). I did not ask questions that led the interviewee in a

particular direction based on any pre-interpretations or expectations that I held.

Memoing. After each interview, I wrote a memo, an activity that "clarifies ideas . . . and their possible meanings" (Goulding, 1998, p. 110). Writing memos is an important piece of the analytical puzzle, and, according to Lempert (2007), "It is the fundamental process of researcher/data engagement that results in grounded theory" (p. 245). Memo writing "should begin with the initial analysis and continue throughout the research process. . . . they [are] important documents [that] record the progress, thoughts, feelings, and directions of the research and the researchers…at the end it is impossible for the analyst to reconstruct the details of the research without memos" (Strauss &Corbin, 1998, p. 218). In addition, writing and reflecting on memos can aid in identifying alternative explanations.

Given my insider/outsider relationship to the research focus, I broadened the role of memoing in the research process. In this study an essential use of memoing was not only to bracket my own reaction to the material to ensure the emergent theory was grounded in the respondent's experience as expected in GTM but also to simultaneously make visible and honor my personal responses to the material based on my lived experience. I wrote memos throughout the data analysis and formally reflected on my relationship to the stories conveyed to me. My bracketed thoughts in the form of a reflective statement are included as an epilogue to this study.

Coding. NVivo 9, a software program for analyzing textual data was used to record and manipulate the coded data. Coding is "the pivotal link between data and developing an emergent theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p.47). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) the purposes of coding procedures are to "1. Build rather than test theory 2. Provide researchers with analytic tools for handling masses of raw data 3. Help analysts to consider alternative meanings of the phenomena. 4. Be systematic and creative simultaneously, and 5. Identify, develop and relate concepts that are the building blocks of theory" (p. 13).

Several levels of coding occurred during the analytic process. I began by open coding the first six interviews which is the process by which "concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.101). By doing line-by-line coding and axial coding, analytical categories emerged from the lived experience of the research participants. I continued line by line to code the subsequent interviews until I reached saturation. In total, 329 codes emerged.

After the initial coding, I moved to another level of abstraction and began the process of theory building by conceptualizing the codes. The conceptualization process collapses and groups the codes based on how they relate to each other—this is theoretical coding. As the study proceeded and categories began to emerge, I turned to theoretical sampling, "initial sampling is where you start, whereas theoretical sampling is where you go" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 100). Theoretical sampling allowed me to hone the emerging theory by going back to data collection in the final interviews, receiving my direction from what the data said through the constant comparative method of analysis.

An important aspect of the analytic process was the participation of my coding collaborator, an experienced PhD, qualitative researcher. This individual brought new perspectives to the analysis. At intervals during the coding process, he participated in the coding and analytic process. He read and independently coded one third of the transcripts; I added the codes he identified to the set I had developed and coded the remainder of the interviews. As I moved to the stage of analysis where I began to develop and test theoretical propositions, we engaged in reflexive dialogue about the emergent theory.

Interviewing, writing memos, and concomitant coding and category building continued until I reached saturation, and the data collected failed to reveal new analytical insights. Charmaz

(2006) suggested that many qualitative researchers confuse seeing the same pattern repeatedly with reaching saturation. She contended and agreed with Glaser (2001) that saturation is more nuanced than this. In this view saturation refers to categorical saturation.

> Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualization of comparisons of these incidents, which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This yields the conceptual density that when integrated into hypotheses make up the body of the generated grounded theory with theoretical completeness. (p. 191)

As categories and concepts surfaced, I drafted diagrams that served as visual representations of the emergent theory that helped me to see relationships among ideas.

Ethics in Action

I obtained institutional review board approval from Antioch University and obtained informed consent from the participants to conduct the research as well as to record interviews (see Appendix A). As a feminist qualitative researcher, I understand that the practice of ethics in qualitative research requires an examination that has more breadth and depth than is reflected in ethical codes; "ethical considerations are much more wide-ranging than they are empirical and theoretical and permeate the qualitative research process." (Miller et al., 2002, p. 1). True ethical practice requires deep reflection beyond ensuring confidentiality, and its limits have been explained. Informed consent is obtained, and approval is received from institutional review boards. Qualitative research demands a more careful examination of the question of ethics. Conducting qualitative research requires engagement between the researcher and researched. Consequently, boundaries are imprecise and not as clearly defined.

Most of the ethical codes "are based on the empirical paradigm, where the research is on top and in control. When we move toward qualitative research . . . new ethical questions arise. Our own authenticity comes into question. We are now talking about power much more. We are

also talking about the self of the researcher as an issue. . . . the ethical problems become both wider and deeper. (Rowan, 2000, p. 103)

Like a researcher's epistemological and methodological stance, one's ethical stance is tethered to values. Once again, one must locate oneself in an ethical paradigm. An ethical stance is guided by philosophical positioning, and the contextualized research environment; it is a reflection of "our own moral, social, political and cultural location in the social world" (Miller et al., 2002, p. 1). Ethical practice does not occur in a theoretical vacuum, bridging the divide between theoretical/philosophical underpinnings and practice results in tensions and dilemmas unique to each research environment. The word practice implies action; ethical practice does not end when the researcher has attended to pragmatic concerns. "Satisfactorily completing an ethics form at the beginning of a study and/or obtaining ethics approval does mean that ethical issues can be forgotten, rather ethical considerations should form an on-going part of the research" (Miller & Bell, 2002, p. 52). Ethical practice is process-oriented and dialogical, demanding the same constant reflexivity, "the thinking forwards as well as back" demanded of all mindful research (Gillies & Alldred, 2002, p. 47). In this framework ethical practice is dynamic rather than static, relationship based rather than rule oriented, and lived rather than abstract.

As a feminist qualitative researcher, I recognize the centrality of power and the potency of relationship in the research process. Illuminating power dynamics and negotiating relational issues are core to the ethical process. Reflections on my ethical process were guided by considering the questions posed by Edwards and Mauthner's (2002) feminist ethics of care and practical guidelines:

- Who are the people involved in and affected by the ethical dilemma raised in the research?

- What is the context for the dilemma in terms of the specific topic of the research and the issues it raises personally and socially for those involved?

- What are the specific social and personal locations of the people involved?

- What are the needs of those involved and how are they inter-related?

- Who am I identifying with, who am I posing as other, and why, what is the balance of personal and social power between those involved?

- How will those involved understand our actions and are these in balance with our judgment about our own practice?

- How can we best communicate the ethical dilemmas to those involved, give them room to raise their views, and negotiate with and between them?

- How will our actions affect relationships between the people involved? (pp. 28-30)

Ethical practice must be viewed organically, holistically and contextually.   How does an individual "consent" to qualitative inquiry before the fact? Issues of confidentiality and informed consent raises complex questions long after the forms have been signed. Miller and Bell (2002) "argue that 'consent' should be ongoing and renegotiated between researcher and researcher and researched throughout the research process" (p. 53).

In this project I have disciplinary sameness: I speak the same language and may have had similar experiences—I possess what has been called insider status, yet I am an external researcher (Acker, 2000). How did this status impact the research process, support and/or hinder my efforts, and color what I saw? One strategy to mitigate potential issues resulting from my insider status was to consult with an outsider while coding and analyzing the data.

Actual practice uncovers a plethora of complex ethical questions. I enlisted the help of a research partner to practice the reflexivity necessary for true ethical practice. I agree with Doucet

and Mauthner (2000) that reflexivity goes beyond locating oneself in terms of gender, race, class,

or sexual orientation.

> A robust conception of reflexivity means giving greater attention to the interplay between our multiple social locations and how these intersect with the particularities of our personal biographies at the time of analyzing data . . . [and] should include reflecting on, and being accountable about personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological, and ontological influences on our research. (p. 134)

Collaboratively I raised questions, challenged my received knowledge, and reflected on

the research process as it unfolded. I strove to remain conscious of the "inherent tensions in

qualitative research …characterized by fluidity and inductive uncertainty" and the concomitant

impact on my work (Miller et al., 2002, p. 2).

Chapter IV: Dimensional Analysis

In Chapter IV I will present the primary dimensions and their properties as they emerged from the women's stories of experiences in the white academy. Each of the five primary dimensions will be described conceptually as they uniquely emerged in the context of these women's lives. The properties of the dimensions create deeper meaning to the dimensions and are illustrated by the quotes from the interviews. The process of making meaning through the dimensional analysis was aptly described by Schatzman in Kools et al. (1996)

> The dimension that provides the greatest explanation for the relationship among dimensions is ultimately selected as the central or key perspective from which to organize or 'choreograph' the data…The final product of this synthesis is a grounded theory 'which gives theoretical and explanatory form to a story that would otherwise be regarded, at best, as fine description. (p. 319)

The central or core dimension in this study was Robust Sense of Self. Table 4.1 presents each of the primary dimensions—Risking Self, Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the academy, Persisting, Exercising Voice and Agency, and their properties. Chapter V will be reserved for the discussion of the theoretical matrix and final theoretical propositions.

To assist in tracking the many elements to this analysis, I have used italics and title case for all primary dimensions and italics sentence case for properties. At the end of each quote there is a number that refers to an individual participant to allow the reader to recognize that all interviews were accessed in the meaning making process of analysis.

Table 4.1 Primary Dimensions and Their Properties

Perspective: African American Women Scholars				
Context : The White Academy				
Dimensions	**Properties**			
Robust Sense of Self *Core Dimension*	*Embodied female blackness*	*Aliveness of received values*		
Risking Self	*Diss/Ease Impact on Body, Spirit*	*Challenges to Authority*	*Uneven Burden*	*Feeling the Need to be Perfect*	*Inimical Environment*
Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the academy	*Critiquing the Topography*	*Under/Over Exposed: Visibility, Invisibility, Hypervisibility*	*Outsiderness*	*Intra-racial complexities*	
Persisting	*Connectivity*	*Cultivating Reciprocity*	*Actively Learning*		
Exercising Voice and Agency	*Responsibility to Students*	*Acting*	*Valuing Rigor*	*Impacting*	*Asserting Personhood*

Primary Dimension: Risking Self

The dimension *Risking Self* illuminates the process that occurs when African American women scholars who participated in the study chose to pursue an academic career in white institutions. There is a difference between being *at risk* and the process *risking self.* While at risk has come to connote some deficit characteristic, such as low socioeconomic status that puts a particular demographic group at risk in a particular environment, risking self places the agency, the act of risking, in the hands of the individual who experiences the consequences.

African American women scholars who participated in the study report being faced with a range of situations where risking self is evident. Among other things, they report attempts by

colleagues to sabotage their success, feelings of being disposable, greater risks of being fired or laid off, and the devaluation of their scholarship when its foci are race, class, gender, or other. They describe feeling unsafe and used, experiencing the loss of voice, and being accused of not being collegial. At times they are pitted against each other and penalized for not embracing the projective roles imagined and assigned to them, all of which can be experienced as attempts to deny personhood. These experiences are articulated in the properties *Diss/Ease, Impact on Body, Spirit, Challenges to Authority, Uneven Burden, Feeling the Need to be Perfect, and Inimical Environment.*

Risking self: Diss/ease, impact on body, spirit. Many of the participants spoke directly about the ways their location in the academy impacted their physical, emotional, and spiritual selves. One participant notes, *"*I'm actually recovering it's been hell. I've lost friends. I've lost respect for a lot of people. I've seen some ugly things, and I got shut down. It's surprising as an adult that this took such a toll on me. The isolation, the attacks. Yeah, it's been really bad. *(18)*. Women report the strain they experience on a day to day basis and how, over time, the insidiousness and invisible tensions wears one down. One participant notes the physical toll and impact on her social relationships outside the academy:

> It's taken its toll on me in many ways . . . this stuff distresses you. It's not nice to be in a place where you feel like your dignity is under attack, or you don't feel like you're really being given fair treatment. Even if it's not overt and in your face or like some one's hanging a noose over your door or whatever, even if it's subtle and it's just like a whispering thing, or it's just—it does have an effect on you. I've reached a point where I'm not sure that I'll actually stay there, which is too bad because I think I've been good for the college and for the students. But it's hasn't been easy. I mean, it has had a physical toll. It has affected my relationships. It did lead to the breakup of a relationship that I had. It does—because this stuff, it really weighs on you. It wears you down. (7)

Participants describe the visceral impact the academy can have on their spirit:

> I feel like the academy is soul crushing; and that ultimately, I'm not sure if I can stay because it makes me unhappy because it expects you to work at a super human level

without any support and links. You're supposed to somehow take your emotions out of it, and be logical, professional, and always on time and always on point. And it's this weird little world where we just get wrapped up in the micro politics of what the academy wants. And I feel like what's the point if we're not like making something happen at a broader level like changing the way people think? (12)

Participants make a direct connection between their identity as an African American woman and the strain and taxing weight on their spirit that they experience:

Our emotions and spirits are always at stake, if we don't respond properly. If you respond positively, then you're rewarded; and if you don't respond positively, then you're not rewarded. And so, either you're the kind of go to happy Negro, or you're the person to avoid. Either you're the angry black woman or the nurturing nanny figure . . . so I can't really think about the impact because I feel disposable and replaceable. You know, that if it's not me, it's someone else who is performing those functions. (4)

The following participant describes how difficult it is to relax in the environment based on her received knowledge about white environments and the hyper-vigilant stance many feel it requires. She knows that this is not a healthy position.

It's sort of letting that be okay, and letting it be okay to kind of relax in this context even though every message about survival that I've kind of internalized tells me you can't ever relax because that's going to be your undoing as soon as you shut that other eye. Somebody is going to fuck with you. And at this point, it's sort of like even if that's true, that's not necessarily a reasonable way to live. (6)

It is apparent to the participants that their position in the academy is unique, that although other individuals may experience stress, their experience is directly related to their identities as African American women.

You know that it's not everybody that's getting this kind of treatment. You know it's not everybody whose promotion is being sabotaged. You know that it's not everybody who is being harassed having crazy things being put in their files, which are not true about their competence whether they can teach, and whether they can write. You know that's not everybody, and so of course, that's going to make you bitter and angry. And you have to wonder why especially when you think that it might be racist. That does make you want to withdraw. (7)

The constant stress of the academy can have real physical consequences, clearly stated by

another participant who reports the myriad of recurring health issues she has experienced since

becoming faculty:

> I've had so many health problems since I started with a range of issues from my weight, to my thyroid, to depression, to food allergies. I've developed 17 food allergies, environmental allergies and my body reacts to everything to being constantly sick, migraines, eye issues, I didn't have glasses before and all of these kind of things. But you either go through sick by trying to do your own thing, or you become a bureaucrat who never gets to publish your own work again because they keep you so busy in some position running something that you don't really do the scholarship anymore and you hardly teach. (12)

Several women indicated they are aware of the anecdotal and documented evidence that

being in the white academy negatively impacts physical health: dying young was on the minds of

several of the respondents:

> It just seemed to me that so many black women in the academia, particularly in white institutions, were dying young from cancer. And the correlation to me was really quite clear and the statistics were stark. So I fled from that institution with no job prospects right when we hit the recession. But you know it just felt safer to me to not be there anymore than to stay there and to get trapped there because of the comfort of having a secure, fulltime job. I just saw that it was something that was easy to get trapped into. And that I wouldn't be able to get out of it, and it could possibly kill me. (4)

Her concerns were underscored by another participant's reflection on martyrdom:

> I don't want to be a martyr . . . many people have seen how it's not only that black faculty gets stuck in associate positions, struggle to come up to tenure, but that they also die young in this profession. I do think a lot about that because one is exhausted at the end of the day because you do give so much. It does often feel like it is about you, that it is personal. It is hard to contend with racism. It is part of what it does is eroding spirit. It erodes us physically, our health, and so on. So I'm choosing not to give my life physically to this job. (14)

The following participant notes that her status as junior faculty increases her

vulnerability:

> I've got to find a way that once I'm no longer in my vulnerable position as a junior scholar, and they can't touch me anymore, and I can just do what I want, to either make it really work, so I can be more of an agent of change and more creative, while not being

swallowed up by the bureaucracy. Because the other thing they do is when you do make it through, you go the independent route, do your work, but still get treated like shit until you get cancer and die early. (7)

One woman laments the absence of role models who have successful academic careers

and remain healthy:

Other people [African American women scholars] do their own work and stay very marginal to the university and really try because they have something to say about an idea, and they want to just do the scholarship. They really seem to be marginalized, and talked bad about, and treated bad, and they seem to get sick and die early. I feel that there are no role models for the type of scholar I want to be sometimes. I don't know where to look for the ideal role model. We all can't be Angela Davis. I mean Angela Davis is one of a kind. And she's healthy and retired, which was one of a kind. (12)

For some women, an awareness of the potential impact on self means leaving the

academy, perhaps the healthiest option:

I understand why the women walk that I mentor because I walked away too. A job with great benefits, great professional development opportunities, great stuff, and I just got tired of it because it eats at the soul eventually. It's not that I believe that I am what I do for a living, but I do believe that it's unhealthy in some ways to continually subject one's self to trauma just to say I have a job. And when I talked to other woman, that's what they said. It's not worth it. You see these well-prepared, African-American women get attacked and then leave the institution because they are like I'm not going to put up with this stuff. We know what it is, and we see it, and I'm just not going to put up with it . . . they leave because they say that they are unhappy . . . we know in our body, and our soul, and from our own experiences as women of color, we know racism. We know cynicism when we see it. (17)

Despite understanding the significance of her achievement, another woman relates her

willingness to leave the academy.

I'm not beholden to the university. . . . I don't want to give you the impression that it's not significant for me, for my family, to have achieved a PhD. I'm the only one in my family with a PhD. It's deeply significant to me, and it matters a whole heck of a lot to my family, and to my students, and other people of color who look at me. But I am willing to walk away from the university and find something else to do with my time. (14)

Being present physically, intellectually, and emotionally in the academy requires an

enormous amount of energy and internal processing.

It's complicated, and it's tiring. And there are certain rewards. So I would say all in all it's the kind of experience that takes a lot of energy. Intellectual energy as well as physical energy . . . the time you set foot on campus, you begin to think about how you are going to function in any particular setting or situation. (13)

The reflections revealed in this property allow a glimpse into the participants' deep understanding of the dear price that commitment to the white academy can entail.

Risking self: Challenges to authority. All 18 participants reported experiences when their authority and intellectual ability were challenged by students, in particular by white male students, "Sometimes I leave my classes, and I feel like a German Shepherd dog that's trying to wean some puppies. You know you're part dog, and you're trying to walk away, and their hanging on your tit, and you just go rrrrh, get off." (17) It is significant that the women have come to expect that this will occur, that this is normative. Challenges come among other things in the form of outright disrespect, lack of boundaries, being tested in the classroom and confrontation. Most participants understand the root cause of these challenges as race-based, stating students are not used to seeing African American women in power positions as one woman asserts.

Students don't respect a woman of color standing in that position of authority. And being on a campus that my students are mostly white, the presumption that I should stand before them, and judge them, and evaluate them in any class they take, it makes them very uncomfortable to be in that position. And there are so many ways that they often try to create a more level relationship between you. (14)

Another participant reiterates the following:

I'm in the situation where the students to me didn't seem like they were used to seeing folks that were of color . . . sometimes I felt like my competency was being questioned, you know, like what I knew…it took a few years for me to really feel like I didn't have to put up with that sort thing, especially with white students . . . I've had my most challenging times with white males that kind of question number one my authority and number two, do I really know what I'm talking about. (11)

The experience of white students questioning the African American women's ability and feedback is normative. In the following comment a participant recalls being challenged about her feedback about citations in a paper. Most concerning is the individual challenging her, a graduate student who is a teacher who has contact with students of color. If he questions the ability of his own professor, how might he view the students he interacts with?

