

OUTSIDERS WITHIN: AFRICAN AMERICAN PROFESSORS
AND THEIR EXPERIENCES AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE UNIVERSITIES:
A NARRATIVE INTERVIEW STUDY

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ABSTRACT

**Outsiders Within: African American Professors
and their Experiences at Predominantly White Universities:
A Narrative Interview Study
(Under the direction of Deborah Eaker-Rich)**

African American faculty who teach at predominantly white universities often experience challenges related to their minority status within the academy. National statistics of public and private universities indicate that the representation of these faculty members has remained steady over the last fifteen years at five percent. Federal equal opportunity statutes and university mission statements about diversity remain unfulfilled, and under-represented undergraduate and graduate students are less likely to enter the professoriate when they see so few faculty of color as role models. In a narrative interview study of sixteen professors, their experiences with isolation, committee responsibilities, retention, tenure, and promotion reviews, and suspicion about their scholarship were analyzed. Also, the attitudes or credos they developed about how to cope with institutional racism, mentoring junior faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and leaving a legacy for the future scholars of color were examined. Through the lens of Patricia Hill Collins' Black Feminist Thought, the ways faculty understood how institutional racism manifested in their careers varied based on their academic training. Trends were examined based on academic discipline, how many years each had taught, and how each responded to subtle institutional racism. Humanities professors, because of their specialized training in close readings and argumentative skills, responded to institutional racism with written grievances, and employed their astute

analytical skills to openly and boldly combat discrimination in their departments.

Accustomed to criticizing other writers and thinkers both outside and within their disciplines, they carefully analyzed the objective and subjective evidence of mistreatment. Social science professors, because of their specialized training in careful observation and reflective analysis, responded to institutional racism by developing liaisons with white colleagues to overcome barriers or suspicious colleagues. Often engaged in inter-disciplinary within the social sciences, they were sensitive to how their own perspectives informed how they both asked and answered research questions. Science professors were less aware of the subtleties of discrimination and disparate treatment as a result of their intense focus on their experiments. Their disciplinary training and empirical methods superceded any cultural bias. Policy suggestions were made to increase retention and promotion of African American scholars.

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PROLOGUE

CASE STUDY OF PROFESSOR SIDNEY

Be nobody's darling;/ Be an outcast./
Take the contradictions/Of your life/
And wrap around/ You like a shawl,
To parry stones/ To keep you warm. . .
Be an outcast;/ Be pleased to walk alone.

-“Be Nobody’s Darling”- Alice Walker (1973)

Despite the efforts of well meaning department chairs, many of whom in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities are Caucasian, professors and students often fail to understand the burden that being different places on non-white faculty. Incidents of covert racism and racial insensitivity, which are obvious to African American faculty, are often invisible to members of the white majority, or are perceived as outsiders within, according to sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (1986; 1998). In fact, most African American professors attended predominantly white universities, and so, unlike their white peers, they are familiar with being perceived as a minority within a majority culture, but even so, they may feel like outcasts. Caroline Viernes Turner and Samuel Myers argue in their book *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success* (2000) that it is essential to "acknowledge the importance of race and ethnicity within organizations as we attempt to implement equitable practices in college and university contexts" (p. 226). They refer to the sheer invisibility of racism astutely terming it "the privilege of ignorance, the ignorance of privilege" (2000, p. 226). Turner and Myers conclude that institutional racism can result from fairly simple assertions based on appeals to common sense, for example, when "research on minority issues is not

considered legitimate work, particularly if articles are published in journals that are not mainstream" (2000, p. 26). Unlike minority faculty, majority faculty do not have to endure the continual pressures of subtle racism, which leaves white faculty with the psychic energy to pursue other intellectual, cultural and social activities.

Hill Collins explains the notion of the outsider within as a standpoint where an minority employee is able to observe the private inner workings of a majority family, and the model she relies upon to contextualize this perspective is the black domestic worker who cleaned, cooked, and cared for white children and families (1986, 1991). The intimate insider status that maids, nannies, and cooks experienced enabled them to efface racial barriers, and as they listened to conversations in white households, they learned how white people navigated through bureaucracies like health care and government agencies, and demystified the legal, banking, and schooling institutions. But, paradoxically, because these women were not considered "one of the family" (1998, p. 21), their presence created divisions in the home and fostered a sense of separateness based on race, gender, and class; they were often watched closely so that they did not "steal anything or spit in the soup. . . Surveillance emerged to signal and control this power differential- White women watched Black women because their race and class privilege allowed them to do so" (1998, p. 21). Hill Collins distinguishes between techniques, which separated African Americans from whites as groups, and techniques which separated them as individuals. She highlights differences that will be addressed later in this dissertation, such as direct versus indirect racism and individual versus institutional racism:

Whereas racial segregation is designed to keep Blacks as a group or class *outside* centers of power, surveillance aims to control Black individuals who are inside centers of power. In other words, surveillance becomes the strategy of choice in

controlling African Americans outside Black civil society when they enter the White spaces of the public and private spheres. (1998, p. 20; her emphasis)

Dr. Sidney was under surveillance at College Q, (pseudonym) but he was never able to be controlled. Georg Simmel, while explaining the “sociological significance of the ‘Stranger’” (1921/ 1969) uses terms which prove useful in understanding the role of the African American professor at predominantly white universities in general, and the role of Professor Sidney at College Q in particular:

Because he is not rooted in the peculiar attitudes and biased tendencies of the group, he [the stranger] stands apart from all these with the peculiar attitude of the “objective,” which does not indicate simply a separation and disinterestedness but is a peculiar composition of nearness and remoteness . . . Between these two elements there occurs, however, a peculiar tension, since the consciousness of having only the absolutely general in common has exactly the effect of bringing into particular emphasis that which is not common. (1921/1969, p. 324, 327)

The “peculiar tension” is reminiscent of W.E.B. Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness of African Americans who are “gifted with a second sight . . . [that] only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. . . a peculiar sensation . . . of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness” (*The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903/1999, p. 214). Many African American professors “ever feel [their] “twoness,” and whether they understand it as the plight of the “stranger” or the privileged perspective of an outsider within, their experiences offer a unique glimpse at the academy, a glimpse that de-centers majority impressions and illuminates the “invisible.”

The experience of Professor Sidney, the subject of the case study that comprises this prologue chapter, diverges from the narrative themes that emerge from my other interviews in important ways. He is more like “the stranger” that Simmel describes in that he was not at all preoccupied with fitting into his department as were his white female colleagues, who

comprised most of his department. Simmel describes the stranger as someone “with less prejudice,” who submits the ideas of the dominant group to “more general, more objective standards, and is not confined in his action by custom, piety, or precedents” (1921/1969, p. 325). This perspective was cemented because he was African American, male, and unmarried in a department that consisted primarily of white, female, married colleagues and his outsider status resulted in a profound discomfort for them. Other factors contributed to his outsider status in terms of my data sample; for example, he was the only scholar in the humanities or social sciences who did not do ethnically related research, which left him uniquely isolated in his profession both in the classroom and at the podium of professional conferences. He was also the first person I interviewed and I had the opportunity to follow his career over approximately three years. Too, he generously shared departmental correspondence and confidential documents with me and let me interview him on three occasions. Although his experience does not fit neatly into the trends that have emerged from my research, or the themes of Black Feminist Thought that intersects with those trends, it illuminates the complexities of institutional racism, particularly those “habits of the heart” (1985; a sociological investigation of individualism and community in America) that blind ordinarily decent people to the sources and effects of their actions. He observed:

My colleagues are not racists; they do not believe that blacks are inferior and [they] do believe that educational diversity is a good thing. Their aggregate response, however, to the very real differences of perspective which emerge from the experience of being a minority combined with an unshakable and paternalistic belief that they knew what was best for both my career and our few minority students expressed itself in ways that were indistinguishable from racism. They, at some level,

expected me "to know my place" and my failure to comply with their expectations led to a great deal of unpleasantness for all parties.

Professor Sidney is one of what famous civil rights lawyer Walter Gellhorn would call the "indubitably qualified"ⁱ (Anderson, M., "Why the shortage of black professors," 1993, p. 27). He is an exemplar of what Wahnema Lubiano (1992) identifies as the male counterpart of her "Black Lady Overachiever" where Claire Huxtable is the fictional representation and Condoleeza Rice or Oprah Winfrey is the non-fictional model. As an undergraduate, he matriculated at a very elite institution where he applied without disclosing his race because he never wanted to be accused of being any less qualified than his classmates. Unlike anti-Affirmative Action, African American public intellectuals like Shelby Steele and John McWhorter who will be discussed in the following chapter, he did not use his race to get a foothold in the academy. Somewhat paradoxically, however, he is a staunch proponent of affirmative action. He stayed on to do graduate study at this institution, which was ranked number one in his discipline at the time, and he won an independent minority fellowship larger than that awarded to him by his department. In retrospect, like McWhorter, he had misgivings about taking a fellowship that might have been of more benefit to someone who had been more disadvantaged, but unlike McWhorter, he never believed it had "infected" his life. He expressed intense criticism for "the ideas of the Steeles and Thomases" calling them "repugnant, not in small measure, because they typically come from men who have made use of the expanded opportunities available to minorities, but wish to diminish those opportunities for others." He observed:

Unfortunately, I was in a position to compete successfully in fields where other African Americans were not. My test scores had always been equal to those of my

white counterparts. As far as I can tell, few Black people in my generation escaped from the consequences of the unfavorable attention paid to them because of race.

Where we differed were the ways in which we responded to insult and trauma. It seemed to me from a young age that one had either to be 'nice' or to be 'tough.' I chose the latter, though I am quite sure I would have prospered more in my profession had I chosen the former.

Professor Sidney was the first African American graduate student at his university to specialize in a field that was unrelated to his race, and according to his graduate advisor "scorns any attention because of his color; in fact, he is oblivious to it most of the time" (Sidney's Reference file letter). He claimed that the limited mentoring he had was excellent, but his mentor spent two years abroad and was not in the country for his Ph.D. oral exam, a fact that made that rite of passage more emotionally difficult than it needed to be. In contrast to his undergraduate years, he did not find graduate school a particularly pleasant experience. His first job was at a Research I institution where he was the only African American in his department. Professor Sidney, who held Associate Professor rank, was one of three African American faculty members whom I interviewed at a small, private, Mid-Atlantic overwhelmingly white institution. At the time I began these interviews, his career appeared to be developing appropriately. His active response to what he deemed an inaccurate mid-career review, however, precipitated a battle with his employing institution that ended in an unfavorable tenure review and a quiet settlement for an undisclosed amount. What eventuated in a less unfavorable outcome for him than might have occurred was his commitment to document every professional achievement and every professional conversation, coupled with his refusal to let a single statement he deemed inaccurate pass

unchallenged. This reflected two tenets of his credo: "Make injustice visible" and "Never back down." Since he has taught at predominantly white institutions, most of his mentees have been white, but at College Q (pseudonym), he mentored one African American woman student for three years, and helped her get into graduate school. He takes mentoring seriously and continues to mentor students after they graduate. Several of his former students now hold Ph.D.s. He is currently employed at a larger public university where he is quite happy, and apparently quite well regarded.

Professor Sidney's narrative is a cautionary tale, which is why it serves as a prologue, insofar as it illustrates the ramifications of a professional philosophy that did not endear him to his administrators. It also demonstrates the ways that the academy will try to demoralize African American faculty by misrepresenting their accomplishments and by retaliating against faculty who have the temerity to point that out. His narrative illustrates every "dirty trick" available to an employer, and in the final analysis, his employers did not want their actions publicly documented, and so they settled out of court. Professor Sidney admits to feeling anger and outrage at the way in which he was treated, particularly because he could have used the hundreds of hours he spent "mounting a defense" on more productive pursuits. His narrative is also a narrative of transcendence because it demonstrates that it is possible to prevail, at least to a certain extent, against institutional injustice. He was an outsider within and when the "politics of containment" (Hill Collins, 1998, p. 14) did not succeed in making him comply, he was cast out of the university.

"I hereby file this document as a formal complaint against College Q . . . In it, I claim that the College has discriminated against me on the basis of race" (Excerpt from EEOC Complaint). These straightforward phrases begin what proved to be an effective response to

Professor Sidney's unfavorable tenure decision. His complaint was forty single -spaced pages with over twenty pages of exhibits. Unlike Professor Young, a science professor I mention later who stridently challenged her unfair tenure denial and succeeded in having her tenure decision reversed, in part because she compared her C.V. to the C.V. of a white man who had been promoted the year before she was reviewed, Dr. Sidney was unable to challenge his tenure decision in –house. He presented the facts of his case to the EEOC in this way:

This is not a tenure issue per se, but a case in which I was evaluated for tenure at the department level without my knowledge, against my will, and quite demonstrably, without my participation. I argue that this action was taken as a retaliatory response to a formal complaint I filed against my academic department, alleging that the department had not adhered to the policies outlined in the Policy Handbook . . . I have been prevented from making a formal application for tenure at the College level by the imposition of arbitrary timelines and other significant abridgements of due process. . . The actions of the College's administrators throughout this process have been both arbitrary and capricious [. . .]

Specifically, I was given five days to prepare for a tenure review. A letter written on (x date) indicated that the tenure review would occur on (y date) giving me four days to prepare. This is unprecedented in College Q's history; this is an unequivocal departure from normal procedures. This is prima facie evidence for discriminatory intent which the College cannot rebut by recourse to the standard argument that had I been given time to actually submit materials for tenure review, the outcome would have been the same. . .

My analysis and argument are informed by and will be organized according to the currently accepted methods for establishing discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended in 1972. The federal courts recognize 'four methods for demonstrating discriminatory intent . . . All four of the above criteria are useful for analyzing this case. Finally, as the following analysis will demonstrate, this case meets many of the standards for a prima facie case of discrimination as delineated by the Supreme Court in *McDonnell Douglas Corp. v. Green* (1973): (1) the complainant is a member of a protected group; (2) the complainant applied and was qualified for a job for which the employer was seeking applications; (3) despite his qualifications, he was rejected; and (4) that, after his rejection, the position remained open and the employer continued to seek applicants from persons of the complainants qualifications. Of course, this analogy is not a perfect one because University tenure proceedings differ from most jobs in a number of significant ways.

The foregoing highlights several themes that I develop at great length in my findings chapters, namely suspicion about African American faculty that can result in mistreatment and the emotional burden or toll that some African Americans feel they must pay in order to remain in the academy. Some even refer to this as “the black tax.” Most important, perhaps, is the amount of psychic energy that one must marshal in situations such as these. Professor Sidney had already filed complaints within his department and his EEOC complaint was informed by a mastery of legal detail that took time and effort to acquire because he had no legal training. Professor Sidney also told me that the letter he referred to above was placed in his box after he left for a conference on the west coast, and so he did not receive it until after the review had occurred. These are classic discriminatory strategies of those in power. In

their book, *Living With Racism: The Black Middle-Class Experience* (1994), Joe Feagin and Melvin Sikes enumerate several of the mechanisms used to restrict the advancement of African Americans in the workplace. They include such things as "inappropriate negative evaluations" (1994, p. 145). Professor Sidney's case illustrates fairly straightforward methods of exclusion: inequitable evaluation, changing the rules, that is, introducing new evaluative criteria, intentionally inaccurate evaluation, unduly critical interpretations of events, and minimizing accomplishments. What Professor Sidney was able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the EEOC was (1) statistical evidence of disproportional representation strong enough to raise an inference of discriminatory intent; (2) conventional evidence of bias; (3) unfavorable comparisons with other professors in the same department who were granted tenure; and (4) irregularities in the promulgated university tenure process. By educating himself about the law, Professor Sidney pursued his complaint by invoking the legal model known as disparate treatment. In his EEOC complaint, he showed repeatedly that he was expected to do things that other faculty were not required to do:

I am required to do things that my colleagues aren't because I am not "visible" within the department's social network. Dr. Anderson (his white female department chair) wrote in her evaluation: 'Last year, I recommended that Dr. Sidney serve on a more visible campus committee than the Graduate Research Committee and that he consider leading a committee. He indicated that he has no interest in that kind of leadership, preferring to work on his research and teaching.' No such demand was made of Dr. Baker, who just received tenure and never chaired a college committee. Dr. Anderson's comments . . . the document in which they are included acknowledges in its first sentence that it derives from 'informal discussions with Dr. Sidney.' I am

accustomed to expressing myself freely with my colleagues, but at College Q anything one says by the copy machine may appear in your evaluation. This, indeed, happened again in my tenure review where, after becoming the chair of a prominent committee, that had extraordinary accomplishments . . . that drew public praise from Dr. Anderson and the President of the College, I was criticized by two members of my department on the basis of exceedingly casual interchanges. . . [In] the "Tenure Decision" Dr. Anderson writes, "In the spring of (x year), he assumed leadership of an important committee. However, two department members who work with the committee have expressed concern about a lack of communication and clear process in his planning for next year's campus-wide events."

Dr. Anderson repeated in her revised evaluation that Dr. Sidney did not volunteer for "the necessary tasks of the department," and she claimed that "his daily pattern is to attend to his own teaching and research but not to seek out or volunteer for the myriad small tasks that keep the enterprise ticking." Dr. Sidney told me that he applied twice to direct an honors program. Even though he had worked in an honors program for eight years and even directed it for one year, the position was awarded to a peer, Dr. Carson, who, though very qualified, had credentials that were inferior to his. I have not included the section in which Professor Sidney provides "statistical evidence of disproportional representation" in order to protect the anonymity of College Q. The data were striking. Under the rubric "conventional evidence of bias," Professor Sidney provided examples in his EEOC complaint, the most evocative of which may be the following:

The degree to which my department head, Dr. Anderson, was made uncomfortable by (1) the introduction of Black cultural artifacts into the classroom; and (2) the ways in

which Black cultural artifacts are denigrated as "objectionable" while the products of European culture, which are demonstrably vulgar by almost everyone's standards, are considered pedagogically acceptable. For example, one of the crucial disagreements between Dr. Anderson and me revolved around the use of the music of Michael Jackson, Alicia Keyes and L. L.Cool J during a lecture about post-modernism. This excerpt is taken from the formal complaint I filed against her: In the evaluation I contested, Dr. Anderson wrote: 'Some class members seemed acutely uncomfortable with the choice of one song that they knew had *vulgar lyrics*; Dr. Sidney stopped the music before the *objectionable* sections, but the dynamic as students waited in suspense to see whether he would, *was not comfortable*.' (emphasis mine) Note first that since I "stopped the music before the objectionable sections," Dr. Anderson did not even know what, if anything, was objectionable about them.

Dr. Sidney responded by explaining that he was selected to pilot a university mandated interdisciplinary course and he was instructed to include more material from African American and Latino cultures. He insisted that he knew that his students were not 'acutely uncomfortable' with sexually explicit lyrics because in the previous class in which he had played an Alicia Keyes CD that had no sexually explicit content, his students swapped stories about the ways in which all of them had sexualized very harmless lyrics. He responded to Dr. Anderson's complaint by claiming that the students felt uncomfortable with Dr. Anderson present, thinking she would judge them "because they didn't know what you would think of them if they appeared to like what I know they do, in fact, like."

In order to contextualize this issue of "vulgar lyrics", however, Dr. Sidney explained that 1930s literary critic Kenneth Muir described his response to Shakespeare's play *Measure*

for Measure, in this way: “My sense of decency and cleanliness are outraged . . . The coarse and crude language of the characters, their unhygienic habits and the light way they spoke of women and sex, disgusted me.” In his formal response to Dr. Anderson, before he even filed his EEOC complaint, Sidney offered further examples of how decency and the supposed threat that he embodied by bringing modern hip hop music into the classroom could be compared to the content of what are regarded as the classics of Western literature:

Defying what we would now consider Muir’s delicate sensibilities, I finished teaching *Measure for Measure* last week. In *Paradise Lost*, my students routinely read about Satan, Sin and Death: double incest, rape, and dogs harboring in wombs. The Wife of Bath laughs about how hard she drove her old husbands sexually. A hip hop lyric, though, which features none of the aforementioned activities, is somehow 'vulgar' and 'objectionable.' You [Dr. Anderson] imply that I did something virtuous by stopping 'the music before the objectionable sections.' Objectionable by whose standards? Hip Hop, of course, is a black thing; it is transgressive; it has from its inception criticized capitalism, materialism and in the song I played, calls into question the Petrarchan conventions of a Michael Jackson ballad . . . Our students listen to hip hop; they like it. Serious scholars in the humanities and social sciences study it and the canon is moving towards greater inclusiveness. The department chair is no longer the moral arbiter of what goes on in the classroom, though the censorious and culturally insensitive quality of your remarks suggests that you believe that you are.’

Dr. Anderson's remarks were only one example of her resistance towards African American culture that was documented in Professor Sidney's EEOC complaint. Her role in his tenure denial was crucial because she presented his case to the department. According to

Professor Sidney, the most powerful argument in his complaint centered on "unfavorable comparisons with other professors" and "irregularities in the promulgated university tenure process." In the interests of anonymity, I have excluded the latter and can briefly summarize the comparison of Sidney to the most recent professors who became tenured. Although he went to first tier schools and his colleagues went to second and third tier schools, his tenure was rejected. Although he gave conference papers and published an article while his peers attended, but did not present at conferences and published nothing, his tenure was denied. In his complaint, Professor Sidney does not boast, but describes his education and scholarly output:

In terms of education, there is no comparison between me and the other members of my department, including the two most recently tenured . . . In terms of scholarly productivity, the comparison is equally favorable to me. By my third academic year here, I had given twice the number of scholarly and professional presentations as the rest of the members of my department combined. I also have important publications, both scholarly and artistic. In terms of awards and fellowships, the comparison is again favorable to me. In terms of service, my contributions have been comparable or superior to this comparison group. Of course, service is the most subjective element in the tenure mix and I have been careful to document my contributions.

Surveillance of Professor Sidney

Looking back at the history of African American domestic workers, Hill Collins (1998) explains the concepts of surveillance and "the politics of containment," which I discussed earlier in the chapter. But as more women have moved from working in the homes of white people to working in professional corporate careers, she claims that employer's

observation strategies have changed: “While continuing to be organized around the exclusionary practices attached to racial segregation, the new politics [of containment] simultaneously uses increasingly sophisticated strategies of surveillance” (1998, p. 14). Developing this idea of surveillance, she furthers her argument about how domestic workers’ insider status in white homes was threatening: “placing individual Black women under surveillance, . . . through domestic work performed in private homes . . . reflected the need to find ways to control subordinate populations who were inside centers of power” (1998, p. 22). To a great extent, Dr. Sidney’s presence in his department, although initially welcomed, represented a threat to “inside centers of power” to his department chair and to his colleagues who were required to vote unanimously not to promote him, but here again, Hill Collins clarifies how the power dynamics at College Q likely functioned: “Where segregation used to keep Black women out of the classroom and boardroom, surveillance now becomes an important mechanism of control . . . [it] operates via strategies of everyday racism whereby individual women feel that they are being “watched” in their desegregated work environments” (1998, p. 38). For example, the department chair, Dr. Anderson, situated her office such that she was right next to Dr. Sidney, and could hear his telephone calls as well as office hour contacts with students. She was aware of who was entering and exiting his office, for what duration of time they stayed, but her gaze was limited to the daytime hours when they were there at the same time. Dr. Sidney was the subject of her gaze, but the fact that he taught at night was both liberating for him and frustrating for her. His magnanimity of offering to teach at night prevented him from being observed by her and afforded him a sense of doing a kindness for the department by considering the needs of his colleagues who had spouses and children and preferred to teach during the day.

Dr. Sidney, as a case study, provides a locus for the intersection of some of Hill Collins' theories of surveillance, "the politics of containment," the outsider within standpoint, and a male corollary of her model of the "Black Lady Overachiever." For instance, Dr. Sidney was watched without his knowledge, and when the standards for tenure were unfairly applied to him, he was frustrated and angry that they were unlike the standards that other faculty were held to. Hill Collins describes the outsider within as someone who does not fit into a certain context, and yet is considered a stranger in a mainstream context as well as a minority context. The "politics of containment" is relevant for Dr. Sidney because he offered to teach night classes since he was unmarried and he thought doing so would be a kindness to his colleagues, many of whom had spouses and children. He was not trying to elude surveillance, but because he was outside of the panoptic gaze of Dr. Anderson, she seemed to resent not being able to observe him. Ironically, by being sensitive to the needs of his female colleagues with family responsibilities, he was cast as the loner who was defiantly refusing collegial interactions.

Teaching Evaluations

In terms of teaching, the student evaluations for Sidney's first year of service compared to recently tenured faculty (based on a five point scale): Baker had 4.7, Elliot had 4.3, and Sidney had 4.3. His teaching evaluation scores, to which I will return later in this section, had always been solid and continued to improve while he taught at College Q. In addition, Dr. Sidney taught courses that all students were required to take because they were general education courses, resulting in greater variability in their grades, while many of his colleagues taught courses for the major, where grades are usually higher. It is a well-documented fact that the higher the grades a teacher gives, the better his or her student

evaluation scores are. So, considering the fact that Professor Sidney's class was populated primarily with freshmen who earned lower grades, his teaching evaluation score of 4.3 is particularly high, especially when compared to colleagues who had higher grades, in part because they were teaching upper division students.

Disparate Treatment

In his EEOC complain, Dr. Sidney paid particular attention to the question of teaching, which is the primary function of faculty at College Q and compared himself to the full professors in his department, Dr. Gordon and Dr. Humphrey (also white women) who had been teaching for approximately as long as he had. He chose this group for three reasons: (1) they were the longest serving members of the department and thus, the most seasoned teachers; (2) they had full teaching schedules (in general, the lighter one's teaching load, the higher one's teaching evaluations); (3) and they held the rank to which he should have been promoted, full professor. This comparison developed the case for disparate treatment very effectively because in the years he had been at College Q, he consistently out performed these particular peers in teaching evaluation scores.

Like most universities across the country, standardized evaluations are the primary gauge of teaching effectiveness at College Q. A memorandum from Dr. Frank, Vice President for Academic Affairs, stated, " This information will be useful for faculty development and evaluation. It will be included in your personnel file and will be sent to your department chair and dean. This data will be available for review by appropriate individuals involved in personnel decisions at the college." Because he knew how strong his scores were, Dr. Sidney wondered what role they had played in his tenure review:

What is missing from the "Tenure Recommendation" I am protesting is any kind of quantitative evaluation of my teaching intended to supplement qualitative data and to be used in making decisions about tenure and promotion. Because it is, in fact, objective and displays trends over time, it has historically been used as the most important measure of teaching effectiveness at most colleges, including College Q. . . That Dr. Anderson, the head of the department, understands the importance of quantitative evaluation is clear: In my annual evaluation for [x year] she wrote, 'Your rating numbers have improved markedly, and you accomplished this without inflating grades.'

Dr. Sidney also wanted to provide me with more quantitative comparative data. For example, the first year he taught at College Q, Dr. Gordon had a 4.1 score, Dr. Humphrey had a 3.3 score, and Dr. Sidney had a 4.4. As I pointed out earlier, the lower a grade is for individual students, the lower the teaching evaluation score is for the professor, but for his first year at College Q, he gave lower grades than comparable educators, yet, he had higher teaching evaluations. Incidentally, according to him and some thank you notes he showed me, he was known as a demanding, but fair teacher, who pushed his students to excel and patiently spent a great deal of time with them in office hours.

During his second year, his teaching evaluations remained high. He provided this comparative data, which I turned into table.

Table 1: Teaching Evaluation Scores for College Q

Name	Course	Teaching Evaluation Score
Gordon	Course 110	3.3
	Course 170	3.8
Humphrey	Course 110	3.8
	Course 170	3.6
Jones	Course 110	4.0
	Course 170	4.2
Sidney	Course 110	4.5
	Course 170	3.8

These figures show that Dr. Sidney had, on average, higher teaching evaluation scores than his peers, and Gordon, Humphrey, and Jones all had been teaching for about the same number of years, but not at the same institution. In general, scores for general education classes are lower than those for upper division courses, and even though Dr. Sidney taught more lower division ones, his scores were above the departmental average.

He maintained this view:

My overall teaching evaluations had always been at or above the department norm.

They have always been superior to the two tenured full professors who do not have administrative responsibilities and they have improved every year. They are, in fact, roughly comparable to Dr. Jones who is widely thought to be the best teacher in the department, and who received an award for excellence in teaching. Dr. Elliot, a

recently tenured member, had a mean score of 3.9 for general education courses; my mean score was 4.08. The omission of such comparative data during a tenure review is evidence of gross inequities, fundamental dishonesty, and a willful attempt to mislead. (Data taken from the Department's Annual Reports).

During Dr. Sidney's third year at College Q, Chair Anderson discontinued the practice of publishing individual faculty member's quantitative scores, thus decreasing the transparency of the department. His mean score for student evaluations for his third year of the unfavorable tenure review was 4.45; the department mean was 4.40 and the College mean was 4.34. In spring of that year, he was nominated by two students for a departmental award for outstanding teaching. Unable to make an objective case against Professor Sidney as a teacher, his department chair changed the rules. *The Policy Handbook* does not mandate any particular teaching style and simply places "excellence in teaching" as the second most important item in evaluating a candidate for tenure. However, Dr. Anderson then employed criteria not found in the Handbook to discredit Dr. Sidney, though the distinction she used is no longer considered a useful one by most contemporary pedagogical theorists. For example, in her evaluation for his third year, Anderson wrote, "He [Sidney] is a knowledgeable, organized, charismatic teacher most of whose students are devoted to him. His style is quite teacher-centered, however, and my recommendation to him this year is to work on fostering self-respect and independence in all his students." Anderson later removed the distinction between teacher-centered and student-centered in her revised evaluation. Invariably, when new criteria are imported into the evaluation of an African American, they are used to discredit him. Dr. Sidney responded to her evaluation through a formal dissent in this way:

"Teacher centered' is a dirty word these days. I have observed many of my colleagues and must conclude that what we practice at College Q is a teacher-centered pedagogy. I have observed people in my own department including colleagues who have been awarded the Outstanding Teaching Award, . . . so let me use her, Dr. Jones. I have observed her on several occasions, teaching several subjects. What impressed me most was the sheer range of techniques she deployed; she used the board, the overhead projector, student reading, dyadic group work and formal lecture effectively. Did she believe there was a right answer to the questions that she asked? Yes. Her manner was authoritative but easy and direct. Her style was unarguably "teacher-centered." Our department is a teacher- centered department more so than any department I have ever taught in. More important, the Policy Handbook does not specify any particular teaching style. . . I have, by the way, taught at a University where student-centered education is widely practiced; students develop their own criteria of accountability and grade themselves. . . .I doubt that anyone in our department would find that an appealing model. The degree to which a teacher employs student-centered techniques is a matter of individual judgment and if there are no clear guidelines governing this matter, it cannot be used in any but the most arbitrary way to evaluate teaching.

Your observations also suggest a certain innocence about the controversial nature of "student-centered" learning among some of the most influential pedagogical theorists. As Lisa Delpit observes, "Somehow, to exhibit one's personal power as expert source is viewed as disempowering one's students" (*Other People's Children*, 1995, p. 32). Your theories of what fosters "self-respect and independence" in

students are simply your theories. I would be happy to discuss them with you, but we may simply disagree. To imply, on the basis of one class observation, that my students have any less self-respect than any other teacher's students is simply irresponsible. There are no pedagogical methodologies which work for all student populations or all teachers. There is some evidence, in fact, that "student-centered" pedagogy does not work well for African American students.

In her tenure denial, Dr. Anderson complained that "he [Sidney] has not shown evidence of reflective teaching..." yet, this statement flatly contradicted her own earlier observations in her evaluation a year earlier, when she wrote: "He is a reflective teacher who, as he continues to fine-tune his presentation of our general education courses, will no doubt continue to both learn and teach in pedagogical discussions with his colleagues." These observations are consistent with her predecessor, Dr. Jones' evaluation of him. The former department chair, Jones praised him: "Philip Sidney is a good teacher who is always on the road to being a better teacher. He has reported in his self-evaluations places where he felt his performance at College Q needed improvement. He does not mention where he excelled. In addition to getting his freshmen through the standardized test he also made them enthusiastic readers of literature." Too, Dr. Sidney sensed that he was perceived as threatening to the department chair, because if he disagreed with her, he would write a rebuttal of her evaluations of him. He did this because he wanted to document that he thought she was treating him unfairly and he wanted his dissent on record. His self-protective gestures were, he believed, seen as offensive to his chair, who expected her faculty to be deferential, passive, and obliging. Dr. Sidney was none of these, as his credo "Never back down" reflected. His assertive attitude did not turn off his colleagues; in fact, he claims that they

were always pleasant in the hallways and at meetings, and praised his dedication to students, as evidenced by the long-line of students waiting to see him in office hours on a regular basis.

He also suspected that Dr. Anderson employed strong-arm intimidation during his tenure review, because he later discovered that some of his colleagues who were supportive of him in-person, voted against his retention and promotion, because the department had a precedent that all tenure decisions had to be unanimous. In fact, just six months ago, he received a letter from a recently retired colleague who apologized for succumbing to the pressure that Dr. Anderson exerted over all the voting members of the committee, insisting that the decision be unanimous, even though several faculty did want to promote Sidney. Receiving this letter recently was both reassuring and frustrating for him. Dr. Sidney believed that because his teaching evaluations, scholarship, and service exceeded all standard departmental measures, the only explanation was that he had offended Dr. Anderson and she had decided to “lynch” his career, ending his tenure at College Q because he was too oppositional and out-spoken.