> I was working with a group of emergent [new] graduate students . . . we were going over papers and talking about my feedback. And one said is your feedback based on your culture? This guy was an English teacher in a private, white high school, who took affirmative action students…and I said no, that's not my opinion, that's APA. Let's go look at the page 62 for the guidelines for bias. Would you please turn to pages 170 and 171 on how to cite an index? And would you please turn to this page where it says how you use the words "that" versus "which." (17)

Respondents find the need to reassert their authority in the classroom:

> I had one class in particular that were—they were challenging me. It was also—I ended up having to cite a couple of students for plagiarism, and one class in particular there was a lot of stuff. There were a lot of codes going on. There were a lot of racial codes, gender stuff, and even sexual identity stuff. Must of the harassment was coming from a queer male. I had to constantly bring him back and remind him that wait a minute, I'm the professor, you're the student. It is inappropriate for you to speak to me that way. (2)

Another participant recalls the overt disrespect she experienced when a student used racist sarcasm in response to a request from her:

> Somebody actually made a comment when I said they needed to do something. And they said like, yes'am. You know what I'm saying? Yeah, like yes'am. Like back in the day when folks were slaves and the master would ask them to do something and they would say yes'am. So that kind of stuck with me. That was a white male. (11)

Participants see these insults as purposeful, "students haze new people. They want to press and see what you're actually made of. I was pressed once, and I smacked them down and that was it." The insults are intentional attempts to put the faculty member in her place and test her. The participants feel pressure to respond to these students in a manner that controls that type

of behavior as one participant states: *"So I as an African-American woman am very aware of the way in which my performativity forms my success or lack of success in the classroom."* (9)

Some of the challenges to authority extend to the work of scholars of color assigned in the classroom. One participant describes her reaction when a White male student, who "exercised his privilege of whiteness and of maleness in ways that were so sophisticated that [he] kind of blindsided some of the black students" questioned the validity of the work being read:

> I'm like look, there is no way that you can be in this classroom and this seminar and talk about black intellectuals in that way. I cannot have that. These are scholars and these are major writers. So you have to refer to them as such. You've got to show your respect. Well, that freaked him out and it freaked out the other students. And so, how did it freak them out? They were like oh, my God, he didn't mean that. You know, just coming to his defense. I said look, really we just have to focus on this. We have to respect the material, the sources, period. And he freaked out. They freaked out. (13)

When these types of events occur, participants seek support from colleagues and administrators. Often, instead of receiving the backing and assistance they sought, the message they receive is that they are somehow responsible for the treatment they are receiving. A participant recalls an incident of overt disrespect from a student.

> my third semester there, I walked in and introduced myself, and one of the students said, "You've got to be fucking kidding me." I was so taken aback. I mean, I handled it. I said to him well, I have to be honest with you, I'm not really great at telling jokes. So could you tell me what the joke is? And he just stared at me, and I said well, you said I have to be fucking kidding you. So I'm missing where the joke is. And again he just didn't say anything, and I said, so okay, let's try this again. My name is . . . , and I'm going to be your professor this year. And then it was quiet, and I said okay, I guess there really wasn't a joke, and you just had some kind of strange outburst. So let's start the class . . .

Later she went to the Chair of her department in hopes of gaining some insight and support in handling the student in subsequent classes. His solution was to have her apologize to the class for being black, a stark example of being challenged both within the classroom and by the administration for taking a place of authority in the academy.

I went to talk to the chair about it. And I said I really don't know what to do about the presence of this student who chose to disrupt the class in this particular way. And he said, I think you have to just like apologize for your presence when you walk into the class. It's like when you came to interview, when I said I have to apologize for being this white guy teaching African-American literature. You have to apologize. And I said, well, I am not sure what I'm apologizing for. It's a creative writing class. I'm a creative writer. What am I supposed to apologize for? And so, he says, well, you have to apologize for being black. And so, of course, we again ended up having a very vigorous, long debate. (4)

Despite their achievement, African American women commonly experience overt challenges to their presence. The preceding quote reflects the way in which this woman courageously challenged the assumptions embedded in the implicit message conveyed by the student: with offhand sarcasm, courage, firmness, and willingness for conversation.

Risking self: Uneven burden. This property reveals the ways in which African American women in the academy are vulnerable to an "invisible" workload that includes the material work as well as the psychological burden that results from the stress they endure. As one participant notes, "there are all of these moments where I become very aware of the ways that there's this uneven labor that happens. And some of that labor is just the labor of me being like really stressed, overwhelmed, and worried about taking on shit that I know that a lot of my colleagues don't have to." (6) The participants report they expend more time teaching, doing service work, and advising than white colleagues. In addition, some participants report the added burden and energy required to address the inequities in the white academy. One participant laments her possibly naïve initial assumption that she could "just do [her] job" but found it impossible as she entered the world of white academia as faculty.

I thought I could just do my job, and maybe even just do it well. I've had to do things that I'd rather not be doing, and I've just come to accept that it's going to be harder for me. I've just come to accept the energies that I thought I could put just in my teaching and my writing, I have to also find extra energy to put into organizing, to going to the union, to having the union work on, look at and investigate racism in my college. I can't just be successful in my job. I have to actually create the environment that I need in order to work. I can't just work. Do you know what I mean? So basically, it's like I have to do

everything myself. I just accept that it's going to be 100 times harder . . . it's going to be difficult row to hoe. That's all it's going to be. (7)

Workload issues extend to the teaching assignments faculty receive; one participant questions her class assignment and the impact said assignment had on her workload as compared to her white colleagues.

> My background is mostly in literature. I was teaching nothing but composition. People were hired with me who were white; they were teaching literature. So what does that mean? What it means is that even though I'm teaching the same amount of credits, I'm actually doing more work because those courses, it's understood that it's more labor intensive. It's more time demanding than teaching a literature course. So right away I'm given a heavier load than everybody else. And why is that? That's not really explained. Nobody will say overtly why that is. (7)

African American women scholars whose field is African American or Africana studies are many times expected to develop expertise and pick up classes in areas outside of their expertise, but faculty hired as Shakespearian or 18th century literature scholars are not, a situation that impacts their workload.

> Scholars of color who do work on race are generally expected to have expertise in many areas. So these days it becomes more and more difficult to find a job where the only thing that you do is being an African-Americanist. That's a small field. You didn't expect it to be African-Americanist, who could also do diaspora literature, who could do Caribbean, who might also do a broad ethnic study survey of literature. So suddenly you should have expertise amongst many different racial groups, and that's often the labor that falls onto us (14)

Respondents frequently mentioned the numerous institutional service duties expected of them and their responsibility as women of color to have a presence on hiring committees and workgroups, all adding to their workload.

> I have done a lot of service work, community work, and other things to represent diversity on the campus. And so certainly, I have found that as many people have said, it's true. not only real need for color on these various search committees, admissions committees, and things like that, but again because there is an absence of population, then the same people do seem to be called upon to do that kind of extra service work. And so, figuring out how to balance the time. How to find other people to network with to talk about the procession and so on, it does required some extra effort. (14)

Some faculty appointments span departments and require extra course development, advising,

and service. The following participant notes that her field is actually romance languages and her

work across departments results in significant additional work.

> having to develop new courses that involved literature and translation, also women's writing, and critical theories. I developed lots of new courses. In fact, most of the literature courses that we have on the books, I kind of taught and developed in somewhat. So there was teaching. There was the advising that goes beyond the visible work. So I brought that in. There were no other black women in the department. So everybody is coming to you for the wrong reasons or the right reasons. (13)

Participants understand they are being stretched thinly and the consequences but many

times feel the responsibility to continue overextending because they are the only or one of a few

African American women available and committed to do the work.

> It may mean serving on stuff that I don't really want to do or being overburdened in certain ways, but that's important. But I also understand that that's how women of color get burned out in the academy as well. So I'm very mindful of that navigation. But I do it in terms of not just teaching, but also serving in these ways as mentor in a service capacity that's not accounted for by the institution. (15)

There is a psychological burden of not being able to relax into oneself, the need to always

be on guard:

> the thing about being this exhausted about stuff is like since I am in fact working three times as hard as people around me, I could take a third of that away and still twice as much and be fine, and that would be not an issue. So I think that's some of it. It's sort of letting that be okay, and letting it be okay to kind of relax in this context even though every sort message about survival that I've kind of internalized tells me you can't ever relax because that's going to be your undoing as soon as you shut that other eye. Somebody is going to fuck with you. And at this point, it's sort of like even if that's true, that's not necessarily a reasonable way to live. (6)

Risking self: Feeling the need to be perfect. Participants also reported feeling the need

to be perfect, to be "better than." This need is experienced as an external and internal pressure

and an "old" message which many African American women learn from their families of origin

and community.

I feel like what I've mostly learned is how hard I have to work. And that I have to a million times better than everybody else. That I can't ever show that I don't have my shit together because the expectation is why are you here? That I was given something rather than earned. . . . It's been extremely an intense environment that kind of brings out that anxiety that I've felt my whole life about measuring up and being evaluated by others. And what these people think of me and will they let keep being in the club, or will they kick me out of the club at any moment. And it's a kind of vulnerability (12)

This need to work harder is not based on deficit ability or the need to "catch up" but the

knowledge that in the United States, among other attributes, our ability, appearance, and

command of Standard English are judged and as the next participant states, scrutinized, no matter

our qualifications or achievement:

I just have to push really, really hard, both myself and the students, like I have to be on all the time. I have to be really kind of perfect all the time at what I'm doing, and any little thing that I don't do right will be scrutinized. Like I said any little thing that I do will be scrutinized. And sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't, but regardless that's the kind of sense that I get. (6)

The need to be better than and "be on" at all times is an immense burden that exacts a toll

that includes not revealing one's true self.

It makes me feel as though I always have to be on guard. I have to be hyper-vigilant. I have to be extra prepared. I have to in some ways compromise myself sometimes, my sense of self in order to just to get along. Know what I mean? (17)

Risking self: Inimical environment. Some participants found the white academy a

hostile and unwelcoming environment. Some spoke of outright hostility, others the subtle

hostility that comes with the lack of support from colleagues and administrators.

what I didn't realize, and what I didn't factor in was just how hostile this place would be…as a black woman, I definitely started to realize certain things that I hadn't even though about before or hadn't even considered. One of them was just the hostility to my being there—my presence there. My first week there, my first days there on the job somebody said, one of the other faculty members there said oh, they are just hiring these people from off the streets. So just even that idea that I couldn't possibly be really qualified for this job. I must have gotten there through some odd channels There was like this kind of aggression, but I guess what I have since learned is called micro-aggression. So it's like these kinds of ways of letting you know not very directly but there are ways of letting you know you're really not that welcome here, or you're kind of a probationary

person and will probably remain in that position. I don't know. I got the sense that I wasn't welcome. And it wasn't subtle. (7)

Participants note the disconnect between institutional stated values and their lived experience. One participant felt forgotten after being hired despite the institutional rhetoric about inclusiveness.

> So once you get in, it's business as usual. Although they say they want it to be more welcoming, they don't know what that means. (5)

The following participant unpacks the varied ways that hostility can be expressed and felt.

> Some days it's felt like a mildly hostile environment. Other days it felt like folks are just kind of clueless, and their cluelessness was impacting my ability to have a successful and fulfilling life at the institution. I think of hostility as having two faces. One is kind of an act of hostility where people are actively doing things to get in your way or make your life unpleasant. The other is less active, less thoughtful, a kind of persistent, coolness that builds up so that you're not included in conversations, in social gatherings. (9)

Even when working in an institution with progressive values where explicit dialogues about race and gender occur, the following participant feels alienated and isolated at times. She does not experience overt hostility but still feels alone.

> It's somewhat alienating and isolating. I work for a progressive institution, however. And so, it's not at all hostile. People are sensitive, and race and gender are topics. [however] people don't share my experience and don't always understand that I am receiving and filtering them through my perspective as an African-American woman. And so, to that extent, it is a little bit lonely, because I'm the only person that sees things in the way that I do, and there is no shared perspective…If I take issue with something, and I'm taking issue with it because of my perspective, my gender/race perspective, typically I am a least listened to. (3)

More than one participant mentioned the lack of support from colleagues and administration. "I was not supported at all, and had to fight that battle by myself." (11)

Primary Dimension: Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the Academy

This dimension represents the whiteness of the academy as experienced by the respondents. The respondents' experiences occur in a specific environment, a white academic environment that is not a benign condition. The respondents have keen observation and analytic skill. *Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the academy* represents the respondent's ability to reflect on and make meaning about the environment in which they work in terms of the socio-political landscape, historically and in the present. This ability to unpack and understand the environments supports their continued sense of agency and ability to proceed and be impactful despite the significant challenges they face. These insights include the impact of class differences of African American women in the academy and how this may impact how they are seen by others as well as their comfort level and ability to navigate the academy. This dimension also recognizes the embedded nature and often covert insidiousness of racism in the academy and the difficult nature of changing the system. As one participant observed, "It's a plantation. Yep, it's a plantation," a theme that surfaced in the review of the literature (Davis, 1999; Harley 2008; John, 1997). Additionally, this dimension includes an historical perspective on the struggles of African American women in the academy. These experiences are articulated in the properties, *Critiquing the Topography, Under/Over Exposed: Visibility/Invisibility/Hypervisibility, Outsiderness, and Intra-racial Complexities.*

Seeing, naming the whiteness of the academy: Critiquing the topography.
Participants offered insight about and awareness of the realities of the socio-political landscape of the white academy, suggesting the ways in which it supported or hindered their ability to thrive which emerged as a reflection of the larger historical and current experiences of systemic oppression of African Americans in the United States. The ability to see and analyze the context

in which they work supports African American women scholars in making personal meaning as

they are confronted with the external environment. The following comment illuminates the

benefit of being able to unpack and understand the environment of the white academy. It enables

African American women scholars to understand that the problems they encounter are not

individual but systemic.

> The thing that helps is to look at things from a distance. It doesn't feel as oppressive, which doesn't mean that it's any better. It just doesn't feel as oppressive, you know, because you realize this is screwed up, and that introduces another problem which is actually realizing the actually the system is screwed up. So it's a bigger problem than you, and in some ways that is liberating, and in some ways it's also depressing. It's bigger than you. But now they are aware of it, which is a good thing. And I think they are now going to try to now address that reality. We have to look at what we're doing with the black women faculty here because these are very gifted people. (7)

In describing her understanding of what the white academy represents, the following

participant reveals her insight that it is a cultural institution where African American women are

tolerated but do not belong.

> The white academy is an institution with or without walls, that says we will bring our own in, we will support our own limping or strong, and you black women have no place here. We may put our arm around you and bring you in because we need to fill a slot, but we're not going to give you any power. And do not in any way try to change anything here because we're not really interested. That's what it means to me. That's what it connotes. (16)

The following participant defines the white academy as an environment that has at its

heart a focus on maintaining the dominant status quo.

> the centrality of the Eurocentric experience. It's central to everything. Everything else revolves around it. Even if it's being critiqued, it's still central. And the framing is often unquestioned in terms of that centrality. So that's what I think it is. And that's reinforced by of course structurally within the classroom, the bureaucracy, the way the school is organized, what people feel like they need to learn in order to be good in their field. All of that reinforces whiteness. (10)

Participants reveal their tacit understanding that favoritism and preferential treatment govern many of the decisions made in the academy. The first participant marvels at the fact that she "slipped" in to her position, given the bias that exist in the hiring process.

> there is a little bit of nepotistic kind of things going on even though that wasn't legal, and it was on the books as you're not supposed to do that, but it was kind of done . . . you have these cliques, they apparently want to protect their privileges because it's not like they were really selected through a kind of objective, open process. And so, they get into this position, and then someone like me just manages to kind of sneak in. . . . I sneak in because I actually got there in the legitimate way, which was I actually applied. . . . Nobody knew who I was. It wasn't like here's this person who, you know, is politically expedient or whatever or we know her. (7)

Her experience mirrors the following comment on the nepotism that exists in the academy. The following comment is from a participant who was given information by a member of the hiring committee, who recognized the actions taken as racist, about what occurred behind the scenes after she interviewed for a position.

> academia is extremely nepotistic like most closed societies. And I know I'm telling you something that I already know, but sometimes people just want to hook up folks. They want to hook up their friends. Their friends are very often much like them, and they consider you an interloper if you get the job. I had one situation where I interviewed for a place, and the person who was the head of the hiring committee clearly had friends that they wanted to hook up. But unfortunately for them, the rest of the committee felt very strongly that I should have the job . . . the people that they wanted to hire were white men probably reinforced this idea of my "otherness." . . . the thing is I was much, much more qualified than the people this person wanted to hire. Like really we weren't peers in the field. So this person set out to sort of sabotage my application. I did a phone interview. It went very, very well. They asked me to come in. I did. That went very, very well, and then they sought to sort of undermine me though the process of what happens after the interview? . . . they politicked people in the committee, and when that didn't work, they sought to usurp me through the Dean. And it became a real stink . . . the Dean refused to call me or to contact me with an offer. (10)

When describing the white academy, one participant extended the analysis to Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's), stating that these institutions were born of and mirror the same values of white institutions.

> I think of it as institutions in the U.S., academic institutions in the U.S. No matter the status of the predominately white or HBCU. When I think of academic institutions in the U.S., I have to think about the history of education, college education in the U.S., which was created and designed for white men of certain economic holdings, and certain pedigree, and that these institutions were created for their sons. And later these institutions were replicated for their daughters, and later those institutions were replicated for freed slaves. So all of these institutions are created in this image of white, male, hetero normative, financially wealthy ideologies (4)

She reflects that the very structure of the classroom, how individuals are physically located in relationship to each other, sets up a hierarchy that is reflective of dominance and whiteness; she asks her students to unpack the implications.

> Why do you think you're sitting in these rows facing forward where you're looking at your peer's backs, and looking at the teacher who is standing at the head of the room and the board behind me? Like what does it mean for the teacher to be standing at the front of the room and all of the student's eyes are facing forward, does that make me the authority? I'm standing; you're sitting. You all are facing me. That means something. that setup, in and of itself, says a lot about how education is thought about, and about who then is the position of power. And when these institutions are built and designed by white men, they are building them to deify their positions of power and authority. And so, when they have to open up these spaces for people of color to come in, there's already a built in hostility and resentment having a person of color in the front of that room because the space was not designed for us to be there. It was quite designed to keep us out.

One respondent categorizes African American women scholars based on era; she suggests there are three distinct groups of black academics in the white academy: those whose legacy was the civil rights struggle of the 1950's-1970s, which challenged the academy and spoke for the community; those who have a desire to simply be seen for themselves ("In other words, they opted out of a presentation of themselves as representative of a community"); and those at risk for exotification ("three presentations are very vibrant, and the discourse around that is very vibrant in academia right now"). Speaking about the third group of scholars she states the following:

> that's the group that is specifically solicited by predominantly white, elite institutions that whether it's based on race, gender, sexuality, class or whatever, it's specifically

antithetical to the presentation of themselves as representative of a group. So there the attractive, black, female, queer candidate who questions black female queer community in their research, in their conversation and they become particularly attractive because they are exotically exotic. That double exoticism actually is a negation of who they are. And so, they become this presentation of that self. I am not that self, I am a representation of not that self.

This last excerpt correlates with the experience of another participant:

Unless I was willing to play a particular kind of young, black, queer, strange woman figure that they had designed for me, this person that they had created. They wanted me to play that role, and when I refused to play that role, then I was somehow punished, and very often the punishment just came in lack of support. (4)

This is a complex dynamic; we can be used, based on our supposed and real identities, to further institutional goals. As a result this may actually reify the status quo as our identities may not only be used against us but may also inhibit the success of other African American women scholars who may not have the presentation deemed compelling by an institution.

One participant who works in two white institutions marvels at how she is perceived differently in each though her presentation of self remains consistent.

I am seen as a conservative in one environment, and I'm seen as a radical in the other. That's the biggest difference. In the college that I work for, for which I'm adjunct, I'm seen as kind of more straight laced, and all of the other women of color are in some ways the exotic other. . . . There are categories of black people that have been represented in the minds of white Americans. And so, in one setting I am put in one category, and in the other setting, I'm put in the other category. But it really has to do with the cultural competence of the white people that are viewing me, but I know that I'm consistent. (3)

The following participant comments on dynamics of power and control when working with white colleagues with a social justice orientation. She finds that even in these situations issues of power and control are just beneath the surface even when masked by the lexicon of equity.

middle-class whites that are interested in social justice and equity tend to still need to control the agenda and the environment. And also aren't always able to be honest about what they are thinking and how they feel. So that in certain situations in the college in the rural northeast, I've had conversations with people where they have said I'm not

angry, but in fact they were very red and terse. I've had conversations with people when they use "let's" and "we," when they either meant "them" or "me," not both. (3)

Participants observed a dynamic of benign neglect at white institutions that had African American Studies departments. These institutions tend to rely on the African American Studies departments to hold the discourse around race for the institution, finding no need to integrate the issues in other disciplines.

> I think also particularly at white universities that have the resources to have African-American studies programs, the rest of the university doesn't ever have to consider or think about issues of race, of ethnicity because supposedly that's being done in these other departments. And so if you leave those departments, if you go outside of those departments often times there's not the kind of cogent critique of race and ethnicity at the universities themselves, and at the community surrounding the universities with regards to issues around politics and race. There is no discussion. There is no discourse going on. And so, they leave it to those departments, and often in kind of detrimental ways to both students and faculty, which is probably why I have actually relocated several times now. I don't feel like I'll ever find a space that actually fits my needs at this point. (15)

Participants' comments reflected clarity and a deep understanding of the structural and socio-political implications of what working in a white environment means on macro and micro levels.

Seeing, naming the whiteness of the academy: Visibility, invisibility, hypervisibility.
A common experience mentioned by numerous participants was the paradoxical dynamic of being invisible in the white academy while simultaneously being hypervisible. As one woman poignantly stated, "I was invisible, and when you're invisible you're a ghost." while another comments, "Everybody knows you. You don't know necessarily everybody. . . . You are very quickly put into a category of good girl-bad girl, team player-not team player. . . . . I was always finding myself in situations where some people sort of invite you, and they want you to be a team player, meaning anti-black."

> By the time you hit campus, your body and your politics are at work. So I'll just tell you what, before I get to campus I have a really good sound system in my car. I'm playing all

kinds of music just to get ready. . . . You get out, you don't know what you're going to deal with. You don't know whether or not if you stop by the coffee place to get some coffee, whether someone is going to say, well, are you a student or—you know, you say no, I'm faculty. And they don't believe you. Or whether someone in your—on a committee is going to automatically come out of this really huge liberal bag and talk about how much they really like black people or whatever. So you're always called upon to perform—not to perform, but to be yourself, and that self is a political self, physically, politically, philosophically, and certainly socially within the institution. (13)

One participant describes a couple ways that being invisible is operationalized; at times

colleagues speak for her and at other times her ideas are sometimes not "heard" yet coopted by

white colleagues.

This is something that happens all the time. A colleague, who is also a friend, tends to speak for me. We will be having faculty meetings, people advocate for me without my asking, and sometimes it's not appropriate…this is another thing that happens often. I will say something in a faculty meeting. I will make a point, and people will pause, and look, and not respond. A few minutes later one of my white colleagues will make the same comment, and then it's discussed (3)

Her experience is echoed by the following participant:

Now I'm sure you're familiar with this. You say something; everybody looks at you like you're crazy. You leave the room. Somebody says it in a different way, and everybody agrees. That's happens. (16)

Another participant notes that visibility—being seen, being recognized —can be positive

at times, but she fears that at any moment it could work against her.

I think other things that I find myself thinking about a lot are just stuff around visibility. Just feeling really, really, super visible all the time. Some of it is just basic day-by-day sort of physical stuff. Like okay, I stand out in a bunch of different ways in this context. . . . It's like I'm good at what I do. I speak up . . . as such this ongoing sense that the visibility could turn on a dime. Like I could see this that it could go from being a positive kind of visibility to people like turning on me because I've seen it happen. Because certainly the messages from my parents that are all up in there are like yeah, do your job, it's really great, have fun, but just so you know don't ever trust white people (6)

Participants spoke about the visibility and vulnerability that comes from speaking out.

invisibility that I feel as an African-American woman in institutions, and the hyper-visibility that I feel also sometimes simultaneously in institutions because I'm outspoken. So I'm one of those people that has spoken back when I see an inequality. And when I

see people acting out in ways that to me say this is more about my race and what your stereotype about me than it is about you really listening to me. (1)

African American women in the white academy are well aware of the cultural representations of the black female and have been taught to suppress feelings of anger because of the way there are perceived.

> There is a socialization for people of color, particularly of women of color to not be angry and to not express anger but I have allowed myself the privilege of being angry… I don't curse and holler, but people know that I'm angry, and they get upset because I'm angry. I allow them to work through it, and I try not to rescue people. So that if one of my white female colleagues gets angry, people tend to not always get as afraid. But when I get angry whoo, which sometimes works for me.

The complexity of understanding her anger and its expression is a constant negotiation between how she will be received by others and how she will react to others' responses. It isn't sufficient to simply be present in her own emotional response; she must be monitoring the emotional reactions of others present and deciding how next to respond in a deliberate and strategic manner to them. She goes on to describe an incident with a male colleague that expressed his rage in the classroom and the effect of that event.

> My white colleague got so angry one time, and he is about 200 pounds, and he is six feet. He got so angry that he got up and banged repeatedly on the table. And I thought to myself right then, I wonder how it would fly if I stood up and just banged on the table? I just wonder—I've often wondered. So one day five years later when he was angry about something, and he was referencing that incident, and I said, honey, because he's a women's studies—one of his courses is women's studies. And I said to him, honey, you use your white male privilege. You stood up, you banged on the table, and you didn't get fired. And I said people were scared. And I said can you imagine if I just started—if I stood up right now started banging on the table. I don't think—I think people would run—flee crying from the room. And so, sometimes I make it a topic. (3)

In this story, she speaks to her colleague of how being a woman and being African American would completely change the reactions others have to expressed anger; that, in fact, regardless of his size and maleness and rage, students would be more terrified of her rage.

Seeing, naming the whiteness of the academy: Outsiderness. This property describes

the sense of being an outsider that many African-American scholars feel in the white academy

(Collins, 1986). The lack of critical mass of African American scholars magnifies the loneliness

of the experience. Many participants experience alienation and isolation in predominately white

institutions; there are many ways in which outsider status is experienced, from the dearth of

invitations to private social events where networking occurs and relationships are established to

absence of family as reflected in the following statement by one scholar: "I was isolated by field.

I was isolated by race. I was isolated being single. . . . So it was really isolating, alienating,

frustrating" (9). A common refrain for a number of women was the experience of geographic

isolation: when white institutions were located in rural, homogenous white communities that

compounded institutional isolation. Participants also encounter unwritten institutional codes

which are not shared with them but serve to perpetuate their outsider status. Outsider status can

ultimately result in dismissal or an individual making the choice to leave the institution/s and

ultimately the academy.

> My experience as an African-American woman in a white—predominantly white
> academic institution; it's been a kind of mixed bag of great intellectual growth,
> community, and culture stymied by just a kind of lack of sense of belonging…I've taught
> at three universities now that are in these kind of rural spaces, where the academic
> community is one setting, and then outside of that when you leave the institution there's
> no sense of anything other than kind of white rural culture. And so, those are the kind of
> isolating factors in addition to kind of the institutional ways in which, I guess, systemic
> racism functions in the academy at these various levels. (15)

One participant understands the reasons for her firing from an institution were based on

her outsider status:

> One of the reasons why they said that let me go was because I didn't culturally fit in.
> Now what does that mean? I mean it's a code word, right? It's a code word for the way
> she is ─ this black woman doesn't fit into our organization. And that was all they could
> say because there was no misconduct. I had done my job. In fact, I had done an
> exemplary job. (1)

Coded communication and insular organization behaviors, as reflected in the previous statement, as well as not being privy to unarticulated organizational norms leaves African American women scholars at a disadvantage. One scholar relates her experience with what she names "the college way":

> they always talked about this college way. It was this kind of mantra, well, this is "the college way". And your students are upset because you're not doing things the "college way". And I would ask everyone, well, what is the college way? What does that mean? And they wouldn't ─ they didn't know how to explain it. It was almost like this secret. Not really this secret, but this code like either you were an insider and you knew, or you were an outsider…I was constantly frustrated when I was here with this college language. And it came from students as well, that's not the college way. And then they would go and complain to the Chair that this was not the college way, and then the Chair would complain to me that this is not the college way. (4)

One individual's comments reflect on her feelings of powerlessness and lack of ownership of the environment to which she commits her time and energy:

> I feel like I've been invited to the party, but definitely not allowed in the VIP room. I'm not at all in the VIP room. . . .   I don't feel like I have power. I'm just some little person, but I'm getting more of a sense of what it means to belong in the university and not be so isolated, which is a good thing. But in terms of ownership, I feel a lack of power, and a lack of ownership, and been confused about what my role is in some ways. (12)

Feelings of isolation are compounded when White colleagues can't see what is happening in the environment because of their positions of privilege.

> When I first came, I was fairly alienated. Actually, one of my colleagues later said to me after I was articulating my displeasure at feeling so isolated, she said oh, I just thought that when you left here, you were going back home to your community.

The absence of a critical mass of African American's in the white academy contributes to the isolation felt.

> I was the only African-American female in a department of 36 faculty . . . they thought that they were doing a great thing. And the thing that I remember specifically is that no one, particularly my director, no one asked me "so how are you doing" . . . that never came off their lips because I think the best way I guess I can describe it is you people have gotten the vote, and you people have gotten an education, so anything about power

relationships, or how you fit, or any of that didn't even enter their minds. (8)

Many participants experienced being an outsider because of the nature of the issues they spoke out about.

> when we talk about issues dealing with race, class, gender, gender orientation, I feel alone because I think that the institution that I work in, especially since Obama got elected, it's sort of like racism is dead, sexism is dead, women are achieving. This was at a historic women's college. And so, we don't need to talk about that anymore. And it's been my belief that we always need to talk about those things because if we don't we start repeating the mistakes of the past…I'm a lone voice. I'm one of a few voices that want to raise those issues up and say that they are important organizationally important to the institution and the growth in our students, especially students that are working primarily with minority populations of children. So I feel kind of like I'm outside because of my role. (17)

Participants noted the difficulty in establishing friendships outside the workplace with white colleagues as a contributing factor to feelings of isolation.

> As an African-American female, I would have to work harder on the relationship than my colleagues in order to be friends. Whereas for instance, most of them are in each other's homes—in and out of each other's homes. I've known most of these people for 20 years or more. I've been in this institution, you know, for 23-1/2 years. And I'm very close to several people. They came to my father's funeral. But they don't come to, you know, other social gathering to which they are invited, and I don't go to theirs. But many of them do frequent each other's homes. (3)

The participant continues to posit that her white colleagues are not comfortable in situations that are outside their norm. She realizes that to make them comfortable she would have to adopt the persona she maintains in the workplace and that is too much work.

> I don't think they are comfortable being in spaces that they don't control. And I am not interested in being around people that I don't share that level of intimacy with because I would feel like I was at work. I would feel like I was still at work. So there's the element of the mask, of wearing the mask of sorts, the phenomenon of black people when they are functioning in white spaces. There is a persona that they adopt. So you know, I don't like smile anymore than I feel like it. I don't do things like that. I'm not an Aunt Jemima or an Uncle Tom, but I am on. (3)

Participants commented on the ongoing need to make white students feel comfortable in their classrooms, particularly when the focus of the class centered on issues of difference and the

concomitant drain this presents. One participant names these encounters "therapeutic sessions"

for the students that result in "mental, emotional and spiritual labor for the faculty member

engaged with them."

> On top of the fact that those types of therapeutic sessions would inevitably lead students
> to feeling that I was some kind of mother figure to them, that I had suddenly become their
> black nanny, like their black nursemaid. And that they had just released all of these years
> of anxiety, and these years of hostility, and these deep feared beliefs that they had about
> black people. And suddenly I'm the figure that they are unpacking that with and tending
> to that with, and I'm mentoring them, and now they can release their shame and then
> release their guilt, but they are dumping it all on me. And I have to then figure out how
> to not only find a place to get rid of all of that energy, and it's very difficult to get rid of
> that energy because for me I'm standing there thinking after all of what I've just told you,
> after all these histories that we've spent weeks discussing, once again you want to use my
> body to dump into. You're using my body as your wasteland. Isn't this also part of the
> privilege and system? Isn't this also part of white supremacy and oppression? And so,
> those were just issues that I just was not really willing to deal with just to not have to
> open myself up to those types of conversations and those types of releases. (4)

Several participants surfaced class as a salient factor of how an African American woman

faculty member is perceived and received and how she negotiates the environment, "I think it's

the class location of African-American women on white campuses can influence the way they

negotiate being in the institution because everyone who is hired is automatically considered

middle class." Faculty and students make assumptions about the class backgrounds of African

American women faculty; they make projections based on these assumptions. One participant

who was raised in an upper middle class black family recalls the surprise of a white colleague

when she found out they had similar high school experiences, highlighting the embedded

assumption on the part of the colleague that the participant did not have access to the same

advantages she had experienced:

> I remember a person who teaches here. Someone I consider a friend. A white woman
> who teaches in the school of education. But meeting her, and she meant no harm by this,
> said oh, so you were in [a European country], you studied in [a European county] when
> you were in high school? I said, yeah. And she said I did too. I said oh, we were in the

same program. Well, how did you get to do that, she wanted to know. I'm thinking, wow, you've just blown it? (13)

She understands that white people in academic institutions have a projective need to assume that African Americans in the institution need assistance from them and are uncomfortable if the reality does not match the projection.

> White institutions are comfortable only with dealing basically or fundamentally with conversations with and dealing with black people who are first generation, or who they are helping. But it's very difficult for them to deal with black people who are privileged or are privileged as they are. (13)

Conversely, the following participant who grew up in a working class household found that white students' class privilege made them behave and believe that she was there to serve and take care of them.

> Sometimes majority white students are unaccustomed to having a faculty member who doesn't come from an elite background. If that faculty member is black, I think it's amplified, but I think there are certainly enough black people who come from elite backgrounds that are faculty members that teach kids that they can assuage whatever class anxiety they may have. But when you come from a decidedly non-elite, you know I grew up in public housing, and then you teach in elite institutions, the disconnect can be pretty striking and a few times I've felt like I've had to socialize my students out of "mammying" me…sort of assuming that I'm there to be subjected to them, especially because they are wealthy, you just have to disabuse them of that notion. (10)

> You'll have white colleagues, who will have a certain pride in being an aficionado or associative with a subgenre or subsection of something that you know. And they kind of resent your authority in being able to trump them not just because you're an academic, but because you've actually lived the experience. But they sort of framed themselves attitudinally as somebody who has the right to talk about you to others. And then you sort of usurp that position not only like I said because of the credentials, but because you've also lived the experience, and you can question that. (10)

Seeing, naming the whiteness of the academy: Intra-racial complexity. Participants noted the impact of white normativity in the academy on relationships between African American Scholars: "why sometimes our angers, our struggles, occur, show up at each other and not always leveled or directed at a white power structure." It is important to view these dynamics

in the context of white supremacy: that the sometimes less than optimal interactions exist in a

particular context where we can be pitted against each other— [at] "times what happens is they

will pit different people against each other because they may not like your iteration of

blackness." African Americans are located differently in the academy, based on factors like age,

department, gender, sexuality, and in how the white academy participants find the need to

negotiate their relationships with African American colleagues. They described colleagues being

coopted by the system, accommodated to white interests, subjected to competition based on

scarcity of positions and resources, replication of power over relationships, and the feeling that

the actions of other black faculty reflect on them.

> I think in white institutions, they create this kind of conflict that's not just white/black,
> but between faculty of color that's not useful. Those faculty of color who do all the kinds
> of institutional accommodation while giving this kind of rhetoric about black
> empowerment are the most problematic kind of sources of angst for black people who are
> trying to challenge the system. . . . That's not to say that they are worse than white
> people, but it does bother me more when I have to deal with some of this kind of stressful
> stuff around people of color, who are accommodating institutions as opposed to
> challenging them. I feel like I'm always prepared for stupid stuff from white people. I'm
> never prepared for it from black people. (15)

Participants recognize this dynamic among faculty of color and feel both a sense of

disappointment and betrayal. This competition among black faculty is sometimes reflected in the

hierarchical structure of faculty life.

> I haven't met one (person) yet who doesn't have a story of having worked or interacted
> with a senior person, an established person, and of having work stolen, or being dropped,
> or being betrayed, or something. I haven't met someone yet who hasn't had a story like
> that. (14)

> It's so tricky because it is in some ways a replication of that hierarchy… I've known
> senior people who would say, well, this person finished the PhD. So how much can I do?
> So people get dropped, or you know I got this other offer, and I'm off to some other
> institution, or a lot black female graduate students said, this senior, black woman seems
> to favor her white students over the black students.

A participant notes the double consciousness that exists among black colleagues and the constancy of being judged as a group rather than as an individual.

> I think there's a lot of double consciousness going on. How we're being seen. Also the way we see ourselves reflected in our other black colleagues, understanding that if this person here messes up, they are going to be looking at me too. So there's a lot of potential landmines that someone is having to negotiate. And it really does impact the way that we relate to each other. And how we see ourselves reflected in each other. …people do have wonderful relationships, but people also …there's many stories …of really being let down, dropped, disappointed, betrayed.

She recognizes the need to understand more fully the complexity of intra-racial relationships among faculty rather than challenging the institutional, white, and hierarchical structure.

> and why sometimes our angers, our struggles, occur, show up at each other and not always leveled or directed at a white power structure. . . . I'm not sure that we have as much sensitivity to understanding how we end up fighting with each other. I say sensitivity because I think it does deserve a certain amount of care from someone that is coming out of a place of really deep meaning. And people again really being under siege.

The ways in which African American scholars see themselves in relationship to other African Americans in the white academy can also impact formal mentoring:

> I'm a doctoral student. And so, when I went looking for mentors to mentor me as a woman from the South, who going to a Northeastern, primarily white institution. And I went to [African American] women to ask them to mentor me. The women were happy to do it informally, but also didn't want to make themselves targets publicly and in a formal kind of way because no one wanted to be perceived as "all you black people sticking together. (17)

The following participant recalls the emotional response she had when a senior black faculty member revealed her feelings that her generation of African American academics failed to produce radical change in the academy.

> The first time in my academic career that a black female or any black person or any person of color for that matter told me to my face. She said, "Honey, I'm looking at you. I'm in my 50s. It's not your fault. We fucked up." I started crying because I knew where she was coming from . . . she said we did what we were supposed to do, but we never stopped thinking that God was white. We still believe that God is white. So the

extrapolation from that is we did not really change our fundamental consciousness around color and place. Therefore, this is why you see what you see. She said you keep doing what you do. (18)

Intra-racial relationships in the context of the white academy surfaced as a significant concern for many of the participants.

Primary Dimension: Persisting

This dimension represents the tenacious and steadfast resolve demonstrated by African American women scholars in the white academy. Despite the on-going challenges to their very presence in the academy, participants recount bringing the full force of their lifelong experiences as women of color and concomitant skill at border-crossing, their intellect and their emotional intelligence to bear by utilizing strategies that ease the impact of outsiderness. These features are demonstrated in the properties, *Connectivity*, *Cultivating Reciprocity*, and *Actively Learning*.

Persisting: Connectivity. Participants report a yearning for and appreciation of community as a way to support their presence in the academy. This property is particularly important, ; it has the potential to mitigate the impact of isolation and outsider status experienced by many. Some participants rely on being a part of or building community outside of the academy while others attempt to create nurturing spaces for contact and engagement within it. Communities provide spaces for African American women scholars to "kind of drop the masks," and breathe deeply into their true selves. Although it is not unusual for workplaces to support lasting friendships and a social life for employees, several of the participants revealed the expectation that community for them is found outside the white academy:

> I don't rely on where I work to have friends and colleagues…it does make you feel vulnerable sometimes when you're dealing with issues of race, gender, those kinds of things. But in terms of community, I get my community from so many places, that didn't matter. I could imagine situations where it really would, especially with junior faculty who are away from home, who don't have other communities, who don't wear like a whole bunch of different hats and get stimulated in other ways or whatever (10)

One participant comments on the role a Black Cultural Institute plays for her; it's where she and other Black scholars check in with each other:

> So anytime that there are events that are really specific to black intellectual experience, black scholarship, black cultural experience, all those overlapping ─ it's usually channeled through this particular institution, that institutional organization, in which black faculty, black students, the community at large, gather. That is kind of our gathering place where we can support one another, where we can network, where we can find solace, and have a degree of protection, and meet in, and just have sort of a sense of community on the campus.(2)

Another participant acknowledges the importance of affinity groups to her survival.