In addition to being one of two African American faculty, he was one of two men in a department of twenty-three white women. Two years after he was hired, the other man was promoted to an administrative position and was infrequently around the hallways, emphasizing Dr. Sidney’s lone male status. He did have one African American woman colleague, Dr. Hansberry, and although she gave him moral support, expressing her solidarity with him and agreeing that his tenure process was unfair, when he asked her to write a letter of support for his tenure file, she declined, scared to be perceived as defiant, because she was still untenured. Dr. Anderson had showed herself to be deceptive and vindictive, since she

had inappropriately altered her initial review of Dr. Sidney, replacing a positive review of him with a revised and very unfavorable one in his tenure file. Accordingly, Professor Hansberry told Dr. Sidney, and that as a vulnerable untenured colleague, she feared that if she allied herself with him formally, Dr. Anderson would use the same strategies to sabotage her tenure process. Dr. Sidney had asked her to write a letter because their offices were next door to one another and she, like he, taught at night, so she was able to confirm that she heard colleagues praising him verbally and could attest to how many students he assisted in office hours. Both Dr. Hansberry and Dr. Sidney were popular with students, and they speculated that jealousy might have come into play regarding Dr. Anderson's unfounded objections to Dr. Sidney. But then, like Delpit, he is an African American and brings different perspectives to the academy than the demographically average professor.

Dr. Sidney's case sets the stage for what follows in this dissertation, as an extreme and gross example of the discrimination that other interview participants experienced in more subtle and nuanced ways in the academy. He is an archetypical example of the theories of outsider within standpoint, surveillance, and institutional racism writ large, encapsulated in one person. He represents the paradigm of Simmel's sociological significant "stranger" who, as I quoted earlier, "stands apart" and who is "a peculiar composition of nearness and remoteness" (1921/ 1969, p. 324). Now, I turn to a formal introduction where readers can see how the tactics employed in Dr. Sidney's case are applied more widely to African American faculty who teach at public and private predominantly white schools across the discipline spectrum and across the country. I hope to show that the outsider within status confers a "nearness and remoteness," that is difficult to overcome, but it may hold possibilities to transcend its own limitations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Moving from Professor Sidney to the introduction will signal a turn toward the larger societal problem of institutional racism, such that his case is the microcosm and the systemic phenomenon of racism is the macrocosm. The academy is an institution in which power is codified and kept in the hands of a few select individuals. By reviewing the historical development of institutional racism, we can understand how it operates on both on grand and small scales and how it resonated in the life of Professor Sidney as well as the fifteen other faculty members that comprise the major findings of this study.

In 1985, a group of sociologists published one of the most widely read, provocative and insightful works on American culture to have been written in the waning decades of the twentieth century. *Habits Of The Heart* (1985), in its broadest intent, sought to plumb the American character, particularly the "extent to which private life either prepares people to take part in the public world or encourages them to find meaning exclusively in the private sphere" (ix). Using Alexis De Tocqueville's resonant phrase as the title of their work, Robert Bellah et al. sought to give voice to "the tension between how we live and what our culture allows us to say" (1985, vii), to bring the hidden and complex springs of our national character into the mainstream of public discourse. What is as significant as the clarity and force of this book is what it had to do to achieve that clarity; it completely excluded "the racial diversity that is so important a part of our national life" (1985, ix).

This omission illustrates, among other things, the inability of the academy to address the

problems of race in the coherent and compelling ways that it can address other dimensions of our cultural life; it cannot address such issues because the academy itself is riven by a deep ambivalence towards the real differences in perspective that emerge from differences in social experience between whites and non-whites in American life; it cannot address such issues because at present, it does not contain even a modicum of the racial diversity that Bellah sees as so important to our national culture. The diverse faculty who are needed to address such complex problems are less likely to be retained and when they are successful, their successes come at a very high personal cost.

Public discourse on race is, to put it mildly, highly polarized. The debate on race is carried on in terms that are often as memorable as they are simplistic (c.f. Geoffrey Nunberg's book *Talking Right*ⁱⁱ) with increasingly little consensus on what counts as evidence. The chasm among the various theoretical camps and cultural pundits can only be bridged by a multifaceted approach.

Broadly speaking, this essay attempts to create a middle ground in the debate on race. It does so by presenting unequivocal evidence of the persistence of racism in the academy and the complexities of its expression. Although it differs in severity from institution to institution, and from discipline to discipline, institutional racism is the predominant factor in the paucity and isolation of minority faculty in the academy. In general, the effects of racism are more pronounced in the social sciences and the humanities than in the natural sciences where there are fewer minority scholars. This essay also examines the language of contemporary race discourse and suggests what can be saved and what can be discarded.

Specifically, this essay recounts the experiences of sixteen African Americanⁱⁱⁱ scholars who teach at predominantly white institutions. Significantly, all but three of them claim to have

been the target of direct or indirect racism, that is, to have been treated in unfavorable ways that their white colleagues were not. This study relies not only on personal narratives, but also on the hard data of an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaint that eventuated in favorable settlements for the complainant who was one of the scholars interviewed.

Paradoxically, the academy richly rewards those whom it most egregiously mistreats (such as Professor Sidney and his settlement from College Q) and non-disclosure agreements prevent the frequency and severity of such mistreatment from becoming public knowledge, and thus from becoming part of our public discourse on race. Because almost every college and university has a public policy prohibiting discriminatory behaviors, institutions aggressively conceal the disparity between their public rhetoric and their less visible administrative actions. Even when they settle a lawsuit publicly for hundreds of thousands of dollars, every administration will deny any wrongdoing.^{iv} As *Habits of the Heart* (1985) did for American culture in general, this monograph seeks to do for the more circumscribed world of the academy: to illuminate the tension between what we say and “how we live.”

What is unique about this essay is the detail with which it will discuss how the process of discrimination operates. Chapter one does several things: first, it introduces the primary positions in the contemporary debate on racism as a social force in America; second, it analyzes the argumentative fallacies exemplified by the various antagonists and contextualizes some of the more colorful rhetoric in the statistics of social reality; finally, it outlines the purpose and contribution of this study as well as provides an overview of the major concerns of faculty of color, concerns which will be examined more closely in the ensuing chapters.

Positions: Shelby Steele, John McWhorter, and Dinesh D'Souza

Surprising at it may seem, not all African American scholars believe racism is a factor in the lives of African Americans or that it can have deleterious consequences for domains as various as employment, bank loans, housing, romantic relationships, college entrance, and medical treatment. Because few scholars announce their explicit beliefs about racism, one can use his or her stance on affirmative action as an index of the degree to which he or she acknowledges the effects of racism. Perhaps the most notorious opponent of affirmative action is African American writer Shelby Steele, who wrote about it in *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America* (1990). John McWhorter, another African American writer, in his book, *Losing the Race: Self-Sabotage in Black America* (2000), discusses what he calls “the evils of Affirmative Action,” despite having personally benefited from such programs. A third representative, Dinesh D'Souza, an East Indian, attacks the concept of institutional racism^v in his book, *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society* (1995). All three are some of the most outspoken poster-boys from the anti-affirmative action movement and all, although they are former professors themselves, coincidentally, currently work for conservative think-tanks.

An opponent of affirmative action, Shelby Steele, who is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and holds a Ph.D. in English, opposes any public policy that offers racial preferences. Steele, like Clarence Thomas and Ward Connerly, opposes affirmative action especially within the realm of higher education. Steele's work is representative of neo-conservative African Americans whose numbers have risen significantly but not dramatically over the last fifteen years. In his book *The Content of our Character* (1990), Steele devotes a chapter to: “Affirmative Action: The Price of Preference.” He writes that his children have endured racial insensitivity, listing examples: they “have been called names, have suffered slights, and have

experienced firsthand the peculiar malevolence that racism brings out in people. Yet, they have never experienced racial discrimination, have never been stopped by their race on any path they have chosen to follow” (Steele, 1990, p. 111).

Proposing that African Americans lose more than they gain from affirmative action, and that it “does very little to truly uplift blacks” (1990, p. 115), Steele asserts that:

One of the most troubling effects of racial preferences for blacks is a kind of demoralization, or put another way, an enlargement of self-doubt. Under affirmative action the quality that earns us preferential treatment is an implied inferiority . . . the implication of inferiority that racial preferences engender in both the white and black mind expands rather than contracts this doubt. (1990, p. 117)

Here, Steele argues that affirmative action actually is more harmful than beneficial because it makes African Americans skeptical of their own rightful place in the work place and it “indirectly encourages blacks to exploit their own past victimization as a source of power and privilege” (1990, p. 118). He shares these sentiments with McWhorter and redefines affirmative action as “a form of reparation” (1990, p. 119). Critics of institutional racism like Shelby Steele dismiss the validity of institutional racism as a formal mechanism that operates in the culture today.

A Manhattan Institute fellow and a U.C. Berkeley linguistics professor, McWhorter is African American and admits, like Steele, to having been raised in a middle class home. According to McWhorter, the “evils” of affirmative action are as follows: 1) “Affirmative action creates private doubt”; 2) “[it] makes black people look unintelligent”; 3) “affirmative action for people who have not suffered unique disadvantage is unfair; and 4) “[it] hinders African Americans from achieving parity with whites” (2000, pp. 229-32). He even acknowledges that he benefited from affirmative action and that critics might accuse him of “pulling the ladder up after” himself because he received a minority graduate fellowship while at Stanford, a post-

doctoral fellowship for minorities at U.C. Berkeley, and was hired by Cornell University from a minority recruitment fund, rather than a regular department fund (McWhorter, 2000, pp. 248-51). “I deeply regret,” he laments, “having applied for that minority postdoctoral fellowship, and I consider it my duty to work against tokenism infecting the life trajectories of future members of my race as it has mine” (McWhorter, 2000, p. 252). McWhorter also muddies the ideological waters by insisting that most proponents of affirmative action ignore the fact that African American students are statistically more likely than whites to drop out of college and that they should be concerned about “whether or not it is *fair* to reject qualified white students in favor of less qualified minority ones” (2000, p. 177, emphasis mine). McWhorter and Steele signal a change from the way in which conservatives of the fifties and sixties, such as William F. Buckley,^{vi} address the problem of race.

Unlike Steele and McWhorter, Dinesh D’Souza is an immigrant from India. He graduated from Dartmouth with a B.A. in English and, like Steele, is a fellow at the Hoover Institution. He claims at the beginning of *The End of Racism* (1995) that because he grew up Catholic in India, was educated by Spanish Jesuits, had an African American roommate his freshman year in college, and is married to a white Protestant woman named Dixie, that he is “uniquely qualified to address the subject of multiculturalism because [he is] . . . a kind of walking embodiment of it” (p. vii). In his chapter entitled “Institutional Racism and Double Standards,” D’Souza rejects the concept that proportional representation is a valid measure of diversity. He argues that colleges and universities should aim for quality applicants rather than diverse applicants. D’Souza dismisses what he refers to as the “proportional fallacy,” (1995, p. 297) which is the notion that the employment sector should reflect a proportional cross -section of the ethnic mix of the U.S.A. He asserts that the logic of proportional representation in America’s civil rights

laws is flawed because if an employer fails to hire a representative pool of minority applicants, then he or she is “presumed guilty of illegal racial discrimination” (D’Souza, 1995, p. 297).^{vii}

After invalidating the value of proportional representation, D’Souza focuses on the fines that employers must pay if they violate EEO standards and he labels adherence to these standards “preferential hiring programs” (1995, p. 297).^{viii} By emphasizing what he terms “rational discrimination,” (p. 259) which is a view that because young African Americans are convicted of a high percentage of violent crimes, most Americans “have good reason to take precautions” when they see African American males (1995, p. 261), he claims that racial bias is “attributable to accurate perception of group traits rather than a belief in black inferiority” (1995, p. 289), D’Souza seeks to give an empirical foundation to his position by using specious analogies while ignoring the current demographics of the academy.

Analyses of Positions: Steele, McWhorter, and D’Souza

Shelby Steele's discursive innovations are emblems of the turn in the discourse about race that occurred in the late eighties and early nineties. Before Steele, American discourse about race featured blunt, brilliant, public analyses such as *Up From Liberalism* (1959) in which Buckley suggested that racism in the service of "civilization," unfortunate as the consequences might be for the "Negro," might not only be justified, but inevitable, because the “leaders of American civilization are white— as one would certainly expect given their preternatural advantages, of tradition, training, and economic status” (p. 127). These incisive mainstream *apologiae* were replaced by their academic counterparts exemplified by such as writers like Stephen Balch, Executive Director of the National Association of Scholars, who, reducing the vestiges of racism to mere unpleasantness, asked, "Does it really help... to label insensitivity as a form of racism, as if those who are insensitive are of a type with Bull

Connor" and Balch's academic adversaries who argued that "institutionalized racism, which is the action of your standard power structure in the university. . . is able to actualize prejudice and oppress others" (qtd. in Bunzel, 1992, p. 3). By the eighties, race discourse had left the mainstream, was intensely polarized, and was vigorously debated only within the limited confines of the academy.

But in 1990, Steele entered the conversation. An English professor with an engaging writing style, whose only real credential was that he was African American himself, he gave a new twist to the conservative values of an earlier generation of thinkers. Steele replaced the empirical arguments of the Buckleys with a definitional argument, redefining "racial discrimination" narrowly as the social force that would prevent individuals because of their race from pursuing "any path they have chosen to follow" (Steele, 1990, p. 111). All other acts of animus became "racial insensitivity," "slights," or "the peculiar malevolence that racism brings out in people" (Steele, 1990, p. 111). Using Steele's definition, there can be no inherently discriminatory act; the nature of the act can only be decided a posteriori by evaluating the consequences of the act.^{ix} This particular definition of racial discrimination requires an understanding of the relationship between actions and their consequences that is not so easily obtained by human beings. How can Steele be certain that the "slights" and acts "of racial insensitivity" his children experienced did not condition or determine his children's choice of paths? Steele's brother, Claude, a Stanford psychologist, who conducted studies about stereotype threat has shown very clearly that everyone experiences stereotype threat, "the threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype." Wary of readers misapplying this phenomenon only to minorities, Claude Steele verified that stereotype threat affects everyone because "we are all

members of some group about which negative stereotypes exist” (1999, p. 46).^x Shelby Steele does not believe that his children experienced racial discrimination, even though they “have been called names” and know “the peculiar malevolence” of racism.

Shelby Steele's other important innovation was to redefine affirmative action, something he claims, "many blacks and some whites" justified as something "owed" as "a form of reparation" (1990, p. 119). Owing, of course, does not necessarily imply "reparation;" it can as easily imply a simple debt. Affirmative action, however, had a specific purpose in a specific historical context; Lyndon Baines Johnson's 1965 Executive Order 11246 banned employment discrimination.^{xi} In June of 1965, at Howard University's commencement, Johnson used an analogy to clarify how affirmative action would be applied: “You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’ and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.” Johnson did not confuse affirmative action with reparations.

Like D'Souza's analysis, Steele's comes directly into conflict with both the letter and the intent of federal statute. Civil rights legislation was forward looking in its intent. It did not seek to repay anyone for suffering incurred in the past but to ensure that the suffering associated with certain types of injustice, based on race, did not occur in the future. Steele's redefinitions were, of course, not the first aimed at changing social policy. They are reminiscent of economist Isabel Sawhill's work “Poverty in the U.S.: Why is it so Persistent?” in which she redefined the poor as the "underclass" (1988, p. 1074).^{xii}

While Steele acknowledges that “subtle discrimination” exists, yet, he argues that “racial preferences” are not “a protection against this subtle discrimination” (Steele, 1990, p. 120). He then declares that racial preferences “implicitly mark whites with an exaggerated

superiority just as they mark blacks with an exaggerated inferiority” (Steele, 1990, p. 120-21). Undercutting his own argument, he reveals that taint can become a further excuse to discriminate against African Americans. Steele criticizes his professions’ “unrealistically high demand for black professors” as “entitlement by color” (Steele, 1990, p. 121-22). Steele impugns the value of proportional representation when he states that “racial imbalances are not always an indication of racial bias” (1990, p.123). To his credit, Steele does acknowledge that affirmative action “can help institutions evolve standards of merit [. . . and] define exactly what racial discrimination is and how it might manifest itself within a specific institution” (1990, p. 123).

Building on the work of Steele and others, McWhorter continues the tradition of argument by ethos, adding his own personal mea culpa. He believes that minority fellowships, and by extension, all forms of affirmative action, are emblems of "tokenism" that can infect "the life trajectories" of African American academics as they apparently infected him. His substantive addition to the debate is his contention that "affirmative action for people who have not suffered unique disadvantage is unfair" (2000, pp. 229-32). His argument, however, is reversible. He logically commits himself to the position that affirmative action is admissible for those who have "suffered unique disadvantage." Statistical data more than confirm the claim that African Americans as a class have historically suffered "unique disadvantage." It probably cannot be decided when the innumerable "slights" and acts "of racial insensitivity" that any individual African American experiences constitute "unique disadvantage." He ignores the fact that no African American is required to apply for a minority fellowship or for admission if he or she does not choose to do so. Affirmative action programs offer an opportunity for the truly disadvantaged that they

might not otherwise have.

The work of Steele and McWhorter is valuable for several reasons. Neither author assumes that America has transcended racism, but they agree that it has diminished to the extent that minorities can succeed without special assistance. This latter assumption is more true than it was fifty years ago, but the empirical data simply do not support the claim that the "playing field" is currently level. Both authors demand that the African American community take initiative for bettering their lot in the conditions in which they currently find themselves. African Americans who make their way into the academy have, of course, already taken that initiative and have a legal right to be protected from discrimination based on the differences that unique disadvantages create between them and their white colleagues.

Unlike Steele and McWhorter, D'Souza is an outsider to the African American experience, despite his claim that he had an "African American roommate" once (1995, p. viii). He is also an outsider to the academy. His work, though part of the mainstream of conservative rhetoric, is not part of an evolving discourse, but signals a return to the position of a Buckley without his incisiveness, credible evidence, or brilliance. With all that has been said and done in regard to race since the fifties, D'Souza's work can only be considered naive. His rejection of proportional representation in the workplace is simply a rejection of federal statute. The basis of his rejection, his notion of "quality applicants" begs the question that has been intelligently considered for the past six decades or so: who establishes merit and what is the epistemological basis of that assessment? He treats merit as if it were not a constantly changing social construct presided over by fallible human beings, but an eternal verity intuited by philosopher kings. In the humanities, to offer one possible example, practitioners themselves work from a number of varying theoretical perspectives that come and go; there

are feminists, deconstructionists, new historicists, and formalists. Which of these positions is most meritorious? Who decides? The incumbents in positions of power within individual departments decide.

More problematic is D'Souza's deployment of the term "rational discrimination" (1995, p. 259). In the way that he uses it, he collapses the distinction between "racial discrimination," what we have come to consider a bad thing, and ordinary discrimination, the intellectual faculty by which we select our dinner entrée from a menu. He argues not by definition as Steele and McWhorter do, but by analogy. His conclusion, based on the percentage of young African American males convicted of violent crimes, is that discrimination may be "attributable to accurate perception of group traits" (1995, p. 289). D'Souza insists that "proportional representation fails to consider differences in talents, culture, interests, and preferences that partly explain the current dispersion of groups in the work force" (1995, p. 300). By refusing to concede that merit is assessed subjectively, and not by objective principles and universal performance standards, he does not take into account the historical legacy of discrimination in most large-scale U.S. institutions, including higher education.

His beliefs about rational discrimination further marginalize him from mainstream political and social thought. At the end of the chapter "Institutional Racism and Double Standards: Racial Preferences and their Consequences" when he recommends that it is time for "genuine liberals to abandon the destructive ideology of 'institutional racism' and to rediscover the virtues of merit and standards evenly applied" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 336), he seems disingenuous. D'Souza expresses anxiety about minorities undermining merit-based promotions, which he assumes are race-neutral. In the academy, however, where in 2003,

80% of faculty were white, there is small likelihood of reversing their hegemonic hold on power (NCES, Table 218, 232). D'Souza distorts the purpose of affirmative action when he claims that it "employs racial classification to prefer less qualified members of some groups over more qualified members of other groups" (1995, pp. 290-91).

In his compelling essay, "The Causation Fallacy," Goodwin Liu, revisiting the Bakke decision, discusses "the common yet mistaken notion that when white applicants like Allan Bakke fail to gain admission ahead of minority applicants with equal or lesser qualifications, the likely cause is affirmative action" (2002, p. 1046). He further observes that "the causation fallacy reflects white anxiety over the intensely competitive nature of selective admissions, and it undoubtedly accounts for much of the moral outrage that affirmative action inspires among unsuccessful white applicants" (Liu, 2002, p. 1046). As Liu shows "proportional representation" at the U.C. Davis Medical School only increased the likelihood of rejection "among [the 3,109] regular applicants from 96.8 to 97.3 %" (2002, p. 1054). Among the 520 "highly qualified" applicants who were invited for an interview the racial quota decreased the average admission rate from 19.2 % to 16.2%. (Liu, 2002, p. 1054) The lesson from the Bakke decision and many similar cases is clear: affirmative action hurts whites very little and helps minorities a great deal. Minorities, moreover, are free to disclose or not disclose their ethnicities for the purposes of admission or employment. They cannot, as the case study in Chapter Two demonstrates, disguise their ethnicity once they are admitted or employed.

The Argument for the Existence of Systemic and Institutional Racism

Sociologist Joe Feagin begins his work *The Continuing Significance of Racism: U.S. Colleges and Universities* (2002) by acknowledging what he refers to as "systemic racism." Because of the legacy of slavery, poorly executed Reconstruction policies, and Jim Crow

segregation, even in a post- civil rights movement, Feagin argues that uneven enforcement of employment and housing laws “to the present day has contributed to the continuation of *de facto* segregation in many U.S. social institutions” (2002, p. 9). Defining systemic racism, he claims that it is characterized by:

- 1) an array of discriminatory practices; 2) privileges and resources that accrue to whites from institutionalized discrimination over many generations; 3) racist ideologies, prejudices, and emotions that defend these unjustly gained privileges; and 4) an assortment of social institutions that generally embed and reproduce racial inequalities. (Feagin, 2002, p. 9)

Regardless of their intent, according to Feagin, individuals who work for large institutions replicate the hiring and promotion inequities that have existed for years. In his book *Discrimination American Style: Institutional Racism and Sexism* (Feagin & Feagin, 1986), the authors distinguish between a traditional view of individual discrimination and an Indirect Institutional Discrimination view. While both models can include both single or multiple discriminators and victims, they differ in terms of action, time, covertness, size of targeted group, and intention. Traditional racism involves a single action, at sporadic intervals, that is 1) overt, 2) affects one person or a small group, and 3) is intentional (Feagin & Feagin, 1986, p. 22). In contrast, indirect institutional discrimination involves multiple actions, occurs at continual and routinized intervals, affects a large institution, and can be either intentional or unintentional (Feagin & Feagin, 1986, p. 22).

Feagin (2002) debunks the myth of “reverse discrimination” that white men claim to face. He emphasizes that the term is absurd and oxymoronic because reversing anti-African American discrimination would “entail large-scale, long-term discrimination against white Americans in all major institutions of society, from employment and housing to education and public accommodations” (Feagin, 2002, p. 11). Because people of color in the U.S. do

not control or dominate banking institutions, government, medical practices, the legal system, or Fortune 500 companies, any type of comprehensive “reverse discrimination” would be impossible to implement. Contending that significant “reverse discrimination” is a myth, he criticizes the use of this term since it polarizes the debate about topics such as affirmative action and reports that “white men account for 37% of the population, yet They hold 90-100% of the top positions in most of the nation’s major institutions” (Feagin, 2002, p. 11). Similar to other national institutions, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics in the fall of 1995, white men and women made up 85% of full-time instructional faculty, while in the fall of 2005, white faculty were 78% of full-time instructional faculty (NCES, 1995, Table 231; NCES, 2005, Table 232).^{xiii}

Institutional Racism Today

Mark Chesler, Amanda Lewis, and James Crowfoot in their book, *Challenging Racism in Higher Education* (2005), refer to the phenomenon of “Indirect Institutional Discrimination” which they borrow from Feagin (1986). Described as “subtle,” indirect institutional discrimination practices have a “negative or differential impact on minorities . . . even though the organizationally prescribed norms . . . were established . . . with no conscious prejudice” (Feagin and Feagin, 1986, p. 31). Chesler, Lewis, and Crowfoot provide an example of how indirect institutional discrimination operates in the academy: administrators may deny “minority scholars access to faculty positions because they lack appropriate or traditional credentials, credentials that may have been foreclosed to them by prior discrimination, or because they lack cultural attributes that are assumed to be relevant for certain positions but that, upon examination, may not be essential” (2005, p. 13). In fact, the simple assertion that racism still exists often comes as a shock to some white faculty.

Indeed, Caroline Turner and Samuel Myers' in *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success* (2000) acknowledge that majority faculty are often unaware of the privileges that their whiteness affords them and they might view a minority faculty member's response to a bigoted remark as "an over-reaction" or the individual as "too sensitive" without considering that a minority colleague might operate from a different cultural context (2000, p. 229). These differences in perspective exemplify how one individual might not intend to discriminate, but might still create a harmful impact. This idea is developed in *Silent Racism: How Well-Meaning White People Perpetuate the Racial Divide* (2006). Barbara Trepagnier takes her point of departure from Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's definition, which she claims has been universally recognized by sociologists since the mid 1960s. Her unique contribution, which is of great relevance to this dissertation, is that she presents a theory of institutional racism that "forges a link between social institutions and the actors who sustain them . . . [it] explains how institutional racism is carried out largely by people who have no intention to produce it" (2006, p. 63).

Institutional Racism in Higher Education

According to the American Council on Education, African American faculty comprised 5.2% of all full time faculty in 2001 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005, Table 24, p. 91). This percentage has risen from 4.9%, which was the steady statistic in 1995, 1997, and 1999 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005, Table 24, p. 91), but it hardly is representative of the national percentage of 13% African Americans in America. Careful observers must analyze this data further, because detailed breakdowns of the data reveal that African American faculty often hold positions at the lowest rungs of the academic ladder, such as lecturers, adjunct faculty, and part-time instructors (*African Americans in Faculty Posts*, 2000). Upholding the value of

diversity is often at the core of a university's mission statements and because ethnic diversity provides "intangible educational benefit" per the 2003 Grutter Supreme Court decision, it is vital that undergraduate students see people of color not only in the lecture halls as their fellow students, but also at the lecture podium.

The projected decrease in the number of African American faculty in American college classrooms brings into sharp focus the fact that inequalities continue to plague their professional experiences. In an article that appeared in 1997, Yolanda Moses, who wrote one of the definitive research documents on African American women faculty seventeen years ago, *Black Women in Academe* (1989), expresses concern about the "pipeline" theory, which maintains that universities find it difficult to replace African American faculty, because fewer African American students are earning doctoral degrees. This "pipeline defense" has been the refuge of administrators who must defend why they have not reached their minority hiring goals. In fact, she claims that severe shortages of minority faculty members have persisted for years, and she reports that African Americans, in general, have the "lowest faculty progression, retention, and tenure rates in academe, with black women comprising the lower academic ranks" (Moses, 1997, p. 24).

Within the U.S. university system, African American professors face a myriad of challenges that are often related to the existence of racist structures, discourses and processes that are woven into the college culture. They confront colleagues and students who challenge the legitimacy of their right to research and teach. Over the past twenty years, federal initiatives and EEOC efforts have been directed towards improving the racial make-up of various departments in ways that will enhance their diversity and provide more role models for undergraduate and graduate students.

Omissions in Current Research

African American faculty are not under-represented because they are not qualified. The “pipeline” and “unqualified” arguments mask a coded understanding of race that is wholly genetic, rather than one that is socially constructed. In fact, what distinguishes my study from the four foremost studies in the field, Sheila Gregory’s *Black Women in the Academy* (1995), Caroline Turner and Samuel Myers’ *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success* (2000), Lee Jones’ *Making It on Broken Promises* (2002), and Darrell Cleveland’s *A Long Way to Go: Conversations about Race by African American Faculty and Graduate Students* (2004), is that I use narrative research with Black Feminist Theory in order to carefully examine case studies. Through the lens of Black Feminist Thought, I analyze the trends that persistently plague African American scholars across the disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, and science: isolation, lack of mentoring, heavy administrative responsibilities, obstacles to retention and tenure, and suspicion about scholarship; other studies are discipline specific or gender specific. Gregory (1995) conducted a gender-specific, quantitative study analyzing factors such as salary, tenure status, marital status, number of dependents, discrimination, and support systems that contribute to women leaving or remaining in the academy (1995, p. 1, 29). She includes little qualitative data, unlike Jones whose work is an anthology of fourteen qualitative chapters by African American scholars about topics related to confronting the culture of higher education with one chapter full of quantitative data. Most of Jones’ (2002) contributors, like Cleveland’s (2004), have Ph.D.s or Ed.D.s in education or psychology, so their experiences are discipline specific. In fact, 25 of Cleveland’s 31 contributors to his anthology have Ph.Ds in Education or Ed.Ds. Turner and Myers (2000) offer thorough qualitative and quantitative

research, as well as historical and legal background, but they address all faculty of color, across disciplines. In addition, they include Asian Americans and Asians as faculty of color, and they have been traditionally over-represented among faculty of color, are not as often subject to the same type of institutional racism as that of African American, Native American, and Latino Americans. In this way, they define faculty of color broadly, and conflate under-represented minorities with the very different category of historically under-represented minorities.

Purpose and Contribution of this Study

African American educators are “other” in the academy and their perspectives yield valuable insights about the ways in which their otherness is constructed. Even though white administrators may advocate for racial diversity within their department, their efforts and their intentions are often ineffective or flawed. Indeed, because increasing the ranks of African American faculty is tied to the future educational success of African American students, African American faculty and administrators of all ethnic backgrounds need to know how more African American faculty can be recruited and retained, mentored and coached to deal with the stresses, racial discrimination, emotional tax, and psychic toll that junior faculty often experience. In the narratives presented in this monograph, African American faculty conceptualize their role in the academy, what legacy they wish to leave, and suggestions they have for junior faculty to prosper within the tenure structure. My interview questions broadly addressed two areas: experiences and tactics; more specifically, I asked faculty about their experiences of isolation, committee responsibilities and other burdens, retention, tenure, and promotion, and suspicion about their scholarship. Then, I

asked about the tactics and responses that they adopted at their predominantly white universities in relation to their credos, mentoring, and legacy.

Finally, it is critical that the views and perspectives of African American faculty inform the efforts of policy makers. Indeed, much of the contemporary literature from federal clearinghouses such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) are neutral reports that address the supply of African American faculty and institutional barriers for them, but include few case studies (only Antioch College in Washington and Harvey, 1989). For example, in their report *Affirmative Rhetoric, Negative Action*, Valora Washington and William Harvey conclude that “a succession of exclusions inherent in all decisions about the hiring and promotion of African-American and Hispanic faculty, works against minorities at every stage in the process” (1989, p. 81). Their recommendations are rather bland and vague, and rather than suggesting strong, vocal, aggressive measures, they merely endorse “proactive advocacy” and “stronger, race-conscious government and institutional action” (p. 81). Consequently, hiring bodies must be made aware of the challenges that hired African Americans endure.

Concerns of African American Faculty

Bittersweet Success, the subtitle of Turner and Myers’s work *Faculty of Color in Academe*, characterizes the experiences of many faculty of color, according to authors Caroline Turner and Samuel Myers who cite seven major concerns: 1) “denial of tenure and promotion due to race/ethnicity; 2) being expected to work harder than whites; 3) having color/ ethnicity given more attention than credentials; 4) being treated as a token; 5) lack of support or validation or research on minority issues; 6) being expected to handle minority

affairs; 7) having too few minorities on campus” (2000, p. 86). The prologue of this dissertation was a case study of racial discrimination that resulted in tenure denial for Professor Sidney. The fifteen subsequent other narratives underscore the ways in which Professor Sidney’s experience is not unique and demonstrate how African American faculty navigate or wreck on the shoals of institutional racism. African American faculty want to be treated equally and respectfully by their colleagues and afforded the same benefits that close colleague relationships offer their white peers, such as opportunities for collaborative publishing, nomination for powerful university-wide committees or national professional organizations, opportunities to be awarded research leaves and institutional grants, the ability to participate in faculty hiring committees, including recruiting minority faculty, and nomination for prestigious university teaching awards, all of which help in the tenure process.

This dissertation, then, tells the stories of sixteen African American faculty and their experiences teaching at predominantly white universities. Specifically, it explores their positive and negative interactions with their colleagues, challenges to their scholarship, responses to heavy administrative responsibilities, teaching experiences, and tactics for dealing with institutional racism. Like Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, these faculty often spend most of their time either silent or “on the lower frequencies” (1947, p. 503) and so their voices shed light on the perspectives of historically under-represented professors. They are narratives or stories that challenge the dominant accounts of how racism affects the lives of people of color. This monograph should prove useful to academic administrators who genuinely wish to recruit minority faculty and welcome them into the academy and to minority faculty for whom the primary dictum still remains: “Protect Thyself.”