> We had a colored girls group when I was at one institution. It was called Colored Girls. And we had, you know, the black network at another place I was at. And so you find networks of people within your organization. And so, that's survival, and then I think you find multiracial organizations or multi—a diverse group of people who you can also work with and also have white allies. So that's what you have to do. And so, for me those are the ways in which you survive this and thrive. (1)

Participants recognized how essential having support and being supportive of other African American women is to our ability to survive and thrive in the academy.

Persisting: Cultivating reciprocity. Participants report the importance of having white allies in the academy. White allies are individuals who are doing their personal work on issues of power and privilege and who, like the African American women in the academy, are able to see the big picture as well as the micro-aggressions aimed at people of color in the academy. One participant comments on how important it was for her to have someone she could trust.

> having people you trust, I'm talking about white people that you trust, who see the issues, are working on them, and also be your allies, and so they will be there to kind of catch your back. So I think that's how it's worked in its best way with my colleagues…she [a white woman who was her ally] was also able to see ways in which I was being excluded or being made invisible or hyper visible. And so, that really created a very dynamic relationship for us. Because there were times when it would be the "it," you know, race, sexism, whatever when it was getting to me. I mean there were times when I would call her, a white ally, she would say to me, you know, just walk away from it. (1)

Another participant shares her understanding that because there are so few African

Americans in the academy, it is essential for people who are not African American to have your

back, to give you advice, to help you vision your career.

> I've been embraced by a lot people who I otherwise would not have anything to do with, but they just said you're all right. I like you, and you're smart, and I'm going to recommend you for this job. Or I want to help you figure out what your career trajectory is or—and a lot of because we're in majority white institutions, in a majority white field with a teeny, teeny, tiny percentage of the population who even has the credentials to apply to jobs in this field. . . . I mean you have to have white allies. And allies of various backgrounds or you're just not going to make it. (10)

Making relationships is as important as having the ability to recognize what individuals

in power positions have, and cultivating these relationships is one strategy that supports our

ability to thrive. One participant describes this dynamic:

> It's a totally relationship-driven institution. . . . Some people are better than others at figuring out how to kind of navigate through it. And my tactic right now has been when I see someone in power who also kind of has some sense like I sort of —there is this Dean that I've been working with this year, she has some clearly demarcated power, but then also has been in this institution for a long time, clearly has a lot of strategies for having navigated even beyond the specifics of her title, and has an approach and savvy. she's a white woman, and she very early in a conversation that we had about work, and my work, and stuff very quickly just kind of identified. . . . " You need to be careful with your time. You're getting pulled in a lot of directions because of your of position, and it can't help that you're in this position as a person of color. . . . " So I'm okay, you actually have some sense. Like I don't have to explain that shit to you. What you do with that information, I'm not sure yet. But that means something to me. And so, because it's so relationship-driven, I have made a point of forming a relationship with her, (6)

Persisting: Actively learning. The learning curve for African American women in the

white academy is steep: the participants highlight how over time they found ways to carve out

space to do the necessary work.

> you just figure stuff out. I mean, I've been teaching for about 14 years and at various levels…And so, I've just learned by doing, learned by being, learned by observing. You know you come in kind of ignorant. I'd say that about anybody who is new at anything, but then I just learned. Sometimes I've had to be told that's because you're black. it's also possible that they did it because they felt threatened because you were black. And then somebody would say, you know, they said that because you were black, or you know,

you're not the only one who has had to deal with this. And this is the consistent mean for the last 20 years at this place, the past 15 years at this place, and you go oh… but I often land on my feet, I just kind of move on (10)

The following participant has learned to choose her battles:

I'll choose which hill I'm going to die on. In other words, I can't deal with every issue, but the ones that are most salient and important for me… when I was young I would pop off at everything. Everything got me annoyed, and everything got me pissed. And I had to tell everybody about themselves. As I've aged I've sort of learned to do a more thorough and in-depth assessment of what's going on for me, what's going on in the environment, what's going on for the other people. And not to be forgiving, but I would say be more compassionate at the same time more strategic…I'll say it again, I choose the hill that I'm going to die on. But once I done chose that hill, I got at it fearlessly (17)

Participants learn to use different strategies in ways that transform some of the

resentment into healthier action of always being asked to take the lead as representatives of

people of color.

I negotiate by force, sometimes by coaching. I do believe in a coaching model. I coach my white colleagues for cultural competence to help them negotiate difference. But other times, I just say, you know what, enough. We don't have enough supervisors of color. We're not living up to our mission. We need to do something. Let's make this a topic, and then I won't talk. I intentionally don't take the lead. . . . when we're having conversations about how to increase the number and quality of our placements of color, just because I'm the person of color doesn't mean that—it's not a black thing, it's an institutional thing.. Cynicism, sarcasm, yeah, and sometimes some of it, quite frankly, I guess is the way resentment plays it's self out in a healthy fashion.   (3)

Participants learned that the creation of communities of support which focused on

scholarship helped them in "staying stable" in the institution and reinforced " knowing who you

are," in this case, an African-American woman. The importance of knowing what you can and

can't change was essential in sustaining oneself and staying focused on the work that brought

them to the academy. *"But it's this particular front for fighting isn't the one where that's going to*

happen, and I can find another place to wage this struggle. So that's one thing. And then another

thing is the work itself to remember that's what it's about" (14). In the next quote the different

types of strategies for survival are articulated clearly and are represented in the reflections of

many of the women.

> I find that what I've learned in my maturity is really using a multiple of strategies, and
> tools, and approaches depending on the situation, depending on the climate, and
> depending on who is there listening. So sometimes there are the cultural negotiations that
> I utilize. There are times that I use shock factor. There are times when I will have an
> ally, a white ally, to come in and carry the message. So really depending on what the
> issues are, the climate, is how I approach it. (5)

The ability to recognize the flexibility and openness in a relationship with a white

colleague is an important strategy in breaking through and making change through relational

connection.

> And I think that my style as it is for many African-American women is to try different
> approaches, to try to build relationships. But of course, we're like anyone else. You get
> to a point where you say, you know, Joe X is like not going to—we're just not going to—
> the most I can be with him or her is being civil. Because there is no way in which we are
> going to come around, not at least at this time. But I think there is a real dynamism that
> happens when you really can break through some of those relationships, and that requires
> for you and the other person to be open to it. (1)

The experience of "breaking through" the barriers of difference and creating openness to

a deeper connection than simple civility is energizing and significant as also reflected in the next

comment.

> So I write to the people, who I'm trying to be in touch with. I'm writing into a
> conversation that I want to join. I'm looking for people who are looking for me too. And
> those are always the audience members that I have in mind whether I'm teaching or
> whether I'm writing. And so, the work feels purposeful. It is meaningful. It doesn't feel
> like drudgery to me ever. It always feels like okay, I'm going to work to have this
> conversation with people who need some knowledge to think about something, and I
> need knowledge too because there is something that I'm trying to figure out. I think a lot
> of it has been that mindset attitude. I'm also a runner. I also have a child. I have strong
> family ties. So out of all of these things I get a kind of holistic sense of well-being. (14)

In this last instance, the sense of reaching out to others who are receptive and questioning

becomes a mutual experience of learning and lends to a holistic sense of well-being. The

survival strategies of this dimension are varied and very deliberate.

I've learned to be I think a little bit less—a little bit more sophisticated and elegant about it. Sometimes you just make people mad by saying it in a context, which would embarrass them. And sometimes, you know, you're willing to accept that. But it depends on what the point is. If the point is just to shut somebody down and tell them about themselves, then it's fine for them to be embarrassed. But if you actually want them to be listen and change something, then if they are embarrassed they are not going to do it. So then you have to have the conversation to the side I think, and say what did you mean by this because this is how I took it. You know that this indicates this or that or the other. I think sometimes you have to be politically savvy to get what it is that you do really want, and not just make yourself feel better, or pat yourself on the back for being a rabble-rouser. I think it just depends. Then sometimes you have to just—you know, academia is full of passive-aggressive people and sometimes you have to just break that logjam by speaking up. (10)

Primary Dimension: Exercising Voice and Agency

The dimension *Exercising Voice and Agency* represents the assertions and demonstrations of personhood by women in the white academy. This dimension is central to the model and illuminates the ways in which the African American women's presence through action impacts the environment of the academy. Despite the obstacle course they face, the African American women scholars find ways to engage their empowered selves to make a difference. The dimension is clearly in relationship to the primary dimension *Strong Sense of Self and Embodied Female Blackness* as many respondents directly tie their call to exercise voice and claim agency to familial and cultural value systems that participants name as an impetus for their action. These are revealed in the properties*: Responsibility to Students*, *Acting, Valuing Rigor, Impact of Presence*, *Demanding Respect.*

Exercising voice and agency: Responsibility to students. Overwhelmingly, participants commented on their deeply felt responsibility to their students and recognized the embodiment of that responsibility as central to their ability to impact their environment: "It's the students. It's always the students." (6). Acting for students in some ways means acting on behalf of themselves. Participants spoke about offering support on behalf of students who were

struggling for various reasons, the importance of their presence in the academy for students of

color, and the impact on white students.

> I had an example this year of a student who was about to flunk out. And actually—I
> really go back and forth with the deans and associate deans to say no, you shouldn't do
> this or this is—what do you mean? You're talking about attrition. I will vouch for this
> student. That doesn't mean they won't kick them out, but they do know that if they are
> my student, it's not going to go down with just a letter. (13)

Several participants spoke about their commitment to students who are struggling.

> In my job I take on any student who cannot graduate. I don't give a doggone what they
> [the administration] think. We had a black woman the university accepted. She could not
> write well. She wanted to do a topic that was more public-health related, and I worked
> with her for seven years for nothing. The university wanted me to drop her. I said no, you
> admitted her. We owe her. We have a responsibility. She just graduated last year. I took
> her on because I felt the organization had betrayed her in some way. They got her money,
> and then told her at the end you can't write. Well, they should have told her that a long
> time ago. If they took her in, then they need to get her out. And so, I took her on
> informally, underground, behind the scenes and got her to graduation despite husband
> abuse, druggy husband, problems with teenagers, losing her job, whatever was going on.
> (17)

Although committed to all students they teach, participants understood the potential

impact their presence has on African American students in particular.

> I care about all my students equally, or I shouldn't be teaching. But I realize that students
> who are in a minority and have to negotiate different types of minoritarian subjectivity
> have a story that I can understand. And that I have to be available because I might be one
> of the few people who intimately understand that story. And so, I feel make myself
> available for them to have someone to talk to, to negotiate specific things that if I don't
> talk to them about it, if I don't help them, they will not be helped because there is no other
> support system for them. (10)

Several participants mentioned an additional dynamic which exists when working with

African American students; they relate how they are careful not to project their own experiences

on their students. It is important to see the students as individuals with unique narratives and

lived experiences distinct from their own.

> Not every black girl that I meet in a class is me. She's her and needs to like ─ or
> whatever sort of variation on that that I identified with in some way, whether it's a young

queer kid or whatever. And they are not me, and as much as I want to see them succeed and see them kind of overcome, I don't need to sort of replay that sense of like this is about my insecurities or my shit. They need to figure out ─ they need to figure out their own path. (6)

I feel that it's complicated sometimes with black students or students of color for me to make sure that I'm doing two things at the same time. Not making assumptions about them based on who I see, because I don't know their story, I don't know I can help you as a black teacher. And suppose they are not invested in that particular framing of themselves. (11)

A common theme was no matter the formal or informal stance taken with students, the

participants spoke about being authentic in their engagement.

They see me as faculty, and as faculty there is a power relationship. So it's important for me to create a safe environment is really showing my humanness, my humanity, sharing the struggles that I've had as a mother, grandmother, as a woman. So sharing the personal pieces of me, that kind of puts me equally human as the student. Knowing that the power differential is always going to be there as being faculty, but trying to diminish that as much as possible. (5)

Many times this is the first contact white students have had with an African American

woman in authority, and learning occurs based on this contact.

I offer white students an opportunity to see an African-American woman in a role that they're not used to seeing. And so, I think that that is critical, and to learn something as a result of the relationship, not just to see me, but also to walk away with knowledge that really helps them to begin to think race. [I've had white student come] up to me and say "you're the first black person that I've ever had teach me, and I really want to thank you" . . . we bring a way of knowing, being, and doing that is different sometimes, in some ways, from our colleagues who are the dominant culture. (1)

Participants recognize the importance of their authentic engagement with students and

recognize the impact their commitment has on the learning environment.

Exercising voice and agency: Acting. The need to take action by speaking out against

the embedded nature of the injustices noted in the academy was a strong theme in all of the

interviews. It was clear that for these women this was not just a choice, but an imperative.

But if I dare -- if I had my hypothesis, I would say that especially for black women faculty whose work is so closely related to thinking explicitly about questions of race,

racial power, and racial identity and so on…it's very difficult to separate that from thinking about the institution itself. (14)

The people who were most invested and like showed up for those meetings and have those conversations were almost all faculty of color. Now great, but it's also like where the fuck was everybody else. And so, that' what is like this unequal burden. So of course they did it because they care, but it was also sort of like they were doing this added burden of sort of being the ones to take responsibility for something that is the whole college's issue (6)

The following participant understands her need to speak out in situations because others

do not.

I remind you every black faculty of color does not speak out, and sometimes you end up speaking out because you're so irritated that some of your colleagues are not. So I think there is a gender component to that as well. (15)

One participant explains she was politicized during her tenure as an undergraduate and

graduate student and taking action as a fundamental to who she is continues in her role as a

faculty member.

So my whole history around knowledge production and the pursuit of knowledge, has been very much connected to the kind of critique of not just the academy for the academy's sake, but really thinking about institutional racism, and how the university is an institution lets this happen. And we can think historically why college campuses have so often been the place of so much political activity. I mean there is a reason why. So for me it's impossible for me to think about sitting, doing service, or participating in those ways without recognizing that is a part of the work. It's a part of the work that I do. And I lost more fights than I've won. But I get to write a statement, and it gets submitted, and it becomes a part of the record. . . . And sometimes things have happened or I've been able to sway an opinion and sometimes not. But I'm also a very junior person, but as I move forward I can see next steps, next places where I need to be where I can have much more influence. (14)

Offering a different perspective from the previous comment, another participant relates

her dismay after realizing that she was going to have to engage in internal justice work in the

academy because if she didn't, who would.

This is not the position that I wanted. I didn't go in there thinking I'm going to start an anti-racism committee, and yeah, we're going to look at all the colleges and universities to see what's happening to black women. I mean, I didn't start out like that. I started out

like everybody else. I was going to be able to teach and do my job. So being forced into that position, I see that as unfairness actually. It's not something that I feel has benefited me even though maybe it has by making me become more vocal and louder about things. But I don't think it's something that has benefited me. It's something that has been unpleasant to have to have done in the first place. It's something that I'd rather not have to do. I'd prefer the luxury of not having to even think about it. (4)

Participants feel responsible for speaking up and out because there are so few African American women present at the table. They also feel the need to protect their colleagues who may not be in the position to take stances against the status quo because they are junior faculty.

in the last few years, I can't not speak out…sometimes it comes across very aggressive and angry. But if I'm one of the two people that you have to deal with, then that's really not making a big dent. So I never feel like it's enough, which is probably why I keep doing it…I think there's something about not having the numbers that makes you more vocal. I think if you're trying to protect junior colleagues, who you know would say something, but you know it's not in their best interest to say anything, that you also end up speaking up for them . . . so I think it's a question of numbers and just making sure you're advocating for people until they can advocate for themselves… It's not just for yourself. It ends up being for other people, whether it's colleagues or students in and of itself (15)

Truth-telling, no matter the consequence, is an important value for the following participant:

I will always speak the truth, not for accolade or celebrity, but because it's what you're supposed to do as a teacher. And how in the world are you going to have students that are living out of their cars, taking showers at the gym—how are you going to look at that dynamic and then say that's just the way the world is. And it's unfortunate but human beings, we've only been around 200,000 years, and we're still working on it. We are devolving in many ways. It's unfortunate. (18)

From an early age the participant speaking in the next quote was determined to not only achieve in the world of academics, but also not to abdicate voice in the service of success.

Don't make any noise. If you do we're going to make it really bad for you. We're going to defame you. We're not going to give you any opportunities. You just need to learn how to be quiet. And I've just never learned how to do that. If we're going to affect change in anyway, we cannot be quiet. We have to be in a mode of improvement, not status quo. That's the way I see it. I see what the problems are. So I just thought the best way to attack it, if you will, was to get my PhDs lined up, and do some writing, and do some lectures, and try to make a difference in some small way. (16)

This next comment starkly points out the risk in challenging institutional policy that is generally accepted as "doing good" and diversity focused. The reaction to the participant's questioning the assumption behind such a policy and the consequences for the students and faculty of color who are at the largesse of the white academy is seen as being overly sensitive, using the race card, and revealing a personal failing "to understand" benevolent motivations.

> It was always me naming the thing…Like questioning their move to seek out these urban black youth in the U.S. and to bring those students to our school. And I would ask them what's the point of that? Why are you reaching out to bring these students to this school or to bringing these faculty members to this school? And they would say because they obviously [the white students] are going to go out into the larger world and they need to know what it's like to interact with other people, with diverse people. And I said, yeah, but what do the faculty members and the students you are bringing in gain from this interaction? And they're like, well, they get free tuition and the opportunity to get a job. And I was like then basically we're like animals in a zoo, and the white students and white faculty get to walk around and look at us and pet us, and we're supposed to be grateful and appreciative that we get to be treated like caged animals. And then of course, they would not really be willing to have those conversations without saying, well, you know, this is not about race. This is not about race. And you're making it about race. And it's not as bad as you're making it seem. You're really cynical. (4)

The women did not falter in the face of authority and spoke to the importance of challenging those that have the authority to change structures in the university. They see this as a part of their purpose and personal mission to create change even if their place in the institution is threatened by these actions.

> You know, I have very serious, rigorous debates with Chairs, and with Provost and with Presidents. And feel very deeply that I have nothing to lose. I might lose a job, but that's okay. I would rather lose a job than lose myself. And something like that is really not a negotiation. And at some point, it feels like it is not a negotiation. And at some points, it feels that I'm demanding the so-called authority figures and the so-called power structures to compromise and to give up more than what they get to hold on to. They are compromising too much of their position because I've already compromised to their position when I decided to teach in the institution. And so, I'm always thinking about ways to dismantle those structures. (4)

The women also spoke to the strategies they take to overtly thwart the system. These

actions sometimes occurred inside the classroom where they created an "open space" to engage

students in critical thinking about structural hierarchy.

> You know, I think that a lot of it has to do with me thinking about what would make me comfortable and thinking about what would help me to be overtly rebellious and retaliatory against the system. And so, I try to thwart that system by having these conversations with students on the first day. I try to thwart that system by having us all sit in a circle, and explaining to them what it means to be able to sit in a circle. I try to thwart all those systems by violating the kind of top-down hierarchy of relationships between the Chair and a faculty member.

The women on a whole understood that their engaged presence is necessary for change

and advocacy to occur in the academy.

> I have to be on committees to advocate for people. I have to be engaged in the campus community and raise questions that otherwise wouldn't be raised. Excuse me, you know. You know somebody says something you go excuse me, what did you mean by that? Or have you considered the fact of how this impacts? Or shouldn't we include these readings, shouldn't we have this discussion, that kind of thing. I think it's essential. You have to be part of the community in order to affect change. (10).