In chapters two through four, I offer my literature review, my theoretical framework, and methodology. In chapters five through seven, I offer my findings about the humanities, social science, and science faculty, and how the disciplines differ in the way scholars in each understand how institutional racism operates. I have used Black Feminist Thought to theorize the way in which the professors thought about their position within the academy as marginalized outsiders within and how that perspective enables them to respond to oppression when they encounter it. In the conclusion, chapter eight, I synthesize my understanding of how the theory informed the narratives, how the narratives made my understanding of the theory more nuanced, and what some possible remedies might be to have greater retention, wider valuing, and more significant appreciation for the unique contributions of African American professors in predominantly white universities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The absence of the voices of African American professors signals a significant gap in the literature on faculty experiences. Thus, while this study was born out of my own interests, the need is apparent as evidenced by the lack of research about African American faculty, despite mandates across the country to increase minority hiring. Here, I offer a review of three related areas of literature: first, the historical perspective on racism in the university, second, the shortage of African American professors, and third, the struggles of African American faculty within a predominantly white university. This review establishes a conceptual framework for this study as well as explains the forces which gave rise to it.

This study takes as its point of departure a belief that race is a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon (Winant, 1994), and that despite the fact that most whites believe that the most destructive consequences of racism no longer exist, racial discrimination entails very real consequences for people of color. Often forced to negotiate even the most mundane daily encounters upon socially constructed notions of how they are perceived in our culture (Obidah, 2000), African Americans often find themselves marginalized and subordinated. For faculty of color who contend with the commonplace manifestations of racism at their universities, what Delgado (2001) refers to as micro-aggressions, the subtle as well as overt ramifications of race, reveal themselves through a myriad of inequities that prevent faculty from obtaining the rights and respect automatically granted to most majority^{xiv} faculty. If they are fortunate, they may find mentors among the few other professors of color in their

department, who can sympathize with being a minority in the ivory tower, or they may find advocates among supportive white peers. Consequently, because they often experience institutional micro-aggressions, they can help students of color deal with the racial, cultural and linguistic barriers in the academy. Henry Frierson (1990) in “The Situation of Black Educational Researchers” summarizes examples of discrimination that African American faculty face:

Customarily excluding black researchers from collaborating on potentially rewarding projects because of the unstated rationale that they would be unable to make worthwhile contributions. . . ; withholding from new black faculty support and assistance that would be normally provided for any new faculty member, because of possible perceptions that the person is not really qualified . . . ; unfavorable tenure and promotion decisions based on the person’s failure to meet prescribed criteria but more rooted in racial prejudice and discrimination; and smaller merit increases in salary that are often based on racial prejudice. (pp. 13-14)

While a growing body of literature attests to the benefits of faculty of color for minority and white students, the number of African American professors in America’s colleges remains remarkably small, at 5. 2% (Frierson, 1990; Dept. of Ed., 1998, William & Harvey, 2005). Thus, because a dramatic increase is unlikely to occur before baby boomer generation faculty retire, it is vital that the current crop of faculty be retained, more strategies should be enacted to help African American doctoral candidates complete their programs, and more new Ph.D.s should seek post-doctoral appointments and research opportunities. These common-sense suggestions echo those that Frierson recommends at the end of his article. Here, I argue that these struggles are a product of discrimination within the academy, which is often self-congratulatory in its attempts to cultivate a diverse faculty and to promote an external image of tolerance, affirmative action, egalitarianism, and meritocracy. But, in order to understand how the academy might foster a more welcoming climate for African American professors in the future, the past research about the experiences of African

American professors must be reviewed, so that current disparate treatment can be fully contextualized.

Historical Perspectives on Racism at the University

Rooted in America's historical legacy of enslavement, racism is ingrained in America's institutions, and it shapes our legal system, which has been the site of many tenure battles, as well as legal precedents for Affirmative Action, yet faculty have not found shelter in the laws that forced segregation of K-12 schools. For example, in *Affirmative Action, Negative Rhetoric*, the authors note that as of 1989, "Under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 11 African American faculty members have sued for problems related to alleged tenure discrimination; none has been successful" (Washington & Harvey, 1989, p. 65). In our K-12 educational system, the educational experiences of students of color are defined by unequal access to advanced placement and gifted programs, re-segregated schools, lower financed schools, higher dropout and suspension rates, and differential access to college admissions, so it should not surprise higher education policy analysts that these same inequalities have their correlations among faculty.

For example, forms of racism such as name-calling, harassment, interpersonal conflict, stereotyping and assumed understandings, which are present in K-12 settings, are mirrored in university settings; just as in schools, professors and administrators, use race or ethnicity as a starting point when they analyze the behavior of people of color (Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000). These methods lead to misunderstanding and, instead of demystifying relationships between colleagues, identifying racist practices often leads to inaction (Henze, Katz, & Norte, 2000).

Two early pieces that must be included but which do not include much qualitative or quantitative research are Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967) and Cornel West's article "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual" (1985). While Cruse's book is mostly a historical account of how intellectuals thrived, then, became scarce in Harlem between 1925 and 1965, West offers suggestions for how marginalized intellectuals can remain committed to social justice causes. His account is really a philosophical treatise and sociological examination of the role of African American intellectuals, rather than a study of them.

In one of the earliest pieces of research located, Anderson, Frierson and Lewis' (1979) used a survey to investigate what they refer to as "survival in a hostile environment." They describe environments where "university and college staffs and faculties remains disproportionately low" and "blacks generally occupy the lower ranks of academe, are untenured and wield relatively little power when placed in administrative positions" (1979, p. 92). These authors addressed four obstacles which block "upward mobility in white academe": 1) cultural differences, 2) lack of support for areas of interest to African American academics, 3) lack of collaboration for publication with white academics, and 4) white prejudice and discrimination (1979, p. 93). They concluded that African American academics need more community support, more clear information about what is required for tenure; likewise, conferences and seminars for majority faculty on sensitivity and tolerance are needed.

Psychologist Richard Scott (1981) investigated the bias in tenure criteria and the supposed lack of productivity as a main reason for denial of tenure and promotion of African American faculty. The study examined the relationship between interpersonal contact (with

African American and white colleagues) and African American faculty productivity by sending questionnaires to all predominantly white colleges in the northeast within a 50 mile radius of a major city with at least 2000 students, which yielded 103 schools. Scott had a “response rate of 70% [and] yielded 386 completed questionnaires” (p. 227). He examined the possibility that African American faculty products could “be judged as inferior merely because they were produced by blacks” or because “they address issues or use methods that are deemed trivial or ‘non-traditional’ by white review committees” (p. 225). He also considered the impact on productivity when African American faculty spend time serving the institution’s African American community, such as counseling African American students, which is “seldom considered productive for the purposes of promotion or tenure” (p. 225). The main survey measurement asked faculty to define their productivity, evaluate their contact with white and African American faculty as informal, formal, professional, or hostile, and listed their academic title; it also measured sex, age, marital status, and school rank according to the Carnegie ranking. His conclusions are mixed and vary across academic rank, but he points to the “limitations of affirmative action and the need to seek a more effective remedy” (p. 236)

Another early piece, “Afro-American Scholars in the University,” (1984) approached the topic of differing roles and expectations for African American scholars, primarily because of a conflict rationale for their hiring in the academy. According to William Banks, a behavioral scientist, the motive stemmed from a desire on the part of white administrators to calm African American student 1970s’ militancy and to demonstrate to students that the university was concerned about the historic absence of African American faculty. He addresses the differences in standards and expectations that African American faculty have

when confronted with the academic performance of African American students, when they must confront the stigma of affirmative action, and when they face the burden of symbolism, that “talented blacks have a special responsibility to be exemplars” (p. 335). Even though he asserts that the African American thinkers believe that “the intellectual community is inhospitable and indifferent to them,” he concedes that white scholars reject this view. Citing narrative interviews that he conducted, Banks claims that conflicting role expectations and social isolation take “a heavy toll” on African American intellectuals and white scholars, whose first obligation is to their discipline, often “look askance at scholars who seem to be saddled with odd concerns about race, sex, and power” (p. 337). I thought it noteworthy that a behavioral scientist would examine these issues, but his clout as a U.C. Berkeley professor surely affected the publication of his work. Early in the article, he articulates the two main positions about shortages of African American faculty: few with required credentials for hiring at universities, known as the ‘pipeline’ defense, and general discrimination in hiring.

The Shortage of African American Professors

In 1975, African American faculty comprised 4.4% of the full-time American professoriate – a respectable number considering African Americans made up 11.1% of the American population (Washington & Harvey, 1989, p. 19). However, a decade later in 1985, they had dropped to 4.1 %, while rising to 11.7 % of the population (Washington & Harvey, 1989, pp. 18-19). Since that time, reports showing the small number of African American teachers in the professoriate have been scant in the literature. What is often noted in the literature is that over the last three decades, the percentage of African American faculty has remained steady at 4.8% (*African Americans in Faculty*, 1998).

To complicate matters further, rather than witnessing an increase in their numbers, the new millennium is likely to witness a decline to less than 4%, especially when one considers the fact that most African American faculty are employed at historically black colleges (*African Americans in Faculty*, 1998; Smith, Altbach, & Lomotey, 2002; Washington & Harvey, 1989). More recent accounts based on 2002 data from the Department of Education (DOE), National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), and Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) indicate that African Americans earned 5.1% of doctoral degrees in the 2001-02 year and comprised 5.2% of full time faculty in higher education (Harvey & Anderson, 2005, p. 90-91). In terms of fields of study, according to the federal report *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities, Summary Report 2005*, African Americans earned 39% of their degrees in education, 17.5% in social sciences, 16% in life sciences, 10% in the humanities, 5% in engineering, and 5% in physical sciences (Hoffer et al., 2006, Table 9, p. 51). In comparison, whites earned 19% of their degrees in education, 18% in social sciences, 22% in life sciences, 15% in the humanities, 7% in engineering, and 12% in physical sciences (Hoffer et al., 2006, Table 9, p. 51).

Recognizing the need for diversity in the professoriate, ERIC and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), higher education researchers, policymakers, administrators, and organizations such as the American Council of Education have conducted research and produced reports about the decline of African American professors (Washington & Harvey, 1989; Feagin, 2002; Moses, 1989). For example, the Association of American Colleges commissioned a study by Yolanda Moses, then an anthropology professor, who wrote *Black Women in Academe: Issues and Strategies* (1989). She concluded her report with twenty general policy recommendations which included: 1) regularly collect “anecdotal and

statistical data by race, sex, and age covering such areas as salary, benefits, promotions, perquisites, awards, grants, course loads, advising loads, [and] committee assignments,” 2) “provide ongoing consciousness-raising programs on minority and women’s issues for all university personnel,” 3) ensure “black women faculty members and administrators are included on recruitment teams,” and 4) “foster mentoring opportunities for black women students and professionals . . . such as released time or extra research money for those willing to be mentors” (Moses, 1989, pp. 22-23). Noticeably, Moses suggested child care, flexible tenure time frames, curricular changes that integrate diverse cultural perspectives, workshops designed to combat harassment, establishing visiting professorships, initiating conferences, and setting timetables to increase the representation of African American women in undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as in junior faculty positions (1989, pp. 22-3). Despite the high profile nature of this report, and the comprehensive range of Moses’ recommendations, many of which would have been relatively inexpensive to implement, the national statistics indicate that the percentage of African American faculty employed full time has not increased significantly over the last fifteen years. According the Digest of Educational Statistics, in 1991, African American faculty were 4.7% of the professoriate, 4.8% in 1995, 4.9% in 1999, and 5.1% in 2005 (NCES, Table 218, 231, 228, 232).

Even though their numbers may be few, overall, minority teachers understand nuanced exchanges in the hallway, subtle slights to one’s credentials, and attempts to undermine a scholar’s confidence. Usually, they are more aware of the covert and overt manifestations of racism and are more willing to address them. Finally, African American faculty may be more culturally sensitive to undergraduates than white faculty because they may understand the need for religion, the pressures of being one of few family members with a college education, the

difficulties that arise from speaking and writing non-standard English, and social isolation. (Foster, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Thus, increasing faculty diversity is vital to a university's mission, as professors are an important factor in students' academic and personal lives. Yet, despite the benefits of the presence of teachers of color to both students of color and white students, it is difficult to recruit and retain minority candidates. Much of the literature about the shortage of African American faculty notes that opportunities in other more lucrative professions, extensive educational debt, and perceived institutional racism are among some of the reasons that African Americans do not remain in the academy (Cleveland 2004; Frierson, 1990; Gregory, 1995; Moses, 1989; Anderson, et. al., 1993).

For some white administrators, acknowledging that racism still actually exists is itself, a challenge (Gititi, 2002). Due in part to the way in which many white people define "racism" in contemporary America as the random, isolated, often violent acts of "racist individuals," few understand it as endemic to America, operating on institutional and societal levels, as well as through individuals (Crenshaw, 1995). Often unaware of subtle forms of discrimination, white administrators are influenced by their personal ways of knowing that may be different from those of African American faculty. Consequently, stereotypical beliefs about African American faculty can proliferate. The inability of many white faculty to recognize their own racial privilege within a framework of widespread and systemic racism, often causes them to diminish research or dismiss publications that address topics related to race or ethnicity.

"Why the Shortage of Black Professors?" (1993) featured eleven African American and white academics speculating about why such a shortage persists. These writers

commented directly about 1) why so few African Americans choose to pursue careers in higher education, 2) if affirmative action programs are working, 3) to what extent African American professors are subject to discrimination in hiring and promotion, 4) if tenure decisions are controlled by those who feel African Americans do not have the capacity to do serious research in traditional academic subjects, and 5) how to remedy this inequitable situation (1993). Some of the theories include: the “slack enforcement” of affirmative action and hiring policies that promote diversity” (p. 25), the demand for well-educated African Americans in the non-academic labor market, the fact that careers in academia for undergraduates are not encouraged by the media or parents, or that what is deemed suitable for academic inquiry and “knowledge has a historically white cast” (1993, p. 32). Amitai Etzioni criticizes the remedies that have been employed so far to establish an equal playing field for African American academics and he claims that required institutional changes must match the scope, duration, and intensity of the institution of enslavement that initially established the inequality (1993, p. 28). Johnetta Cole formulates a harsh critique of the Ph.D. program itself, which requires students to devote between seven to fifteen years, in addition to years of reduced earning capacity and financial debt, to run “the academic gauntlet of tenure review” (1993, p. 31).

In his article “A Stranger in the Village: A Black Professor at a White College,” Phillip Richards (1998) speculates because society reproduces itself, the schools with few African American professors teach by example and further reinforce the “black marginality in the upper class world” (p.90). He thinks that predominantly white universities, such as the one in which he teaches, preach a “gospel of homogeneity” even though the official message is one of diversity and inclusion (1998, p. 90). As he concludes his analysis, he maintains that

most elite and predominantly white schools exhibit “a polite apartheid, a genteel separation between blacks and whites on the grounds of black deficiencies. This segregation not only explains, but also justifies, patterns of African-American student withdrawal, [or] cathartic militancy” (1998, p.92).

Writing for the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Theodore Cross (1998) addresses what is referred to as the “pipeline defense” and responds to the fact that there has been almost no progress in hiring African Americans to the faculties of the highest-ranking colleges and universities. Proponents of this line of reasoning cite the “few number of African Americans earning Ph.D.s and seeking jobs in academics as the reason why it is so difficult to find qualified candidates for teaching posts “ (1998, p. 115). Cross concludes that although the pipeline defense should not be dismissed entirely, it is the “racial customs of the past, often alive and well today in faculty selections at our most famous educational institutions, that present the most formidable barrier to racial progress” (1998, p. 115).

The Struggles of African American Scholars at Predominantly White Universities

The ‘pedagogy of the personal’ (my phrase) is powerful and the university functions as an institution which reinforces who “smart” is and what “smart” looks like in our culture. Five major studies set the stage for how I understood the struggles of African American faculty before I collected my data. They are: Lois Benjamin’s edited collection of essays, *Black Women in the Academy: Promises and Perils* (1997), Darrell Cleveland’s edited collection of essays by various researchers, *A Long Way to Go: Conversations about Race by African American Faculty and Graduate Students* (2004), Sheila Gregory’s qualitative and quantitative research, *Black Women in the Academy: The Secrets to Success and Achievement* (1995), Lee Jones’ edited collection of essays by various scholars, *Making it on Broken*

Promises: Leading African American male Scholars Confront the Culture of Higher Education (2002), and Caroline Turner and Samuel Myers' *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success* (2000). As I stated before, all of these collections were extremely useful in learning about the narrative of individual professors, but they either focused on gender specific issues or discipline specific issues. Responding to the struggles of minority women professors, Linda Tillman (2001) addresses the issue of mentoring African American faculty who teach at predominantly white universities as a means of facilitating professional growth. She analyzes assigned mentoring relationships as well as the social isolation of African American faculty. One of the distinctive features of her study of same race and mixed race mentor-protégé relationships was the definite perceived advantage on the part of the protégé for a same race mentor, regardless of gender.

In *The Politics of Survival in Academe* (2002), editors Jacobs, Cintrón, and Canton introduce their work in this way:

This volume represents an unadulterated firsthand account of the lives that many faculty of color experience in American academia. . . . It is important that these narratives be known to other academics of color as well as nonminority faculty . . . Prejudice, racism, and inequity not only dehumanize the victims but also the oppressors. In the long run these structural injustices jeopardize substantially the intellectual value of academic endeavors . . . Ultimately, and perhaps most importantly, systemic racist practices undermine the richness of an open, humane, and fair academy. (p. xxiii)

When an African American professor is hired or recruited by a university, he or she is often savvy enough know that the department may not actually wish to retain and promote him or her, despite university mandates to actively cultivate diversity. Admittedly, while many applaud and celebrate the increase in the number of African American faculty at national universities over the past thirty years, skeptics consider the nature of their work conditions and how they have been treated or mistreated. Feagin (2002) considers that faculty

of color endure questions about their abilities, training, and intelligence and that racial barriers on campus often take a heavy toll on faculty members. Accordingly, one of his interviewees comments eloquently about the energy costs of his lifetime struggle with racism:

If you think of the mind as having 100 ergs of energy, and the average man uses 50% of his energy dealing with the everyday problems of the world . . . then he has 50% more to do creative kinds of things that he wants to do. Now, that's a white person. Now, a black person also has 100 ergs. He uses 50% the way a white man does, dealing with what the white man has [to deal with], so he has 50% left. But he uses 25% fighting being black, [with] all the problems of being black and what it means. (2002, p. 23)

Similarly, Feagin adds that huge psychological, physical, and financial costs are associated with racism, and another of his interviewee's stresses that the wasted time, "could be spent in doing research, writing grants, publishing articles, mentoring other students, serving on college committees, [and] serving local communities" (Feagin, 2002, p. 24).

With varied success, African American faculty struggle to find effective ways to retain and promote themselves within the collegiate hierarchy and to effectively address the inequities faced by faculty of color. At the heart of these troubles is the disjuncture that exists between the largely white colleagues, administrators, and students with whom African American faculty work, some of whom resist acknowledging the systemic racism. While the negative consequences of this phenomenon for faculty of color is evident, its depth, its complexity as related to discriminatory hiring practices, and its manifestations in the classroom, continues to be difficult for tenure evaluators to grasp. To a great extent, the contemporary racism persists because of the under-representation of African American faculty who teach at predominantly white universities so that, majority faculty remain ignorant about the unique challenges that African American faculty face.

While Moses and Frierson offer both individual and institutional remedies for increasing faculty productivity, social acceptance, retention, mentoring, and scholarly output, Thompson and Louque in their work, *Exposing the “Culture of Arrogance” in the Academy: A Blueprint for Increasing Black Faculty Satisfaction in Higher Education* (2005), signal a sea change in the discourse around retention, not questioning whether African Americans are able to remain in the academy, but how to increase their satisfaction within it. This rhetorical position and starting point for their study is based on a self-selected, purposive sample of 136 faculty who teach at predominantly white universities. Emerging fifteen years after Moses and Frierson, their study points to the fact that some of the remedies suggested in 1990 have yet to be fully implemented across the board, nationally, but progress albeit slow, is being made. Thompson and Louque make pertinent recommendations to improve the campus climate with greater recruitment and diversity training for all constituents, increasing support for African American faculty especially through mentoring and more equitable pay, making the tenure process more transparent, and reducing teaching load and committee workload (2005, p. 159). They emphasize the value of explaining how the unwritten rules of the academy can disproportionally affect African Americans by demystifying some of those hidden procedures. In addition, Thompson and Louque show how important feeling respected and supported is to faculty, outlining how campus leaders can do it better. Their work speaks to the value and power of sharing counter-narratives.

In the next chapter, I explain the theoretical model I used to analyze the narratives of my participants. Although the social construction of race is a key underlying conceptual assumption of this study, Black Feminist Thought and Outsider Within Standpoint Theory

were the frameworks around which I understood the distinctions that emerged between humanities, social science, and science professors whom I interviewed.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Three primary theoretical constructs inform this study— the theory of race as a social construction, Outsider Within standpoint theory, and Patricia Hill Collins’ Black Feminist Thought. The social construction of race is a perspective that explains the way in which race remains an intimate part of institutional and personal relationships because of the way people are socialized in their homes, churches, schools, courthouses, and neighborhoods. Any daily experience such as listening to a particular radio station targeted for a certain demographic group, watching local television news, or reading the crime reports in the newspaper are examples of how, “we are compelled to think racially, [and] to use the racial categories and meaning systems into which we have been socialized” (Winant, 1994, p. 2). The outsider within stance explains the double perspective of outsiders, who can be accorded insider status and intimacy, if they achieve a level of trust, and insiders reserve the right to grant or rescind trust. The opportunity to observe both environments often results in a multi-layered understanding of each. However, the knowledge that the outsider gains does not afford him the same opportunities as that of the insider. Du Bois is particularly useful in this regard: “The Negro is . . . gifted with a second sight in this American world- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness. . . It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (1903/1999, p. 214).

Hill Collins, in one of her first major treatises about Black Feminist Thought, divided her theory into three themes that informed the way I interpreted my interview data; she

presents them in this order: the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation, the importance of African American women's culture, and the interlocking nature of oppression. When she expanded her treatise into her first major volume, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (1991), she articulated seven "core themes" of Black Feminist Thought, and these are more specific than the three comprehensive themes. Yet, these seven themes, which include work, controlling images such as Mammies, motherhood, activism, and sexual politics, were less immediately pertinent to the issues around which this dissertation revolves. The three theories that inform this study will be explored briefly.

Social Construction of Race

In *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory and Comparisons* (1994), Howard Winant asks why "is race such an important source of meaning, identity, (dis) advantage, power, and powerlessness?" (p. 2). He further argues that "race remains a fundamental organizing principle, a way of knowing and interpreting the social world" (1994, p.2). Of course, narrow definitions of race, based upon perceived phenotype rather than genotype, or upon skin color as a social status symbol, are seriously flawed because discrete racial identities do not really exist. It is reductive to understand race as a category of making meaning about a person's identity based on his or her skin color or perceived race. In fact, because of the increased number of people of mixed ethnicity, racial categories for census figures, for public perception, and for self-identification are blurring more and more. Because race is a highly complex organizing principle, my project is a modest attempt to explore the terrain where "culture meets structure" (p. 22) in the hierarchical world of academe, where the presence of African American professors disturbs and upsets conventions. I posit that race is a socially

and historically constructed attribute, and knowledge is constructed in the ivory tower, such that chairs and department heads see African American professors as problematic. Their existence as wielders of influence in institutions that reproduce status, threatens “common sense” notions that are passed to impressionable undergraduates.

Similarly, African American professors represent a departure from the domination of whiteness among the professoriate and are therefore threatening. For those who hold fast to historical traditions of “common sense” as an orienting theory (Belsey, 2002, p. 3), African American people do not belong in the academy, because they have not been there in the past, and they could disrupt the hegemonic control of college as an ideological institution. Under “common sense” paradigms, Catherine Belsey notes that “what seems obvious and natural is not necessarily so but that, on the contrary, the ‘obvious’ and the ‘natural’ are not given but produced in a specific society” (2002, p. 3). She attributes this notion to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who proposed that “common sense itself is ideologically and discursively constructed, rooted in a specific historical situation” (p. 3).

Winant elicits further inquiry as he offers two views, which do not fully capture the complexity of societal racism: race as an ideological construct or race as an objective condition. He offers an alternative, a critical theory of the concept of race and describes the limitations of the racial formation context which is “an effort to organize and distribute resources along particular racial lines” (1994, p. 24). Per Belsey, then, the academy forges “common sense” doctrines and creates an expectation for undergraduate and graduate students, about what race a professor should be. This expectation or hidden curriculum results in students expecting a professor to be white and male, which perpetuates a sense that the academy should keep its ranks relatively free of African American faculty. The

predominance of white professors reinforces myths about the academic aptitude of African American students simply because so few African American professors exist. Hill Collins (1998) can be instructive here in clarifying the way in which elites codify knowledge, especially in universities:

It is not that elites produce theory while everyone else produces mere thought. Rather, elites possess the power to legitimate the knowledge that they define as theory as being universal, normative, and ideal. Legitimated theory typically delivers tangible social rewards to those who possess it. Elites simultaneously derogate the social theory of less powerful groups who may express contrary standpoints on the same social issues by labeling subordinate groups' social theory as being folk wisdom, raw experience, or common sense. (1998, p. xiii)

The scarcity, then, of African American professors creates suspicion that they do not belong, and heightens the idea that they are unconventional anomalies. Now, I reflect upon and deeply consider the theoretical significance of the stranger as a useful idea to conceptualize the outsider within standpoint, or perspective.

Outsiders Within: "The Stranger" and Standpoint Theory

The notion of outsiders within originates with Georg Simmel who describes the sociological significance of the "stranger" who has greater objectivity to observe data and people based on his perspective, yet he also acknowledges the stranger is regarded with both a "concern and indifference" by the main "group" in whose society the stranger resides (1921/1969, p. 324). In addition, Simmel explains: "Because he is not rooted in the particular attitudes and biased tendencies of the group, he stands apart from all these with the peculiar attitude of the objective, which does not indicate simply a separation and disinterestedness but is a peculiar composition of nearness and remoteness" (1921/1969, p. 324). Simmel further offers the ways in which the "stranger" is free from conventions that limit and restrain those in the group: "he is the freer man, practically and theoretically; he examines relations

with less prejudice; he submits them to more general, more objective, standards, and is not confined in his actions by custom, piety, or precedents” (1921/1969, pp. 324-25). The “stranger” as a paradigm for the African American professor suggests a striking similarity of perspective and Simmel concludes his brief chapter by expanding upon the complexity of the stranger’s position, which calls forth Du Bois’ notion of double-consciousness:

He [the stranger] is not a member of the group itself. As such he is much more to be considered as near and far at the same moment, seeing that the foundation of the relation is now laid simply on a general human similarity. Between these two elements there occurs, however, a peculiar tension, since the consciousness of having only the absolutely general in common has exactly the effect of bringing into particular emphasis that which is not common. (1921/1969, p. 327)

This sociological paradigm addresses the “peculiar” position of the African American professor and other thinkers have described it as either a “crisis” or a “dilemma.”

Harold Cruse in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967) explains how Du Bois’ notion of double consciousness translates to the intellectual landscape:

The peculiarities of the American social structure, and the position of the intellectual class within it, make the functional role of the negro intellectual a special one. The negro intellectual must deal intimately with the white power structure and cultural apparatus, and the inner realities of the black world at one and the same time. . . . Therefore the functional role of the negro intellectual demands that he *cannot* be absolutely separated from either the black or the white world. (emphasis Cruse’s, pp. 451-52)

Here, Cruse captures the peculiar position that African American faculty still find themselves in forty years after Cruse’s conclusion that mirror Du Bois’ remarks from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903/1999). Following Cruse, Cornel West, in his essay “The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual,” (1985) posits that:

The contemporary black intellectual faces a grim predicament. Caught between an insolent American society and insouciant black community, the Afro-American who takes seriously the life of the mind inhabits an isolated and insulated world . . . the choice of becoming a black intellectual is an act of self-imposed marginality; it assures a peripheral status in and to the black community. (pp. 109-110)

It should be pointed out that both West and Cruse are African American, and they each use language such as “crisis,” “cannot be absolutely separated from either the black or white world,” “dilemma,” “caught between,” “marginality,” and “peripheral,” that confirms the idea of the African American academician as neither insiders nor outsiders.

In *Black Feminist Thought* (1991), Collins explains that this outsider insider relationship was “satisfying” to Black domestic workers who “stress[ed] the sense of self-affirmation . . . at seeing white power demystified. But on another level these Black women knew that they could never belong to their white ‘families.’ . . . The result was a curious outsider-within stance, a peculiar marginality that stimulated a special Black women's perspective” (1991, p. 11). Like domestic workers, black intellectual workers both benefit from and suffer from their outsider status in the academy. Their specialness has an elevating as well as a diminishing effect in the academy. At the turn of the century, however, black women intellectuals were perceived as especially threatening. Comparing three areas of inquiry where Black women might “fit nicely” such as mainstream academic discourse, feminist thought, and black social and political thought, Hill Collins elucidates this paradoxical position: “Prevented from becoming full insiders in any of these areas of inquiry, black women remain outsiders within, individuals whose marginality provides a distinctive angle of vision on the theories put forth by such intellectual communities” (1991, p. 12). Hill Collins maintains that this outsider within standpoint is “essential to Black women’s activism” (1991, p. 12) because this perspective frames the way they perceive the locus of any kind of oppression that a group or individual faces, and thus, it helps shape how African American women can advocate for any subjugated group or mobilize a course of action that will liberate them.

Hill Collins' theory of the outsider within is particularly relevant in terms of this study and the way in which African American faculty see themselves and are seen by their white colleagues. She asserts:

While the economic, political, and ideological dimensions of Black women's oppression lead directly to the suppression of the Black feminist tradition, these same conditions simultaneously foster the continuation of Afrocentric culture. The exclusion of Black women's ideas from mainstream academic discourse and the curious placement of African-American women intellectuals in both feminist and Black social and political thought has meant that the Black women intellectuals have remained outsiders within all three communities. (1990, pp. 12)

This "special standpoint" (1986, p. 14) that she addresses was especially noticeable for those faculty whose disciplines assured a certain self-reflexive perspective that permeated their academic work. Hill Collins claims that "Black intellectuals, especially those in touch with their marginality in academic settings, tap this standpoint in producing distinctive analyses of race, class, and gender." (1986, pp. 14-15). She refers to the work of sociologists such as Karl Mannheim who labeled "strangers" in academia "marginal intellectuals" and argues that their critical posture is essential for the creative development of academic disciplines (1986, p. 15). For example, she claims that "marginality has been an excitement to creativity" and that bringing this group into the "center of analysis may reveal aspects of reality obscured by more orthodox approaches" (1986, p. 15). I believe this to be relevant for African American faculty, whose creative expression can often add an unorthodox approach to their particular discipline. But, their approaches only seem "unorthodox" because, as Hill Collins later theorizes, mainstream academic work is rooted in what she refers to as "Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation" which understands new knowledge claims as "anomalies" (1991, p. 203).

The special standpoint of the outsider within enables black faculty to see white power demystified and to see the advantages of racism for white Americans. They use their standpoint to transcend limitations in bureaucracy and to understand both their marginal status and their insider status. As outsiders within, Black women have a distinct view of the contradictions between the dominant group's actions and ideologies (p. 11-13). Black women's ideas have been excluded from 1) mainstream academic discourses; 2) feminist discourses; and 3) black social and political thought. There are assumptions of whiteness for feminist thought, maleness for black social and political thought, and both for mainstream scholarship. As outsiders within, black women's marginality has proven to be a distinctive angle.

Hill Collins comments on the benefits of holding such a peculiar position: "Rather than rejecting our marginality, Black women intellectuals can use our outsider within stance as a position of strength in building effective coalitions and stimulating dialogue" (1991, p. 36). Black women intellectuals use their outsider within stance as a position of strength to both build coalitions and to stimulate dialogue. They are "others:" they never fully belong, yet they are essential for survival because those who stand at the margins clarify boundaries for insiders and emphasize the significance of belonging (1991, p. 68). This perspective of double awareness certainly benefited the social science faculty, mirroring W.E. B. Du Bois' double consciousness.

Black Feminist Thought advances the power of black women's voices and Hill Collins emphasizes women's empowerment as the primary tool for social justice, which is emphasized in the second edition of her volume. She insists that those who practice Black feminist thought should be "listening and speaking freely with each other, in music and as

writers . . . But, paradoxically, being treated as an invisible Other gives Black women a peculiar angle of vision, the outsider-within stance that has served so many African American women intellectuals as a source of tremendous strength” (1991, p. 94).

Hill Collins explains: “Black women make creative use of their outsider-within status and produce innovative Afrocentric feminist thought. They must confront the Eurocentric masculine political and epistemological requirements. The marginality of the outsider-within status creates creativity and frustration” (1991, p.233). To minimize their difference, they can, first, become two different people, which causes strain (in other words, “Be black on the weekends”). A second option is for them to reject their own cultural context and work against it by enforcing dominant group thought, which is what some scientists do. A third option is for outsiders within to critically “inhabit both contexts using their standpoint as a source of insight” (1991, pp. 232-33). Through this path, they become agents of change. All of these strategies have “substantial personal cost,” including, but not limited to “intense loneliness” (p. 233).

The outsider within standpoint as an interpretive lens highlights the advantages and misfortunes of African American culture. The possibilities for activism and scholarly advocacy exist within multiple structures of domination. For example, Black Feminist Thought expresses them as sisterhood, which I interpreted as solidarity as response to isolation in academy, motherhood, or mentoring in university setting, creative expression, which could be expressed as scholarly output in department, such as articles and books, and rational action, which can manifest as committee responsibilities in academy or a research legacy (1986, p. 22-23). At this stage of her development of Black Feminist Thought, she believed that these four modes of activism belonged strictly in the realm of African American

women's culture when later, she develops them into the basis of Black feminist epistemology, which I will discuss later.

Outsider allegiance interferes with choosing full insider status: they must remain outsiders within. Hill Collins, in fact, lays the groundwork for her chapter on epistemology by making sure her readers know in no uncertain terms who the power brokers are in institutions where knowledge is codified: "Because elite white men and their representatives control structures of knowledge validation, white male interests pervade the thematic content of traditional scholarship. As a result, Black women's experiences with work, family, motherhood, political activism, and sexual politics have been routinely distorted in or excluded from traditional academic discourse" (1991, p. 201). In other words, since white males dominate in the academy, African American women cope with, avoid, subvert, and challenge the workings of white male insider-ism. As outsiders within, African American faculty become different people and their difference sensitizes them to notice patterns, such as disparate treatment and institutional racism, that are difficult, if not impossible, for insiders to see.

Problematizing Black Feminist Thought as a Theory

The outsider within perspective or marginality standpoint offers a useful theoretical framework for the way in which black faculty see themselves in the academy, but it does have some flaws. First, Hill Collins reserves her theory for women only and the theme that she mentioned third, *The Importance of African American Women's Culture*, seems to exclude the possibility that men can be feminists. When she names the possibilities for activism that exist within the multiple structures of domination, which are sisterhood, motherhood, creative expression and rational action (1986, p. 23), she assumes an exclusivity

of perspective. In the 1991 and 2000 volumes, she stresses the value of building coalitions with white women, African American men, white men, and others in a dialogue with those who produce Black feminist thought, but she absolutely maintains that the actual construction of the theory must be African American women.

Other omissions in the theory that some might consider problematic include the view that some, but not all, black male or female professors, do not perceive themselves as outsiders. I would respond to this charge by retorting that whether they perceive themselves that way or not, many majority faculty and some students, perceive them as outsiders, so their self-definition and externally imposed definition do not agree.

In her 2000 version of *Black Feminist Thought*, Hill Collins explains the ways in which the term Afrocentrism has shifted from when she used it in 1991, and she uses it rarely, only after re-contextualizing it. She claims that despite acceptance of the term by many African Americans who used it to refer to Black consciousness and racial solidarity, “academics and media pundits maligned the term in the 1980s and 1990s. Similarly, the pejorative meanings increasingly attached to the term feminist seem designed to discredit a movement dedicated to women’s empowerment. Even the term Black fell victim to the deconstructive moment” (2000, p. 21-22).

She added significantly to the section about black women intellectuals and this contribution helped me understand how she conceptualized her role and possibly the role that she foresees for the scholars whom I interviewed. First, she claims black women intellectuals “provide a unique angle of vision concerning Black womanhood unavailable to other groups, should we choose to embrace it. It is more likely for Black women, as members of an oppressed group, to have critical insights into the condition of our oppression than it is

for those who live outside those structures” (2000, p. 35). Second, she explains that black women intellectuals are “less likely to walk away from Black women’s struggles when the obstacles seem overwhelming or when the rewards for staying diminish” (2000, p. 35). Third, since the academy has become easier to access over the past thirty years, Black women intellectuals come from all walks of life, and as such, they must “aggressively push the theme of self-definition because speaking for oneself and crafting one’s own agenda is essential to empowerment” (2000, p. 36). Fourth, black women intellectuals “are central in the production of Black feminist thought because we alone can foster the group autonomy that fosters effective coalitions with other groups” (2000, p. 36). For all these reasons, it is important to understand the vital role African American women have in shaping their own knowledge production.

In her 1991 version of *Black Feminist Thought*, Hill Collins enumerates four controlling images that have been persistent stereotypes of African American women. They are the mammy role, the matriarch role, the “welfare queen,” and the Jezebel or sexually voracious woman. But, in *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (1998), she describes another image that she refers to as the “Black Lady Overachiever” who is likened to a Claire Huxtable model from 1980s television show *The Cosby Show* (perhaps Condoleezza Rice would be a more contemporary example). In her 2000 version, she alters her description and refers to her as simply the “Black lady” and it is this image that is most relevant for my purposes here. Hill Collins asserts that this woman is middle class or affluent, well-educated, hard-working: “Claire certainly modeled a view of Blackness that White America found highly comforting. Never speaking in Black English, free of dreadlocks, braids and other indicators of nappy hair, Claire demonstrated her Blackness

largely through a love of jazz and Black art depicting an idealized southern Black experience” (1998, p. 39).

Hill Collins offers the example of aggressive African American women being perceived as threatening “because they challenge white patriarchal definitions of femininity” (1986, p. 18). Rather than merely resisting stereotypes that require that they be meek and docile, black feminist thought encourages women to “embrace their assertiveness, value their sassiness, and to continue to use these qualities to survive in and transcend the harsh environments that circumscribe so many black women’s lives” (1986, p. 18). What Hill Collins suggests is especially disturbing about the “Black lady” image is that she is a version of the modern mammy who works twice as hard as everyone else, but she also resembles the matriarch. She expresses it thusly, “black ladies have jobs that are so all-consuming that they have no time for men or have forgotten how to treat them. Because they so routinely compete with men and are successful at it, they become less feminine. Highly educated Black ladies are deemed to be *too* assertive- that’s why they cannot get men to marry them” (2000, p. 81). Relevant to the narratives of the women that I present here, Hill Collins points to the double bind that occurred within the political climate of the eighties and nineties in regard to the reinterpretation of anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action as “reverse racism” (see correlation to D’Souza, 1995), “no matter how highly educated or demonstrably competent Black ladies may be, their accomplishments remain questionable” (2000, p.81). Moreover, many Black men erroneously believe that Black ladies are taking jobs reserved for them” (2000, p. 81).

These images intersect with outsider within status to heighten a sense that African American faculty, especially women, will never find a perfectly comfortable fit in the

academy as long as it is dominated by majority professors who refuse to acknowledge the benefits of their (i.e. African American faculty) unique contributions to the academy. Hill Collins summarizes how difficult permeating that ideological divide can be when she concluded her 1986 treatise with this pronouncement: “As an extreme case of outsiders moving into a community that historically excluded them, Black women’s experiences highlight the tension experienced by any group of less powerful outsiders encountering the paradigmatic thought of a more powerful insider community” (p. 29). While some progress has been made toward greater acceptance of minority scholars, the narratives gleaned from interviews with my participants reflects just how entrenched institutional racism is because it is, to a great extent, dependent upon persistent and deeply held beliefs that African American men and women have over-stepped their boundaries by joining the academy.

Theoretical Justification for the Chapters

Black feminist thought is relevant to the disciplinary distinctions between the faculty as I grouped them. The narratives are evidence of a link between the discipline and black feminist thought, which is intimately related to the epistemology and research methods of each discipline. As stated before, the three themes of Black Feminist Thought are the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation, the interlocking nature of oppression, and the importance of African American women’s culture.

To investigate my developing ideas, I interviewed professors across the discipline spectrum. Rather than only focus on education, which has the highest concentration of African American faculty, I wanted to speak to humanities, social science, and science professors. Not wanting to de-contextualize these scholars from their disciplines, I formulated a theory that, based on their training, they understand the world through different

lenses. These different lenses affect how they respond to various pressures in the academy, enabling them to adopt stances that reflect their training.

Because their epistemological perspectives have shaped the way they think since they were undergraduate and graduate students, the way scholars perceive the world is intimately tied to their discipline-specific training. Based on these particular participants and their reactions to institutional racism in the academy, my general “hypothesis” is that humanities faculty responded by using their words, written grievances, and their astute analytical skills to combat discrimination in their departments very openly and boldly. Social science faculty sought white colleagues to partner with and developed liaisons to overcome institutional barriers or suspicious colleagues that they encountered. Science faculty were largely unaware of racism or the subtleties of discrimination and insensitive to what might be disparate treatment from their colleagues, in part because they focused so closely on their experiments and labs. As a primarily narrative interview study, I inferred that although the data was far from neat and discrete, trends suggest that professors responded to institutional racism either vocally, moderately, or mildly, depending on their discipline.

The Meaning of Self -Definition and Self-Valuation

Hill Collins defines this theme in this way: “Self-definition involves challenging the political knowledge validation process that has resulted in externally-defined, stereotypical images of Afro-American womanhood. In contrast, self-valuation stresses the content of Black women’s self-definitions- namely, replacing externally-derived images with authentic Black female images” (1986, pp. 16-17). She fully clarifies the theme here:

The insistence on Black female self-definition reframes the entire dialogue from one of determining the technical accuracy of an image, to one stressing the power dynamics underlying the very process of definition itself. . . . When Black women define themselves, they clearly reject the taken-for-granted assumptions that those in

positions granting them the authority to describe and analyze reality are entitled to do so. . . . Defining and valuing one's consciousness of one's own self-defined standpoint in the face of images that foster a self-definition as the objectified "other" is an important way of resisting the dehumanization essential to systems of domination. (1986, pp. 17-18)

For example, humanities scholars criticize other writers and thinkers with their words, separate along camps such as post-modernists, structuralists, or feminists, and analyze each other's arguments. Some have argued that they use words as weapons, bringing to mind Patricia Hill Collins' notion of "fighting words," (see *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (1998) the way African American women confront oppression. In order to do this, humanities professors need a keen mind and sharp sense of what argumentative strategies are most effective. They use Aristotle's rhetorical triangle, selecting emotional, ethical, and logical appeals to persuade a reader. Highly detail-oriented, they specialize in close readings of literature and language, textual analysis, posing questions as they read, and the intersection of historical and literary ideas. Skilled at structuring their ideas, they are usually masterful organizers, gifted debaters, and witty conversationalists, which may explain why many end their careers as higher-level university administrators.

Social science faculty, because of their training, are attuned to the manifestations of Black Feminist Thought that are related to their participants' perspectives and how those perspectives inform how they answer qualitative research questions. Per Hill Collins, "Black academics who persist in articulating a black woman's standpoint face rejection of knowledge claims on epistemological grounds. Black women may be unwilling or unable to legitimate our claims using Eurocentric masculinist criteria with methodological adequacy" (1991, pp. 204-06). In addition to culturally specific issues, social scientists are fascinated by the ways in which interviewees value and define themselves. Group insiders have similar

worldviews that are acquired through similar education and professional training that separate them from everyone else, i.e. white faculty.

Because they must follow a prescribed protocol and strictly adhere to universally accepted systematic methods, scientists in general self-define, first and foremost, as scientists, putting ethnicity and national origin aside. Therefore, African American scientists easily become insiders because their disciplinary training and epistemology supercede any personal or cultural bias. Even if they were interested in race-based research, some scientists have had less opportunity to do widely respected research of this type, until recently, when emphasis in the medical sciences regarding health disparities in diseases like diabetes and obesity, came to the forefront.

The Interlocking Nature of Oppression

Hill Collins defines this next theme as the “attention to the interlocking nature of race, gender, and class oppression” (1986, p. 19). She claims that Black Feminist Thought as a theory is rooted in an understanding of the “intersection of multiple structures of domination” and “this viewpoint shifts the entire focus of investigation from one aimed at explicating elements of race or gender or class oppression to one whose goal is to determine what the links are among these systems” (1986, pp. 19-20). A second important hallmark of the interlocking nature of oppression is that it offers an alternative humanist vision of societal organization that is based on solidarity of human experience and full equality. She maintains that “Black feminists who see the simultaneity of oppression affecting Black women appear to be more sensitive to how these same oppressive systems affect Afro-American men, people of color, women, and the dominant group itself” (1986, p. 21).

Another contribution that is distinctive in the 2000 version of *Black Feminist Thought* that is relevant to the interlocking nature of oppression is a new subtopic in the chapter entitled “Work, Family, and Black Women’s Oppression,” the middle-class Black women. She includes new data that verifies that persistent racial discrimination means that Black middle-class women and men are less economically secure than White middle-class individuals (2000, p. 64). Their unique role as managers of “working class employees, especially working-class Blacks” puts them in what can be an awkward situation where they are pressured from white supervisors from above and white and minority employees from below to either suppress or champion their rights as workers. These middle-class African Americans, many of whom became middle-class through social mobility but are from working-class origins, are, like African American professors, in a unique position to observe power relations from an empowered position, yet struggle with solidarity with the disempowered. Hill Collins describes their unique position: “While some aspire to manage working-class Blacks, others aim to liberate them from racial oppression and poverty, while still others aim to distance themselves from Black working-class concerns. Similarly, though many middle-class Blacks defend dominant group ideologies, others challenge race, gender, and class ideologies and practices” (2000, p. 64). What is especially pertinent in discussions about the interlocking nature of oppression and the academy is that like middle class African Americans where more women than men occupy professional positions, in “lower-paying, lower- status jobs” (2000, p. 64), more African Americans occupy the lower echelons of academic hierarchies as assistant and associate professors.

Regarding discipline specific generalities, humanities faculty are keenly aware of how oppression can manifest in any university interaction whether it is a hallway

conversation with a colleague, in the classroom, at a tenure meeting, or in the way black coaches or black athletes are treated. For example, many academic journal articles in the field of English literature begin with a provocative quotation about a specific current event which captures an example of how common institutional racism is and then, a writer is spurred on to reflect more deeply on a previous play, poem, or offer a new interpretation of how this even is representative of wider discrimination or ignorance. Similarly, social scientists are often aware of subtleties of mistreatment because they are attuned to observing verbal and non-verbal cues, listening, and analyzing phenomenon. Overall, humanities and social scientists are more likely than laboratory or life scientists to see the value of hybrid epistemology, which is impossible in the sciences. Black Feminist Thought must account for the sociological significance of interlocking structures of group placement and oppression in business, political science, economics, education, public policy, sociology, and communication studies. Science faculty, in general, do not fit into a neat category because while humanities researchers may focus primarily on the value of African American culture and the social scientists might highlight their ethnic pride by doing research related to their culture, expressing their self-definition and self-valuation, scientific researchers rarely express a keen understanding of the interlocking nature of oppression.

The Importance of African American Women's Culture

Hill Collins sees this last theme as unifying and synthesizing the previous two. I tease apart the assumptions that she makes, later in this chapter, but according to her:

“Black women’s culture may help provide the ideological frame of reference-namely, the symbols and values of self-definition and self-valuation- that assist Black women in seeing the circumstances shaping race, class, and gender oppression. . . . There is no monolithic

Black women's culture- rather, there are socially-constructed Black women's cultures that collectively form Black women's culture" (1986, p. 22). She lists several areas that are related to African American women's experiences which exemplify the cultural trends, such as the notion of sisterhood, which she defines as "a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression" (p. 22). Next, she discusses motherhood of one's own children as well as of the community's children and finally, "the role of creative expression in shaping and sustaining Black women's self-definitions and self-valuations" (1986, p. 23). This creativity in music, dance, art, writing, and theatre are key coping mechanisms to provide opportunities for African American women to manage the stress of daily life, with its accompanying struggles.

Now, I move to address the way in which Black Feminist Thought as a theory has an accompanying and relevant epistemology, which affects the way the narratives were analyzed and interpreted.

Epistemology

One of Hill Collins' most fascinating assertions is that outsider within status influences the actual thought that is produced. Because it is not positivistic or empirical, Black Feminist Thought engenders its own epistemology, the hallmarks of which include: first, concrete experience as a criterion of meaning; second, the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims; third, the ethic of caring; and fourth, the ethic of personal accountability (1991, pp. 208-19). Concrete experience elevates wisdom gleaned from encounters with racism and objectification in daily life and an individual who lacks wisdom in African American culture is lampooned as an "educated fool" (p. 208). Hill Collins emphasizes the inherent necessity of relying on concrete experience to conceptualize meaning: "This

distinction between knowledge and wisdom, and the use of experience as the cutting edge dividing them, has been key to Black women's survival. In the context of race, gender and class oppression, the distinction is essential. Knowledge without wisdom is adequate for the powerful, but wisdom is essential to the survival of the subordinate" (1991, p. 208). Wisdom, daily experiences, and advice about how to navigate in white society are also shared through women's networks of sisterhood, church, beauty shop, sororities, and book clubs, which is where the second element of the epistemology dominates: the use of dialogue in assessing knowledge claims, which also might be a gendered way of knowing (1991, p. 214). Hill Collins, though, in particular reinforces the oral roots of African American culture and the call-and-response tradition so common in churches. She emphasizes that 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" (1991, p. 212). In addition, she contrasts the African worldview that is "holistic and seeks harmony" and is not characterized by an "either/or dichotomous thought" of Western thought.

The next two epistemological modes are the ethics of caring and of personal accountability. The first is three-pronged: the value placed on unique individual expressiveness of a common spirit, the appropriateness of emotions in dialogues, and the capacity for empathy, and all of these components of caring pervade African American culture. They are best exemplified in the use of call-and-response discourse in the black church. Hill Collins identifies an important link to feminism: "the emphasis placed on expressiveness and emotion in African American communities bears marked resemblance to feminist perspectives on the importance of personality in connected knowing" (1991, p. 217-17) and the ethics of caring (Noddings, 1984) as part of women's experiences. She explains

that people are expected to be accountable for their knowledge claims and that “it is essential for individuals to have personal positions on issues and assume full responsibility for arguing their validity” (1991, p. 218). The credibility of the speaker or writer is critical here. If a speaker is discredited or a writer is disrespected, then the rationality of his claims are questioned. Nevertheless, Hill Collins also acknowledges that this accountability holds true for feminists, and the values of Black Feminism and feminism converge here (1991, p. 219).

To this group of four components of epistemology, Hill Collins adds one more hallmark when she updates her volume in 2000 which is especially relevant for my purposes here, black women as agents of knowledge (2000, p. 266). Because of the social and political movements of the last fifty years, more African American women have become what she refers to as “legitimated agents of knowledge” who are no longer “passive” and who “speak for ourselves” (2000, p. 266). When African American women were able to implement the four dimensions of their epistemology in their own “organizational settings” and they were in charge of their own self-definitions, this most recent mode emerged, and the primary agents, according to Hill Collins, are African American women intellectuals. According to her, they must answer to three constituencies: ordinary African American women, the community of black scholars, and the dominant groups “who still control schools, graduate programs, tenure processes, publication outlets, and other mechanisms that legitimate knowledge” (2000, p. 267).

In order to be credible for ordinary black women, intellectuals “must be personal advocates for their material, be accountable for the consequences of their work, have lived or experienced their material in some fashion, and be willing to engage in dialogue about their findings with ordinary, everyday people” (2000, p. 266). As scholars, Hill Collins insists

how vitally important it is to study black women's lives, but says this stance has "placed many careers at risk" (2000, p. 267). She advances this praise with a warning not to neglect the value of solidarity with other groups. Finally, for the third target group, the white dominated academy with its rigid standards and resistance to alternative epistemologies, African American women face a daunting task: "[being] engaged in creating Black feminist thought illustrates difficulties that can accompany grappling with multiple interpretive communities. A knowledge claim that meets the criteria of adequacy for one group and thus is judged to be acceptable may not be translatable into the terms of a different group" (2000, p. 267). Here she cautions against conducting research that while it reflects Black Feminist Thought, may be considered so marginal, that when coming up for tenure review, committees become highly dubious of theoretical perspectives that have not been sanctioned by the discipline or which incorporate non-canonical literature or data.

Regarding epistemology, per Hill Collins, "Black women scholars are not seen as credible researchers . . . Positivist approaches aim to distance selves from values, vested interests, and emotions of race, sex, class (i.e. scientists). By decontextualizing themselves, they allegedly become detached observers. Black women are more likely to choose an alternative epistemology for assessing knowledge claims that don't devalue emotions, objectify selves, and force us into adversarial relationships with those with more social and professional power" (1991, p. 205). Again, when scholars use alternative epistemologies, they open themselves up for greater scrutiny by skeptical tenure committee members or external reviewers who may be highly dubious about the use of non-mainstream theorists, non-traditional literature, or cutting-edge race-based research.

Hill Collins argues “Black women with academic credentials . . . face pressure to use our [their] authority to help legitimate a system that devalues and excludes a majority of black women” (1991, p. 204). She further expands how this pressure and forced exclusion operates on an institutional level:

One way of excluding the majority of Black women from the knowledge validation process is to permit a few women to acquire positions of authority in institutions and to encourage them to work with assumptions of black women’s inferiority shared by the scholarly community and culture at large. They are rewarded, but at a significant personal cost. (1991, p. 204)

Further, Hill Collins explains that Black women in the academy who persist in articulating black women’s standpoint face rejection of knowledge claims on epistemological grounds. Black women may be unwilling or unable to legitimate their claims using Eurocentric masculinist criteria with knowledge and methodological adequacy.

On an organizational note, after this chapter on the theoretical framework concludes, the methodology of the study will be explained, and then, chapters five through seven represent the findings regarding the actual lived experiences of African American faculty. I have employed the Black Feminist epistemological perspective in that I have asked them to use their own concrete experiences as a criterion of meaning, the interviews themselves were a dialogue, I instilled an ethic of caring in relationship to preserving the words of each interview participant, and their own credibility and accountability granted that their knowledge claims were respected. The way in which I analyzed the data offers, in most ways, support for Hill Collins’ theory of Black Feminist Thought, but my analysis suggests a more nuanced approach, especially with regard to African American men adopting and implementing principles of the theory. Also, both men and women were certainly affected by the social construction of race and the outsider within standpoint theory. Before moving to

the findings chapters, chapter four will clarify the rationale and methodology used for this work. Additionally, my research participants will be introduced.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Because this study involves shedding light on the invisible professors and their professional and personal experiences within the academy, I argue that a qualitative study is appropriate in order to evoke their voices. Moreover, when one considers Denzin and Lincoln's (1994) definition of qualitative research, qualitative study becomes even more relevant. They define it in this way:

[it] involve[s] an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical . . . -that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives. (1994, p.2)

Further, Bodgan and Biklen (1992) identified five major features of qualitative research that include: a) a concern with the context of the data gathering (naturalistic setting), b) a primary focus on descriptive research, c) a preoccupation with the research process as well as its outcomes or products, d) an emphasis that theory emerges as data are gathered and analyzed, and e) a concern with participants' meanings and perceptions. These features speak not only to important aspects of this project, but also to my emphasis on the research processes and outcomes as well as my concern for participants' experiences and perceptions, especially as outsiders within a large institutional bureaucracy where they are minorities, on their campuses, in their departments, and in their classrooms. All of these factors are essential

aspects of conducting qualitative research with a social justice aim. Consequently, because these features underlie this study, a qualitative approach, is justified.

Qualitative Research and Narratives

Qualitative inquiries about racism and discrimination, like this one, seek to understand the depth and complexity of the lives of people of color. Powerful and compelling narratives can enable white administrators to explore the multifaceted ways race functions to maintain African American professors' marginal status. Qualitative researchers interested in race can inquire about and uncover the effects of dominant ideas such as meritocracy, which are championed in the academy, but which affect minority faculty, especially African American professors, more negatively than white faculty. Inspired by Melanie Carter, an African American educational researcher who credits the examples of famous autobiographies by Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington for guidance about narrative models, I tried to follow her advice about methodology:

Our stories are our theories and our method. . . Methodology is a process of a set of standardized practices that govern and direct inquiry. Because process is a critical part of the search for knowledge and understanding, it should emerge from the research itself. . . In fact, there is a rich history of narrative, which speaks about grounding our knowledge in a more truthful and accurate narrative historiography (she cites Du Bois and Washington here) . . . These indigenous tools include oral and written forms of storytelling and testimony that acknowledge the interdependence of the researched to the stories they share. (Carter, 2003, pp. 40-41)

By citing narratives which presented voices that had been heretofore silenced before they were in print, thereby correcting white-washed narratives that omitted the stories of African Americans, especially those of the enslaved, Carter claims that she can bring the “fate of a black story” to the forefront in a “white world of white stories” (Carter, 2003, p. 29; Her subtitle is referring to a line from a John Edgar Wideman short story “What’s the fate of a black story in a white world of white stories?”). So too, with the narratives in this

dissertation, I hope to prevent the voices and experiences of African American professors from being overlooked, silenced, or disempowered.

The study is especially concerned with the ways in which African American faculty experiences can provide different perspectives about how racism manifests within institutional hierarchies. In the study of race, experiential knowledge, shared through personal narratives is valuable because, “the narratives link the individual experience in all its subjectivity to the common experiences that we quantitatively measure” (Lazos Vargas, 2003, p.10). Indeed, Lazos Vargas argues:

Narratives yield insights that are important to the dialogue of race because “outsider knowledge” and perspective can help both racial minorities and non-minorities acquire deep understanding of how race functions in society. Narratives help bridge the cognitive racial divide by explaining the racial experiences at a personal level. (2003, p.10)

The interviews and narratives that result from this study aided in these efforts.

Research Participants

In order to gather, interpret, understand and, most importantly, make use of the potentially rich and varied stories that African American faculty may share, we have spent time together. Because I was interested to learn if different scholars offered different responses based on their disciplinary training, I interviewed faculty in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. These interviewees teach at private, public, Tier I, national, regional, predominantly white universities. All are on the tenure track or had been granted tenure. I attempted to speak to a balanced number of male and female faculty as gender differences factor into student and faculty interactions, but finally included the narratives of eleven women and five men. According *Survey of Earned Doctorates*, 65.5% of doctorates awarded to African Americans were earned by women (Hoffer et al., 2005). Although I interviewed

24 faculty representing many disciplines, I analyzed narratives for sixteen, six from the humanities, five from the social sciences, and five from the sciences. One of the humanities participants, Dr. Sidney, provided me with many documents, including his EEOC complaint, as well as copies of his tenure file and letters from his departmental chair. Because he sued his university, won a settlement, and was still angry about his ordeal, Dr. Sidney was eager to talk to me, on the condition that his anonymity was secure. He was one of six professors (including Douglass, Hamer, Marshall, Wheatley, and Young) with whom I had more than one interview. This approach is different from previous studies, which have highlighted African American women or men's experiences in the academy. Others have emphasized discipline specific issues, such as in schools of education (such as Cleveland, [2004]) or in the sciences (Williams, 2001) or over-generalized about faculty of color (Turner & Myers, 2000), ignoring unique cultural distinctions or incorrectly assuming that individuals of the same ethnic group behave as a monolith. The professors represent seven schools around the country, three private and four public universities. While I intended to include a representative sample across the discipline spectrum, due to the dynamic nature of fieldwork, I made decisions about sampling populations in order to take advantage of opportunities during the data collection process.

The generation of a pool of potential participants for the study relied on "snowball sampling" in order to locate what qualitative researchers refer to as "information rich cases," "key informants." Thus, I asked Dr. Darity, Dr. Frierson, Dr. Noblit, and Dr. Pearce to suggest interviewees. Some interviewees recommended someone else, and some were gleaned from combing university websites for photos of faculty and advisors for African American undergraduates. The diversity affairs office of one university provided me with a

list of the entire African American professoriate. In addition, I attended two conferences for African American faculty held by two major public universities and, after the event organizers introduced me, I asked professors for interviews. I identified most of my interviewees by requesting an initial list from Dr. Darity and he provided me with twelve names. I sent emails and letters to their campus addresses soliciting their participation. In the letter, I asked the faculty to share other names with me, especially if they were unable to meet with me. From that initial list, I was able to secure one interview, but a history professor suggested more names, and my list grew to 22. After more conversations with faculty, some of whom I interviewed, I had a list of 42.

Data collection

Culturally sensitive research approaches use qualitative methods such as interviews (individual, group, life history), observation, and participant observation. These and other qualitative methods are used to investigate and capture holistic contextualized pictures of the social, political, economic, and educational factors that affect the everyday existence of African Americans, particularly in educational settings. (Tillman, 2002, p.4)

To ensure the success of this study, I sought multiple sources of information. For all the interviewees, I used pseudonyms and selected the names of famous African American writers, inventors, and scientists, all deceased in order to avoid confusion, to substitute for their real names (See Appendix D). This added measure of anonymity helped secure a measure of honesty and privacy for the participants. I conducted 90-minute interviews with professors in their offices to ensure privacy and audiotape them. Then, I transcribed the tapes, consulting my interview notes as I listened to the tapes to clarify any faint words. Then, after each interview, I wrote a brief reflective log about my overall impressions of the interview.

My main tasks were: reviewing documents, setting up interview times, interviewing, getting referrals, reading research in the field, and developing relationships with participants to enhance trust, facilitate intimate sharing, develop rapport, and deepen my sensitivity to their unique place in the academy. In order to keep me accountable and credible, I sent a transcript to each of the interviewees of his or her session, in order to fact-check and to verify their remarks. My ideal plan included follow-up interviews, but these faculty were so busy that that goal proved very difficult. For example, I interviewed most of the professors once; however, I interviewed Drs. Douglass, Drew, Hamer, Wells, and Young twice. I was able to interview Dr. Sidney three times, and he also provided me with documentary evidence. When I had initially imagined this project as part oral history and part qualitative research, I collected historical and archival documents, C.V.s, departmental letters and photos, and university institutional research information. During the research process, I gathered other relevant documents that enhanced an understanding of the participants' experiences, such as departmental profiles on the internet, so that I could accurately quote entire passages from memoranda, press releases, and departmental correspondences.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers have used storytelling and the production of literary and narrative accounts as valid and appropriate forms of data collection, interpretation, and presentation (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Tillman 2002). Consequently, narrative analysis is an especially valuable approach to the analysis of qualitative data as the conversational exchange of the research interview often invites participants to recount stories (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). The use of narrative analysis encourages researchers to examine their data from several different points of view including a focus on the structure of the narrative as the

ways in which a story is told and structured can, “provide information about the perspectives of the individual in relation to the wider social grouping or cultural setting to which that individual belongs” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p.68). Examining the functional properties of the narrative (which often highlight the social actions within the text) as well as the participant’s meanings and motives for sharing what they share are also important aspects of narrative analysis.

As part of my analytical approach, I created relevant categories and themes that lent themselves to effective interpretation. I believe that this process helped me explain, hypothesize, and link the stories. In addition, in order to enhance my attempts at categorizing, synthesizing, and interpreting, I developed a coding scheme(s) and maintained a codebook. Because there are no static points in qualitative research, researchers recommend that data collection and analysis take place concurrently (Creswell, 1999; Glesne, 1998). Consequently, I tried to consistently engage with the data in order to understand it and how it relates or does not relate to the themes and categories that I generated. To assist in the analysis process, I kept a field journal to record my own experiences and thoughts as a means of maintaining a reflective stance towards the data and as a way of checking my perspective and positionality.

Since I used qualitative research methods to interview my participants and I analyzed their interview responses for patterns related to the intersection of race and research, mentoring, teaching, colleagues, and suspicion about scholarship, I desired to honor the unique contribution of each of the voices of my participants, while at the same time noting trends among the stories. My study confirms that oppression exists, but demonstrates the possibility of change and hope. The trends and themes did not devolve into “a” singular,

monolithic story; rather, I have shown multiple stories of how some address discrimination within the academy. I did not promote reductive or repetitive tactics for African American faculty to have greater retention and promotion. My study may have public policy implications, which if applied, can address insensitivity to difference at the department head and chair administrative level, especially since many department heads are white and unaware of how the subjective nature of retention, tenure, and promotion committees can negatively affect the tenure chances for a person from an under-represented minority.

Positionality

This study focused on trying to understand the experiences of African American faculty, to improve the retention and promotion of African American scholars, and to combat departmental hostility directed toward African American professors stems from my own experiences growing up as a minority in American culture, as a Jewish woman, as a student who has been mentored by African American professors, and as a college administrator who was mentored by an African American woman. I devoted my dissertation to this topic as a result of these personal and professional kinship experiences and my desire to repay them for their generosity to me. My primary motivation for this study stemmed from a genuine concern about the ways in which mostly white, middle-class professors marginalize African American faculty, with whom I feel solidarity, and from whom I have learned so much. Consequently, I have committed myself to exploring ways of opening possibilities and options for African American faculty. As a side effect, Drs. Douglass, Lorde, and Sidney expressed great emotional relief at being listening to and being able to air their grievances. By sharing their feelings and experiences, all three told me that our conversations, through the interview process, provided some healing for them to discuss how their mistreatment had

really hurt them. I felt a great sense of reverence for the fact that they shared with me, but according to them, they benefited from the cathartic reliving of their experiences.

Growing up in a family of seven teachers, I am also the granddaughter of immigrants, three of whom came to the U.S. illegally, two of whom were illiterate in their native Polish and Romanian as well as English, and one of whom finished only the 10th grade because she was forced to work. Because I was raised as a Jew, my family was perceived as “different.” Throughout my youth, the dictum from Deuteronomy 16:20 “Justice, justice shall you pursue” has guided my educational worldview. If college administrators can reduce barriers to accessing higher education so that more faculty of color, especially African American faculty, can be retained, justice and equity would thrive in schools and society at large.