Exercising voice and agency: Valuing rigor. Participants spoke about their love of and

dedication to rigorous inquiry in their own research and in the classroom. Participants create

containers for rigorous inquiry for students and themselves:

> I think that students don't very often have professors who are like me. And so, I think that in some ways they are awfully intimidated by me because I'm really serious about rigorous thought and rigorous conversation. And I really hold them accountable for being self-motivated and self-directed. I'm not going to feed them. And I ask them to argue with me. It's like have a debate with me, have an opinion, and be wrong, and tell me where I'm wrong. And they don't ─ they've not met professors like that before. You know where it's not a game. That I'm not saying do this so that you can learn how to survive the academy. It's like no, do this so that you can expand your thinking. Do this so that you can challenge my thinking. And so, I think that certainly there's an impact on those students who are really, really joyous learners, and who are interested in development. Like they are interested in developing their mind, and interested in developing their politics, and interested in just not dealing with the status quo, and those are very rewarding exchanges for me. (4)

One participant commented on the role she plays as "great black mother" in the class

room; she is supportive and personally engaging with students, creating an environment where

she can also set high expectations of students and be "hard assed," two personas working in

concert.

> It's cold. . . . It's not a warm climate. It's a chilly kind of place. And so, partially, I think that they appreciate somebody kind of being like an auntie. And the other reason that I enact the great black mother often, particularly in classroom setting I'm pretty hard assed. So I find it very useful to be able to be really hard assed with them, and to turn around and say, man, do you want a cookie? You know what I mean? There's a tension there that works. And I think what I absolutely want for them— and I say this to them, what I want you to understand is that I have very high expectations for your behavior in class, for your thinking about people's work outside of class et cetera. And I will hold your feet to the fire. If you don't read a book, I will put you out; and I may cuss you out, before I put you out. If you need something to eat, I will also give you $10. And so, there is this kind of thing back and forth (9)

Participants spoke of their ability to create learning environments that were rigorous

while still being enjoyable.

> I have heard from students that I'm very much liked, respected, and appreciated. They think I'm hard too. They think I'm a hard grader and I'm really serious, and that they can't play around in my class, but it's a good class, and it's fun. And that's a perfect thing. You want to put fear in them but you also want them to enjoy it. (12)

Several of the participants believe they challenge students, particularly students of color,

more than the white faculty does. This belief is coupled with their observations that some white

faculty members do not have a great deal of respect for the ability of African American students.

> in my classroom, my students know that if they come—if they enroll in one of my courses, that they will learn how to read well, write well, and defend their writing. They know that they are going to have to work hard. When I go to my department meetings, in particular, the Chairs of the English department are both white. White male, white female. They are co-Chairs. They are rigid. They do not think very highly at all of students of color. They make that very clear. They think that they are stupid. (16)

The belief expressed in the previous comment is tied directly to an understanding

expressed by several participants about the difference African American women faculty believe

they can make in the lives of their students.

> black women faculty, they tend to be more idealistic in their teaching. They feel like they make a difference,—they are not sort of like phoning in to collect a check. . . . You're not

as cynical as they [white faculty about African American students] are. You're not like antagonistic towards the students and hate them or resent them. You're not lazy and it comes through in this racial way. I think that's part of it that we do have a different kind of attitude towards our jobs as professors—as educators.   (7)

Exercising voice and agency: Impacting. This property reveals the multitude of ways that African American women scholars understand their impact on the academy: "we bring a way of knowing, being, and doing that is different sometimes, in some ways, from our colleagues who are the dominant culture. . . . I listen with a different ear. " The following comment reflects the participant's understanding that her work is not just a job, but a calling. Education has changed her life in positive ways, and she is determined to make that same difference in the lives of others.

> [I make a] difference . . . in people's lives. I think that long ago, I figured out that education was more than a career for me. It is a calling for me, and it has been and always will be because education has been liberating for me. Even with all of its problems and that's why as much as I loathe it at times, I think for all of its problems it still is the best opportunity that you have to break a cycle of "I'm a first generation college student". So I have broken the cycle. Making a difference, working within organizations to try and change those structures keeps me coming back. Seeing little rays of hope in different schools where people are making a difference; it kind of keeps you going. It keeps you going; it keeps you energized. (1)

The following participant understands her impact as contributing to the dismantling of a system that is based on power and control and that privileges the few over the many.

> I have to believe that anytime you walk through the world, you leave your mark or your footprint. I have no idea how deep my footprint or mark is or will be. But I know that being here at this particular time, in this particular journey, there is a reason, and I have to trust that. My spirituality requires me to believe in that. …as long as the systems are in place, it's going to keep it running and operating for the benefit that it was created for. Knowing who it was created for; who it benefits is the first step. And then you know what you can do to help dismantle that… my mark in the world is to keep putting those things on the table in the multiple ways that I can with my students, with my colleagues, with my children, with my grandchildren. And building capacity, we've got to build capacity of our young people to take our place. We've got to keep it going. (5)

The following comment reflects the bidirectional nature that the participant understands as her impact. The students were changed by engagement with her, and she was changed by engagement with students.

> I have students now that date back 30 years. And while all that time hasn't been in the classroom, it's been engaged with students; and so, to be in touch with them, and have them remember you really is another thing that keeps you coming back because you do change lives. And they change your life. And so, it's a very dynamic process. (8)

The next comment represents several participants' experiences of agitating to increase the awareness of multicultural issues on their campuses.

> I am—have been a faculty agitator, an activist. So when I first started, the first day of school was on MLK day for example. . . . There was no mention of it. There was nothing. We didn't have an assistant Dean of multicultural affairs. We had a little student-led office of multicultural resource center. So I think of myself as a catalyst and an activist, and I am pretty good at figuring out who I need to partner with in order to get done what I think needs to happen. And that's what I did as a junior faculty. So I aligned myself with some senior folks and agitated for them to kind of get on board and let's get diversity on the table because this cannot stand. And so, over the years we have created a group of interested faculty who are kind of working on these issues [now there is a dean of multicultural affairs] . . . this was a result of all that agitation. (9)

The next comment reveals that the participant understands that she is the first line of defense for her students. Her interactions with white students who aspire to teach in urban communities of color is supportive, challenging their self-knowledge to make a positive impact .

> I am able to have great impact on people's lives, who will have great impact on the lives of people of color. One of the things that I do is I affect the teacher education curriculum. So I have these white kids coming from the Midwest wanting to work in an urban school districts that are really not prepared because they have never taken a look at their own identity as white people. So that's what I do. I also am the person to ensure that the students of color from these campuses are able to get our program easily… I think that if I wasn't there, the white people that are very committed to social justice don't have the cultural competence to make sure that our Cambodian, Laotian, Puerto Rican, Mexican, Native American, and African-American students are able to take full advantage of the program. (3)

The following participant comments on her positive impact on efforts to increase the number of African American faculty and bring multiple perspectives to the curriculum.

I have in very concrete ways influenced recruitment of black faculty. I mean, I can tell you the search committees I've been on, and the conversations, and the votes that I've had to try to get like in Congress or something, you've got to do that. So in very concrete ways I've done that. I think I have influenced—in humanities, I think I have influenced ways in which people talk about the humanities. Because being on certain committees and all of that, you can sort of influence the projects that are going to happen. The people who get invited to campus. So I think I've helped to shape that. And particularly, through the curriculum and through curriculum building. I think I've helped to build— yeah, my presence is definitely felt in programs abroad and curriculum building and faculty building.(13)

The next comment reflects one participant's belief that she impacts individuals but not

the institution at large, an idea that surfaced in many participant comments. She explains that her

presence is an oasis for students of color in a "sea of whiteness," yet because she is in the

minority, she does not have institutional structural impact.

I think it [my presence] matters and it doesn't matter, or it impacts individuals as opposed to institutions. I think that's the way I would describe it as impacting individuals as opposed to the institution. I don't see my presence impacting institutions at all. I mean, I just think at a certain point you have to have numbers. And if everything is a vote, if everything —if policies, if who gets hired, if who gets admitted is based on numbers and votes and you don't have the numbers or votes, then you can't affect institutional change. And maybe that's kind of a cynical view, but I mean I don't see myself as really belonging to the institution. For those particular reasons, I think that it's not meant to be for people of color. It's meant as what it's meant as a kind of insular white institutional experience. But the bonus or the kind of benefit is that when students of color are there, that they have somebody that they can gravitate towards. They have some courses that somehow help them make it through that kind of sea of whiteness. And so, I think my presence impacts individuals, not institutions or environments. And I'm okay with that. I feel okay with that.

Exercising voice and agency: Asserting personhood. When faced with multiple

challenges to their personhood, intellect, and presence in the academy, African American women

scholars take measures to mitigate what can be experienced as assaultive, "I assert my authority

and command respect from them in class. I'm just like I'm not your secretary. What's wrong

with you?" This property illumines ways that participants control their environments to survive.

A common theme that emerged centered on how the participants thought about the way that

students should address them; the following participant creates clear boundaries.

> Students begin the course by saying what should we call you? You can call me Dr. [last name]; you can call me Professor [last name]. Well, why can't we call you [first name]? And I will say, well, because we're not friends. In a situation where I am actually going to evaluate you at the end, it doesn't mean that we should be mean to each other, that I should be oppressive towards you. But the reality of the situation is the classroom where I'm the professor and you're the student. Now, I understand that there are certain campuses that have a more informal or casual culture. But I find it hard to believe that those same students would walk into a course on Shakespeare with an old, white male professor and ask him can we call you Chuck? I find that very hard to believe. And if I ask them, they would say sometimes the professors say we can call them such and such. And I'll say, well, I'm saying to you that you can call me Dr. or Professor and those are your two options, so you can pick. It's not a debate, right. (14)

The following participant who prefers to be addressed formally as Dr. by her students

found that students, as well as colleagues, were bothered by her stated choices, not only her

preference regarding how she is addressed but also her choice to dress more formally than her

colleagues. She understands that this phenomenon is the result of her hypervisibility.

> We have terminal degrees. And when I would go out to teach, I preferred that my students called me Dr. Now my students—some of them were offended by it, as were some of my colleagues, which initially it just baffled me. I thought why wouldn't you— what's wrong with that? I mean you can choose to have students call you by your first name, but if I choose to have them call me by my official title, then why is that a problem. . . . A lot of my colleagues dress very differently, and I was questioned… why do you need to wear a suit when you're going to teach; and again, it was kind of like my—my visibility in the institution was one that felt almost burdensome because it was like why am I answering these questions when we should be talking about education. (1)

Another participant notes the cultural differences and socialization of black and white

students and how they express respect to those in positions of authority.

> I let them call me [first name]. They generally do, especially at elite schools. They [white students] are socialized differently than black students. Black students tend to call you by your last name, or professor, or doctor. I'm like I don't have to worry about you respecting me. If you're not clear about that, I'll make sure you're clear about.

She goes on to note if she requires students to address her differently from that of her colleagues, once again she is differently located.

> And so, it becomes kind of weird if they only address me by my last name and everybody else by their first. Then you're setting yourself off in a way that creates an additional distance (10)

Another participant understands the stances she takes as the "performance of boundaries," acts that she engages in to maintain her authority.

> I don't dress casually when I teach. I don't dress up. I don't wear a three-piece suit or whatever, heels, but I don't dress casually. I don't dress like my students. To me that's important. It's an important performance of boundaries. And I reinforce those boundaries through other types of performative behavior. I don't hang out with my students. I don't call my students. I don't do any of that stuff. It's like we don't hang. I don't hang out. We're not peers; we don't hang out. I don't judge what other faculty members do in terms of bonding with their students, but I like to keep that separation.

The amount of energy participants expend thinking about the ways their appearance, actions, and behaviors impact the respect they receive from students and colleagues is considerable.

Core Dimension: Robust Sense of Self

After years of scholarship and preparation some African American women begin an academic career trajectory in white academic institutions. They bring not only their academic backgrounds but also a strong sense of self and an embodied female blackness, which acknowledges the historical and current struggles and relentlessness of African American women. They come to the academy with a strong desire to pursue their own intellectual interests and many of those (not all) pertain to brown on brown research, scholarly inquiry focused on issues relevant to communities of color, as well as a strong commitment to rigor and excellence in the classroom and expressed commitment to students. This is not an essentialist position; the women express the fullness and diversity of their personhood. Possessing a robust sense of self

ensures a protective layer, an armoring of resilience. To survive in the white academy demands

certain emotional competencies and the possession of clearly articulated beliefs and values and a

sense of purpose.

Robust sense of self: Embodied female blackness. To aspire to a career in the white

academy and to remain there requires a strong sense of self, as one participant notes: "I'm guided

by Fanny Lou Hammer. I'm guided by the legacies of Harriet Tubman. This ain't nothing. We

ain't picking cotton, not yet" (18). For the participants their sense of self is inextricably tied to

their understanding of self as a black woman. One participant comments on how her awareness

of her embodied female blackness moves through perilous white space.

> I locate myself in what I call my black female body. . . . How my black female body
> moves through space, which is mostly framed by a certain kind of whiteness. . . . I'm
> very aware again of a black body in this umbrella, progressive, liberal state which is
> fraught—fraught with issues of neo-liberalism, and all of these kind of subverted
> behaviors. (2)

Another participant attributes her ability to survive the day-to-day struggles in the

academy to her womanist worldview and her ability to call on the wisdom and creativity of other

African American women.

> on my best days I know as Maya Angelou would say, I'm a phenomenal woman. And
> when I'm feeling down, and I'm feeling blue, I can always go to Desiree, who is like
> screaming it out to the audience, I'm not moving. I'm not moving from my place in
> history. Or I go to Paula Giddings, the scholar, and I look at where and when I enter the
> struggles. . . . I have been able to survive. . . . there is so much that can chip away at
> your identity in these institutions because they are microcosms of society. . . . And so, I
> think that my womanist philosophy along with my other practices, that helps me. And
> there are ways that helps to support me and to keep me kind of emotionally stabilized. (1)

Participants' comments reflected the intersectional aspects of their identities, one woman

remarks:

> Females of color have what has been described as a double jeopardy or double vision, so
> that my perspective isn't just that of a black person. It is that of a middle class black
> person who is female. And those identities are inextricable… as a person that holds

membership in two communities that have been traditionally marginalized, I hold both stories. I hold the view of the middle class whites, I can encode and decode things in the very same way that middle-class whites can. I also encode and decode things according to my identity as black, and according to my identity as female. (3)

The following participant observes that although she embraces her identity as a "black

female faculty member" a result of contact and engagement in the white academy is that she can

be seen and known holistically by her white colleagues.

I'll just say that I feel very grounded as a black faculty member —black female faculty member. I think that's the first thing that people see when they see me. But I don't think that's the only thing that they see when they see me because at a certain point when your colleagues, folks just get to know you as colleagues. (10)

Participants understand themselves in relation to the history of African American

women's agency and resistance.

The civil rights movement was not born on Martin Luther King. It was born on sisters making sandwiches and opening up their kitchen and helping people get prepared, get organized, and women talking to their men at night and that kind of stuff. So I'm saying it continues a tradition of informally. It's culturally grounded. It's relational in that way. (17)

The next comment reflects the participants' understanding that to stay present and useful

it is essential to create emotional and intellectual spaces that honor one's embodied female

blackness.

I think the most important thing is it to keep—you know, you have to have icons around you. You have to be surrounded by books that nobody really reads. You have to feed yourself. All we can do is just keep seeking community of self, and keep remembering that as the walls tumble, it's not about playing the game. It's not about being strong. You don't have to be strong to become more of who you are.   Everyone is hurting . . . right now is a particularly important time for people like myself to not shut down. But I almost did. I almost did. That's what I wanted to say is you've got to surround yourself with things and people that remind you of the beauty of who you are it's important as a black female. Your survival is dependent on the dynamics of your character. (18)

Robust sense of self: Aliveness of received values. The participants attribute much of

their ability to be steadfast as they negotiate the white academy to the lessons learned from their

families and communities of origin; "I come from a long tradition of African-American educators beginning historically in slavery. So I'm carrying on a tradition that's important to my community, important culturally" (17). Core values that emerged from the participant comments include valuing education, valuing speaking out, and valuing giving back, expressed by one participant as "I deeply believe that you leave a place better than you found it. I believe that. My parents lived that. I have lived that." (9)

Another participant reflects on how she was raised to consider the collective needs rather than just a focus on the individual.

> I think we're raised that way to sort of think in terms of community, to give back, to not just sort of take. And that you can actually make a positive contribution, and that's a good thing. I think we're raised to have spiritual values. (7)

The following participant surfaces her belief that African American children are raised and socialized differently, and this impacts the way she is perceived in the academy.

> I have different ways of being then many of my white colleagues because I grew up in a household where you were told what to do. And you knew that school was an important time, and that you follow instruction, and that you had great respect for teachers. We were raised having different values in terms of expectations. So sometimes that rubs against the grain in the dominant institutions. (1)

A recurrent theme was the emphasis on education in the participants' families of origin.

> I'm a very serious scholar and a perfectionist in a lot of ways. My mother who didn't finish college, she took some classes at Hunter and things, was always drilling me about education is the only way out, and the only way to get what I want from life…she really always pushed that I had to be better than the rest. When I would come home from school, she would have extra homework for me. She had her own assignments… I had spelling quizzes since I was little. And if I got anything under probably a B+ was punished. I constantly had to show off my intelligence…my mom worked nights, but she would be calling and making sure I was there, and I couldn't go out. She sent me to a school—a middle school that was away from all my friends because she didn't want me to hang out with my friends because she thought they weren't going anywhere. And she wanted to separate me from them. So I was always raised with education first. (12)

The parents of the participants provided them with experiences and knowledge that supports their ability to move in white spaces.

> I have to say that my parents gave me a very good Catholic education. And in their simple ways they understood what it really means or what is necessary for their child, their daughter, to be successful in the world, and education was very important to them. So I know that I'm bicultural. I can move, I know the rules of the dominant culture. I can speak the language. I can operate in a white organizational structure and be effective. (5)

Another participant recognizes she learned to speak up/out and truth telling in her community of origin. She also acknowledges that holding someone else's "issues" is not a burden she is willing to bear, no matter the consequence.

> I was socialized in a community where you spoke up. What's wrong with you? It comes from my experience. I'm not going to feel bad. I'm not going to carry this with me. You carry it. You got issues, you're the one with the issues, and you carry it. I'm not going to carry it, and sit in silence. No. And I think sometimes black women are just tough, and we're just like whatever, and then we pay. Sometimes we pay. (10)

Summary

"Sometimes we pay," a compelling final thought offered in the last quotation and true at times. Yet the narratives from which the primary dimensions emerged were not reductive accounts of internalized victimization, but multifaceted tales of redemption through resoluteness, understood promise for the future, felt responsibility to support the uplift of others, and emancipatory purpose. The women who participated in this study shared the complex realities of their lived experiences in the white academy. In the interviews the participants revealed the intricate dynamics they face on a daily basis; they shared the stress, frustration, discouragement, and rage felt, as well as the energy, zest, determination, intellectual/analytical prowess, and love of self and others that enhances their ability to impact the ecology where they dwell. The participants revealed their ability to hold these conflicting realties simultaneously. Although these were stories of pain and struggle, the meta-story shouts a clear declaration of spirit that

cannot be denied, a counternarrative of salvation. These are not women who find their power via institutional largesse. Their agency comes from within; the act of leading is despite the environment found in the white academy, not because of it. The participants possess a ferocious appetite for justice, and the actions, recognized and unseen, they take on behalf of others and their own personhood transmutes the weight of whiteness.

The intent in Chapter IV was to bring the voices of the research participants' lived experience to life on the page and dimensionalize their narratives, the first step in the analytic process. In Chapter V I continue theory building by describing the relationship among the dimensions and their properties through the creation of a theoretical matrix and the theoretical propositions that emerge from that matrix.

Chapter V: Discussion and Implications

At this juncture it is necessary to revisit the original intent of this project. I was curious about the processes that undergird the experience of African American women scholars in the white academy. In this chapter I move from the voices and lived experience of the research participants illuminated in Chapter IV to the next level of conceptualization. I first introduce the theoretical matrix which illustrates the relationship between the primary dimensions and the core dimension in narrative form as well as graphic depictions. In the subsequent section I name and discuss the theoretical propositions postulated in relation to the theoretical matrix, the final step in the analytic process. In the explication of the theoretical propositions, I return to the discourse at large and weave in the relevant literature that corroborates conflicts or extends my findings. Finally I consider the limitations of the study and propose areas of future research.