“Tell the truth and shame the devil,” my adopted African American grandmother advises to remedy any ethical dilemma. All my life, I had been drawn to marginality, and ethnic, cultural, and religious difference. So, as a result of my particular life history, my positionality as a Jew, as a feminist, as a child of divorce, and as an underdog, my life’s quest has been to build bridges between myself and people from communities who have experienced harassment and intimidation. Because of my history, I know what it is like to be on the margins in a community that professes to be inclusive. Even though I am aware that I could benefit from the cloak of “whiteness” that my physical exterior affords me, I am committed to social justice, because I have tasted what it is like to be beaten and rejected. Recently, a classmate asked me if I self-identify as white, and I said I do not, because I believe “whiteness” implies a perspective free from being excluded or discriminated against, and that is not my experience.

Interviewing African American academics and learning about their experiences in the academy has helped me understand why African Americans still experience discrimination at universities when at first, they may offer warm welcomes. One must have true grit, tolerance of people's insensitivity, and patience to deal with well-intentioned ignorance, bigotry, and malice. As a qualitative researcher, my positionality makes me especially sensitive to the hypocrisy of institutions which profess to be inclusive, yet create hostile environments for faculty of color and who do not allow a space for outcasts to thrive. Accordingly, I see this project as a means of giving voice to Du Bois' double-consciousness and suggesting that, although the academy can be discriminatory, faculty can avail themselves of strategies to increase their likelihood of getting tenure, even if they are targeted by skeptical, unhelpful, antagonist, or resistant department heads.

Ethics

Because I already have permission from the Institutional Behavioral Review Board to conduct this study, the ethical issues surrounding how this study is conducted have already been addressed. I secured the informed consent of all 24 of my participants, preserving, to the best of my abilities, the anonymity of my participants, by securing all field notes, tape recordings, and documentation. The informed consent letter, as well as interview questions, and the invitation letter to my participants appear here as appendices. The consent letter details the ways in which I maintained each participant's confidentiality, as well as my means of safeguarding related research materials.

For the most part, ethical considerations in qualitative research also encompass issues of power in conducting a study, particularly regarding the relationships between researchers and their participants and the need to privilege people over process. Further, scholars of

color are keenly aware of their responsibility as narrators of “counter-stories.” They often carefully consider what they choose to share, knowing that they will expose their story, their vulnerabilities, candid details, and their honest recollections. I hope to earn their trust that I will protect their stories from individual(s) who would attempt to de-contextualize our work and use our research findings in unintentionally detrimental ways (i.e. to reinforce stereotypical views about people of color). Thus, because the fate of these stories is inescapably linked to the context in which they are conveyed and interpreted, Carter insists that, “how we tell our stories is, at least, equally as important as where they are told” (2003, p. 34).

Consequently, I considered several issues, such as what potential power dynamics are involved in this study and how they might impact its process and outcomes. While I acknowledge the “power of the researcher,” and comprehend its relevance, I have trouble envisioning what such power might look like when I think about my position as a graduate student relative to my participants - professors - for whom I hold a high level of respect. I wonder whether or not I will be perceived as the one in power or the one with power because I will be organizing the findings. I could be seen as someone with more privilege because I am not African American. But paradoxically, precisely because I am not African American, many faculty felt a great sense of relief both before and after speaking with me because my outsider status enabled some of the participants to disclose more fully, knowing that I had no claim to stake. In addition, speaking to an eager graduate student audience seemed therapeutic for some professors, functioning like a cleansing sweat lodge or a confessional. Because I emphasized the value of counter-story telling for junior faculty who could benefit

from hearing their experiences, most of the participants told full and rich anecdotes and experienced some emotional healing after offering their stories as another kind of legacy.

I recognize that part of my power as researcher is an ability “to name” their stories and in such a way that, though their words and phrases will be used, their final presentation will be in a context of academic discourse that is not their own. Moreover, at every step of the process, from data collection to analysis to presentation, I privileged what information is deemed “useful” or “worthy” to be shared in print. I tried not to infer too much and to continue to re-read the transcripts in order to stay true to them and not interpret too widely. Consequently, the only way to minimize this power to name was to invite participants to collaborate with me throughout the research process. I was less successful at this than I had hoped to be, again, because so many faculty were so busy; reading a transcript of an interview just added to their already busy schedules. As the ultimate goal of this study is to positively impact African American faculty, both directly and indirectly, and because I perceived that my participants would welcome that impact, I believe that potential power issues or possible negative effects are unlikely.

CHAPTER FIVE

HUMANITIES FINDINGS

I do not doubt God is good, well-meaning, kind
And did He stoop to quibble could tell why
The little buried mole continues blind,
Why flesh that mirrors Him must some day die, . . .
Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

- “Yet Do I Marvel” (l. 1-4, 13-14) by Countee Cullen (1925)

When Cullen articulated his sentiments in 1925, the NAACP was young, the Great Migration was in full swing, and the Harlem Renaissance writers were producing works that sparked a huge cultural, social, and literary movement. Yet, in 1925, lynchings were still relatively common and African Americans faced blatant racism at work, housing, and in all public accommodations. In his poem, Cullen laments injustice, in general, but especially that African Americans poets and playwrights were often silenced and restricted from fully voicing their own metaphorical songs, despite the popularity of the blues, jazz, and ragtime musicians and singers of the day.

Writing much later than Cullen, Professors Wheatley, Douglass, Lorde, and Marshall (all pseudonyms) addressed institutional racism by being very productive, so that there would be little room to criticize their academic merits and quality of scholarship. Like Cullen, God made them poets and “bid” them “sing” (l. 14), but despite their books, presentations, and articles, the injustice that he decries, still occurred. Trained in the humanities, they were sensitive to and vigilant about the three themes that Hill Collins refers to as central to Black

Feminist Thought: first, the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation; second, The importance of Afro-American women's culture; and, third, The interlocking nature of racism (1986). They told stories of being respected and lauded by students and of helping students make significant growth and contributing to many different kinds of committees. In addition, although a few had mentors, some did not, but all felt a strong desire to mentor undergraduate and graduate students in order to foster like interests and create a mutually beneficial support system, which is a cultural connection. As strong-willed and opinionated professors, they provided advice for junior faculty and statements of belief about how they coped at the university with the pressures and stresses of tenure reviews. Each faculty member offered a vision for his or her legacy and many had suggestions for how junior faculty could navigate collegial relationships, optimize their reputations and publishing opportunities, and minimize skepticism about their scholarship, even when cognizant of the interlocking nature of oppression within the academy. Their research and creative expression is due, in part, to a deep commitment to teaching about racial injustice and social inequalities of all types, and how these issues emerge in art, literature, music, the law, language, and folklore.

Hill Collins claims that black women's view of their own subordination is based on "their experience at the intersection of multiple structures of domination" (1986, p. 19) and humanities scholars have a heightened awareness of these multiple structures. Moreover, humanities scholars are especially attuned to the appeal to the universal that Hill Collins insists is the trademark of black feminists "who see the simultaneity of oppression affecting Black women appear to be more sensitive to how these same oppressive systems affect Afro-American men, people of color, women, and the dominant group itself" (1986, p. 21).

For the purposes of this paper, I have included a law professor in the humanities group, and although some would not categorize a law professor with those in the humanities, I believe faculty who are trained to closely examine texts and analyze them for subtle meaning and interpret the multiple ways in which that meaning can be understood, are more likely to be attuned to the subtle ways in which racism can manifest itself

In this chapter, I provide evidence for my theory that the humanities faculty are guided, first, by the epistemological framework of the interlocking nature of oppression tenet of Black Feminist Thought. The sequence of this chapter is predicated upon the logic that their way of looking at the world is based on the overarching concept that oppression and discrimination shape the way that they see literature, language, and history, based on their lived experiences with racism and based on the historical fact of racism. Secondly, the lens through which they see the world is their African American culture, which is a vital part of what these scholars researched and who they are. Their ethnic culture provides an integral connection to the work they do inside and outside the classroom. Finally, least important, because they developed confidence and confronted racism early in life, humanities faculty developed a strong self-definition and self-valuation, yet this tenet was the least important aspect of how they manifest Black Feminist Thought. Rather than being preoccupied with their self-definition or self-valuation, they just express their opinions clearly and are who they are, but they do not necessarily talk about how they define themselves or value themselves. During the data collection and interviews, I discovered seven trends that were common to the participants: 1) Committee Responsibilities; 2) Credos; 3) Isolation, 4) Legacy, 5) Mentoring, 6) Retention, Tenure, and Promotion, 7) Suspicion about Scholarship and these trends were then analyzed in relation to the themes of

Black Feminist Thought. The interlocking nature of oppression can be tracked in their responses about scholarship suspicion and retention, tenure, and promotion, the importance of African American women's culture is represented in isolation and mentoring, and the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation is exemplified in credos, committee responsibilities, and legacy.

Because I do not want to describe oppression without the possibility of change, I have included an account from one junior professor, who is on the tenure-track, Professor Hurston. The participants' responses address the seven themes that I discovered, but it must be stressed that the themes made themselves evident as I read and re-read the transcripts, and then I began to structure later interviews accordingly. While I have organized the quotations in a particular format, I do not mean to suggest that the data is neat, orderly, or easily interpreted, but the categories shed light on the ideas that emerged, especially those about discipline-specific ways of analyzing evidence of institutional racism and the theoretical framework that underlies the way in which humanities faculty interpret situations.

Recognized as gifted educators, many in this group of teachers won teaching awards throughout their careers. Dr. Douglass won one teaching award in the 1970s and later was honored with a three year distinguished professorship for career-long excellence in teaching. Dr. Wheatley has also won a university wide teaching award and Dr. Marshall won a university award that acknowledged teaching and service to the general community. Dr. Hurston has not yet won a teaching award as a junior faculty, but she had won one as a doctoral student. Dr. Lorde has won many prestigious writing awards and grants, but not a teaching award. Now, I will discuss how humanities scholars understand discrimination and institutional racism as the dominant modes of mistreatment for women and minorities in

higher education. Yet, their study of history and literature teaches them to be only cautiously optimistic about the possibility of power relations changing over time.

The Interlocking Nature of Oppression

As I stated earlier, I assert that humanities faculty were rooted epistemologically in the theme of the interlocking nature of oppression, which Hill Collins clarifies is attention to race, gender, and class oppression and being at the intersection of multiple structures of domination (1986, p. 19). Therefore, this chapter is organized in order of importance of what tenets guided them most closely, based on their particular training, and then, I offer evidence from their own words.

Suspicion about Scholarship

With both an international and national reputation, Dr. Wheatley is renowned in her profession. A product of a historically black college, she began her career with ambitious goals, and she continues to publish at a rate much higher than many of her colleagues. This high rate of productivity is fueled by a realistic assessment of what she believes she must do in order to be acknowledged as a scholar. She asserted:

Well, I have done and continue to do what I need to do to get professional recognition. I decided a long time ago that I was going to do 3 or 4 or 6 or 10 times the number of publications that my colleagues have. But in general to get the same recognition, African Americans have had to do more work in whatever field to get the same recognition and that is true of the academy too. But expectations are hard to articulate and very nuanced.

While this level of productivity has earned her tenure and is in part why she is asked to speak at conferences here and in many foreign countries, her reputation also engenders jealousy

from her colleagues and she cited a few examples from two of the universities where she has taught, so the envy was not restricted to just one campus, or one set of colleagues. She also discussed salaries and because she teaches at a public university, annual earnings are public record, so colleagues know each other's salaries. Regarding her financial compensation from the university, she reported that jealousy created an unpleasant environment for her, where colleagues were openly rude. After she earned a raise at one point, a colleague "asked me if 'Are you going to buy another big ole car with it?' " This particular inquiry smacked of racism in the sense that her raise was conflated with the much-lambasted African American welfare mother who buys a Cadillac, ridiculed during the Reagan administration as an example of welfare abuse (Lubiano, 1992). Implicit in this remark is criticism that African American people do not know how to invest their money wisely, and are interested in buying showy or lavish items. But a more disturbing interpretation is that her colleague was threatened by Dr. Wheatley's success, and her professional accomplishments established her as the "Black Lady Overachiever" of the department (Lubiano, 1992). Similar to Dr. Sidney's status in his department, Professor Wheatley's teaching awards, frequent book publications, and speaking invitations made some of her colleagues jealous of her. Her colleague's remark was an effort at "a politics of containment," or an attempt to keep her in her place by ridiculing her purchasing choices. Like Dr. Sidney, Dr. Wheatley refused any attempt to be "contained," yet unlike him, she was tenured, so her position within the department was secure, but the slight still stung.

Dr. Wheatley summarized her sentiments about this collegial mistreatment:

Other faculty have picked at me for my accomplishments. We, as black faculty, are often the targets of jealousy and envy from our colleagues. For example, I've

published five books in three years, and few of my colleagues have done that, yet the rewards have not been great. There are some people that couldn't stand that I used to be the highest paid person in the department. Now, the highest paid person is a white male. I've really learned that this isn't a meritocracy.

Dr. Wheatley was aware of the interlocking nature of oppression of being an African American woman and how her income engendered collegial jealousy and resentment.

One anecdote that Dr. Douglass shared symbolized the way in which a student showed him how taking his class altered her suspicion about the value of African American literature and about Dr. Douglass' value as a professor. At some point in the 1980s, a dean in the School of Education decided that education majors should be required to take a course in African American literature and one student wrote a letter to the student newspaper criticizing the decision. This same student, after she took the class, later wrote another letter where she claimed that because her first teaching assignment was at a school with a large African American student population, that the class was "incredibly useful." He tried to find the article, but summarized her sentiments:

She said that while she didn't teach any of the literature we read in our class, she learned about human relationships and that she couldn't have survived at her job without having taken our class. She used what she learned in her classroom, not the images or symbols that we discussed, but because the literature gave her a fuller understanding of the human condition, not just the lives of black people. She made the argument that studying the literature, helped her relate to her students.

This student's response to Dr. Douglass's class certainly provides a fitting tribute to his contribution to her overall sense of the role of a teacher to expose a student to new

experiences that will broaden them and help them become more fully human. Douglass seemed quite pleased with this legacy, in part, because as an educator, he knew that her sincerity in teaching was enhanced and her heart was broadened as a result of her exposure to African American literature.

Dr. Douglass granted that his first book was about “a relatively unknown African American woman author,” but that he published a second book in order to get tenure. While members of his department minimized his work and he heard colleagues talking in the hallway about how he had not published articles, even though he published two books, he defended his own scholarly contributions: “I know my work has been influential. My work has spawned other work and I know of two books that have been recently published that are based on my work.” He further explained how he sees his place in the profession:

I won a teaching award in (X year) and it is probably true that I am not a scholar, but that I teach well . . . but what I have published has been influential and my scholarship is solid. I was begrudgingly granted tenure after I had a job offer from Stanford. And that kept me here. But after I earned it, I didn’t get a raise in salary. Which is crap. At this university, people will get angry with you if you object to being mistreated. Mistreatment is not always based on race; it is not always racist, but I can’t separate myself from my race.

Regarding the way in which his colleagues view him as under-qualified and his work as sub-par, Dr. Douglass also clearly described what Du Bois articulated as “double consciousness” in relation to his place in the academy and how colleagues perceived him:

Being black at a predominantly white university is pleasant and also one big headache . . . There is certainly an old guard of the faculty who see the work of black scholars

as illegitimate just because of who we are and what we did. To them, we aren't qualified or we are here for diversity sake or to make the department look good on brochures and in institutional research or for pictures.

Professor Douglass resented the fact that he knew his presence made the department look like it had done its part for the sake of diversity, when he thought it was a ruse.

Curiously though, he did portray some optimism about the younger generation of faculty who seemed less skeptical of his research and more "open minded, or at least, they are less demonstrably racist." Because "the standard texts that they read nowadays, includes texts by black authors," [. . .] they "have been exposed to literature of different cultures and there is more respect for that lit." He seemed optimistic about how receptive younger faculty were to the benefits of teaching literature from different cultures, especially for helping students understand cultural similarities and differences for more tolerant thinking.

Dr. Lorde contended that her research interests are related to her identity and that some of her colleagues misunderstood her scholarship or discredited her poetry and creative publications because they wanted her to focus purely on literary criticism. She explained that her "research interests have been really varied; a lot of them are related to my ethnicity, I think. The first book . . . There are a lot of poems in that book which are about my identity as a woman and my identity as an African American and my interest in spiritual issues. Then my second book was an exploration of my family history, so that was clearly related to my ethnic background." Her strategy was counter her colleagues' skepticism by publishing books, which she hoped would disprove their suspicion.

Her dissertation was about immigrant writers, of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, but she claims that it was "purely an exercise" and that she was not interested

in pursuing that same type of writing as a professor. She was disappointed that “academics don’t understand creativity and they don’t respect it. . . . The department is based primarily on studying the creative work of people in earlier generations . . . they aren’t at all interested in the literary productions of their own generation.” When she won a national fellowship, her department chair did not tell her that she could keep her salary and benefits for her university position, so during that year, she was awarded the funds, but could not pay bills without her salary, so she had to take a part-time teaching job, just to make ends meet. She complained that even though she had earned a prestigious fellowship, which brought positive national press coverage to the university:

Nobody ever took me aside and said this is what you need to know. . . I think that is probably what happens and it’s not only, I don’t think it’s only because I’m black. I think it was being black, being a woman, and being a writer; that all of those things worked against me. And so everything I got from the university I had to get on my own. I had to fight for it on my own. My department heads were never out there fighting for me with the administration.

Her gender and race made her aware of the interlocking nature of oppression and she wanted to blaze the path for younger faculty. Because she had been mistreated, she wanted to actively work toward kind and humane treatment for junior faculty, African American undergraduates, poets of color, and women. Because she understood how oppression had affected her as an African American in the academy and as an African American in her marriage to a white man, she wanted to combat discrimination. As a humanities scholar, she had been trained to see the cycles of systematic oppression through history and to see the pain and frustration that she and other poets of color expressed in their art.

The *studia humanitatis* reveals the power of words to give voice to the universality of the human experience, to provide emotional solace to readers through the ages, and to speak truth to those in power, but for Lorde, those in power did not listen. Lorde was resentful and bitter about the incident especially because she later discovered that normally when one receives a fellowship, one can leave campus and go write anywhere in the world one needs to for the inspiration to complete a book project; moreover, one is usually on-leave from all teaching duties and committee responsibilities. But her dean told her, seemingly magnanimously, “We’ll let you out of your teaching for a year, but we don’t want you to leave town. You stay here and continue your committee work and counseling students and so on. So yeah, other people that get grants, they go off to Italy.” So, Professor Lorde has had several books become finalists for the National Book Award and she still did not believe that her colleagues respected her. Despite her many academic accolades, the disrespect that her colleagues had shown toward her for all those years expressed itself in resistance to them, in return, which is a natural reaction: “I can’t imagine collaborating with a colleague on something. I can’t even imagine having a serious conversation with a colleague about anything.” She had had an initial teaching experience at a small Midwestern university that was very collegial, and she had done several visiting professorships at other universities in New England and in the Midwest, so she had a point of comparison of other campuses where scholars were more friendly and professional. But, because she had two children with another faculty member in the department and he refused to leave, she felt obligated to stay for over two decades.

Throughout the interview, it was evident that she had developed a great deal of animosity toward the department, because of the repeated slights she endured from her

colleagues, efforts at disempowering her formally, and minimizing her academic contributions. As she recollected various moments in her past, she repeated phrases like “Gosh, it just brings up so many experiences of fury,” “I was so pissed,” “They all thought I was, yeah, a sort of semi-idiot I think, ” and “Well, okay, that’s a source of bitterness. It really, really, still makes me angry.” After the interview, she thanked me for listening to her and apologized for being negative, but I reassured her that I wanted a truthful and honest account of her experiences in the academy. She, along with Dr. Douglass, expressed a real sense of relief at being able to vent their discontent to a disinterested party because it provided them with some healing and emotional release. I was glad to oblige, but wondered if they had had sounding boards earlier in their career from a person in power, whether they would have felt less frustration and acrimony, and been less conflicted about their place in the academy. They seemed to endure emotional angst, painful memories, and stressful workplace interactions because they believed they were helping their students and contributing to their respective academic fields. At this point in their careers, as each was about to enter retirement, they seemed to be asking themselves, “Was it all worth it?” I wonder if non-African American faculty have to ask themselves this difficult question or must endure similar trials.

On a different and more positive note, Dr. Hurston did not experience suspicion about her scholarship or criticism from her colleagues. In fact, her position was advertised as a 19th century specialist and an African American specialist, and since she was both, she applied. So, her experience compared to other participants is very different, because now, instead of African American faculty having to make a case for the importance of their field of interest, they are sought by hiring committees to fulfill specialties that already exist in departments,

again as a result of more than thirty years of advances by her academic predecessors. Also, the historical, literary, artistic, and philosophical canon of traditional texts has expanded over the past thirty years to include African American writers, so the fact that Dr. Hurston was hired to fill a need the department had in ethnic literary studies was very promising. She remarked: “No one else specializes in that and, in fact, I was brought in to replace a woman whom they had hired to do also 19th century work and African American work.” When I asked her if her research interest was related to her ethnicity, she replied:

It is related. Yes, my research is related to my ethnicity in that primarily I do work on African Americans and African American women. [. . .] And, I have a love of theory as well as aestheticism, so I use black and non-black theorists in my work and in my teaching. [. . .] I really run the gambit, but I like to put them side by side and try to see what we can do with that, how we can fuse it, how it doesn’t fuse.

Hurston wanted the freedom to experiment with different topics other than her primary specialization, but unlike Douglass, she did not feel segregated within those fields or that she could not step outside them. Even though her research was linked to her ethnic identity, she did not seem to perceive it as a ghetto, but more an avenue for her to advance in the profession, that was established because the canon had expanded to include scholarly exploration of her culture and race. Again, she benefits from the trailblazers who preceded her. Based on these experiences with suspicion about scholarship, these faculty, who are trained thinkers and writers, were inspired by their historical predecessors such as Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, and Thurgood Marshall, who defiantly fought against stereotypes and oppression. These predecessors would marvel at how far African Americans have come in America such that they occupy privileged positions in academe, but lament the

fact that they still encounter doubt related to tenure and promotion, as will be discussed in the next section.

Retention, Tenure and Promotion Issues

This is a sensitive area because if one could trace racism to tenure decisions, universities would be sued for EEOC violations, so departments are very careful. For example, Professor Lorde discussed what kept her at a university where she did not feel respected by her colleagues. In part, she believed this was due to her race and in part, because she married a white colleague the first year she taught there and he “was very, very deeply rooted in the place.” She expressed that their disrespect was reflected in her tenure review: “My husband [was] one of the good ole guys, you know, He’s one of the good ole boys. So when it came to my tenure decision, he sided with his colleagues and told me not to fight the fact that I wasn’t given a promotion [. . .] I really fault him for that, for not being supportive.” Reflecting back, she thought that her meek attitude had not served her well and was part of the reason that, after she gained confidence following her divorce, she later adopted a more strident attitude. She had realized that her timidity was unproductive and did not yield the career advancement that she wanted because if she was not going to speak up for herself, no one else would.

Professor Lorde told a very disturbing story of blatant disparate treatment that “a department superstar scholar” told at her retirement party recalling when she was hired. He recollected: “I remember interviewing you at MLA, and that year, we had two hires. We hired you and another young woman who was a medievalist, and we had great hopes for this medievalist who was brilliant. And we didn’t think you would get tenure.” At this point, Dr. Lorde interrupted her story and told me that she had a Ph.D. and had published a book by the

time she was hired, so his representation of the department's assessment that she would not get tenure was inaccurate, and the fact he was revealing this story at her retirement party, made her very mad, because his comments were so inappropriate. He continued: "The other woman turned out to be crazy and she left, but you surprised us. You stayed on and you got tenure and you became a real colleague." He was callously declaring that the consensus at the time was that she was not expected to be granted tenure, all of which made him seem impolite, disrespectful, rude, and obnoxious, all at once. Then, Dr. Lorde shared her reaction to his disclosure at what was supposed to be a celebration of all of her achievements:

I was so pissed. I was really holding myself back because that was what characterized the entire 23 years I was there. . . . No matter what I did, they didn't think I was qualified . . . I had published two chapters of my dissertation; I had a book of poems; I had work in poetry anthologies, and they grudgingly tenured me without promotion. I was married to someone in the department and he said the entire time he was in the department, I was the only person who was ever hired as an "instructor" with a Ph.D.

She was very hurt and disappointed by her department's continual mistreatment of her.

Professor Douglass believed that his promotion was delayed because of institutional biases against those who are better teachers than they are scholars:

There is definitely resentment in the academy if one has a good reputation as a teacher. In fact, I sat up here for 18 years as an Associate Professor without an invitation to become a full professor. None of the people on the committee for tenure, retention, and promotion . . . had as many publications as I did. I had my first book in 1977. Granted it wasn't on Melville, Poe, or Hawthorne, but it was original research.

[. . .] But it is also true that while I have published less than many, I have also published more than many have.

Dr. Douglass shared an experience of overt racism when he first started teaching in the mid 1970s, when a colleague went into Dr. Douglass' classroom and spoke to the students privately, on false pretenses of a clerical matter related to late registration, before Douglass arrived:

He said he was going in to straighten the logistics out. Well, I noticed some tension, and after the first two or three classes, it hadn't dissipated . . . they told me that on the first day, the professor told them that I had been hired late and that I was black and if they had any trouble with me, to come see him. He set them up expecting trouble. [. . .] What that professor did was unacceptable.

Dr. Douglass' colleague suspected that he was incompetent because he was black, and he tried to undermine Douglass' credibility with his new students, which was an unprofessional reinforcement of both overt and institutional racism.

Regarding junior faculty, Dr. Hurston, whose remarks, as it has been noted before, about tenure should be tempered by the fact that she had not been reviewed yet, was very optimistic about the transparency in her department and the clarity of expectations. She explained that of the three criteria, publications are weighted most heavily, then teaching, and finally, service. She understood that the requirement was: "one book, and several articles, and work on a second book. It's a research one university, which really is the categorization for any university that does weigh research more heavily [. . .] you still have to be a pretty good teacher, not even just a fair teacher, and receive I think it's 75% of your teaching evaluations have to be very good." She was again fortunate to teach only two courses per

semester, like her colleagues, but she also described the resources that would support her ability to dedicate herself to her research output: “I mean library access, travel funds, research funds, all those kinds of things that you need, a mentoring program, the things a junior scholar needs in order to be successful and to successfully be tenured.” When she had her campus interview, she asked about the requirements for tenure, she was told: “They’re saying this is what we’re going to do to make sure that you meet them. In fact, when I first arrived at the office, both my chair and my vice-chair told me that we’re here to do anything to help you get tenure.” Hurston’s experience bodes well for her longevity in the profession and unlike Professors Sidney, Lorde, and Douglass, she hopes that the formal mentoring will facilitate a favorable and fair tenure review and promotion.

Humanities scholars are familiar with arguing for certain literary interpretations, but when they must defend themselves in a tenure review, or their place in the academy, the emotional toll is high, and the stakes are even higher. Accustomed to debate as well as rich intellectual conversations, they duel with words, verbally sparring with other critics about meaning, often certain that their own interpretation is correct, advancing textual evidence as proof. Emblematic of their struggle for this meaning or that perspective, they become experts on tenure details in the Faculty Handbook and scrutinize all the nuances of promotion requirements. Also, because they disagree about meaning and what should be in the literary canon or what should be included in a history survey, they are used to tenaciously maintaining their positions. Having examined the way suspicion about scholarship and challenges to the tenure process are manifestations of the Black Feminist Thought tenet of the interlocking nature of oppression, especially as it relates to race and gender in Dr. Lorde’s and Dr. Sidney’s case, now, I will examine how isolation and mentoring are

manifestations of the Black Feminist Thought tenet of the importance of African American culture.

The Importance of African American Women's Culture

Hill Collins enumerates three key aspects of what she refers to as “the Black female experience”: sisterhood, motherhood, and creative expression (1986). She defines sisterhood as “a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression” (p. 22) and the natural corollary among the themes of my participant's narratives was the isolating way in which the academy distanced women from one another and disconnected African Americans, regardless of gender, from one another. The analogue for motherhood, which Hill Collins expands to include women's “biological children, the children in their extended families, and the Black community's children” (p.22), has its corollary in the nurturing implicit in mentoring. Although Hill Collins excluded men from her theory, I included them because they supported their students and functioned as attentive and concerned guides. Third, creative expression, according to Hill Collins, helps “in resisting objectification and asserting Black women's subjectivity as fully human beings” (1986, p. 23). To some degree, the creative writing that each of these scholars produced was a response to isolation, a hand extended across the written page, reaching to mentor a reader, who, if not an actual descendant, was a literary descendant.

Isolation

Many faculty members feel isolated in their departments, which may be related to their temperament, such as introversion, or why they chose a career in academia, such as a general preference for the companionship of books rather than people. For example, Dr. Wheatley, who is one of four African Americans in her department, addressed the issue of

isolation. In our interview, she talked about teaching as “lonely” and remarked: “I grade papers by myself, I write by myself. But, teaching is isolating; academia by its very nature is lonely and you spend so much time alone.” She believed it was part of the price she pays by choosing a solitary profession:

But what I tell people who feel alienated or isolated in the profession, ‘No one asked you to join this fraternity or sorority.’ . . . I volunteered for this fraternity and I decided that even though I am often the only black person at a departmental social, I am going to go because I’m not going to be an invisible person. Plus I have students who need committee members for their theses and dissertations, and as a result, I need to form liaisons with my white colleagues.

Here, Professor Wheatley seems very practical in her approach to the isolation that is part and parcel of the academic lifestyle and she seemed at peace with it. But, it should be noted that she was both childless and unmarried, and one wonders about the toll that many women academics, regardless of race, have had to pay in terms of personal sacrifice in order to succeed in a male dominated occupation, defying traditional women’s roles and expectations in African American culture. Although she had no biological children, she had a very close relationship with her nieces and nephews whom she visited often and took vacations with and an African American “little sister,” whom she had mentored in a local Big Sister organization for almost 15 years.

Professor Marshall told a very illustrative anecdote about isolation that needs to be contextualized. A few years ago, the women’s caucus in his department interviewed him about diversity hiring and he told them: “We say we’re recruiting. But the proof is in the pudding. And I think it’s a shame that after 20-25 years, we have come full circle, to where I

am again the only full time African American. The only reason that is the case is because this faculty lacks the commitment to do what needs to be done.” About a week later, the article “hit the floor;” in other words, it was published in a departmental newsletter, and one of his colleagues told him he shouldn’t have said what he did because it “was unfair.” He responded to him with a teaching analogy:

I likened our defense that “we tried hard, but we didn’t succeed.” Well, imagine our response to the student who gets a “D.” The professor says, “Well, you didn’t meet the standard. I didn’t judge your effort, I judged your results.” I didn’t impugn your efforts. Indeed, the only reason I made the statement was because I believed we had worked in good faith, but I believed we hadn’t worked hard enough. I think we can do better. We want results. That’s what we grade our students on. We flunked. Over the next 4-5 years, we hired three black professors. Now, I ‘m not saying there is cause and effect there, but now we have four full time professors on the tenure track.

Professor Marshall was disheartened to report that after so many years at the university, there were still so few full-time African American faculty members.

From the opposite perspective, because Dr. Douglass had four other African American colleagues in his department, he was less concerned with the number of African American faculty than Dr. Marshall had been, but very concerned about their disciplinary separation:

I’m not isolated here. . . we have solidarity because we are all in African American [names the field], but that is also because the department won’t hire a black for a job here unless he or she is an African Americanist. There are some colleagues who say that with five out of more than sixty white faculty, that there are already too many

blacks in the department. But we are certainly segregated in terms of our discipline, because all the blacks are in African American [names field].

Here, Dr. Douglass recognized an important connection between social isolation within the department and isolation as a result of disciplinary specialty. Except for Dr. Sidney, all of the humanities professors I interviewed taught topics related to their African American heritage, and as a result of their specialty, some white colleagues thought of them as on the periphery of the department. At a faculty meeting in the late eighties, Dr. Douglass refuted a complaint he heard from a colleague that because African American faculty taught the classes related to their culture, that they had fewer students and that they should not get teaching awards, because they only taught African American students: “There is an assumption that only black students take African American classes, which is untrue because now almost all of the students in the African American [names field] I classes are white.” By dispelling myths about the composition of the classes, Professor Douglass felt that he could correct misperceptions and ensure skeptics that he was reaching more than just a small audience of African American students, or that white students would be uninterested in African American authors.

Regarding his interactions with his colleagues, Douglass contradicted himself because he insisted that his tenure and promotion to full professor was delayed because he suspected that his peers did not want his input for hiring decisions. As a result of his reputation for, as he put it, “speaking up for people” and “not support [ing] mistreatment,” he thought that his unpopular opinions would be unwelcome on hiring committees, and make consensus difficult. He described the way that he believed he was systematically excluded:

After I got tenure, I came to learn that a meeting would be held, and they wouldn't send me a notice. . . [Or say] in the hall when you see someone, "Are you going to the meeting later?" . . . But I got silence. Despite this exclusion, I get along well with my colleagues.

Again, as will be noted in later analysis of participants' words, Dr. Douglass repeatedly expressed contradictory feelings about the academy and his place in it. The only positive anecdote he shared was about his mentor, who had also been his professor and who offered him his second academic appointment, back at his alma mater, the university he had taught at since 1975. All the other stories about colleagues were negative and tinged with resentment and bitterness at how rudely he was mistreated, which made him feel like his culture was devalued.