The Theoretical Matrix

The goal of dimensional analysis is to advance the inquiry which is focused on a complex social phenomenon from qualitative description to the level of explanation and to "discover the meaning of interactions observed in situations" (Kools et al.,1996, p. 316). It is not enough to notice narrative themes that emerge from the data; it is the illumination of the underlying processes and dynamics at work that is of greater interest. This is achieved by reconstructing the multiple dimensions created in the data analysis into a framework called an explanatory or theoretical matrix, a process identified as "the cornerstone of the analytic process" (p. 317). The matrix serves as an analytical tool that helps the researcher make meaning of the phenomenon being studied by revealing the relationships between identified dimensions. A dimension is an abstraction born from analysis; to dimensionalize data means to explore its significance by identifying its attributes, context, processes, and meaning in ways that surface the multifaceted

nature of the phenomenon being studied. The process of dimensionalizing discrete bits of data gives life and meaning to the data, singularly and then in relation to each other, and uncovers "what all is involved here" (Schatzman, 1980, 1986, 1991), what is the dynamic at play, and what cannot be seen on the surface. By honoring the perceptions of those persons experiencing the situation, the full complexity of the social processes within the phenomenon are uncovered. Chapter IV has described in rich detail the primary dimensions that emerged from the analysis— Risking Self, Seeing/Naming the Whiteness of the Academy, Persisting, Exercising Voice and Agency, and Robust Sense of Self. In this final analytic process of matricing, these dimensions are examined in relation to one another and are placed in the explanatory matrix. A Dimension might become a condition under which certain social processes occur, resulting in particular types of consequences or impacts as perceived from the perspective of the person within that context—in this study the perspective is the African American Woman scholar in the academy. Kools et al. (1996) describes each of the elements of the matrix in the following manner. A condition of the social phenomenon "has an impact on actions and interactions by facilitating, blocking, or in some other way shaping" the human engagement. The social processes that ensue under these conditions is "an intended or unintended action or interaction that is impelled by specific conditions. Finally, the consequence or impact of these processes are "the outcome of specific actions or interactions" taken by the actors (p. 329). The first task in creating the theoretical matrix is identifying the core dimension. The next section will describe Robust Sense of Self, the core dimension of the theoretical matrix.

The visual presentation. The foundational dimension Robust Sense of Self serves as a cradle providing support for the other five dimensions. The robustness revealed in the narratives of the respondents is in relationship with the remaining four primary dimensions: Risking Self,

Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the Academy, Persisting, and Exercising Voice and Agency.

While connections and relationships can be found among other dimensions within the matrix,

none except Robust Sense of Self possesses the criticality to influence and shape the matrix as a

whole. Figure 5.1 illustrates the relational qualities of the theoretical matrix and the dimensions

that describe the context, conditions, processes, and consequences of the social phenomenon of

interest in this study.

PROCESSES

DISS/EASE

EXTERNAL

RISKING SELF

INTERNAL

SEEING, NAMING THE WHITENESS OF THE ACADEMY

INTERNAL

EXTERNAL

ROBUST SENSE OF SELF

CORE DIMENSION

EXTERNAL

PERSISTING

INTERNAL

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN SCHOLARS

EXTERNAL

EXERCISING VOICE AND AGENCY

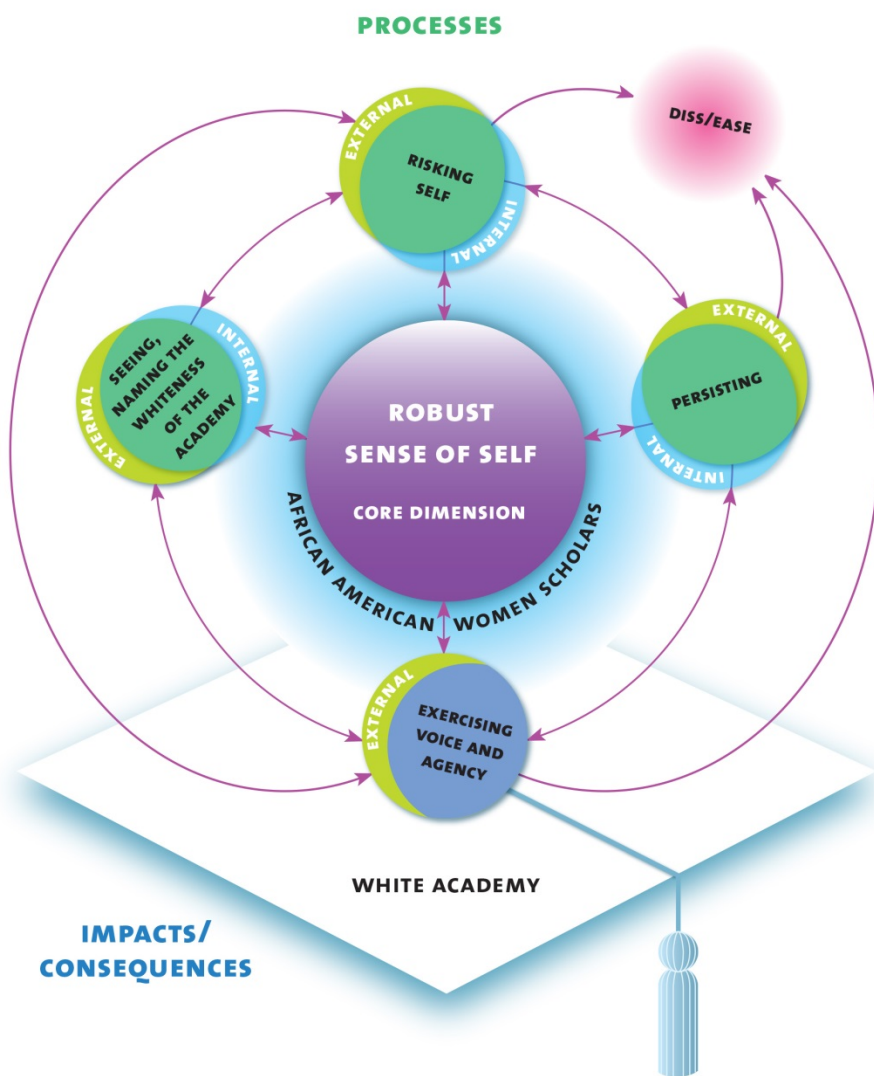WHITE ACADEMY

IMPACTS/ CONSEQUENCES

Figure 5.1 Theoretical matrix

The core dimension. At the heart of the theoretical matrix is the core dimension Robust Sense of Self, a condition. During the analytical process this dimension emerged as the "the dimension with significant explanatory power" (Kools et al., p. 320); it is the sturdiest dimension. When an architect designs a building, a primary consideration are loads, the forces that act on structures. Buildings must withstand loads, or they will fail. In this study the loads experienced by African American women scholars are many, and the fulcrum which supports their ability to withstand and negotiate the pressure is the core dimension Robust Sense of Self. This dimension is a social/psychological condition or attribute that the African American woman scholar brings to the context of the white academy. It is the self-knowledge and self-definition reflected by Lorde's (1984) assertion, "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive" (p. 137), it is "a belief in self far greater than anyone's disbelief" (Robinson & Ward, 1991, p. 87). Robustness should not be conflated with the myth of the strong black woman who silently endures the weight of the world; an imposed and at times internalized construction that has been used to pathologize and stereotypically define the lived experience of the intersectional identities of African American women. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2005) argues this construction is a " limiting rather than empowering construction of black femininity and that it rewards women for a stoicism that draws attention away from the inequalities they face in their communities and the larger society" (p. 105). Conversely the robustness articulated in this theoretical matrix represents an internal process of self-knowledge and self-definition that feeds the African American women's ability to resist objectification, confront injustices, and guide conscious and critical interactions with the environment. Robustness supports an individual's ability to give voice to lived realities; it is the

process of becoming as opposed to "becoming everything to everyone, [and becoming] less of someone to themselves" (p. 107). This construct is about recovering and nurturing self and developing a black female critical consciousness that is enacted in the external world.

In the environment of the white academy, the African American woman scholar engages in interactions that have certain impacts on her. Her work requires her daily interaction with students, colleagues, staff, and administrators, and these encounters necessitate use of self in a myriad of ways which require her to draw from the well that robustness represents. Robustness operates on two levels: micro and macro; it is an internal process that operates to sustain her, and it also has an external feature that emerges as she navigates the terrain. The revealed dimension is dynamic, not static, in constant use—actively bolstering and buttressing the African American women's' ability to navigate the travails they face in the white academy. Robustness emanates from and emanates back, acting as a feedback loop. Under what circumstances do we see the condition robust sense of self emerge?

- robust sense of self supports one's ability to **risk self** when faced with the ordinary and extraordinary
- robust sense of self allows one to **persist** under less than optimal conditions
- robust sense of self and the concomitant self-knowledge supports the ability to locate oneself in the socio-political landscape of the white academy**,** and
- robust sense of self supports one's ability to exercise voice and agency.

Social processes. The primary dimension Risking Self, a process, requires courage, nimbleness, agility, and ambidexterity. For the African American woman in the white academy, day to day existence can resemble a game of dodge ball where she is a team of one without any balls to employ and her opponents have ten players launching balls at her from every direction.

The act of everyday risking necessitates a robust sense of self. To want to remain in the game while simultaneously dodging the balls requires an act of courage that relies on a strong sense of self.

The primary dimension Seeing, Naming the Whiteness of the Academy, a process, represents the deep understanding of what it means to be in a white space. It is a practice of meaning-making and articulating in an environmental context. The ability to perceive the gestalt of the insular academy is buoyed by a Robust Sense of Self; only by knowing who one is in relationship, first to self, and, second, to the socio-political landscape can one make informed decisions about how to locate oneself and commit concomitant acts of resistance. This is the ability to see, to notice, and then make sense of the gendered and raced nuances of the structural power dynamics at play. Similar to the core dimension Robust Sense of Self, the dimension Seeing Naming the Whiteness of the academy also is a bi-level process. The internal component is the seeing; understanding and analyzing the environment and the external process—the naming that results in an active articulation of what is seen.

The primary dimension Persisting, a process, represents the steadfastness that is crucial for African American women to remain and be effective in the white academy. Once again this a process enacting on multiple levels. Persisting is about staying present with oneself, as well as staying present authentically with others in an external context. Women engage in active learning and use this knowledge to make crucial and conscious decisions about where and how to use their energy. Drawing on the strength of self-knowledge or robustness is crucial to the ability to persevere. Robustness supports one's resilience, sense of purpose, and the adeptness needed to improvise in the moment: pivoting in and being response/able in the external environment as needed, to persist.

Social consequences. The primary dimension Exercising Voice and Agency, a consequence, is the active and profound result of taking in and making sense of the raw data of experience filtered through the lens provided by a Robust Sense of Self as well as the information gleaned and analyzed in the dimension Seeing and Naming the Whiteness of the Academy. This dimension represents women actively engaging with their environments in proactive and compelling ways. The women see/understand a dynamic in the environment and act on behalf of themselves and others. This dimension is also tied directly to the primary dimension Risking Self; the commitment to justice represented in exercising voice and agency puts the agent at risk. A property of the primary dimension Risking Self is Diss/Ease: Impact on Body, Spirit—a significant aspect of the theoretical matrix which deserves mention. Although this property did not rise to the analytic category of a dimension because it lacked properties itself, it is a consequence worthy of note. The everyday acts of Risking Self, Persisting and Exercising Voice and Agency all have potentially deleterious impacts on the African American woman's physical and emotional health and relationships at home, work, and in the community. Many African American women live with these consequences; the core dimension Robust Sense of Self has the capacity to moderate the assaults and tame attempts to colonize the minds of spirits and female black bodies of the academy.

Theoretical Propositions

The theoretical matrix describes the potential explanation of the women's experience in the academy. The final step in the analytical process is postulating the underlying human processes that govern the dynamic interplay of processes described in the theoretical matrix. What might explain the experience of the women as it is told from their unique perspective? I will offer three theoretical propositions: Seeking Full Range of Motion, Creating/Claiming Free

Space, and Living Truth to Power to place the findings of this study in the broader scholarly

discourse of African American Women in the academy and to suggest further empirical work on

this topic.

Proposition one: Seeking full range of motion.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your
hatefulness,
But still, like air,
I'll rise
            …Maya Angelou

The data demonstrated that African American women scholars have a desire to live

productive lives in the academy and experience satisfaction through engagement in their

communities and relationships. This yearning is represented in the first theoretical proposition

Seeking a Full Range of Motion. As one participant states:

> I love being theoretical and thinking about these deep questions. But I also want to be a
> public scholar and have a reach far beyond the university and the academy. And I want
> to be healthy, and I want to have a family, and I want to have a personal life, and I want
> to have hobbies. And I want to go on a vacation, not a work related vacation. And I
> want to make money. So if you know another black woman [academic] who has all of
> that, could you tell me? Because I don't. (12)

In physiological terms range of motion refers to the distance and direction a joint can

move to its full potential. When one's range of motion is inhibited, an individual's ability to

move with ease and without pain in the environment is compromised—their full potential goes

unmet. African American women scholars choose careers in the academy for a variety of

reasons: to stretch intellectually and make significant contributions through new scholarship that

many times troubles the status quo, to support their communities, and to inspire and engage

students to be critical thinkers and engaged members in a global society. The data surfaced not

only the myriad of ways that African American women's range of motion is systemically limited

but also the ways in which they resist and fight to lead a full intellectual and personal life. An

academic career and life characterized by full range of motion is unconstrained by the politics of

respectability (Higginbotham, 1993), cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994), assaults on intellectual

prowess and interests, and rejects the stress inherent in alterity which has the potential to kill.

The late poet, essayist, and scholar June Jordon (1980) offers language of resistance,

> I have been wrong… the wrong sex the wrong age the wrong skin the wrong nose the
> wrong hair the wrong need the wrong dream the wrong geographic… I do not consent…I
> am not wrong: Wrong is not my name…My name is my own my own my own. (p. 86)
> This declaration reflects not only the experience of alterity which constrains movement

but also offers a counternarrative crucial to the survival of the African American woman in the

white academy; she is not wrong.

Used in this context, full range of motion refers to the African American woman

scholar's ability to contribute abundantly and freely while bringing the fullness and complexity

of their personhood to bear on the environment, to stumble and struggle and find their way with

the same opportunity to learn and recover as other colleagues without race/gender based

attribution and punishment, and to pursue research that moves them and honors the salience of

their lived experience and intellectual curiosity without insult and diminution. Full range of

motion rejects the commodification of black women's scholarship that "bewitched, bothered and

bewildered," duCille (1994) as she asks "Why are black women always already Other?" (p. 591).

How then is range of motion restricted? A return to the literature about African American

women in the white academy from the last 30 years continues to underscore the intransient

nature of issues faced by African American women in the White academy and aligns with the

experience of the women who participated in the study. Taken at face value it is true that strides

have occurred; there are more bodies of color in the academy as students, faculty, and

administrators than in the past, and scholarship exists that challenges the white normativity of

disciplinary inquiry and language. Despite these advances and, in part, because of them, the more

we show up, the more we need to be contained as our bodies disrupt the status quo; the

entrenched nature of gendered racism (Essed, 1991) and its consequences remains a prevailing

characteristic of our experience, we remain "present and unequal" (Moffitt, Harris, & Berthoud,

2012, p. 79).

African American women in the white academy, a space that fundamentally reproduces

itself, live out their daily lives in inimical environments that tear at their bodies, souls, and

professional careers. The culture of the academy forwards the notion of meritocracy and

individual achievement, a trope that suggests through hard work and the expected concomitant

recognition of intellectual ability one achieves success; the cream naturally rises to the top,

unfettered by constructed roadblocks. This notion ignores the impact of social capital, "the sum

of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing

a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and

recognition" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). The reality of African American women's

experiences as articulated in this study and in the relevant literature troubles that presumption as

we find ourselves forced to dance on the sharp edge (Rains, 1998).

The institutional context of this study, the white academy, is not a neutral location and

frames the experience of bodies of color that dwell in an environment where "whiteness is

created, constructed, and protected in active ways" (Ahmed, 2007). This location, this place is

physical and metaphorical and viscerally felt by "space invaders" (Puwar, 2004), those

individuals whose invitations to enter come with an unspoken caveat that although they are

present, they don't belong. Puwar's (2004) examination of gender, race, and space asks "what

happens when women and racialised minorities take up 'privileged' positions which have not

been "reserved" for them"…what are the terms of coexistence? (p. 1). Historically, the academy

is a socially constructed environment that reifies white male normativity where "whiteness is

lived as a background to experience" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150) and "white power secures it

dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular" (Dyer as cited in Simpson, Utterson, &

Shepherdson, 2004, p. 213). The academy is institution and instituted.   Bourdieu suggests an

almost cathected bi-directional energy that maintains institutional structures and relationships

and, thus, the status quo.

> The act of institution is an act of magic, [p. 119]…An act of communication, but of a
> particular kind: but of a particular kind: it signifies to someone what his identity is, but in
> a way that both expresses it to him and imposes on him by expressing it in front of
> everyone and thus informing him in an authoritative manner of what he is and what he
> must be. [p.121] This is also one of the functions of the act of institution: to discourage
> permanently any attempt to cross the line, to transgress, desert, quit. [p. 336]. (as cited in
> Fine, 2004b, p. 246)

It is widely noted that African American women in the academy experience invisibility

(Baraka, 1997b; Brandon, 2006; Rains, 1998), yet it is the invisibility of the whiteness of the

academy that must be problematized because it is hidden in plain sight and fuels the restricted

range of motion of African American women scholars: "whiteness demands and constitutes

hierarchy, exclusion and deprivation" (Fine, 2004a, p. 2). Twenty-five years ago McIntosh

(1988) observed that "White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special

provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (pp. 1-2). It is

chilling that after a quarter of a century her list still produces "a ha" moments for some readers

introduced to the concept. More insidious and unmovable is the persistence of structural

unmarked whiteness, as Fine (1997) has argued, "whiteness has remained both unmarked and

unstudied" (p. 58).

Ahmed's (2007) phenomenology of whiteness is useful when we unpack the experience of the black female body in the white academy. She suggests "When we describe institutions as 'being' white (institutional whiteness), we are pointing to how institutional spaces are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others: white bodies gather, and cohere to form the edges of such spaces" (p. 157). The presence of black female bodies in the academy perverts the understood order and creates an uneasiness expressed covertly and overtly. When forced to share spaces of hegemonic power, Puwar (2004) suggests "regardless of how amicable academics are to other cultures and people, the sharing of the seat of power (knowledge) with those one studies can be an experience that very easily "throws" institutional positionalities and runs the risk of causing ontological anxiety" (p. 45). As I try to imagine the nature of this type of anxiety, I return to the feeling I had as a child playing musical chairs: "what if there is no chair for me when the music ends." My stomach would clench at the idea that I would be left standing; I hated that game and the existential angst that it provoked. Unconscious white institutional anxiety is expressed in a variety of ways when confronted with bodies out of place. Institutional defense mechanisms enacted by individuals, groups, and policies/procedures range from the primitive to the sophisticated. From projection: "she's pulling the race card" and rationalization: "we have a multicultural center/have a black studies department/have a black woman faculty member in the English department we are doing just fine" or "we can't find any qualified black women applicants to interview, but we'd hire if we could, to passive aggression: "I really think your research is commendable, but you seem to be writing more as an activist than a real scholar, and overcommitted to your informants, take another pass." These and other expressions of unease are commonplace.

Apprehensiveness operates on an everyday basis on a more conscious level for people of color. Every African American knows what "driving while black" means; the behavior inherent in the stop and frisk laws, currently being challenged in New York City[5], is replicated in cities across the United States. In 2000, it was revealed that African American women are more likely to be stopped, frisked, and searched when returning from abroad than any other airline passengers (Dorning, 2000). More recently reports indicate that at airports African American women's hair is being subjected to physical pat downs when going through security (Sharkey, 2011). In the last two years this has been my outrageous experience, and I suspect there will come a time in the near future that I will refuse and also end up in the news. Just as black bodies experience profiling in the social world, in white post-secondary institutions African Americans experience "academic profiling." African American women scholars are scrutinized physically, intellectually, and emotionally/psychologically. Projective judgments are made about their worth and appropriateness for membership in the academy. The impact of these judgments show up in the comments of the research participants as they reflect on the time they spend thinking about what to wear, how to be addressed, the stance to take in meetings with colleagues, how to speak and the consequences.