Dr. Lorde also mostly had negative interactions to report. Having grown up on military bases, she was fully accustomed to an integrated world, clarifying: "I was almost always the only black kid in a group." Because she was teaching in New England, she was keenly aware that her African American students wanted her to remain at the university, even though she had to resort to making a pact with a friend who taught in the art department "that neither of us would leave because the other would be just devastated." Later in her career, she was recruited to teach at another university, but one of her African American students had won a poetry competition and she "decided that I couldn't leave him. So I gave up the job in order to be a mentor for him, which was a terrible mistake, but at the time, I thought it was really important for me to be there for him because there wasn't anybody else for him." Her impulse to subordinate her needs to her mentee's needs is admirable, but unfortunately it

kept her at a university where she felt unappreciated and dismissed by her colleagues, which ultimately led to a very acrimonious early retirement.

Expressing a greater degree of inclusion than any of the senior faculty I interviewed, Professor Hurston dined with a group of African American faculty when she interviewed, an event set up by the hiring department, and she maintained contact with some, meeting regularly to support each other through the early tenure review process, which is a sign of hope on the horizon. Remarking that the department was very social, she described parties, movie outings, regular picnics, barbeques, and calling it “a very friendly family place.” In addition, she has met other African Americans on the campus through a faculty organization, but her African American departmental colleagues had introduced her to some of them before a meeting occurred. Enumerating the representation of faculty, Dr. Hurston reported:

There are four African Americans including me, but there are five hired African Americanists who actually teach and specialize in (names field). And there are six who teach African American and world (names field),” out of fifty full-time faculty members. As a result of these numbers, she claimed that she felt her discipline was “well-supported in our department and I don’t feel isolated. [. . .] Even in an Ivy League, in a (names field) department, five is usually the maximum number.

Dr. Hurston seemed to be rather satisfied with African American faculty comprising 10% of the department, but when I alerted her to the national averages, she seemed unfazed, perhaps because she believed that many schools could model their numbers on what her public Southeastern Research One university (population over 30,000) achieved.

However, she did couch her praise with reservations, by explaining that the state (in the Southeast):” [The state] is unique in that it has a particular endowment specified for

African American scholars. It's a private foundation and so it's unique in that way, but it's specifically meant to encourage the recruitment and retention of African American students and faculty members." Asked if her position was funded by this private foundation, she said that it was not, adding that most of the funds went toward private scholarships for students. Professor Hurston also celebrated the fact that other faculty in the department who were neither African American, nor specialists in the African American field, could teach the introductory class if they had published an article in the field because it "is pretty unheard of. It really is. So, I feel very connected to them. I don't feel isolated. [. . .] I was just wonderfully surprised when I went to do my campus interview at the strides that the department was making [in terms of diversity]." I wondered, but did not ask at the time, if African American faculty were encouraged to teach outside their field specialty, or if the flexibility in teaching ranges was only extended to white professors.

So, according to Dr. Hurston, she did not feel isolated, which was quite the opposite experience of the other participants, maybe the result of a younger generation of scholars whose path has been made less burdensome because of the scholars who have paved the way for her. Or, perhaps, because she was fortunate enough to be hired at a university that had a private foundation that prioritized recruiting and retaining African American students and faculty. Financial aid certainly can set the tone of valuing inclusion and reserving funding sends a signal to other faculty that the university wants to enforce diversity hiring and admissions. Even so, these types of policies have been known to back-fire as well, causing some of the resentments and problems that Reyes and Halcón allude to in their article such as tokenism and typecasting, which can further alienate African American faculty and cause

resentment among other faculty members. Now, I will consider the remedy for isolation, mentoring, which can foster tenure and help promotion.

Mentoring

Little consensus emerged regarding the importance of mentors to one's own academic career, although many agreed that being a mentor was tremendously important for both mentor and mentee. Majority faculty may be insensitive to a need for mentoring by a senior minority faculty or different cultural expressions or family demands. This type of intellectual attitude reflects what Gail Thompson and Angela Louque (2005) refer to as "the culture of arrogance" which is characterized by four beliefs: 1) "whites are smarter than blacks, 2) blacks do not have the aptitude to do outstanding work; 3) whites know what is best for black students; and 4) the research of black scholars is inferior to the work of whites" (p. 167).

Mentoring undergraduate and graduate students can help reverse the prevalence of institutional stereotypes such as these and may provide an avenue for cultivating students' interest in pursuing careers in academia. I propose that Hill Collins' focus on the importance of African American's women's culture, with its manifestations as sisterhood, motherhood, creative expression, and concrete rational action (1986, pp. 22-23) is too narrow, because men also express what she defines as "motherhood," which serves as a site to "express and learn the power of self-definition, the importance of valuing and respecting ourselves, the necessity of self-reliance and independence, and a belief in Black women's empowerment" (1991, p. 118). I extend her definition in this chapter to mentoring.

Hill Collins expands the definition of motherhood to include other children: "[political] work on behalf of their own children evolved into work on behalf of the community's children" (p. 23), much like how African American faculty mentor graduate

and undergraduate students, of any race. Wheatley, who had no children, remarked: “I’ve never had a mentor [. . .] but I’ve spent my time mentoring grad students. I’ve directed 22 dissertations, black and white kids.” She exemplified what Hill Collins refers to as “othermothers– women who assist bloodmothers by sharing mothering responsibilities– Despite strong cultural norms encouraging women to become biological mothers, women who choose not to do so often receive recognition and status from other mother relationships that they establish with Black children” (1991, pp. 119-20). Her dedicated mentoring was important to her because it tied her to another generation of scholars.

Professor Marshall has been the advisor for the African American law student organization for years:

When I came here, we had 7 black students in the whole department out of a total enrollment of 700. There were 230-235 in the first year cohort. We supported one another and I’ve been advisor to [it] every year . . . I tell them every year, “I wouldn’t have probably stayed in an all white environment,” so I had to have them. They thought I was supporting them, but it was the other way around. With social support, academic support and just seeing a friendly face.

The students provided the solidarity with African American culture that Marshall lacked and missed because so few African American faculty taught in the law school. This symbiotic relationship is similar to what Hill Collins describes as community “othermothers [who] provide a foundation for Black women’s political activism. Nurturing children in Black extended family networks stimulates a more generalized ethic of caring and personal accountability among African-American women who often feel accountable to all the Black community’s children” (1991, p. 129). Clearly not only women but, men too, such as

Marshall, are enriched by their relationships with “children” and offer the students a cultural touchstone and supportive role model.

Dr. Lorde vacillated about whether or not she had had a mentor, even though she knew she had been a mentor (discussed in Isolation section). She discussed a poetry professor who sent her first manuscript out for publication and arranged and hosted her first large public reading. She clarified his role in her life:

He’s done that [held readings] for several people. . . I always think of him as like my fairy godfather. He really supported me and I love him, yeah. But it wasn’t a kind of teaching mentorship. It was just a kind of supportive mentorship and I don’t think I had any mentors. My dissertation advisor was terrific, but I don’t think I would call him a mentor. I think a mentor is someone with whom you have a personal relationship; you have a sense that they’re taking you under their wings and teaching you things that they believe are important. Or they’re telling you things about the academy and what to do in the academy. My dissertation advisor did not do that, but he did get me through the dissertation and I treasure that . . . I actually love him too. But we never had any really personal relationship.

Based on the way that Dr. Lorde answered this question, I wished that I had asked my other participants to define mentoring rather than to merely ask them whether they had a mentor or not, but the variety of definitions of what the role of a mentor should be and how the role is defined, would have yielded more insight into my informant’s responses to some of the oppressive forces in the academy, as well as to the liberating forces.

Professor Douglass paid homage to his dissertation director and former chair:

I'd never have survived without one person who supported me. He was my protector and he had a lot of power in the department and he was the senior faculty member . . . He was responsible for my getting hired here. . . At the time he was hired, it was unusual for a department in the South to hire a Jew.

Douglass equated his departmental chair's understanding of what it was like to be a minority with his willingness to hire an African American teacher. They had solidarity, he believed, based on their shared marginal status in the South; both were outsiders within. In "Learning from the Outsider Within Revisited" in *Fighting Words: Black women and the Search for Justice*, Hill Collins explains this phenomenon:

In the United States, many individuals currently express feelings of being outsiders because they are Jews or Muslims in a fundamentally Christian country; or because they are Sansei, Chicanos, Chinese-Americans. . . Despite their divergent histories, their similar positions within unjust power relations seems to generate remarkably similar and recurring patterns of reactions to social justice. . . [they reject] paralyzing constraints of putative "marginality" that alternately views outsiders as grateful ambassadors or unwelcome intruders. (1998, p. 4-5)

Dr. Douglass and his mentor defied stereotypical roles and understood each other.

Professor Wheatley was the first person in her family to graduate from college, and proudly insisted that she had not been mentored. When asked who supported her in her graduate program and who encouraged her to publish, she said, "Sometimes, I think people just need to hear and recognize that the best attitude toward the work is to "do it [. . .] But, I am certainly responsible for my own productivity." Dr. Wheatley was exceptionally close to her mother, sisters, and brothers who lived in the South and whom she frequently visited, and they provided her deepest link to her African American culture and heritage, including church, reunions, and food. She helped find funding opportunities for her undergraduates, and publishing opportunities for her graduate students, as well as devoting time to editing

their writing, helping them polish presentations, writing letters of recommendation, and offering guidance as they applied for jobs and became professors.

Dr. Lorde's attitude then developed based on her identity as an African American woman and, she spoke to me with the hope that I would pass on advice that was given to her. When she was a graduate student, she was selected to be part of a future faculty forum, and the funding agency brought speakers to guide students. As one of few African Americans in the program, she was wondering about the special challenges she might face as a minority woman in the academy. One particular speaker, who was also an African American woman, took her aside and told her:

You'll have a career; it'll be a good career, but you need to know that you need to say 'no' to the university because it will eat you up. And it's very hard to learn that lesson because everybody says 'You can't say no because you don't have tenure. You can't say no because all of the African American students at the university need you.

How can you not be there for them?' But you have to say 'no' for your own sake.

Since informal mentoring helped Dr. Lorde, she felt compelled to mentor younger writers, which explains how much this new generation of faculty, like Dr. Hurston, who was mentored as an undergraduate and a graduate, has benefited from formal mentoring.

Dr. Hurston is part of an institutionally enforced mentoring program at her university where she is on the tenure-track: "I actually have two mentors. . . I have a junior faculty member who is tenured and then I have a very senior faculty person who's tenured and an endowed chair. [. . .] They intersect with my research interests, so they were very good choices. And they try to, the department, tries to identify volunteers, but very well-matched volunteers, who can really help junior faculty to blossom." In addition, she discussed peer

mentoring in the form of a writing group for junior faculty to “encourage each other and keep each other on track, you know, in terms of the requirements for tenure [. . .] I mean I can’t tell you just the great advice that I’ve gotten from my colleagues in terms of reading my material and how it has really kept me on track with the writing schedule and my goals for myself.” Again, unlike many of the faculty I interviewed such as Wheatley, Lorde, and Douglass, Hurston was receiving useful guidance from senior faculty and peers, which she hoped would help her gain tenure in the future. Based on others she knew in the profession, she sensed that her experience was especially supportive and she was grateful: “I feel like that I’ve been nurtured just as much as I’ve been able to nurture while I’ve been there [. . .] It’s not just the sort of structured mentoring, but also, all of the informal mentoring that goes on is fabulous and that’s something that again is probably hard to come by in any job situation.” Clearly, Hurston was being mentored formally and informally, but because I interviewed her before she had her tenure review, I do not know the final outcome of the mentoring that she was so fortunate to receive. Mentoring, in and of itself, will not guarantee a favorable tenure review, but it certainly helps.

Some of the interviewees did not have a mentor and did not seem to be troubled by it. Certainly, many of these faculty were already very driven to earn their degrees when they did (all in the late sixties, early seventies coinciding with the onset of inclusion of ethnic literature and history in the traditional canon). At that time, support and mentoring came from their families, friends, and churches, but not necessarily from their academic institutions. All the faculty reported tremendously positive experiences with students, both undergraduate and graduate. Although they enjoyed teaching, they knew that through a mentoring relationship, they could contribute most closely to their students’ careers. In

addition, some expressed a desire to replicate their academic legacy by mentoring students who wanted to pursue higher degrees and study their own culture. Now, I move to the next theme and it is noteworthy that Hill Collins argues that “subordinate groups have long had to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations and to rearticulate them through our own specialists” (1991, p. 202). The next section explores the various ways faculty define and value themselves.

The Meaning of Self-Definition and Self-Valuation

Hill Collins places The meaning of self-Definition and self-valuation first when she articulates the three key themes of Black Feminist Thought, defining it in this way: “Self-definition involves challenging the political knowledge-validation process that has resulted in externally-defined, stereotypical images of Afro-American womanhood. In contrast, self-valuation stresses the content of Black women’s self-definitions- namely, replacing externally-derived images with authentic Black female images” (1986, p. 17-18). Similarly, Hill Collins explains the significance of this theme:

Defining and valuing one’s consciousness of one’s own self-defined standpoint in the face of images that foster a self-definition as the objectified “other” is an important way of resisting the dehumanization essential to systems of domination. The status of being “other” implies being “other than” or different from the assumed norm of white male behavior. (1986, pp. 18-19)

For the purpose of this section, I consider how self-definition can be understood in the credos of the faculty and how self-valuation can be explored based on committee involvement and emotional stresses.

Credos

For the humanities scholars, I situate this theme last because they do not discuss how or why they value themselves, they just do it with firm opinions. Less preoccupied with the

process of how they realized they were valuable, they assert themselves confidently and self-assuredly. Most participants expressed a credo that they used to cope with institutionalized racism. Some of them were aware that this was their motto, and some just expressed attitudes that I characterized as a set of beliefs developed to respond to micro-aggressions or routine disrespect. Frequently during our interview, Dr. Douglass revealed his attitude frankly:

I won't budge. I won't capitulate. I've seen it all. I don't support mistreatment. I'll never leave a place just because someone didn't want me to be there. . . . I don't retreat if I believe I'm in the right . . . At this university, people will get angry with you if you object to being mistreated.

His dauntless attitude was the reason I gave him the pseudonym Frederick Douglass, a freed slave, and later an abolitionist and orator, who wrote his own autobiographical narrative. He defied and dominated his overseer by fighting with him physically. Inspired by the historical Douglass, Professor Douglass stood up for himself and the downtrodden.

Some faculty expressed more universal beliefs that represented values that were not restricted to seeing themselves as racial representatives. When Dr. Lorde considered what she would tell a junior faculty member, she recommended: [do] "not sell your soul to the school and the school will require that of you. The administrators act like you are being disloyal if you consider taking a position someplace else. [. . .] They think you belong to the plantation. And my advice would be 'don't belong to the plantation.'" Lorde had recently retired and felt free to dispense wisdom that she herself had wished someone had offered her, so some of her advice was tinged with remorse for a career that had been spent with loyalty to a particular institution and that loyalty had not been repaid.

Wheatley maintained a strong departmental presence and refused to be dismissed:

I'm not going to be invisible. On the faculty side, for some, the initial response to me is that I am a 'ball busting, black bitch' and that I am a big black lady who is going to beat them up. In general, I have good relations with the [white] faculty in the department and across campus.

Extroverted and popular, she attended faculty receptions, campus speakers, departmental job-talks, and campus-wide convocations, as well as student musical and artistic events.

Professor Marshall referred to his classroom persona and demeanor as well as the way in which he believed his colleagues characterized him:

Now, I never pretended to know everything; I never tried to beat them [the students] up. I tried to encourage them and keep them awake, tell jokes, and be interesting [. . .] When we were formulating our admissions policy in anticipation of Grutter [Michigan's law school affirmative action decision] and we had drafted some materials that people weren't altogether happy about, I asked 'May we withdraw our proposal and bring it back to the next meeting?' So we withdrew it, in good faith [and revised in later. . .] A lot of people will say that Marshall is a 'Bring us together sort of guy.' But, we've disputed.

For Marshall, then, consensus was important to him and his credo became his *modus operandi* in the department, which helped him win battles that he determined were worth fighting.

Credos seemed to be a coping mechanism to dealing with chronic devaluation of one's work, historic under-representation, or a perception that one is under-qualified. In general, the humanities faculty had strong credos. Philosophies or credos seemed to help keep them sane when dealing with white colleagues who just "don't" get it" or routinely

perceive African American colleagues as under-qualified. In fact, for some faculty, the credo exemplified how they were able to effectively respond to the racism that they experienced. With the exception of Dr. Hurston and Dr. Sidney, I interviewed tenured professors, and in the case of Wheatley and Marshall endowed full professors, it could be argued that their successful promotion was both a consequence of and a side effect of their determination. Instead of asking faculty what they did to get to the ivory tower, I asked them to reflect upon how they “made it” and why. One literature professor referred to the title of a poem by Alice Walker “Each one, Pull one” as a source of inspiration. Some referred in general to a debt that needed to be paid to enslaved ancestors or to older family members whose intellectual potential was untapped because of unequal educational opportunities or other historical obstacles such as segregated schooling.

Professor Lorde was mistreated and disrespected by her white colleagues at a university in New England and took a leave to teach at another prestigious university in New England and, later, had a visiting professorship at another elite school. At both of the other schools, she was “treated as a star.” When she returned to her home institution, she adopted this attitude: “So coming back to University X, I just don’t let them kick me around anymore. I think a lot of the old guard have retired, so I think people respect me now, but you know by this time, I’ve had three books that have been finalists for National Book Awards. They’d better respect me.” Her remark also captures how some faculty like Lorde and Wheatley strategically responded to institutional racism, by publishing so much scholarship and by winning so many awards that colleagues cannot accuse them of not being productive or not being effective teachers.

Still, she was dubious of the criteria that her colleagues used to praise certain scholarship and resentful that her work as a poet was devalued, especially when compared to her literary criticism, and her credo also embodied her skeptical attitude about academic endeavors in general: “Even in an English department . . . much of that work is really fourth or fifth rate. People make their careers writing about nobodies.” This aspect of her belief system represented an attitude that was related to being a proud African American woman poet, who stood alone, “telling it” like she saw it, which is why I used the pseudonym of Audre Lorde for her. After spending more than three decades in the academy, she had developed a high degree of skepticism about the value of academic work, and she did not take herself, or scholarship, very seriously anymore. When one is rooted in a community that has been disenfranchised and disempowered for as long as the African American community has been, it is not uncommon to look at entrenched institutions with a critical eye of an outsider within, especially because for so long, institutions have excluded African Americans from receiving rights guaranteed to other citizens. Dr. Lorde shared a vivid experience of a counter example to show attitudinal differences between how she perceived a situation versus the way a white professor understood it:

When I was on a committee chaired by a colleague, . . . I’m spending probably thirty hours [in addition to regular duties]. I wasn’t eating dinner with my family while I was on this committee . . . And I went into a committee meeting once and said, ‘This is not right. This is only a job. This is not life. . . I do not feel that the university has the right to ask this kind of commitment of us.’ And my colleague who was chairing the committee, said, ‘Well, when you are getting paid by the king, you have to do the

king's work.' I said 'That may be your metaphor. I have a different metaphor. This the master and the slave.' Yes. Yeah."

While Dr. Lorde compared her work conditions to enslavement, Dr. Wheatley rooted her support base in institutions apart from the university: "I get support from my family and from church . . . So, some of the battles I have in the department, I talk to people outside the academy, friends. I have to look to those outside the university for social connection . . . I have great satisfaction in my work. It is a private and personal outlet for me and also an outlet for connection." Related to this notion of personal outlets is the next section about committee burdens, and here, Hill Collins is relevant because she claims that the value of self-definition and self-valuation are to allow "Afro-American women to reject internalized, psychological oppression" (1986 p. 18). In committees and with other types of responsibilities, Black feminist thought can help explain how to understand the psychic toll and emotional burdens of African Americans.

Committee Responsibilities and Other Burdens

Overall, at predominantly white universities, African American faculty are more frequently asked for their cultural expertise than their white colleagues because of the constituency they are perceived to represent. Because there is still not a critical mass, the price minority and African American faculty pay in not having critical mass is that, for all kinds of reasons, they are solicited for a number of committee assignments, such as a chancellor's committee, a provost's committee, a dean's committee, a minority scholarship committee; in an effort to ensure that the group is diverse, administrators will often ask the same individuals. Professor Marshall remarked about this phenomenon:

Where the same person is being asked, he or she has to make tough choices, especially when un-tenured. Then undergraduates might want role models. And so in addition to the committee obligations, you have students who want to establish a closer relationship with you. And so I think that's an added pressure that hasn't changed since I've been here.

For example, Wheatley addressed how busy she was:

But the main challenge is how difficult faculty schedules are. We are so busy, so busy. . . It would be like another job to sustain all those contacts with other black faculty. . . I get asked to write loads of letters of recommendation or to give talks or make statements. When I reached 80 letters of recommendations, I decided to curtail . . . There are so many demands that are placed on black faculty, likely more than white faculty . . . there are some in the department that treat this like a day job and because they don't do more, the demands on the rest of us are affected.

Dr. Douglass' attitude was that he was a "custodian of the state. My white colleagues may believe that the Dean or the Chair employs them, but I don't. I work for the state," but his sense was that most committees were a waste of time and that he would rather devote his energy to teaching. He kept his presence on committees to a minimum: "I have served on committees to help out, but I don't feel compelled to do so. You can ask me to do something, and I can decline." His situation was complicated because while he claimed not to be interested in participating in campus-wide committees, he was very much interested in serving on hiring committees. He said that he was not informed that most faculty were reviewed every five years for promotion. Clearly, Douglass suspected that his committee load was restricted to committees that would not impact the department hiring, and he felt

disempowered by what he perceived as an intentional effort by his colleagues to minimize his voice.

Leaving a Legacy

Although this question was not included in my initial round of questions, it developed after a few interviews, when I realized that several of the faculty were considering retirement. Since a large cadre of incoming junior faculty have not joined these seasoned professors, and offered hope that their work will continue, they are looking to the future. Professor Wheatley worried about three related issues: first, increasing recruitment of junior faculty of color, second, the shrinking number of incoming graduate students of color and third, limited funding, which disproportionately affects students of color: “I do want to leave a legacy and I want our department to hire some younger assistant professors. I want to leave the department in good shape for when I’m gone. We’ve made progress” (5). But her optimism in that regard soured when she reflected about the small number of African American undergraduates who pursue graduate study in the humanities:

Why should they go into this field, where there is less money, when they can make more money as doctors? [. . .] There was a bubble (of African American academics) in the late 1960s and early 1970s [. . .] By 2010, I bet we’ll reach a flat-line in terms of integration of black academics in white academia. It’s not getting better, that’s for sure. Especially when it is so much more lucrative for good students to become lawyers. In the early 1970s, there was a wave. But I doubt it will be duplicated in the same numbers as it was then. [. . .] But overall I would say there are very few black academics coming to Tier I research universities.

Third, she lamented that graduate students of color do not enter humanities programs because: “There is no money. Why should students of color come here without funding? Funding is a major piece of the puzzle. [. . .] I don’t expect the enrollment of students of color to change any time soon because we need to find fellowships in order to recruit students. We need to give our students funding just to do work and contribute to the profession. I tell it like it is. We don’t recruit students of color and so they don’t come.”

Professor Marshall shared about a decision to use a secret ballot on tenure and hiring decisions. His concerns about the future reflect his philosophy:

I said I thought this would make us head down a road where we have never been before and from which I fear we would never return. We voted it down [. . .] So, I mean, you know, I think when the issues were important, I have tried to be a constructive force[. . .] And as I have gotten older, I have been saying to myself, the future of the school is in the folks who have 30 years ahead of them, not 30 years behind them. So we have made changes that didn’t seem exactly right to me, but the people got to live with ‘em longer than I have.

So, for Professor Marshall, part of his legacy was related to the textbooks he wrote, the law cases he helped law students prosecute defending low-income clients, encouraging students to think about social justice for the downtrodden, and part was related to the institutional structures related to tenure battles that would affect the junior faculty and those who would follow them.

When I interviewed Dr. Douglass, I had not yet included the legacy question, and he made it very clear that his two books were an academic legacy about which he was very proud. In addition, he was slated to retire at the end of the academic year during which I

interviewed him, and he was busy working on organizing a reunion of all the graduate students who either had their master's or doctoral degrees in African American literature since 1969 for an academic conference, so this event and the academic contributions of dozens of his former students was certainly a key part of his legacy.

Dr. Lorde had a very tangible response to legacy, a non-profit writer's retreat house that she was putting into place with the help of some financial support from her university, even though she felt that they extorted more years of teaching service from her as a result. She recounted that "the older I've gotten and the more invested I have become in writing poetry, the less I believe my legacy has to do with teaching undergraduates. I think it has to more to do with writing and publishing. And now I have this artist colony and that's really where I think my legacy is going to be." She clarified that the university is providing some funds, but in return she had to sign a contract, promising to teach in exchange for a donation. Her friends said that the university was holding her in "indentured servitude"; she had initially envisioned it as a place only for African American writers. When she affiliated with the university, however, they would not agree to it being exclusively for any one race. She offered more details and explanation:

So, it had to be multicultural, so I had to give up my primary reason for it . . . but the writers could write about anything. Although, I do think most African American poets are driven to write work that is socially conscious in some way. And I actually don't mind the idea that it be multicultural, but [. . .] all of the artist colonies I've ever been to, I've always been the only African American there at the time. I don't want it to be like that. Because if you are there with other minorities, you don't have to explain yourself so much . . . So there's some kind of special solidarity and encouragement

and speaking at least to some extent the same language and understanding why someone might be interested in writing about a certain topic.

She firmly believed that this writer's retreat would be a permanently established place for poets of color to feel community and for writers of color to feel understood and nurtured in their art.

Marginal Perspectives: A Conclusion

In terms of remedies for how to recruit more African American faculty or how to increase the retention of African American faculty, some of the participants had specific policy suggestions and some included ideas for how to minimize the isolation that African American faculty sometimes feel. Some were troubled by the fact that although the number of African American undergraduates has been increasing steadily, many of them are choosing to pursue careers in science, law, and the social sciences, yet few are choosing the humanities.

Although Hurston seemed pleased that white faculty were teaching topics related to African American philosophy, literature, history, or art, as a sign that these subjects were valuable and worthy of being taught by all faculty, regardless of race, I wondered if there was the same type of reciprocity that it is vital for African American scholars not to be ghettoized by presuming that they can only be experts in fields that are related to their ethnicity. What I should have asked was if the department chair encouraged and supported African American faculty to teach traditional Western European culture, art, literature, history, and philosophy, or were African American faculty segregated to "their" specialty, while white faculty were able to specialize in historically white, European fields as well as African American fields? Did the teaching flexibility cut both ways or was segregation subtly enforced, and she misperceived the intention? Her perspective certainly stood out from the

other interviewees, but I credit that to a difference in generation. As will be noted in later findings, I conclude each chapter with a section entitled “marginal perspectives” because at least one of the interviewees expressed views about certain topics that were noticeably different from the others. But, the differences among the humanities faculty fell solidly along generational lines. Dr. Sidney was in his mid-fifties, Drs. Lorde, Marshall, and Wheatley were in their early sixties, and Dr. Douglass was 70, and their personal philosophies, experiences, and responses were similar and we all grounded in significant experiences with institutional racism, although none were as significant as Dr. Sidney’s. Dr. Hurston, who was in her early thirties, however, did reap the benefits of having her path trail-blazed for her and she seemed appreciative of having an easier road, but again, because she elected to take an administrative- research intensive position, it is difficult to determine what her tenure process would have been like for her.

English, history, foreign languages, and philosophy faculty often enter into administrative positions and hold powerful positions across campuses. In addition, because of the interdisciplinary work that they often do, they may interact with other scholars across campus and compare notes about tenure processes, collegial collaboration, department head support, and opportunities for research leaves. By observing these phenomena and practicing their skills of closely examining texts and analyzing them for subtle meaning, the humanities professors were the group most closely attuned to the presence of discrimination, disparate treatment, slights, and gestures of disrespect. I ordered the themes in this chapter in such a way that highlighted how they were trained in their discipline to tease out meaning from in-person interactions or documents and interpret their relevance. Except for Dr. Sidney, their ethnicity and culture were vital to their research, yet unlike the social scientists, whom I will

profile next, their self –definitions were not a dimension of themselves that they talked about a great deal; they just enacted their self-definition with their behavior by mobilizing what they valued in political action, mentoring, hiring minorities, producing scholarship that positively showcased their racial heritage, and refusing to let isolation or suspicion keep them down. Like the persona in Cullen’s poem that framed this chapter, they had struggled with paradoxes implicit in why God made the mole blind, but the real mystery was why injustice persisted, and why God would make a poet black and deny him tenure.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL SCIENCE FINDINGS

Once riding in old Baltimore,/ Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,/
I saw a Baltimorean/ Keep looking straight at me./
Now I was eight and very small,/ And he was no whit bigger,/
And so I smiled, but he poked out/ His tongue and called me, "Nigger."
I saw the whole of Baltimore/ From May until December;/
Of all the things that happened there/ That's all that I remember.

-“Incident” by Countee Cullen (1925)

This chapter begins with this poem by Countee Cullen because one of the professors whom I interviewed, Dr. Parks, recounted a similar incident which occurred in her classroom in 2002. Like the persona in the poem, she responded in surprise and disappointment when a student called her a racial epithet, but she did not file hate-speech charges against the student, even though her department chair told her he would support any action she wished to take against the student. While I was shocked as she shared this particular classroom interchange, she had enough distance from it to consider it with detachment. While I thought she might have recommended strict punishments and diversity training, she let it go, chalking the experience up to his ignorance. In this dissertation, I have focused primarily on the ways in which institutional racism and other methods of covert racism have embedded themselves within the academy, especially the internal workings of personal and professional isolation, committee responsibilities, tenure committees, and suspicion about research output and focus. But this student’s comment is an example of overt racism and blatant hostility; moreover, he succeeded in making Dr. Parks feel like an outsider, within her own classroom.

Most of the social scientists whom I interviewed, like the humanities professors, had a clear sense of the way that institutional race can factor into tenure battles and how colleagues' cultural insensitivity can affect hiring decisions. Many were keenly aware of the subtle forms of racism and the difficulties in feeling connected to other departmental faculty that I have pointed out in earlier chapters such as over-producing academic work, self-imposed or externally-imposed academic segregation because of research specialty, self-imposed or externally imposed social segregation from other faculty, or involvement in committees or student mentoring related to cultivating diversity. The humanities faculty, on the whole, shared stories of struggle with institutional racism and its subtle and varied manifestations, but the responses of the social scientists whom I interviewed were more mixed, stretching my analytical skills to see if I could decipher trends in the data. While the humanities faculty seemed to incorporate a more comprehensive understanding of all of the themes of Black Feminist Thought into their beliefs and behaviors, the social scientists held the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation and the importance of African American women's culture as their main epistemological perspectives. After considering these perspectives, they concluded that the interlocking nature of oppression was integral to the way their self-definition and culture emerged in their research.

For example, neither Dr. Hamer nor Dr. Bethune, both of whom worked as professionals for at least fifteen years before they entered doctoral programs, had young children to care for while they were pursuing tenure. Dr. Hamer was divorced and childless and Dr. Bethune was married, but her children were older. Neither had attended an HBCU as undergraduates. In addition, Dr. Hamer and Dr. Bethune were from Midwestern states, with a low density population of African Americans. Consequently, they were accustomed to a

cultural climate and a workplace environment that, like the academy, was primarily white, and instead of sensitizing them to discrimination, they seemed to either not notice it or have the good fortune not to be affected by it. Yet Hill Collins' theory offers an empowering explanation for their response to the academy: "If Black women find themselves in settings where total conformity is expected and where traditional forms of activism . . . are impossible, then the individual women who in their consciousness choose to be self-defined and self-evaluating are activists" (1986, p. 24). These women, while demonstrating a desire to mentor women and conduct research related to African American children, were unconvinced that they had experienced institutional racism, yet saw the inherent value in maintaining their faculty presence for the next generation of students. In contrast, Dr. Carver, Parks and Wells had life experiences that sensitized them to the nature of oppression as it manifests in work, housing, the legal system, and public schooling.

While two taught at public universities and three taught at private ones, most of them had been teaching for at least twenty years, but one had only eight years of experience. Unlike the junior faculty member from the humanities, Dr. Hurston, who was supported with research leaves and publication opportunities, these social science faculty forged their careers with little departmental support, except for Dr. Wells who had received a federal research travel grant. Dr. Hamer's narrative functioned as a contrast to the other narratives because her experiences were unlike the rest of the social scientists and her views did not fit in with theirs. Social scientists, like other scholars, are not a monolithic group and her marginal perspective made her stand out from the other faculty whom I interviewed because she claimed that she did not feel isolated at all. Her views did not conform to the equity and justice bent of many social scientists, nor did she maintain views consistent with her activity

as a lead member of a committee to enhance diversity and inclusion on campus. In fact, her participation in this committee highlighted the stark hypocrisy of her total inaction and silence when she could have advocated for African American professors at her small college, including Dr. Sidney. Except for Dr. Hamer, all of the social scientists, published research related to the intersection of their discipline of politics, economics, education, leadership, and communication with their African American culture. Their research, though, is based on the reflective nature of Social Science training to consider the role of the self when one approaches a research topic and to focus on self-discovery as part of academic inquiry. So, while their culture was the primary lens through which they saw the world and their self-valuation was a main mode of looking at the world, after observing these phenomena, oppression's interlocking nature was the world-view that they concluded could more comprehensively account for what they experienced as African American faculty.