As "space invaders" we inhabit the academy, yet our attendance is disruptive and unsettling to the status quo. The very presence of the African American female body in the academy makes visible, animates, and problematizes the imbedded nature of white, masculine normativity. We do this whenever we are present in spaces where we are unexpected. I am

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[5] According to New York Civil Liberties Union In 2012, New Yorkers were stopped by the police 533,042 times, 473,300 were totally innocent (89 percent); 286,684 were black (55 percent); 166,212 were Latino (32 percent); 50,615 were white (10 percent).

reminded of a conversation I recently had at the 75th birthday party for one of my colleagues in Vermont, the whitest state in the nation and home of the college where I teach. I found myself engaged in a conversation with a professional couple who extolled the virtues of a racism free Vermont—not true. That same week the cover story headline of the Burlington Vermont free weekly Seven Days read "Report Shows Racial Disparities in Burlington-Area Policing. Now What?" (Picard, 2012) When I point this out to them, they appear confused by my suggestion that perhaps a problem existed when from their perception none had existed moments ago and then uncomfortable that I embodied the problem—I was a mirror. The women who participated in this study "take up space"—they take up physical space, intellectual space, and emotional space; by virtue of their being, they cannot be ignored even when being rendered invisible. The neoliberal narratives that extoll institutional diversity efforts while simultaneously maintaining the status quo increases the "crazy-making" nature of being in but not of the white academy. We know what our lived experience is, yet institutional narratives insist it is not so, thought of as the gas-light effect—the rhetoric does not align with the experience. Ahmed (2007) calls these "happy stories of diversity" (p. 164), and argues that "The speech acts that commit the university to equality…are nonperformatives. They "work" precisely by not bringing about the effects that they name (Ahmed, 2006, p.105).

Narratives found in the literature align with the reported experiences of the research participants. Some enter the academy as seasoned professionals with no sense of the travails that await them, Baszile (2006) states, "I came to academia seeking refuge from the racist, sensational, and troubled business of television news filled with fantasies about the freedom I would have to teach, research, reflect . . . I was disconcerted to discover otherwise" (p. 197). For others the struggle for legitimacy to become and thrive begins as graduate students (Berry, 2004;

Clark, 2006). No matter how we enter with or without advance knowledge of what awaits us, we soon learn that it is critically important to learn to read the environment in order to survive. The fact that African American women scholars are able to produce scholarship, teach/mentor students, and contribute to the culture of their colleges and universities is a testament to their fortitude rather than a reflection of the level of support, encouragement, and collegiality offered or found in the neo-liberal white academy as we enter the second decade of the 21st century.

At every turn African American women scholars in the study and in the field find themselves "presumed incompetent" (Gutiérrez y Muhs, 2012) by students, colleagues, and administrators which creates a sense of cognitive dissonance for women of color scholars, faced with the gulf between their reception and their understanding of their own competence. This dichotomous experience has the potential to create internalized stressors. As Collins' (2000) points out "black women's lives are a series of negotiations that aim to reconcile the contradictions separating our own internally defined images of self as accomplished African American women with our objectification as the Other" (p. 99). A robust sense of self helps to mitigate this internal schism, as well an internally active black feminist epistemology. "The complex nexus of relationships among biological classification, the social construction of race and gender as categories of analysis, the material conditions accompanying these changing social consciousness, and black women's consciousness about these themes" has the potential to also alleviate the impact of constructed alerity (Collins, 1990, p. 3). These women chose the academy after years of preparation. They make a "*conscious* [emphasis added] decision to center [themselves] in an institution that views [them] as other" (Moffitt et al., 2012, p.78). It is this very act of choosing the academy which demonstrates their courageous commitment to liberatory and transformative praxis, not only for their students and institutions but also as a commitment to

liberating themselves. Repeatedly found in the literature as well as in the narratives of the research participants are declarations that being designated other and of being space invaders does not stop us; we use that location as Turner states "By bringing ourselves through the door and supporting others in doing so as well, we can define ourselves in and claim unambiguous empowerment, creating discourses that address out realities, affirm our intellectual contributions and seriously examine our worlds" (as cited in Moffitt et al., 2012, p.79).

There are casualties, for how can individuals continue to live under constant stress without real consequences. Priest (2004) eulogizes and provides an in memoriam as she names African American women intellectuals who left the world early, most from cancer: Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Virginia Hamiliton, Beverly Robinson, Claudia Tate, Sylvia Boone, Toni Cade Bambara, Shirley Ann Williams, and Barbara Christian. She asks, "How can a community achieve freedom if many who fought for it are not known or cherished and are prematurely taken from us?" (p. 54). The women in the study spoke of the physical, emotional, social, and psychic impact of the daily strain of negotiating the treacherous terrain of the white academy. The everyday assaults: being mistaken for service staff or students, challenges to authority in the classroom, and being accused of a lack of collegiality all create racial battle fatigue (W. Smith, 2004) with real consequences. The late Nellie Y. McKay (2000) offers a poignant reflection on the choices she made as a trail blazer in the white academy, demonstrating the conflictual nature of her academic sojourn.

> I am not sure whether I chose this life or it chose me. For although I feel enormously fortunate to have had the chance to contribute to the overall recognition of women's lives and academic achievements over the past 20 years (especially to those of black women), I'd like to believe that had the choice been entirely my own, I would have given more consideration to the personal costs. Fickle fate handed me a life to love but also one I often resent for its relentless demands on my time—my person. So, while I take joy and satisfaction in . . . the project. . . . I yearn . . . for my own time to rest from the weariness of continuous overextension—the relentless demands on my time. Like others, I see

wonderful achievements but only at the cost of extremely heavy tolls on the well-being of the self, on personal relationships and health. (p. 204)

McKay sought free range of motion. Taken at face value what is known about the lived experiences of African American women in the white academy is disheartening and demoralizing. The attempts to restrict the movement of African American women take many forms as does the act of resistance. For many African American women in the academy, the refusal to be invisible and the agency to give voice to their lived experience comes in the form of the powerful personal narratives found in the research literature (Benjamin, 1997; Berry & Mizelle, 2006; Cooper, 2006; James & Farmer, 1993; Gutiérrez y Muhs, 2012). A simple review of the language used in the titles of the narratives of African American women scholars reveals a lexicon of struggle, resistance, and accomplishment: *Free at Last! No More Performance Anxieties in the Academy 'cause Stepin Fetchit Has Left the Building* (M. Smith, 2012), *In This Place Where I Don't Quite Belong* (Baszile, 2006), *Seen Not Heard* (Brandon, 2006), *Being all Things to All People* (Conway-Jones, 2006), *My Skin is Brown and I Do Not Wear a Tie* (Clark, 2006), *They Forgot Mammy had a Brain* (Wilson, 2012). While clearly the titles of their work are indicative of struggle, their narratives and those of the research participants in this study are truth-telling testimonies about seeking legitimacy through self -definition, intersectional identities as a source of creative power, and actions that claim agency in the struggle for free range of motion.

Proposition two: Creating and claiming free spaces. African American women scholars demonstrate the agentic ability to create generative spaces real and luminal where participants exercise creativity, cultivate freedom, and nurture empowered voice. The white academy remains contested ground, yet participants found "sites of resistance" (hooks, 1990). These interstitial spaces as described by women in this study take various forms: physical, e.g.,

the classroom; psychological, e.g., a robust sense of self; relational, e.g., creating generative connections via community, affinity groups, and allies; and intellectual spaces, e.g., scholarship and research. In order to maintain their radical subjectivity, hooks (1992) states, "many black women create sites of resistance that are far from conservatizing institutions [and] those of us who remain in institutions that do not support our efforts to be radical subjects are daily assaulted" (p. 57). In these spaces we resist the colonization of our minds and spirits, birth ecologies that are generative and engage in meaning-making that is egosyntonic and aligns with our sense of self, sense of purpose, and ability. In these spaces of affirmation we talk back and talk forward as the re-articulation of purpose becomes possible and animated.

This proposition extends concepts that articulate the existence and importance of spaces of freedom and possibility that appear in the literature: *counter-spaces* and *free spaces* and *home spaces*. Critical race theorists (Solorzano & Villalpando,1998, 2000) introduced the term counter-spaces to describe protected sites where students and faculty of color can gather to give voice to their shared experiences, offer collective support and validation, and challenge "deficit notions of people of color" (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000, p. 70). Likewise, the phrase free spaces (Evans, 1979; Evans & Boyte, 1986) is used by social movement theorists to articulate the spaces in between, where people have the potential to voluntarily organize independently, "removed from the direct control of dominant group . . . and generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization" (Polletta, 1999, p.1). Robnett's (1997) work on the bridge leadership of African American women in the civil rights movement suggested that when contrasting bridge leadership with formal leadership, the salient difference is that while formal leaders have power in institutions and organizations, bridge leaders operate within a free space. Robnett defines free space as a "niche that is not directly controlled by formal leaders or

those in their inner circle. It is an unclaimed space that is nevertheless central to the development

of the movement, since linkages are developed within it" (1997, p. 21). King and Watts (2004)

recommend African American faculty create home spaces inside white institutions and in their

communities: places where they find connection and mentorship. They acknowledge that

"creating a home space requires extra effort" but is essential (p.118).

*Physical spaces***.** The research participants consistently spoke of the freedom, the sense

of possibility and expansiveness they experience in the classroom even when at times faced with

challenges and disrespect from white students: "I thought my classroom itself was a free space."

Here they find themselves as much as possible released from the institutional restraints, as

autonomous professionals. One participant notes,

> I totally empower myself. It's my classroom, and I think what I challenge my students
> with is a way in which they can be invested and engaged with a learning process that not
> so much ever allows them to not see me as this black body in this space, but it becomes
> one of many things. And I like to think of it — it becomes one of many gifts that I'm
> bringing them. And I really do honor myself in that way. I'm not invested in the
> institution administratively…I'm not expecting to have the dinners or the lunches with the
> Dean. I don't exist at that level. So it's like okay, well, if that's not going to be how you
> exist in the relationship with this institution, then in what ways are you going to be
> satisfied? In what ways are you're going to be fulfilled? And ultimately, in what ways
> can you kind of control? And for me it's like I get to shape my own syllabus. I get to
> decide what the canon is going to be for these students. And really, where can I take their
> minds in these 15 weeks?

In the physical space of the classroom the self is the tool in transformative praxis and

ownership of the process is felt. hooks (1994b) offers the following observation about the

performative and generative nature of teaching "it is that aspect of our work that offers the space

for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst, drawing out the unique

element in each classroom" (p. 11). As educators the use of self is an imperative.

Psychological space. As African American women in the white academy negotiate the

many obstacles in their path, the power of self-knowledge, self-definition, and internalized

resistance serve to lessen the effects of alterity. Affirmations that support the centrality of these

schemas abound in the literature (Collins, 2000) and in the responses of the research participants.

The deep understanding of one's own worth and ability to contribute and change the

environments they occupy fortifies the African American woman scholar and supports her ability

to respond with appropriate outrage and resistance when necessary. One participant reflects on

how much healthier she is since refusing to be silenced and embracing her whole self:

> I'm not leaving who I am at home anymore, because that's what I was doing. I was leaving myself at home, close that door, go to work, take on that persona, do well, leave work, close that door, come home, and embrace who I am. And I decided I wasn't going to do that anymore, that I was going to bring who I was to the table …And that has become the mantra that has really moved me…I'm open with people and let them know this is who I am, this is how I think, this is how I process, this is what I need, and we're going to negotiate how it's going to be. And not to say that's it going to be 50/50, sometimes it might be on my end more, it might be on their end, but we're going to work through this. And it's exhausting, but it feels healthier…The other way, being quiet, I didn't have voice. I have voice now. And it's very powerful, and I refuse to give up my voice. (5)

This participant acknowledges that the embrace and articulation of self in the context of

external interactions in the academy was not a forgone conclusion; it didn't just occur but was

part of her process of "becoming" whole. Although she did "well" when wearing the persona, the

price was eventually too high. Only when she chooses to reveal her authentic voice does she feel

whole. This experience of embracing self is mirrored in the narrative of Kersey-Matusiak (2004)

as she reflects on how she recognized her location on the margin as a site of resistance

> In retrospect I realize that it was my own recognition and acknowledgement of myself as a spiritually strong, intelligent, and competent African American educator that kept me grounded. I was certain that, even as "other," I was quite capable of making a meaningful contribution that might enhance the learning environment for all of my students. Viewing myself as "other" in this context helped me to determine my personal goals, based on my own abilities and motivation. I could determine the roles for which I was best suited. That determination has remained a source of inspiration and strength, sustaining me even amid some of the most challenging experiences of my career. (p. 125)

For many participants the psychological tools needed to "become" begin in their families of origin. Participants in the study spoke passionately about the importance of the life lessons and values they were taught by their parents and communities and that this sentiment is reflected in the research literature as well. African American parents possess a deep understanding of what awaits their children in a world where racism and, in the case of girls, gendered racism, is an active construct. Ward (1996) argues that African American girls are raised as resisters and benefit from the "intergenerational transmission of resistance" (p. 86). One of the primary roles for these parents is to prepare their children for what awaits them, and parenting becomes a "political act" where "lessons of resistance are those that instruct the black child to determine when, where, and how to resist oppression, as well as to know when, where, and how to accommodate it" (p. 87). These hard lessons provide African American women with the capacity to withstand and defy the odds of living and working in the environment of the academy where gendered racism continues to frame African American women's experience.

Patterson's (2004) research on the self-esteem (self- worth) of African American women interrogated through the lens of black feminist thought also contributes to our understanding of how psychological states shore the African American woman in the academy. Her work acknowledges the impact of the simultaneity of oppression on the identities of African American women, and she attempts to answer the question "If self-esteem is high in Black women, as is posited, it is important to understand why it is high, in spite of the race, class, and gender inequality they experience" (p. 314). Rather than focus on what might be labeled as a victimization schema, or a deficit model, in the lived experiences African American women, she examines what contributes to high self-esteem.

Early research on the psychology of African Americans (Allport, 1954; Clark, 1965;

Clark & Clark, 1950; Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Johnson, 1957; Kardiner & Ovesey, 1962; Pettigrew,

1964; Simmons, 1978, all as cited in Patterson, 2004) predicted dismal outcomes as a result of

internalized oppression and the impact of cultural and structural racism on the individual. It was

hypothesized that African American women's self-image would be devalued when they

compared themselves to and internalized the represented ideal—white women—and this would

result in lower self-esteem. These suppositions have not been validated in research findings;

African American women, in particular, have been found to have higher self-esteem than white

women (Boyd, 1993; DeFrancisco & Chatham-Carpenter, 2000; Hoelter, 1983; Myers, 1975,

1980; Turner & Turner, 1982, all as cited in Patterson, 2004). Patterson's work is significant due

to its scope, a 14 year study, and its black feminist lens. She states,

> The continued maintenance of self-esteem by Black women goes against the very
> ideology of a racist, patriarchal system, one that values Whiteness and manhood . . .
> members of subjugated groups that are able to affirm their self-worth should also be able
> to withstand the assault of racial discrimination and other forms of inequality. (p. 323)
> African American women's level of self-esteem is not determined as was once

hypothesized by a comparison with white women or whiteness. One participant comments on her

childhood and adolescence:

> White people were not my concern daily….we had businesses, we weren't segregated on
> the busses…We didn't have that….my frame was black. So therefore I never thought of
> it [whiteness] as better. That's the best way to say it. I saw people who were raising their
> children. I certainly knew the power of the black church. I was grown when the civil
> rights movement started. I marched with Martin Luther King when he came to Detroit in
> 1963. I knew that. So therefore when I got to the university and the emphasis was
> whiteness, I was really kind of perplexed.

Additionally African American girls are socialized to be self-confident and independent

and, as previously noted, learn lessons about resistance in the context of gendered racism.

Patterson found the women in the study maintained high levels of self-esteem over time due to connectedness—family, friends, and community—shored by the lessons learned in girlhood.

As explicated in the matrix, at the heart of the model sits the core dimension Robust Sense of Self that bolsters the other primary dimensions as the African American woman navigates the academy. Robust sense of self has similar features to the self-esteem construct: being grounded in self as an African American woman and possessing a belief in one's worth and abilities. Despite trying experiences which occurred in the academy, the narratives of the participants' instances of struggle were expressed in ways that did not include doubting ones' worth.

Relational space. As noted in the previous section, being in relationship and community is crucial for psychological health of and is liberatory for African American women when faced with the convergence of multiple oppressions. The relational space serves the psychological space and vice versa. The creation of intentional space to cultivate supportive relationships with other African American women and foster connections with white allies and in some cases work with students of color is essential in the white academy. The connectivity afforded in relational space provides a counter-space that militates the onslaught of discouraging messages, explicit and subtle, that emanate from the academy. The participants in the study articulated the importance of making connections and cultivating reciprocity; one participant acknowledges the radical comfort this free space provides for her:

> I think in these spaces where there are so few of us, and that conditions and sometimes other forces generate adversarial conditions for people of color, women of color, and our male allies sometimes we've had to struggle around it. But what I most appreciate even in all the tension and sometimes the ways in which I feel at risk or insecure, that we have found a way to make space and to hold each other in that. And I think that is really radical for me. That's kind of like what gets me through. I'm just like we create solace for one another. And I feel that that's really important. (2)

Born out of African roots, African American women's orientation is understood as communal in nature as reflected in the Ubuntu statement "I am because we are" an epistemology of collectivity. King and Ferguson (1996) suggest communal principles, what they call the "we-ness" of African American women are always at work, both in communities of likeness as well in white spaces.

> Black women commonly act to apply, include, and preserve communal principles within their ethnic communities and within white cultural settings. These capacities are channels for the expression of the women's individual and collective identity and function as an active form of resistance to race, gender, and class oppression. (Kindle edition, no page number)

In the academy the relational/communal worldview of the African American woman, coupled with the demands placed on them to serve, can result in the uneven burden previously noted as a property of the dimension risking self. Essed (2013) acknowledges the paradox of "The double edge of care and compassion" however she also suggests "Rather than problematizing women who care, one can also ask: so why would it be wrong to care"? (p.8). Likewise (King et al., 2002) reframe the invisible work African American women perform in the academy, the "third shift" work as a representation of their commitment and "willingness to create humanizing change" and "critical to the work of the academy"(pp. 403-404). The relational space claimed and created by African American women in the academy with colleagues, students, and allies may entail an expenditure of energy beyond the norm, yet for many women these are spaces and acts of resistance.

Intellectual space. The intellectual plots of land claimed by African American women scholars are sacred acreage. Resisting the intellectual manifest destiny of western hegemonic knowledge production, the minds, the ideas, and the contributions of African American women cannot be contained and are inextricably tied to the verities of female black bodies and "ways of

knowing beyond the common" (Huggins, 2006). Their intellect is a counter-space, a free space, a

home space that is occupied, untouchable, despite attempts to delegitimize the results of its

efforts. Our scholarly interests and contributions to the intellectual landscape are not monolithic

and reflect a diversity that mirrors the variance in our own lived experiences. One participant

notes that she refuses to deny her scholarly interests because they do not correspond to what

people expect of her.

> So I like Shakespeare. I make no bones about it. I teach Shakespeare classes
> regularly…it's not like you have to choose … I think that that might have been something
> that was more the case in that first wave [of African American women scholars]. That
> you have to choose to be all black all the time, and you have to get rid of that other stuff
> that you like. And I'm like no, I'm a black lady who grew up in black neighborhood, and
> I like Shakespeare and Harry Potter, and wear dreadlocks, and like to talk about I Dager,
> and watch Soul Train. And still think I could still do a decent funky chicken and cabbage
> patch. It's like that's me. And I'm not ashamed of any of those things.

Other African American women scholars have troubled the intellectual topography of the

academy in different ways and excavated buried voices of African American women despite the

danger of being compartmentalized based on their interests in the "souls of black folks" (Du

Bois, 1903/2003).