A brief word about the theme that Hill Collins refers to as "The Importance African American Women's Culture" (1986, p. 21): Dr. Carver was the only male social scientist whose interview was included in this dissertation, but he is a feminist, by his own admission, and co-authors many of his articles with women social scientists who are anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and economists. Even though Hill Collins' category specifically addresses women, I think this a limitation of her theory because she precludes the possibility that a man can be feminist due to the sexism that has characterized the political, artistic, social, and literary history of African American women. It should be noted that it has been twenty-two years since Hill Collins forwarded her theory and that I took exception to the way she excludes African American men's contribution; therefore, I have

included African American male professors and believe that they sufficiently can still be categorized as outsiders within the academy.

The Importance of African American Women's Culture

Isolation

Although Professor Bethune claimed that she did not feel isolated (“I don’t feel the need that I have to go out with people all the time. I have my buddies on campus So, no, I’m fine.”), four of the five faculty experienced significant personal and professional isolation. This isolation was externally imposed in the case of Dr. Carver, whose career was rather distinguished. He had been very productive in his career and had published ten books and 125 articles in the most prestigious journals. But after researching in his field for many years, he became more and more interested in inter-disciplinary research between his field and historical and political topics relevant to African Americans. Presuming to understand his motivation for doing so, his colleagues judged him believing he was no longer doing “serious” work. When I asked how many African American colleagues were in his department, he surprised me: “I’m the only one they will encounter and have been for a long time, and that’s much to my dismay.” When I asked him how it felt to be the only African American faculty member for more than twenty years, he replied:

I’m tired of it. Well, I’m tired of the fact that this department has never hired any other black faculty members. Well, there are a couple of occasions, I think two, where offers have gone to other blacks, and those folks went elsewhere. Yeah, I generally don’t think it’s a priority. I think people will say, ‘Oh, we’re going to hire the best person we can find and so we’re not going to really generally give much attention to the fact that we’re a department that consists of only almost all white males.’

Dr. Carver, then, felt unsupported by his department, even though he had been lured away from another major research university, where he had already been granted tenure. But the fact that he had been the only African American faculty member for so many years disturbed him. A strong individualist, he characterized himself sarcastically as “not exactly a shrinking violet I enjoy confrontation particularly over intellectual ideas. I can’t think of a significant number of situations where people, students, have asked me questions that are suggestive of their questioning my credentials.” Unlike some of the other social scientists, Professor Carver acknowledged that being the only African American faculty bothered him, but it did not reduce his productivity. He was also the only man I interviewed, and he enjoyed a warm relationship with his wife and sons. Three of the other social science participants, Professors Wells, Hamer, and Parks, were single, which is characteristic of African American women in the academy overall, and they relied on the church and friendships for support. Drs. Carver, Hamer and Dr. Parks did not report socializing outside of on-campus gatherings with any of their colleagues, but Dr. Bethune and Wells did.

After graduating from a public university in the Midwest that was “certainly very white,” Professor Hamer taught in a small private college in the Mid-Atlantic, and her department only had seven faculty full -time members. In 1993, she was the first full-time African American woman to be hired by the college, and in 1996, she was also the first tenured African American faculty member. Her current dean was also African American, but when asked if she felt isolated, she said that she did not, in part” because I am personable.” Perhaps the reason Dr. Hamer did not feel isolated on campus was because her self –concept was so oriented around being capable. She was childless and divorced, not lamenting either situation, repeating several times, perhaps defensively, that she was raised by “very strong

women” who wanted her to be autonomous also. She had worked in corporate communications for many years, and, there too, she was often the only African American employee, so she had become accustomed to her minority status, and she did not seem to regard herself as an outsider within. She said: “I don’t think about it. But I guess I do think about it (race) when someone leaves. There have been four African American faculty who have left since I came.” Even though she claimed to “not think about race,” she claimed her most challenging teaching experience is that:

I feel discouraged about the number of people of color entering the teaching profession. My friends [presumably black friends] don’t recommend that their children become teachers. These are even friends who are teachers. They say it is “too hard.” We need to be represented in the schools. The children need to see African Americans in positions of authority in the school and they need to see qualified teachers, caring teachers because there aren’t enough of us.

Based on this comment, Dr. Hamer was distressed by how few African American educators were teaching in the public school, but she did not transfer that same worry to the small number of African American faculty at her college. Because she had worked in public schools in various capacities for fifteen years before entering the professoriate, perhaps she believed it was more important for schools that had a high population of students of color to have teachers of color and prioritized that need over the need of a private college to recruit and retain African American faculty. Her actions seemed to contradict her views because she claimed that hiring and promoting public school teachers of color was vitally important, yet, she was unconcerned about the same issue at the college level.

In our interview, Dr. Hamer described how much she valued her solitude at the college. She shared views that combined a credo about the value of solitude and a manifesto on independence. This statement of beliefs gave me insight into why she may not have intervened to help other African American faculty, while paradoxically desiring more African Americans to teach in public schools. She described how her solitary status made her feel:

Four black faculty have left since I came. But, nobody bothers me here If you think you won't feel comfortable here, then don't come here. If you are going to stay here, you need to be comfortable with who you are. Nobody asks me here if I am doing my job. I do what I want. I volunteered for the diversity council; I wasn't asked because I am a black faculty. I have my autonomy. It feels right to work here.

Dr. Hamer's remarks were insensitive to African American faculty who do not "feel comfortable." When she reported that four faculty members had been hired, but had left since her arrival at the university in 1993, I should have asked her what she did to encourage or advise them, especially since she had been granted tenure. Later in this chapter, I describe Hamer's beliefs, how much she valued her autonomy and how appreciative she was that no one asked her if she was doing her job, but apparently, she did not consider supporting fellow African American faculty part of her job. Her lack of concern for why African American faculty left her campus furthered my sense that she felt that some people belonged on her campus, and some people did not, a biased viewpoint, reflecting a disjunction between her solidarity with African American professors and her lack of effort to increase her college's low retention rate. In addition, her isolation represents an outsider within perspective, but she seemed to want to become an insider and not help other outsiders remain at her college. Ironically, Dr. Hamer was a key member of a specially selected committee that issued a

report “For a Diverse and Inclusive Community,” recommending what the president do to make the campus more welcoming to people of different ethnicities, religions, ages, nationalities, and physical ability levels. Yet, instead of trying to foster a sense of community and diversity at her college, she contradicted her own purported core values: she wanted to highlight how upset she was that so few African Americans became public school teachers, but, she neglected to mentor other African American faculty.

Socially isolated her whole career, Dr. Wells shared an anecdote about how her white colleagues were oblivious about how “naturalized” racism has become. Here, she referred to “these are people who write about race. These are good leftists; they are people who hate racism, but they don’t have a clue. But if you were to mention it or to bring it up, then there’s something wrong with you. You’re too touchy or you’re overdoing it or you’re exaggerating.” She offered an example:

The grand dame of our department . . . she was chair for a while and had a lot of socials at her house and I would often go. And I remember I had a social at my house . . . It was mostly black people and she and her husband came, and afterwards she was so upset. She said ‘I felt no one would really talk to me. I felt, you know, kind of isolated.’ She told me this at the party. And I thought to myself, ‘This is how I feel at your house all the time. But I don’t talk to you about it.’ . . . She’s my good friend, but bless her heart, she doesn’t get it, you know. It’s because this is the system. It’s a systematic, institutional, historical force that is beyond some individual’s good intentions.

Dr. Wells perfectly understood how uncomfortable it felt to feel isolated at a social event, but this was a new experience for her colleague. For Dr. Wells, who was silent about her own

outsider within experiences of not fitting in, this exchange highlighted how ignorant white people can be about how racial difference can affect any gathering, what Peggy McIntosh refers to in her article “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (1990).

When Dr. Parks interviewed for her job, the panel included Dr. Wells, who was a well-respected senior scholar in the field, but after Parks was hired, Wells was awarded a three-year international research opportunity. Dr. Parks told me that she had mixed feelings about Dr. Wells’ absence: “I was so sad to hear that because she was part of the interview Having her here attracted me to the position and to the school even more because she is a leader in our field and I hoped I could learn from her and get guidance from her.” During those first three years, another African American woman was hired, but Parks focused on publishing, and when she had her sixth year review, she earned tenure. She wanted to make clear however, that those were lonely years:

When I first arrived, I went to a couple of black faculty and staff get-togethers and meetings . . . but then I got busy with the tenure application and academic schedule and committee responsibilities. I certainly do not feel solidarity across campus and I am not connected even in my department . . . many of us say we’d like to be more connected, but we go into our offices and we work on research and we work with our students, but most of that goes on behind closed doors.

The psychological price that many African American scholars face, especially women with children, is profound isolation, but it is required in order to succeed in the profession, especially because of the solitary nature of research and writing. While I acknowledge that most academics experience isolation due to the nature of the profession, it exemplifies institutional racism to the extent that African American faculty are not asked to socialize

outside the department and it is in this sphere that many opportunities for publishing, co-authoring, and editing anthologies arise.

Hill Collins here is very useful in that for Dr. Parks, whose first years as a full-time professor coincided with being stripped of sisterhood, a vitally important aspect of her African American culture. Hill Collins explains: “it appears that the notion of sisterhood- generally understood to mean a supportive feeling of loyalty and attachment to other women stemming from a shared feeling of oppression- has been an important part of Black women’s culture” (1986, p. 22). Dr. Parks, at the time that the student called her “a nigger,” had just experienced the loss of her mother, and with Dr. Wells gone too, she had no sense of sisterhood at the institution where her very presence guaranteed her outsider status, and where his comment silenced her. Hill Collins offers what might explain Dr. Parks’ minimal and emotionally muted response to the hateful word: “Black women may overtly conform to the societal roles laid out for them, yet covertly oppose these roles in numerous spheres, an opposition shaped by the consciousness of being on the bottom” (1986, p. 23). In other words, because Dr. Parks felt so isolated emotionally in her department, devastated by the loss of her mother, and without a sense of sisterhood from a colleague, she conformed to the societal role of the African American woman, who is silenced by epithets, abused, and unable to defend herself, and victimized, even if temporarily. Yet, Dr. Parks did oppose that role in “numerous spheres” by mentoring African American undergraduates and local teens. In this way, she reclaimed her power and turned a disempowering act into activism.

Mentoring

Professor Carver, whose father had a Ph.D., reflected on his father’s role in his life, his own mentors, and his own role as a mentor:

I think the mentoring that I received, the most significant mentoring, occurred before I got to graduate school. . . . But first of all, my father is an academic. . . I think people overemphasize this notion of the necessity of role models because my father didn't have one. But on the other hand, I had a natural role model. So, in some ways, there was nothing surprising to me about black folks having advanced degrees.

While he did not speculate about where his father, who earned his Ph.D. in the 1960s, looked for advice, he realized that while he had the model of his father, his father had no one to guide him, and he respected his father's independence. Dr. Carver also had undergraduate and graduate mentors at private schools in New England. Although he was not mentored after he became a faculty member, he made it very clear that he benefited from a relationship with someone he referred to as "a very, very important mentor." This social science professor taught him during his freshmen year and did not specialize in the field that Carver ultimately pursued for graduate study, yet: "it was in his section that I sort of really began to get the sense that I had somewhat of a gift for really thinking critically. He could give me material to read, and I really would contemplate about what's the argument being made here, what's the evidence, what's the ideological frame that's shaping it. So, I think, in his class, that crystallized for me, and he was very supportive." In graduate school, he met a professor who sensed that Carver had not learned a fundamental quantitative method as thoroughly as he needed to, and so he asked the department to assign Carver a more advanced graduate student tutor. As a result of his own studying and his tutorials, afterward, he was prepared for the course that his professor was worried about: "So, what I always admired about that was that he did not take the view that I wasn't capable of doing (names specialized course), but that I just needed additional preparation to succeed at it and he facilitated that." He also credited

his dissertation supervisor, who “is to this day one my best friends [and] he really encouraged me to take on topics that were certainly not run of the mill.” Professor Carver appreciated what his mentors did to help him reach his academic potential and that none of them foreclosed any avenues for advancement for him simply because he was African American.

Dr. Carver has very strong relationships with his mentees, both graduate and undergraduate and many have prospered in academia. For many years, Dr. Carver directed an undergraduate research program designed to encourage African American, Latino, and Native American students to pursue doctoral work by pairing them for a summer with a mentor professor. His colleague was a program mentor and apparently her experience:

broke through a sense that there might be something inappropriate about telling me about an outstanding black student. You know, it’s kind of a perverse thing. I mean some of them might feel that if they tell me it’s, you know, why should they be telling me? Is that a form of racism to be telling me? But anyway, this colleague told me about this student who had done very, very well in her class and she was very impressed with her. And then, she [the student] participated in the summer program here and now the student is finishing her Ph.D. at M.I.T. So, you know, it’s useful for me to know about these students, not simply because we’re both black, but because I actually have some avenues that I can offer them I think it’s my role more of a mentor than a classroom instructor that I think has been more valuable. . . . I think the continuity of the relationship is greater once you develop a mentor/ mentee relationship, more so than when you are exclusively engaged in being a student’s classroom instructor.

Dr. Carver established himself early in his profession as a serious scholar, and throughout his career, he generously and actively mentored students. Wanting to ensure that students had formal support in place, he chose to affiliate with an institutional mentoring program. Later in the interview, he was careful to point out that even though his university hosted this program, they provided none of the funding for it and he did not over-generalize the presence of the program with the university's desire to recruit or retain African American faculty. Throughout the interview, Dr. Carver criticized the gap between the rhetoric of the university to promote diversity on campus, and the fact that when he was hired he was the only African American professor in the department and 23 years later, he was still the only one. For Dr. Carver, whose discipline relied on quantitative analysis, the numbers spoke for themselves.

Dr. Parks, who was the most junior social science faculty I interviewed, earned her Ph.D. in 1997 and after graduate school, she was looking for a department that had at least one African American faculty member, so that she could feel a sense of cultural connection, especially since she was raising two sons by herself. During our interview, she shared how valuable it was to her to have "solidarity and a sense of community with other black faculty." She felt a great degree of comfort with Dr. Wells, who interviewed her when she applied for the job, but Wells' three-year Fulbright fellowship took her abroad. She wanted to benefit from the mentoring from Wells would provide and was looking forward to the solidarity that she hoped she would feel with Wells. While in graduate school, she had received mentoring support, socialized with others in her discipline, and although she hoped the same would be true when she became a professor, it was not. Her lack of mentoring did not seem to detract from her promotion, since she was granted tenure in 2003, but the road could have easier with a mentor. Paradoxically, she felt a great sense of independence because she earned

tenure without the mothering guidance of a mentor. In fact, she claimed that she felt she “had finally earned the right to be here” in the academy.

Dr. Hamer was mentored and credited role models for providing a sense of what she could accomplish in her profession. When asked to what she owed her sense of confidence, she spoke primarily of the women mentors and role models in her life:

I have had great mentors. . . . My mentor encouraged me to be on committees, to take part in professional development, to advance my career, to go to university –wide lectures to get my face known. She took care of me; she looked out for me. . . . She wanted me to be exposed. . . . Young faculty need to be encouraged to participate and the department head needs to lead them I have struggled, but women and men have helped me all the way.

Dr. Hamer valued her mentors and expressed her appreciation by mentoring in return.

Moving to the next theme, Hill Collins tells us that “subordinate groups have long had to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations and to rearticulate them through our own specialists . . . [to] develop a distinctive Black women’s standpoint, but have done so by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge” (1991, p. 202). The next section explores the various ways faculty use to define and value themselves.

The Meaning of Self-Definition and Self-Valuation

Credos

Yolanda Moses, in her work about African American women in the academy (1989), claimed that the low retention rate of women is related to the hostility and arrogance that they face. In addition, she maintains that they experience a “chilly climate” because their departments do not value diversity. But, she does not address the attitudes that women might

adopt that could enable them to better cope with the challenging circumstances that they face. In fact, most of her remedies are institutional policy suggestions, more funding for cultural sensitivity training, and diversity workshops, instead of concrete strategies in case they get derailed by a tenure committee, isolated from colleagues, or burdened with administrative busy-work. What follows are belief systems that are articulated or created to manage institutional racism. In considering self-definition and self-valuation, Hill Collins tells us how African American women shift from their own communities, yet are mindful of the expectations of social institutions, like the university. In order to minimize the difference between the two communities:

some women dichotomize their behavior and become two different people. Over time, the strain of doing this can be enormous. Others reject their cultural context and work against their own best interest by enforcing the dominant group's specialized thought. Still others manage to inhabit both contexts but do so critically, using their outsider-within perspectives as a source of insights and ideas. (1991, p. 233)

Regardless of which strategy is used, Hill Collins emphasizes how the outsider within defines herself and values herself.

Dr. Hamer told a vivid anecdote about her father who was a letter-carrier and who taught his daughters to “wash the car, cut the grass, saw, use a drill. He taught us, raised us, to be capable and confident and to do a lot of different things. My mother was very independent; she was a widow for 30 years. She was strong and able.” She praised her parents and grandparents for bestowing her and her sister with a sense that “there is nothing I can't do.” She added that she has had help when she struggled in her career and personal life, but she remarked that she defined herself as competent: “I don't like women who whine. I am not very patient with women who don't have that quality of ‘I'm capable.’”

She encouraged her students to embrace feminist principles, especially because many young women became engaged to be married at this college, which, when she arrived, had had a strong religious affiliation. Based on her own experience, she discouraged them from rushing into marriage. She informed me that her “marriage did not survive my master’s degree.” She frankly admitted to imposing her beliefs on her students, wanting them to hear a different perspective. She advised her students to try to “not let their identities revolve around a man. I come from very strong women in my family Many of the young women here are also strong, but they all want to get married and I try to tell them that there is so much more. I encourage them to give themselves time to be alone.” Regarding academic self-valuation, Dr. Hamer was raised in a family where scholastic accomplishments were common; for example, her grandparents attended college and she had a sense of pride about her family’s educational history, especially considering how rare it would have been for African Americans of her grandparent’s generation to be college educated. Her mother, a widow who worked full-time, provided a solid example of a competent, self-assured role model for her, who took care of her daughters and helped put them through college.

In addition to her feminist views, she advocated a work ethic that would have been hard to maintain if she were married with children. She claimed that her parents “practiced and preached” the value of hard work and that she never heard them complain. She explained her family’s perspective: “I used to hear them in the kitchen, talking about work in a positive way. My sister and I are both workaholics. We work and we enjoy our work. We found something we are good at and we do it. My mother was a home economics teacher and after she retired, she worked at a military base. She taught us our work ethic and positive attitude.”

Hamer valued her independence and thought her students under-valued their independence. She worried that these women defined themselves too much by their husbands.

While growing up in a New England state, Dr. Carver was a high school debater, and his debate team won the state championships his junior and senior years. This preparation, he claimed, was instrumental in teaching him how to think in an organized and logical manner, which established what would become his career, which he phrased as “consolidating how you think about arguments and how you construct arguments and how you defend arguments.” In fact, his father had earned a Ph.D., evidence that his family clearly valued academic excellence and were stalwart trailblazers.

He, like Dr. Sidney, had a strong personality and although a little disheartened that his department did not appreciate his interest in the way his publications sometimes analyzed the way in which race intersected with his discipline, such as the achievement gap between African American, Latino, Caucasian and Asian students public school students, he let his conscience be his guide. Confident in himself, Dr. Carver enthusiastically embraced diverse research interests, unwilling to let disfavor silence him and refusing to allow his colleague’s myopic perspectives derail his social justice interests. When I asked him why so few African American students pursued graduate study in his field, he described the unwelcoming climate of his discipline and shared how they should navigate the waters of institutional racism and manage their own outsider within standing:

I’m not sure that the undergraduates actually necessarily realize that it’s hostile territory. And there are ways to maneuver in hostile territory. You could go to departments that are less hostile, okay. You can identify departments where African American scholars have completed Ph.D.’s successfully and departments that don’t

necessarily view having an African American scholar as a weird thing. [. . .] But the problem is that mix of places, or what I would call, oh let's use Amanda Lewis' language, 'identity safe' departments, those places don't align perfectly with the rankings of departments in terms of prestige. So, you'll get situations where a talented black undergraduate will be steered by faculty at their home department to go to the place they get admitted that has the highest rank. But that may not necessarily be the place where they're actually going to be likely to finish a degree. Okay. And not because of any inadequacy on their part, but because of the environment that they'll be faced with in that department. And that's a hard thing. . . but if they don't finish the degree that has ripple effects too that are more severe.

Here, Carver alluded to his belief in two important modes of coping with institutional racism. First, scholars can create alternative methods for maneuvering through "hostile territory," with the caveat that factors outside of their control will occur. Second, it is far more important for a student to finish a Ph.D. than to attempt to pursue one at a school that is unwelcoming and unsupportive, especially if that pursuit fails. For 25 years, Carver had observed the mechanisms of institutional racism, yet, his goal has always been to increase minority student graduation rates and broaden representation of minorities in the academy.

Demanding integrity in all aspects of her life, Dr. Wells, like Dr. Carver, advocated for social justice and maintained clear boundaries about what she would and would not do for the university, in addition to not wavering from her objectives for her own career and activist - oriented research. Requests for her to be on committees were frequent, yet, she asserted, "I used to be on way too many committees, had too many graduate students. But now, I've been doing this for eighteen years now. I know how to just say no. You just learn how to

prioritize.” Her attitude about the disrespect that she experienced from her colleagues and some graduate students who minimized the value of her work represents a long-term perspective: “I am just now, after almost twenty years, learning how to really not let it affect me at the core. . . .we know racism is alive and well, but it’s so convoluted and ubiquitous that it’s almost a way of life . . . it just becomes naturalized. And the insults, it’s not anything that you mark. You just think that it’s just life. But it isn’t.” After articulating the way insensitive colleagues can undermine an African American faculty member’s sense of belonging in the academy, highlighting their outsider within status, Dr. Wells shared the way she preserves hope, ending our interview optimistically:

This psychic toll, it’s a little bit more than just deciding that you can’t change people completely and altogether. Maybe some people you really can change, okay. So what do you do with that besides just decide you’re going to detach? You need something more than just to detach. You need something inspiring. What does that for me is like listening to ‘Sweet Honey in the Rock.’ [an African American women’s a cappella group]. Toni Morrison helps me immensely. Good art helps me. Listening to just people, I mean certain kinds of expressive traditions and smart people and hearing what other people are doing in the world who are brave and fearless.

Dr. Wells captured here the sentiments of what motivated me to conduct the research. These faculty inspired me to be more “brave and fearless” in learning about the challenges and they faced and to recommend policies for administrators who can help smooth their career path. Now, I move to discuss service to the university and the legacy that some faculty want to leave, which can maximize their sense of self-valuation.

Leaving a Legacy

All but one of the social science faculty I interviewed had been teaching for at least ten years and some were well-past fifteen years. Even for those not planning to retire for many years, the desire to leave a legacy was a foremost concern. In fact, leaving a legacy, whether teaching, research, or service was, one of the three responses to the different experiences that emerged from this narrative study along with credos and mentoring. Dr. Carver expressed concerns about his legacy related to his dissatisfaction at not being able to recruit likeminded junior faculty. Discouraged by how little his department valued him, Dr. Carver collaborated with many scholars outside his field and with scholars in his field, at other institutions, some of whom had been long-time friends from graduate school days. Later, I discovered that three years after our interview, he retired early from his home institution, securing a position at a higher ranked, private university where he was conducting more interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Dr. Bethune had strong feelings about the twilight of her career and saw her legacy as two-fold: trying to hire more minority faculty and sensitizing students to the special needs of minority students. Leading two faculty searches where three of the seven candidates were minorities, she considered herself as someone in a position of power to increase the number of minority faculty: “But I think we’re doing what we need to do, you know. We had a dean who is African American, we have Latinos that are moving up into higher positions; it’s working. I think it’s working. I’m not impatient with things that sometimes take time.” After we spoke about a recent Supreme Court ruling, I asked her how long she was willing to wait for more equal representation in the professoriate: “No, I can’t wait twenty years . . . I’m

not that patient. I'm patient if people are trying. See, affirmative action can very easily disappear, so that is a huge concern, because I don't think that we could have done this [looking for highly qualified African Americans and Latinos and Asians to hire] without affirmative action." Interviewing and hiring faculty of color seemed to reassure her that her white students would benefit from cross-cultural exchanges with these faculty, which would make them more sensitive to the importance of workplace diversity. She taught students from departments all across campus, and many of them planned to enter the teaching profession. She shared what she thought her contribution was:

I truly do believe that the kids that come here tend to be very privileged kids, and they've never had to deal with the populations they will teach . . . most of these kids are going to public institutions, and they have to know how to teach all kinds of kids. And I think that's why I'm here. So, I can help them think about teaching all kinds of kids. Not that another professor wouldn't, but when I started, they weren't.

After she reflected about the undergraduate students she encountered, she considered her graduate students, whom she referred to as "my legacies" and she points to photographs of her students that decorate the walls of her office. As she briefly narrated their names and accomplishments, she offered:

those are both African American women. I have a legacy in (names a man and points to another picture) and he is a white male. [. . .] So that's my legacy. So, I don't have a problem. They can be male, female, white, black, Latino. Yeah, it makes no difference. These are people that I have loved, and I have taught, and I have learned from. They will go out and do what I'm not doing now, which is teach in the public schools . . . I hope they'll treat the kids the way they should be treated. Which is not

second-guessing them, not making any assumptions about them, learning about where they're from, what their issues are, how they learn, and then teaching them that way, and allowing them to be individuals, encourage them rather than discourage.

Dr. Bethune valued connecting emotionally to her students and, appreciated that her gentle and motivational tactics would benefit not only her students, but by extension, her students' students. She hoped her legacy of offering a loving attitude toward all students, would build momentum, strengthen in number, and be passed onto future generations of educators.

Even though she succeeded in helping her white students become more comfortable dealing with people of color, by interacting with her, Dr. Hamer seemed dispirited that her department had only produced eight African American or Latina students over the past eleven years. Based on how important it seemed to her that she reach out to students of color, especially because most of her students were white, I asked her if she had applied to teach at a historically black college because there were some nearby and she had not wanted to move. She explained that one of her mentors who was an African American woman, expressed surprise when Hamer told her that after she earned her degree, she had wanted to teach at a historically black college, because she thought it was important. I asked her why that had not happened, and she replied:

Well, I found (names her college) and then I thought, maybe for the young women here, that they needed to see me; they needed to *see me* (emphasis hers). You have to be comfortable with who you are as a student of color or as a faculty person of color here. I feel it is important for white students to see me, especially me and be comfortable interacting with me because I'm in the schools and classroom. I'm the mother of their students; I'm your administrator. It is important for me and it is

important for them. With all of my students, they've never had a black teacher or if they have, it hasn't been a good experience. It is important for them to *see me*.

Here, Dr. Hamer's remarks spoke to the power of the presence of African American faculty to counteract misperceptions and stereotypes that result because of the invisibility ("for them to see me" was her repeated phrase) of African American faculty or because of how few African American faculty there are on predominantly white campuses, like her small, private college. Also, the power of visibility was the strongest legacy she wished to pass on because as a teacher trainer, she knows that in many urban school districts, many of the teachers are Caucasian, while most of the students are not, which can lead to some cultural conflicts and a type of institutional racism of its own. Feeling a sense of mission, but not a sense that she was an outsider within the institution, she provided an opportunity for her students to interact with someone who would share the cultural background of the parents of their students, who may have a different set of expectations, socio-economic status, or a different manner of speaking. She envisioned her legacy as one in which she bridged a cultural connection between her students and their students. Rejecting invisibility, she embraced a bold presence in the classroom, one in which her students would be able to interact with the diversity of their client base, and by extension, be comfortable interacting with people of different ethnic backgrounds, religions, nationalities, and cultures. Now, I move to discuss service to the university and the emotional price that some faculty pay, which can minimize self-valuation, regardless of how strong one's self-definition is.

Committee Responsibilities and Other Burdens

Nellie McKay in her article "A Troubled Peace: Black Women in the Halls of the White Academy" (1997) observed that after teaching university students since 1978:

black women I know complain constantly of overwork: more is expected of them than of others by students, other faculty, administrators, and the professional organizations to which they belong. . . . Students (even white ones) in need of counseling on academic issues as well as psychological ones continually appear on the doorstep of the black mother, the great bosom of the world. The black women feel sure, too, that their performances are more carefully scrutinized than those of some others. (1997, p. 21)

Her views provide a context for how the social science faculty saw their committee assignments and they echo Hill Collins' opinion that traditional stereotypes of African American women create expectations that they will be more emotionally supportive and nurturing than other professors. But, when they deviate from those traditional roles, and assertively say "no," to committee requests, majority chairs may refuse to accept their decisions. For example, Dr. Wells was a member of large committees for her public university, including the committee to hire the director of the Black Cultural Center, the women's faculty committee, and selection committee for the university's most prestigious scholarships; moreover, she disclosed "I can't even remember all the committees." Recently, she was asked to be on an administrative hiring committee, but because she was doing field-work in the U.S. and abroad, she declined. An administrator pressured her, claiming he really "needed her" to do it, assuring her that the maximum time commitment was two months. It took four months, and at the time, she was teaching an overload of classes and had an overload of graduate students. She insisted, however:

You just learn to prioritize People don't understand that academics work all the time But, I don't think that there is just an inherent amount of work anymore that falls in line with being an African American faculty member, okay. I think it depends on who you are I think the burden of the African American faculty is not the amount of work, but the level of disrespect, the level of everyday, most often

unconscious, most often naturalized disrespect. It's the psychic burden of a kind of benevolent racism that weighs, I think, us down more than the actual intellectual or pedagogical work. . . . Most of us can handle the quantity of the demands. What is more difficult to handle is the multitude of ways that you are disrespected and dismissed and devalued, and not just salary, just in terms of ideas, in terms of your personhood.

Dr. Wells changed my perception of the word "burden" and reframed it in a psychological context and her notion aligns with Hill Collins' theme of self-valuation because, as Wells tells us, the university provides a setting where African American worth is often compromised. Aware that she was speaking in generalities, she promised to provide concrete examples of what she meant by disrespect, and I include these later in this chapter. Her interview was one of the final ones I conducted and because she altered the way I had conceived of African American faculty being "overburdened," I wished I had interviewed her earlier in my study, or that I had encountered the phrase "psychic burden" earlier in the data collection process. But, again her phrase provided a practical example of what happens when despite a strong self-definition, self-valuation can deteriorate after repeated exposure to institutional racism via continual disrespectful encounters.

Although she was chairing two faculty searches, in which she interviewed seven candidates, proudly revealing that three were minorities, Dr. Bethune firmly believed that African American faculty were not expected to participate in more committees than other faculty were. Throughout our interview, she seemed unaware of any differences in treatment between majority and minority faculty. Guarded about any negative portrayal of her school, Bethune appeared protective against any unfavorable descriptions of it. She appreciated the

camaraderie of several African American women and men in her department, responding to my question about if there was a connection among all of them: “Of course there is, *we’re black*” (emphasis hers). She insisted that her school “doesn’t say we have to have a minority on this committee. The School says we want the people that are going to get the job done, and that’s who gets on the committees. So, just because you’re a minority, no, it doesn’t work that way.” She claimed no one was treated unfairly or disrespectfully, and she also perceived that there was little bureaucratic maneuvering in decisions about which faculty member participated in which committee. I found her assertion simplistic because it is a rare academic department, or any human organization, that runs efficiently and fewer still that run without committee appointments that are politically orchestrated. But, regardless of my incredulity, Dr. Bethune was convinced and she confidently valued her contribution to her school and knew she was asked to serve because she was “a doer.”

As explained at the outset of the chapter, a white male undergraduate student who had been glaring at Dr. Parks called her a racist epithet in 2002 while she was teaching a summer school course at her southern university. Initially, she dismissed it:

I’m thinking, ‘Well, I have 24 other students. I can’t let one student get to me. It will sort itself out.’ Well, one day we did this activity where I lead a game of “Simone Says” and I was performing various communication styles, such as assertive or passive . . . [then] an authoritative attitude, and they reflected on how it made them feel to be interacting with an authoritative leader . . . I asked ‘What did you think about me when we were role playing?’ and I heard this same white male student say: ‘That you’re a nigger.’

Then, she described her initial reaction: “At first, I could not believe what I was hearing. I had all of these internal responses when it registered with me. I had no words. I should say that, at the time, my mother, who had been a teacher, had just passed and so I probably was feeling more vulnerable than I normally would have been feeling.” But, then, she had to react verbally:

So, when I heard what he said, I kept talking to the class at large, looking at these 25 students, sitting in small groups, when it really registered with me, and I tried to finish my sentence. And then, when words finally did come, I said, ‘Excuse me. I need to leave the room.’ . . . I talked to the receptionist who is a young white woman and I told her ‘I think someone just called me a ‘nigger’ and I can’t be in the room by myself just now. Would you come in?’ I should say that all my teaching has been at predominantly white universities and there is all this stuff under the surface about authority and who has it and who doesn’t . . . But, you have to deal with it when it lands on the surface. I’ve been through segregation, as a school-age girl, and I’ve proved that I belong. . . . So, I asked myself, should I ignore it? How do I deal with it? He whispered under his breath . . . I continued to teach the rest of the class and I didn’t address it. I thought the best response was to return to my teaching. After the class, I looked at him directly, and he made eye contact with me directly, and he knew I heard him. Then, after all the students left the room, I went to talk to the chair, who is a white man. He was shocked. He asked me ‘What do you want to do?’ and he showed deep concern, even offering to beat the student up for me, albeit jokingly.