African American women scholars run the risk of having their work diminished and

questioned institutionally and publically. The denigration of the newly minted PhDs from

Northwestern University's African American Studies Department by Naomi Schaefer Riley, a

former Chronicle of Higher Education blogger, who was let go in the firestorm that resulted from

her posting, is a current example of a particular attitude about scholarship about African

Americans that live in African American Studies Departments (Riley, 2012). Despite not having

read the dissertations in question, Riley belittles Ruth Hayes' dissertation *So I Could Be Easeful:*

Black Women's Authoritative Knowledge on Childbirth, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor's *work Race*

for Profit: Black Housing and the Urban Crisis of the 1970s, and others as "left-wing

victimization claptrap. The best that can be said of these topics is that they're so irrelevant no one will ever look at them" (para.1) . Her attack is on the individuals' research foci as well as on the institutional site of their study: African American/Black Studies departments. By extension she questions the relevance of studying the lived experiences of Black people that aren't framed by a deficit model and/or conducted by white scholars. Riley (2012) concludes,

> Seriously, folks, there are legitimate debates about the problems that plague the black community from high incarceration rates to low graduation rates to high out-of-wedlock birth rates. But it's clear that they're not happening in black-studies departments. If these young scholars are the future of the discipline, I think they can just as well leave their calendars at 1963 and let some legitimate scholars find solutions to the problems of blacks in America. Solutions that don't begin and end with blame the white man. (para. 5)

> These attacks do not deter the intellectual freedom exercised by the participants in the study. The following participant comments on her initial reservations about the possibility of being "pigeonholed" and notes her eventual embrace:

> bell hooks speaks about it. Audre Lorde speaks about it. Patricia Hill Collins speaks about it. Aida Hurtado speaks about this notion that we get typecast and relegated because our interests and our passions are in lifting up the voices, hearing the experiences of and privileging the experiences of Black people as the topic of academic study. And that as a result we get pigeon holed. We'll put you in women's studies, or we'll put you in African-American studies you're only fit for African-American studies…And when I first started my doctoral work, I didn't want to get pigeonholed. But then I realized my place and my voice, I wasn't pigeonholed; **that's just who I am. It's what inspires me. It's what's passionate to me.**   It's what I feel is missing from mainstream research.

Baszile (2012) recognizes the value of and chooses the "space in between,"

> While I must also, to some extent, recognize and deal with the dominant discourse of academia, I have also decided to work against it, to work in a way the values the pedagogical promise of the space in between and thus challenges the hegemonic order of things as usual in the academy. (Baszile, 2012, p. 198)

Despite barriers, the participants in this study create important and legitimate space for their scholarship in the context of the white academy and encourage their students to look in between and engage in learning that broadens the scope of disciplinary canons.

Proposition three: Living truth to power: Leaving footprints.

> Well, I think the time has come for us to get truly hysterical, to take on the role of "professional Sapphires" in a forthright way, to declare that we are serious about ourselves, and to capture some of the intellectual power and resources that are necessary to combat the systematic denigration of minority women. It is time for Sapphire to testify on her own behalf, in writing, complete with footnotes. (Austin, 1989)

The women in this study struggle to live truth to power: a theoretical proposition that illuminates the impact and import of critical resistance and the need to birth and nurture a radical black female subjectivity. Critical resistance demands more than simple defiance; it is not enough to interrogate and oppose oppressive structures, but it is also necessary to re/birth, nurture, and consciously interrogate self in a perpetual process of becoming, the two working in concert (hooks, 1992). This process of becoming does not invoke a black female essentialism rather "legitimating one's own way of knowing and doing, is the crafting, finding, outlining and framing, as well as the advancing and living of one's own scholarship as the essence of one's being--the very meaning of authenticity" (Huggins, 2006, p. 240).

Living Truth to Power speaks directly to the embodiment of critical resistance. The participants in this study inhabit the white academy with courage, authenticity, and purposefulness. They honor the multiplicity of their identities and recognize the ways in which aspects of self converge in social and political spaces with differing impacts and outcomes. The women seek and are engaged in radical self and collective transformation; they live truth to power. Lorde (1984) implores us to push back from unforgivable silences:

> the times when we must speak, if not for ourselves, we can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For

we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition. And while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us. (p.44)

The women in this study fight back from silence even when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds; one participant refuses to walk away and chooses to use self in service of larger goals.

> I feel like I shouldn't be chased out… I'm starting to see how this is part of a systematic problem…I feel like I have work to do, I guess, and I mean, it could be a little bit foolish on my part. Like why not just go someplace where it might be a little bit easier… Will I stay? It's really hard, but I feel like there are things that I ought to be able to accomplish despite [the challenges]. And I feel like those things are important. (7)

The participants bring their complex selves to the project, and I would argue by virtue of their physical presence and actions are change agents in the academy; the question remains: How does the presence of African American women scholars help to reframe and reconstruct the meaning of the academy and knowledge production? Some of the ways African American women leave footprints is documented; their presence in the academy has a positive impact on the retention of student of color (Myers, 2002;) and they have changed the topography of disciplinary study with the advent of Black Studies departments and scholarship (McKay, 1997). These material ways are significant. What is less obvious, but no less significant, is the impact on the reordering of relationships in the white academy—if not reordering, then the impact of exerting tangible pressure on the norm.

> I've talked about the challenges of being in that environment, the alienation, the isolation, the being viewed with suspicion, my scholarship questioned, feeling like the mammy, in some ways I have to compromise my standards [yet] I really believe that if I wasn't there, and other women like myself were not there, that these institutions would be poorer for the fact. They use the word disenfranchised to apply to people of color, or people based on social class, or based on their gender orientation. I think that institutions that don't have people like and others like me are disenfranchised.

The women in the study actively engage in "the intimacy of scrutiny" whereby the fearless examination of "those worse fears which …rule lives and shape silences begin to lose their power" (Lorde, 2009, p. 201). The position of being an outsider/within comes with privilege and the potential for dangerously tacit participation and complicity in the maintenance of the "master's house" (Lorde, 1984, p.110). When one is center, in relation to those not in the academy, while also being the margin, then the construct center changes and the construct margin changes. There are imperceptible shifts/fluctuations that take place and unbalance the social order of the academy. To be clear, these movements occur in the "master's house," yet in a culture where racism, heterosexism, classism, and white supremacy have deep roots, these fissures, instabilities, and perturbations seed the potentiality of slow moving radical transformation of space and consciousness in the academy, troubling the status quo.

Theoretical propositions: **Implications for leadership**. During 18 interviews over 22 hours, only one participant uttered the words leader or leadership. I did not ask a specific question about leadership or leading and it is important to consider what this omission in the narratives of the participants might mean. Does this imply the women who participated in the study do not lead, are not leaders, do not think of themselves as leading? I was not surprised that the research participants did not explicitly surface leadership as a relevant construct when they reflected on their experience in the white academy. I have spent nine years personally bumping up against the notion of studying leadership or claiming the title leader; the words still do not resonate with me. Even the participant who spoke about leadership in her interview, began her comments questioning the construct as defined by mainstream white scholarship:

> A Leader, what does leadership look like? Here in the American culture, it's definitely you take the lead, it's you. You make the decision; you take the ball and run with it. It's very competitive. I thought about leadership and the way it was defined, it didn't feel right for me.

"It didn't feel right to me," resonates, as noted previously. The absence of African American women in the mainstream leadership literature, with some exception (Robnett, 1997; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Parker, 2005) is conspicuous. African American women's theorizing about the nature of leading and leadership continues as evidenced by the recent contribution of King and Ferguson (2011) which adds to the increasing scholarship that centers African American women in models of leading. Their work calls for African American women to claim their leadership narrative as a culturally relevant legacy of leadership knowledge and embodiment, transmitted from mother to daughter and through allomothers "women who helped mother us by developing our characters, providing us with emotional support, or mentoring us to leadership . . . they believe African American women . . . must examine their own capacity for leadership and acknowledge the tools passed on to them by their motherline." They frame this knowledge as "a form of resistance to oppression" (Kindle edition, no page number). As they gathered submissions for the anthology, they note many of the women who responded to their request for a personal narrative about leadership from a cultural relevant stance did not identify themselves as leaders. King and Ferguson (2011) enumerate impediments to African American women "laying claim to leadership," including gendered projections; negative internalized ideas about women leaders that are incongruent with a woman's understanding of gender roles; cultural and racial projections; a belief that exists in the context of structural racism: by claiming leadership, African American women may appropriate leadership roles from African American men; socialization to deny or downplay one's contribution, referring to the communal belief that the collective is more salient than one leader; contradictions between terminology and action; and the usage of a different lexicon, such as helping or serving, given the fact that leader and leadership are white male terms (Kindle edition, no page number). These socially constructed

and at times internalized hindrances to claiming self as leader do not stand in the way of African American women understanding that they impact on their environments in potent ways.

As the women in this research live out the processes and impact associated with the theoretical matrix, Risking Self, Seeing/Naming the Whiteness of the Academy, Persisting, Exercising Voice and Agency, and Robust Sense of Self and bring to life the three propositions: Seeking Full Range of Motion, Creating /Claiming Free Space and Living Truth to Power, they embody a model of intentional individual and collective change. If leading is as defined by T. King and Ferguson "the desire, ability and efforts to influence the world around us, based upon an ethic of care for self and other and fueled by a vision that one sustains over time" (Kindle edition, no page number), then it is apparent that without using the word leading, the women in the study are exemplars of the construct. The propositions offer a new paradigm in which to explore leadership behavior and meanings.

The propositions embody the "we-ness" of African American women. They are not discrete constructs; they work in concert on behalf of each other as do the women in the academy. The African American women of the academy who participated in this study do not seek full range of motion solely for themselves; their desire for free expression and healthy whole lives is an aim extended to their sisters in the academy, their students, their communities, their institutions, and the global community. Their struggle is necessarily individual as they move through the obstacle course of the academy on a daily basis. They each have personal dreams and aspirations, but their sojourn undeniably has a collective intent and impact. The women told intimate and rich stories of acts of risking self, an individual deed, but one that may yield collective outcomes. When a participant made the potent assertion: "I'll choose which hill to die on," she speaks directly of her intent to take control of her own destiny and exercise

discretion, informed by received knowledge, and choose which battle to wage; the context was not only about her survival but also about her strategically assessing ways to bring about change in the institutional environment to benefit the whole, in particular other African American students and faculty. The women spoke of the legacies and struggles of the African American women who came before them in the academy and, in some instances, critiqued the legacy elders faced. Leading in this proposition means bringing one's whole self to the project and inviting the same of others. It means transparency in collective intent and action.

By creating and claiming free spaces the women model agency and embrace the ethic of care tenet explicated in black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). It is in these spaces: the engaged classrooms; the affinity gatherings; the lunches with the only other African American woman in the department; or on campus, the third shifts or graveyard shifts with students (T. King et al., 2002) they demonstrate the intentionality, connectivity, and reciprocity that is necessary to further individual and collective aims.

> The groups that I belonged to and the work we've done, we've done in a collaborative, collective effort where multiple perspectives and abilities and skills were present…we moved in and out of leadership depending on what was needed at that particular time….to me this is the ultimate kind of leadership, where you knew you could move back and support those who were doing whatever they were doing, or you were out there calling them to come ahead, join you.

They lead intellectually by teaching and interrogating the western canon from their subjectivity or by teaching the works of African American women writers, validating the personhood of students of color while simultaneously opening the eyes of white students to lived experiences outside their own. The participants revealed a commitment to research and scholarship that pushes the edges of convention and counters hegemonic knowledge production. They demonstrated the ability to hold the discomfort, messiness, and ambiguity that is foundational to individual and collective change, whether it is holding the space in a classroom

while white students struggle when faced with bodies or ideas outside their frame of reference or at the conference table at a faculty meeting when they know their "silence will not protect them" and they speak their truths. This is leading.

When considering the last proposition Living Truth to Power and its implication for leading, Collins (1998) suggested stance of "remaining oppositional" offers insight. As previously discussed, living truth to power in this context is the act of continuing "to become," the nurturance and honing of a radical black female subjectivity and the continuance of acts of critical resistance performed with care in the academy. Collins (1998) proposes that "For Black feminist thought, oppositionality represents less an achieved state of being than a state of becoming" (p. 89). Here Collins suggests that as a social theory, black feminist thought must continue to evolve as it occupies space in both dominant and critical discourses. As examples she reflects that the absences of radical discourse around the impact of heterosexism in the Black community as well as an emphasis on individual rights which privileges United States citizens "means that Black Feminist Thought can operate as an elite discourse" (p. 89). This notion holds relevance to African American women in the academy and for the praxis of leading consciously sans cooptation. A participant names the dangers:

> the black people, who are the senior folks, end up being co-opted, bought and silenced and are not the radical effectual people that they started out being. It's like "eat the other" as bell hook says. They eat us. They totally consume us and make us part of their system. We become the board. What's scary is I hear myself talking like I'm never thought I would talk. Telling other junior scholars well don't do that because that won't get you tenure. When I know it's fully valuable and part of their overall political commitment to do extra student meetings, or write a blog, or teach in a prison, or do some poetry collective, or something.Those things feed them.Those things are part of their soul, and here I can hear myself, "Well, don't do that."

Leading in this context demands a critical consciousness; the participant's comment reflects her knowledge of the danger inherent in the academy. Leading also entails the ongoing

process of being and becoming and the encouragement of the same in others. The leading of Living Truth to Power is layered, nuanced, fluid, and evolving.

Conclusion

This study holds significance for African American women in the white academy as well as potential contributions to the larger discourse on the nature of leading and leadership. First, for the women in the academy, it offers a framework to understand and see the complexity of their experience and their impact on the environment. It is a mirror for them to gaze into and see themselves and their acts reflected back, framed as leaders leading. Second, African American women know how to lead for survival—uplift, and they have been doing this since "before the Mayflower." It is for this reason that this study and studies like it in the scholarly discourse on leadership hold a broader significance.

The global community is experiencing a profound crisis of leadership. Failures abound, and leadership as it is currently embodied has not yielded positive results. As Leadership Studies takes a foothold in the 21st century, scholars must decide whether to embrace a post-industrial paradigm, which demands the inclusion and centering of disparate lived experiences, or continue to clothe the old in new garments. The experiences of women and others not situated at the center reveal old knowledge about leadership. More importantly, as Hine (1998) tells us:

> the values that have helped Black women survive are *entirely communicable* [emphasis mine]. And at a time when the problems of our society seem insoluble and the obstacles to peace and freedom insurmountable, all Americans have a great deal to learn from the history of Black women in America. (p. 308)

Hine wrote the above in 1998, but it remains true 15 years later. Joseph (2009) asks "what would it mean to take seriously strong black feminist voices- a community of scholars in the academy" (p. 248). This research bears witness to and unpacks the processes that occur when African American women inhabit and lead with self in the white academy. African-American

women face unique challenges and simultaneously possess narratives of leading that provide

original meaning to the word leadership by "loosening the untold stories" (King & Ferguson,

2010).

> There are times when I'm in the front calling people to come forward. There are times when I'm side by side in arms linked together moving forward together. There are times I'm in the back pushing people gently forward…leadership is a combination of that, it's a skill to know when to step to the side, to the back, to the front so people have a sense of their own power…it's not about me saving the world, it's about "we" the collective saving the world. We all have a role. So that's what leadership is to me. And I find that I constantly rebel when they use the term seize the day and run with it. I'm not seizing the day and running. We can seize the day, and we can strategize how we're going to run with it, yeah.

Limitations of the Study

Four limitations can be identified: the exploratory nature of study; the sampling method;

the disciplinary sameness of the research participants; and my identity as an insider in the

context of the white academy and as an African American woman. The study was exploratory in

nature and not intended to be generalizable to larger populations. Despite this limitation, the

method was highly effective in gaining a holistic understanding of the complex processes and

impacts associated with African American women's lived experiences in the white academy.

The purposeful sample was small in size which decreases the generalizability of the

findings. This was approach was intentional and appropriate for this study. The population of

African American women in the white academy is small, and I was interested in those who

identified as feminist or womanist, further delimiting the sample. As I was looking to identify a

population that could be considered a community of practice despite limitations, this was an

appropriate strategy.

The disciplinary sameness of the participants is another identified limitation to the study

as designed. I utilized the snowball method of sampling; participants recommended other

individuals they knew who might be interested in participating in the research study. Because

the participants recommended friends and colleagues they were associated with, the majority of

the participants taught in the social sciences and humanities. Every discipline has its own

culture, and to extend the scope of the research to include or specifically focus on faculty in other

disciplines, such as the sciences or arts, might have yielded different results and implications.

My identity as an African American woman academic and, thus, my sameness in terms of

race and profession in relationship to the participants may be seen as a limitation. In this method

that employs co-construction of meaning there are instances either in the interview process or the

interpretive analysis where the similarity of experience may impact my interpretation of the data.

This limitation was mitigated by engaging in active self-reflexivity.

Future Research

Several areas emerged during the research process that piqued my interest for future areas

of study: intra-racial relationships in the white academy; the comparative experience of African

American women in the white academy versus in Historical Black Colleges and Universities

(HBCU's). When I considered the initial design of this study, I was interested in the experience

of African American women faculty in white institutions that self-define as employing a radical

or progressive pedagogy, as well as having stated social justice values. This, I believed, would

still yield interesting results.

One of the most intriguing themes that emerged in the research was the reported impact

on intra-racial relationships, relationships among African American colleagues in the white

academy. Although research exists that explores aspects of intra-racial dynamics, I have not

found any grounded theory research which focuses on these dynamics as they unfold in the white

academy.

I am also curious about the sameness or difference in the lived experience of African American women faculty in HBCUs and those in the white academy. Several of the participants commented they believe HBCUs were fundamentally similar to white institutions in terms of structural inequalities; a grounded theory in this specific setting would be interesting.

Appendix

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Antioch University
PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Human Subjects Research Review
Informed Consent Statement

You have been asked to participate in a grounded theory method research study conducted by Muriel E. Shockley a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Change program at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

The primary purpose of the research is to explore the complexities of feminist and womanist African American women scholar-activists' lived experiences as change agents in predominately white institutions of higher education.

The study involves, at a minimum, one interview about your lived experience as a faculty member at a predominately white college or university. The interview will be arranged at your convenience and is expected to last about one hour. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed by a confidential third-party transcription service. Once the interview has been transcribed, I will share a copy of the transcription with you for your review.

As the study progresses additional questions could arise. Only if there is a need and you approve would a follow-up interview be scheduled. In that case the total time involved for the original and follow-up interviews should be no more than 2 hours.

Your name and the name of your current or prior institutions where you are/have been employed will be kept confidential and will not be used in the final report. Additionally any other identifying information will be removed from the transcripts. The results from these interviews will be incorporated into my doctoral dissertation.

I will retain the data in a secured space for potential future scholarly publications. All related research materials including signed Informed Consent Forms will be kept in a secure file cabinet indefinitely. The audiotapes will be destroyed after the completion of the study. You may withdraw from this study at any time either during or after the interview, no reason needs to be provided and there are no negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study. There is no financial remuneration for participating in this study.

My hope is that through this process you will have the opportunity to reflect on the impact your presence has in predominately white colleges and universities. The risks to you are considered minimal; although unlikely, there is a chance that you may experience some discomfort in the telling of your experiences. The learning from this report has the potential to add African American Feminist and Womanist perspectives to our understanding of leadership and change in predominately white colleges and universities.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement I can be reached at 805.448.3182 or at muriel.shockley@goddard.edu or you may contact Elizabeth Holloway, PhD the Chair of my dissertation committee.

Elizabeth Holloway, PhD, ABPP
Professor of Psychology
Consulting Counseling Psychologist
Leadership & Change Doctoral Program
Antioch University
eholloway@antioch.edu
Off: 512.263.1416

If you have any questions about the ethical considerations of this study, please contact:
Carolyn Kenny, Ph.D.
    Chair, Institutional Review Board
    Professor of Human Development and Indigenous Studies
    Ph.D. in Leadership & Change
    150 E. South College
    Yellow Springs OH 45387
    805-565-7535
    ckenny@phd.antioch.edu

       Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this research. Return one to me and keep the other for yourself.

Name of researcher (please print)

Signature of researcher

Date

Name of participant (please print)

Signature of participant

Date

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