Here, Dr. Parks described the disciplinary options that the chair offered such as involving the Dean of Student Conduct, but she was perplexed:

I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. Was this an opportunity to address desegregation and generations of racial hatred? I said 'I'm not sure if I wanted to address the epithet with the student directly because I don't think this person is on that level.' I will have a conversation about race with most folks, but to call me a name! I wasn't sure that I wanted this to be 'a teachable moment' because I would have been tempted to yell at him. He hugged me, told me he'd support my decision . . . Since that class, I have students write about race when we do that exercise and I ask them how to negotiate that space that exists under the surface. I think I got too comfortable and I forgot how to defend and protect myself verbally. Now, I am more prone to assert myself as a black woman and that feels empowering, which is, I guess, the only positive outcome of that incident, because I chose not to address the student about the remark. He didn't say anything else offensive that summer, but I had my eye on him. That whole experience really took a toll on me and was a wake-up call to how persistent racism is.

Dr. Parks did acknowledge that her reluctance to prosecute the student was affected by her emotional fatigue due to her mother's death. Denied one of her most supportive allies, this incident took its toll on her in part because it coincided with her tenure review. When the category of 'being overburdened' emerged from the initial interviews, I envisioned it as primarily related to a high number of committee assignments or multiple requests for African American faculty to serve on several diversity committees. Only when I conducted more interviews did the aspect of the emotional burden of being an African American faculty member emerge, as anecdotes mounted. None of the stories, though, were as demeaning as this one, yet it speaks powerfully to how self-value can be diminished regardless of how

vigorously one defines oneself. Moving from the themes of self-definition and self-valuation, it is important to point out that Dr. Parks was sure that the bigoted student believed his Caucasian male subject position entitled him to attack her verbally. Her understanding of the interlocking nature of oppression led her to suspect that a female student would not have tried to degrade her publicly because of their shared subject position, but rarely are such generalities true. As will be pointed out in the following section, this next theme is very subtle and it is not always easy to see the ways in which it manifests in suspicion about scholarship and retention, tenure, and promotion.

The Interlocking Nature of Oppression

Suspicion about Scholarship

Dr. Bethune claimed that she knew of no one in the department who presumed that she conducted research related to African American youth, just because of her ethnicity. But, she acknowledged that her focus was “very, very narrow” and that some colleagues in her department wondered why she worked more with colleagues from national organizations and not regional ones, aside from the obvious reason that she was trying to establish a wider reputation. She revealed that “there was nobody across this campus who could be my colleague in the research I was doing.” This situation could have led to a catch-22 scenario, opening her up to criticism where she could have been criticized because she was not collaborating within her department, even though she was trying to increase the university’s exposure on a national scale. Also, her collaboration choices could have raised suspicions about the legitimacy of the research if “nobody else” was doing it. She unapologetically said that her “base” is research on African American children, but also the achievement gap in schools.

When she started thinking about possible dissertation topics in graduate school, she decided to write about African American children. A professor told her she “was very lucky” because “times have changed” and she clarified that what this person meant was that if she had pursued that topic in the eighties rather than in the nineties, she would have been discouraged from conducting research about African Americans. Apparently, the individual dispensing this advice cautioned her that her committee would not have allowed her to do it, because that research “isn’t going to go anywhere.” Now, Bethune boasted, this type of research was widely respected, especially as educational studies focused on the relevance of student’s cultural background. Those who conduct research that focuses on his or her own ethnic identity is met with covert and sometimes overt disapproval by white colleagues who refer to the “Brown on Brown research taboo” and judge the “quality and validity of our scholarly work, our research, and our publications. Quite often, our research interests are dismissed as minor or self-serving” (Reyes & Halcón, 1988, p. 306-07). So, when Dr. Bethune shared that her professor speculated that if she had been seeking her Ph.D. in 1985, her dissertation topic would have been judged as “minor or self-serving,” she expressed gratitude that “times have changed,” and she could write about what she wanted to research. Dr. Bethune did understand the interlocking nature of oppression such that racism could silence certain research projects.

Dr. Carver became a full-time faculty member in 1978 immediately after he earned his Ph.D., when he was only 25. For the last 23 years, he has been the only African American in his department. When asked if students were more argumentative or resistant to him as a result of his unique status, Dr. Carver responded that it may have occurred when he was teaching graduate students early in his career, but that it did not occur after his first few years

of teaching. Because he was so young when he began teaching, he suspected that any skepticism from students was age-related, since he taught a graduate class where 75% of the students were his age or older. After reflecting about anecdotes he had heard from junior faculty about disrespect, he captured the essence of how discrimination manifests as race and gender oppression:

I think that the issue of disrespect is racialized; I sense that it is a more serious issue for black female faculty than black male faculty members In fact, I can't think of any significant number of situations where students have asked me questions that are suggestive of their questioning my credentials. I sort of take charge of the class right away, so there is not much space for that to occur. I mean if you want to drop my class, drop my class, but if you are going to stay in it, the presumption is that I have more expertise about this subject than you do.

So, even though Dr. Carver did not believe that students doubted his knowledge, he was unsure how to respond when I asked if his department had a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward him. In light of the fact that he was widely published in prestigious academic journals, engaged in varied inter-disciplinary research with colleagues at elite universities, earned grants, co-wrote a textbook commonly adopted, and was even featured twice in a high-profile national newsmagazine, he reflected:

I think there are some faculty members who view me as an outlier. I think that there's inevitably a group of your colleagues who no matter what you do, if you don't do work that's like theirs . . . they will always question you sort of, your legitimacy, your intellectual quality, etc. And I think this is inevitable because of race. And because of the priors that so many (practitioners in his field) have about racial inferiority.

I was surprised to hear that colleagues still doubt him, because his academic credentials and his publication history were impeccable, yet, he had a detached attitude about his colleagues who “question[ed his] legitimacy [and] intellectual quality.” This part of the interview, which was one of my earliest, led me to reflect deeply upon the assertion of W.E.B. Du Bois, himself a social scientist, who in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903/1999), described the paradox that Dr. Carver and many of the faculty I interviewed experienced: “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 214). Hill Collins builds upon Du Bois’ theory when she formulated her notion of the outsider within, with its double perspective, first, accounting for the limited possibility that outsiders could ever become insiders, and second, recounting the benefits of their unique dual vision. Wanting to understand what he meant by the “priors that so many have about racial inferiority,” I asked Carver for an example and he then described some of the racist discourse of a leader in his field who won a Nobel Prize, claiming that those in his discipline held deeply entrenched beliefs:

I mean it’s really, it’s raw racism, you know, but in [field], it’s legitimate discourse. I think it’s in part because of the culture of this particular profession, with its heavy emphasis on the use of mathematical formulization and quantitative methods. So, there’s this kind of implicit belief that this is an arena in which black folks’ minds can’t take them as easily But, I think that there’s again a pervasive belief that those kinds of reasoning skills are something that most black folks who enter the academy are not capable of executing.

Here, Carver condemns those in his discipline for a persistent type of racism that assumes an intellectual inferiority for African American students and colleagues and a perceived incapacity for them to grapple with sophisticated concepts. For whatever reasons, majority faculty continue to suspect the quality of African American students' work and this doubt can translate their expectations about African American colleagues.

Based on his long teaching career, he summarized what he had observed in the profession regarding suspicion: "The biggest thing that remains is the fact, you know, as a black academic, you've never ever actually proven yourself. You continue to be re-evaluated in some sense." I interrupted him, asking him to explain further, because his C.V. showed ten published or edited books and 125 articles. He reiterated that, despite his productivity: "I mean, even if you've published a large amount in terms of quantity, there's always going to be somebody who is going to say 'Well, it not quality.' There's always going to be some complaint." I asked him to provide a clear example of this skepticism and the toll it takes for his own colleagues to maintain a distrustful attitude toward him and his work:

A faculty member with my record and my experience might readily be offered, either directly or indirectly, the opportunity to bring in two other faculty members whose work is related to one's own. I mean that's usually, I mean that's when you're really in a position of influence is when you have the opportunity to bring in collaborators to join you on the faculty. No, [that opportunity] it's never been extended to me. . . .

Therefore, it's not the direction the department ought to be investing resources in. Despite his extensive publication record, Dr. Carver's story is discouraging because his department's disregard for him represents the insidious and nuanced way in which institutional racism has long-term, perhaps unintentional effects, such as sidetracking a

research legacy due to ignorance about its value, underestimating how traditional disciplines can intersect with research about ethnicity.

Both Dr. Parks and Dr. Wells worked on projects that intersected between their ethnicity and their social science fields. In addition, both were interested in ethnographic and qualitative research about African American women. Because revealing their topics would violate confidentiality and since their fields are so specific to them, I will not share their exact research interests. Suffice it to say that both wrote dissertations related to African American women and work. Dr. Parks asserted that she chose her topic because “race, in general, is absent from the literature [in my field].” Her background also affected her methodology, since she chose Critical Race Theory to explore her topic, and she was excited about her new research project which involved empowerment workshops for African American teenage girls. Dr. Wells did in-depth oral histories of elderly African American women. I asked her to discuss the intersection between her identity politics and her own academic research interest:

I have some ambivalence about it in that I do work that comes out of my own, you know, history and my own communities because I feel I have, --that’s where I get my inspiration and I have a responsibility to that community. But also, my concern with a lot of work that people do who, you know, kind of embrace identity politics is that sometimes, it ceases to be really political. . . . but you have to go beyond that, you know, to get at the really political kind of work. So that’s why I’m concerned about some of this identity work . . . because of that paradigm. . . . It keeps it too simple sometimes. It doesn’t lead into more complicated layered interpretations.

I explained to her that this dissertation research was not about limiting people's perceptions about African American academics, or presuming that they researched topics that were related to their cultural background. I wanted to explore how someone's ethnicity might or might not predispose them to a particular field of study, and she encouraged me to avoid essentializing people because doing so would restrict the study and minimize the openness I needed to conduct qualitative work.

In order to offer an example of how suspicion from one's colleagues emerges in the daily life of African American professors, Dr. Wells described an incident where she was trying to finish a book and she asked her chair to modify her schedule so she would teach only one course one term, and three, the next. Trying to accommodate her request, he asked her if she could teach a course about how social theory, media, and her discipline intersected, reminding her that certain courses in the department could be taught by any faculty, not just specialists. She agreed, adding that she had published several articles on the topic:

I said, 'Yeah, I can teach it, sure, why not?' And I'll never forget that some of colleagues saw me in the hallway, and were, you know, like 'Oh, you're teaching [names class], what do you know about it?' . . . And. then I asked one faculty member just to check my syllabus because I'm teaching this course for the first time; it was almost as though he resented that the syllabus was this good, you know, that I could do this too.

Dr. Wells reflected more fully about how threatened colleagues seemed to feel when she breached her perceived place, because she had been permitted as an insider regarding a certain terrain within the discipline, but was viewed as an outsider about another topic.

Your knowledge base is about a kind of identity politics that is projected upon you It's okay to teach (my discipline and how it relates to) African American literature, but it's almost as though they put us in- it's like a line or in a category of discourse and of study, that if you go outside of those parameters, then you are an intruder. . . . So I'm not saying anything about my colleagues don't appreciate me and value me. And while I'm saying that I can say I still feel, based on my race, these everyday moments of insult So that's why it's complex and contradictory and a paradox But the fact that my blackness cannot be denied and there are times when that eclipses, it dislodges all of the other ways in which I am respected . . . and so with being African American, it has its very particular difference that's associated most often against white arrogance and superiority and rule We've grown up on it like mother's milk.

Dr. Wells very articulately illustrated the subtle ways in which her colleague's suspicion of her academic credentials or intellectual merit oppressed and affected her and how complicated her response was, a pairing of sensitivity and resentment. As eloquently as she elaborated upon the disrespect that she felt, she claimed that overall, her colleagues valued her; in this way, she explained the essence of the paradox of institutional racism, as I have come to understand it, and how it manifests, even for tenured faculty. Now, I turn to how the entire retention and promotion process is also an expression of the interlocking nature of racism and gender discrimination.

Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Issues

Tenure and promotion are sensitive issues in any university, but especially so for African American faculty who often occupy the lower, more vulnerable rungs of academia

such as adjunct or assistant professors. In 2005, the American Council on Education published *Minorities in Higher Education*, based upon National Center for Educational Statistics data, and it reported that African American faculty comprised 5.2% of the 611, 308 full time faculty in higher education. Of the African American faculty, 15.8% were full professors (compared to 28.5% of whites who were full professors), 21.5% were associate professors (the percentage was the same for whites), 28.5% were assistant professors (compared to 21.9% of whites), 23.8% were ranked at the instructor or lecturer level (compared to 17.8% of whites), and 10.2% were other, which refers to full-time faculty at institutions without standard academic ranks (the percentage was the same for whites). (Harvey & Anderson, 2005, Tables 24 & 25, pp. 91-94; data from DOE, NCES, and IPEDS). These figures prompt one to ask why so few African American faculty rise to the top of the educational hierarchy? There may be more junior African American faculty than senior professors, and they therefore, work as assistant or adjunct professors because of their lack of experience. Some may only have master's degrees, which hinders their ability to be promoted, but institutional racism is also a factor that can lead to tenure disputes. Dr. Hamer and Dr. Carver were full professors, while Drs. Bethune, Parks, and Wells were associate professors, which was due, in part, to the number of years of teaching, publication output, and different tenure standards at variously ranked schools.

Because Dr. Carver mentored several junior African American faculty and had organized annual African American faculty gatherings designed to foster networking about research collaboration, tenure, and publishing, he spoke knowledgeably about navigating recruitment and retention. But, when he was a junior faculty member, he did not know much about the process. Because his father was a professor, he had watched him go through tenure,

yet Carver's concept of tenure when he was first hired at age 26 was limited: "So, my understanding of it was being successful at publishing. It was not an absolute guarantee that you would get promoted or that you would be successful in academia, but if you didn't, then you were much more vulnerable." He refused to accept the generalization that African American faculty find academic jobs more easily than white faculty because their rarity makes them highly prized. Although he began his career at another university, Carver was actively recruited by his current institution twice, but their initial job offer meant he would have been demoted to assistant professor, after he had already been promoted to associate professor. He refused. A few years later, his current university revised its package, and he was able to negotiate "a lateral move" and so, he came to his current university with tenure. Later, he was promoted to full professor. But, instead of discussing his own tenure situation, when I asked about tenure, he eagerly offered his opinion about the differences between recruitment and retention, indicating that this arena of university bureaucracy was the clearest avenue for institutional racism. He elaborated upon his theory that he had developed by talking to newly recruited African American faculty whom he met:

But for junior faculty who are African American, they might be highly recruited, but there may not be any strong desire to retain them. And so the fact of intense recruitment is not really an indicator that a department really wants you. I mean there may be a situation where a department hasn't had black faculty members and they may be under some pressure at that given moment to change the demography of their faculty Yeah, so they may actively recruit a junior faculty member but not really create an environment that's conducive to the person being successful once they're

there. Or even if the person is successful, they may find some reason to deny them tenure.

Because he was dubious of faculty searches that included minority candidates, he distinguished between recruitment and retention, especially when departments interviewed many prospective faculty in order to be perceived as complying with equal opportunity and affirmative action guidelines, but they rarely hired any.

Because she was the first African American faculty hired at her college and the first to be granted tenure, Dr. Hamer responded with less frustration to my question about whether she noted any differences in tenure review for African American faculty and majority faculty. She neither speculated, nor expressed much curiosity about why the four colleagues had departed in the years since she had been hired. I was surprised that the high number of departures did not raise a red flag for her about possible institutional racism, but apparently she was neither alarmed by the low number of retained faculty nor disappointed that so many had left. Keeping her comments vague and mild, she stated matter-of-factly that:

one woman colleague was here in religious studies, and once during a faculty meeting, she confronted the president of the college. She challenged him in an open forum and she was gone the next year. Whites wonder and are puzzled about why black faculty leave. There is no one answer about why they leave. But, you have to be a special person who has to be comfortable here. Another woman left after two years in the history department. I don't know why she left. There was a woman in the English department, but she hadn't finished her Ph.D., so, she left. There was a woman in human and environmental sciences who was here for one year, and she left.

I did not ask her what she meant by “you have to be a special person who has to be comfortable here,” but it was curious that Professor Hamer did not question why these women left or if they thought they might feel more at home at other institutions. She simply accepted the fact that they left, which reinforced her sense that she was special because she persevered at an institution that retained so few African American faculty. She taught at the same university as Professor Sidney, who unlike Hamer, questioned why so many African American faculty had come and gone. He wondered about the factors that contributed to their departures, such as if they were leaving academia, an issue that Thompson and Louque (2005) devote an entire chapter to in their book *Exposing the “Culture of Arrogance” in the Academy: A Blueprint for Increasing Black Faculty Satisfaction in Higher Education*. Because she was an educator, I thought she might wish to discover the reason her colleagues retention rate was so low, but because her credo and her upbringing were oriented around being independent, she seemed more preoccupied with herself than with others.

Proud that she was the first African American faculty ever to be granted tenure at her small private college, she seemed unwilling to believe that those professors who left the university by choice, or due to tenure denial might have been uncomfortably isolated on the campus or overly stressed of because they were so under-represented. The perspective that forces beyond their control, such as institutional racism, might have contributed to their not being retained, did not seem to be on her radar, and she was the only professor who seemed oblivious to the insidious and pervasive nature of oppression. In this regard, Dr. Hamer’s attitudes seemed to parallel some of the scientists I will discuss in the next chapter more closely than her peers in the social sciences. Ironically, she was totally unsupportive of an African American male faculty member, Dr. Sidney, who endured an acrimonious promotion

review and was eventually denied tenure, even though they had served on a committee together and she knew that his department had treated him unfairly. If she were truly committed to using her power on campus to help retain African American faculty, she could have supported him, and the three other African American faculty in English, religious studies, history, and environmental science who left the university. Since she was a respected and tenured faculty, she could have intervened on behalf of her African American colleagues who were considering leaving before they left, by writing letters for their tenure files and encouraging them to stay. She valued cultivating diversity in one teaching realm, but not at the university level, which seemed inconsistent.

Unlike Dr. Hamer, Dr. Bethune acknowledged that institutional racism existed, but seemed skeptical about the possibility that it could occur at her school. She asserted that she was recruited for her position by a dean, whom she described as “a very affirmative dean.” Just to clarify, I inquired if she meant that he supported affirmative action, and she agreed. She further explained how she believed her school had done an excellent job of hiring African American and other minority faculty, but she did not address the issue of retaining African American faculty. Beaming with pride, she described the people who had been hired under this dean:

During the time that he was a sitting dean . . . maybe seven years. He hired two Asian females, he hired me as a black female, he hired a black male, he hired a couple of white males, and a lot of white women . . . So I think the university itself has done a good job, but just because you hired them doesn’t mean—

Dr. Bethune interrupted herself here and although I asked her to elaborate upon this provocative point, she told me that she was ready to discuss her research. Although I wished

I had encouraged her to disclose more, I agreed to move on to the next question, opting to respect her decision to censor her remarks.

When I asked about her own tenure review, she quickly offered that it “was fair. It was good. I was one of the people that wasn’t very concerned about the process, because I had a lot of articles for my review and my mentor at the time said that I was doing fine with the kinds of articles that I had.” However, then she contradicted herself, describing this scenario: “The only thing negative that happened in my review was that one of the professors didn’t like that fact that I didn’t do quantitative research. . . . even though I had a rating that was fine overall, he didn’t speak positively about my research at all. . . . It wasn’t fair of him to do that.” These dueling responses to my question about her tenure review (“It was fair” then “it wasn’t fair”) indicated an undercurrent of protection of her home institution that she maintained throughout our interview and what role she best fit. She did, however, concede that she had to do some battling during her tenure review, but she did not acknowledge that the resistance she encountered was related to her race. As she revealed more about the situation, she did not believe that his mistreatment of her was racially motivated:

But he would have done that to anybody. I don’t think it had to do with race. And I’m very quick to say, ‘Hey, he did that because’ . . . I think he just thought that I should be doing quantitative research like he does . . . but, Oh, I was mad. And I never thought that he was doing that to me because I was black. I thought he was just doing that to me because he doesn’t agree with my research agenda. I will give the black thing when it should be given, not when it shouldn’t be given.

After she explained to me how she had eliminated the possibility that her race entered into her tenure decision, in another contradictory move, she emphasized how her race was

important to her hiring and recruitment. Even though I was perplexed by her shifting responses, she seemed undeterred by what I perceived as inconsistent positions. She appreciated that a dean had asked her to apply for her first faculty position and dispelled the rumors of nay-sayers who suspected that she was only recruited because she was African American. In stalwart fashion, she “very clearly explained to them the process, and that the blackness is a plus. I do believe the Dean recruited me because he saw a strong black student in his school and didn’t want that strong black student to go somewhere else.” This interview is an example of the limitations of my data collection method of one in-depth interview. Ideally, I would have asked her at a later interview why she said her tenure review was fair, and then described how unfair it was or how she was recruited because she was a qualified candidate, but then acknowledged that her race was a plus factor, or how her university had a great track record for hiring, but not retaining African American faculty. She shared conflicting perspectives, painted her department in a favorable light, and dismissed what, to some, would be legitimate examples of institutional racism, yet she was still clearly aware of the interlocking nature of oppression, even though she did not think it occurred in her school.

Marginal Perspectives: A Conclusion

In terms of my speculation about why Dr. Hamer expressed sentiments so different from the other social science faculty I interviewed, several factors emerge to account for her contrasting views. She grew up in Indiana, attended integrated schools from kindergarten until 8th grade, and then she attended a majority white preparatory school, before enrolling at a major public university in Indiana in the mid 1970s, where she said there was a “very small black population of students.” Curiously, she attended a historically black college for her

master's degree because "I had never been to a school that was predominantly black; I wanted to try it. But what was ironic was that most of my classmates and professors were white." While she pursued her doctoral degree, she was carefully mentored by one white woman and two white men, all of whom helped find funding for her through research and teaching fellowships. The entire time she pursued her doctoral degree, she reported that "there were no black professors in my concentration area and no black students. This was in 1987. Plus, there were no black professors or students in two other areas. But it was a very welcoming place and I had lots of exposure to how to succeed in the profession. I was a happy camper there." But even with a doctoral degree in hand, she decided to delay entering academia and worked for a friend's staff development company, because she did not want to move from her home and "I had my own office." She echoed this sentiment of valuing independence throughout the interview, and it factored into why she did not feel isolated at the academy.

When she learned of a position at the small private college where she currently teaches in the city where she lived, she applied and got the job. In a department of seven women faculty, she was the first African American woman the college had hired as a full-time professor (not an adjunct or part-timer), and was subsequently, the first African American to become tenured there. Having worked for 19 years before she entered her doctoral program, her perspective upon entering the academy was different than it would be for a junior faculty entering the profession. She had a fully developed social sphere outside of the academy, a support system through her church, and perhaps most importantly a familial legacy of pursuing higher education and teaching. Her maternal grandfather, grandmother, mother, and her aunts graduated from college and her aunts held graduate degrees. She kept

pictures of her aunts, grandfather, and mother in her office wall, all educators. Her sense of family pride, fierce self-reliance, and duty inspired her to cope with tensions in the academy.

The social scientists shared many traits, for example, Dr. Parks and Dr. Hamer were very interested in women's empowerment and Dr. Carver, Dr. Wells, and Dr. Parks were deeply committed to using their academic pursuits to effect social change and greater choices for African American students and faculty. Fewer of the social scientists responded to suspicion about scholarship with high publication output, which was a common tactic for the humanities faculty, but Dr. Wells and Dr. Carver were especially ambitious in this regard, and Dr. Parks is still early in her career. This group of professors demonstrated greater variability in temperament, and tactics, and defied categorization more stubbornly than the participants in the other disciplines. While all the faculty whom I interviewed experienced at least one of the four manifestations of institutional racism, isolation, committee and other burdens, suspicion about scholarship, and tenure difficulties, their responses to these obstacles varied based on the credos they adopted as coping mechanisms, the mentoring they provided to deepen their sense of satisfaction in the profession, and their desire to leave a legacy, with the hope that the next generation of African American scholars will not need to endure the same slights that have been representative of their experiences.

All in all, one of the most unsettling effects of institutional racism is the way in which it manifests as suspicion about scholarship and how entrenched this doubt is, especially as it relates to long-held stereotypes about African American intellectual capability. Even in a purportedly enlightened setting like a university, because of the paradoxical nature of their outsider within status, African American professors experience open resentment and praise

for scholarly research, blatant disrespect and appreciation about committee work, and snide hostility and sincere valuing of departmental contributions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SCIENCE FINDINGS

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger's tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my youth!

-“America” (l. 1-4) by Claude McKay (1921)

Lovers of science, yet often tested because the scientific academy is the least integrated of all the disciplines, many African American scientists feel “bitterness,” but treasure the “cultured hell” of their laboratories and experiments. This group of participants, Drs. Daly, Drew, Haynes, Moore, and Young, was the most difficult to find. In fact, when I initially began this research project, I contemplated limiting my focus to faculty in the social sciences and the humanities because most of the African American faculty who earn Ph.D.s degrees, earn them in these fields and far fewer earn them in the sciences. Research by Cleveland (2004) and others indicate that most of the qualitative research that is published is about African American faculty in education and other social sciences. According to the National Opinion Research Center, in 1997, 529 out of 5415 (9.7%) doctoral degrees were awarded to African American students in education, while 59 out of 3592 (1.6%) were awarded to those in physical sciences and 165 out of 5139 (3.2%) in life sciences (Smith & Lomotey, 1999). These numbers are not very promising, but representation in engineering is rising, and the horizon for African Americans entering science and engineering professions is rosier than it was thirty years ago.

According to *Technology and the Dream* (2001), which offers accounts of African American graduates of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the field of architects, civil engineers, physicists, and chemists is improving as more African American scientists enter the field and make it more hospitable for African Americans to enter graduate programs. However, even if the number of African American Ph.D. students increases, the number of African American science faculty remains low, because unlike humanities and social science scholars who primarily enter the academy, science Ph.D.s have the flexibility to work in private industry, federal research programs, or universities. Extremely time consuming and isolating by its nature, the culture of science is very exacting and highly competitive for grant dollars. Faculty must spend hours in a laboratory, unlike their colleagues in the humanities or social sciences, where faculty can write anywhere, and do not have to be confined to monitoring a laboratory procedure. For example, Dr. Moore explained the mentality in the sciences regarding the work ethic and the hours that one must devote to one's laboratory:

A lab director could demand that you be in the lab 60-80 hours per week The sciences have to change. The culture has to change. It began as a culture of monks, that's who the first scientists were. Then, later, they were men who had wives at home to take care of the children, and the bills, and the food, and chores. Now, it's different and many women have to share the responsibility with male faculty for home duties, but the burden sits squarely on women more than men.

According to many of the science, medical, and engineering faculty whom I interviewed, African American women face a double bind of being African American in the sciences and being women in the sciences. Some deny institutional racism exists; some cope with it; some are insensitive to it, while others insist that they are unaffected by sexism and/or racism. The

stories shared here offer a context to understand the professional lives of African American science faculty, especially considering the deep, imbedded, and enduring nature of discrimination in large-scale bureaucracies like universities.

For the scientists, their primary way of perceiving the world was self-definition and self-valuation and it manifest in their attitudes about committees, credos, and legacy. Scientists self-defined first as scientists and saved the weekends for cultural expressions or expression of their ethnic heritage. The scientific search and discovery process defined the foremost way in which they saw themselves. Second, they understood the value of their African American culture and how it might affect mentoring or isolation within a department, but it was not that important. They maintained a specific focus on chemical, biological, pathological, and technological scientific problems. Third, the interlocking nature of oppression was the least important for scientists, and this tenet of Black Feminist Thought manifested in the areas of suspicion about scholarship and in retention, tenure, and promotion, but it was only marginally on the radar for them. The sequence of the chapter subheadings, then, follows their priorities for how they understood their position in the academy and how institutional racism operates there.

The Meaning of Self-Definition and Self-Valuation

Credos:

Dr. Moore explained that she had seen a great deal of mistreatment over the 18 years that she had been teaching and researching at her Research I university. She was a Unitarian Universalist and, according to her, her religion affected her outlook, especially when it came to observing the political machinations at the university and her decision to stay as marginally involved in them as possible. She maintained that: “We need to improve the way

we treat women in the sciences and all over campus.” Dr. Moore’s credo captured her sense that both racism and sexism were pervasive on her campus and, that if administrators and hiring chairs listened more patiently and compassionately, then they would be able to dismantle patterns of exclusion. For example, Dr. Moore shared her beliefs: “I am a human being. I’m not only my race and I’m an integrationist I’m a bridge builder and all sorts of people have helped me in my career, not just black folks. And I’ve helped all sorts of folks.” When I asked her to clarify her role, she elaborated that she wanted to be a future leader and, perhaps, a dean or an administrator. I was surprised by this remark, especially because of the degree of mistreatment she observed on campus: “I have experienced mistreatment and I have seen mistreatment. There is blatant mistreatment; some of it is willful.” Yet, paradoxically, she was committed to changing conditions there for women and minority students. I asked her to respond to a charge that I had heard levied against some universities during my data collection that the conventional wisdom governs that African Americans in high administration at a university are those who are not going to rock the boat. Moore wanted to bring greater attention to gender discrimination and to rectify it; therefore she might be perceived as threatening to the status quo. She offered this perspective:

Well, I think there can be something strategic about boat-rockers and that just because someone doesn’t rock the boat, doesn’t mean that they aren’t doing good things. The university needs an agenda that must be effective and deliberate. I’m not quick to judge what people do to get ahead. I think you need to ask when you rise, to what extent are you conforming to institutional pressures.

Based on these remarks and her own self-identification, Dr. Moore created the change that she wanted to see, from inside the institution. It was almost as if she was more subversive

than she gave herself credit for being, wanting to become a leader, so that she could set her own priorities, all the while being mindful not to conform to institutional pressures that might silence her particular clarion call. While certainly not the gadfly that some of her colleagues in the humanities and the social sciences were, she was committed to gender equality and greater representation of students of color in math and science, crediting her Unitarian Universalist beliefs and the way she valued fairness to a great degree for why she felt this way.

In addition to her desire for togetherness and inclusion, she seemed troubled by the unreasonable hours that were required of scientists because that work ethic fostered an unbalanced personality, resulting in scientists who were less likely to consider the social, psychological, and emotional aspects of working with others. She revealed that:

I know what the career ladder requires and I know the consequences of the choices I have made. My job is not my whole life. I have my family and my children. I'm proud to have trained eleven students and helped them earn their Ph.D.s. I think that students might consider me more approachable than others in the department, especially women.

Crediting her approachability with the fact that she was noticed in the hallways and in the classrooms as an African American woman, as an outsider within, she speculated that the students believed she would be more sensitive to their struggles than other faculty, since she was different.

In addition to addressing her approachability, she acknowledged that many of the men in the department were very socially awkward, ignorant of cultural differences, and politically unaware, making some students less likely to approach them for mentoring or

research collaboration: “I think that there are skills that many men in the sciences just don’t have, especially when it comes to dealing with people. I think they don’t listen to issues of race and that you have to be socially skillful to fully participate in departmental relations. Some who come to the sciences are social outcasts and they have bad behavior.” I asked her to provide an example and she said that she had seen some of her white male colleagues “scream at students or assert their power in inappropriate ways.” Because she was kind, socially skillful, respected lab assistants, and set an example that a researcher could be sensitive to student’s non-curricular needs as well as productive and innovative, Dr. Moore was particularly interested in helping women graduate students, regardless of race, because she believed that “gender is a more manageable obstacle (than racism) to handle.” Dr. Moore defined herself as “a helper” who valued students and research, but not necessarily in that order. Rather than having overly-ambitious goals, she recognized that more proportional gender representation in the sciences among students and faculty was more likely to occur before she retired, than was greater racial representation.

Dr. Young shared an anecdote about when a white woman administrator asked her privately at a committee meeting “if I had any problems with colleagues challenging me. I said ‘Well, yeah, but for me, it’s difficult to discern; is it race, is it gender, is it age, is it the way I wear my hair?’ [She wears her hair closely cropped.] I don’t have time to sit in the classroom and figure all that out. I was hired to do a job and so that’s what I’m here to do.” Dr. Young claimed her main belief was basic: “I want to be respected as an individual.” She was tired, too, of students doubting her: “There is an image of what a technology or an engineering or a scientist or a mathematics professor should look like. I’m not it. I think being female and black and under a certain age, and frankly, the physical way I wear my hair,

really throws off the perception of what that face in question should look like.” Since she had been at her university since 1998, she thought the student grapevine of engineering fraternities would have spread the word of her expertise, but she perceived that they were resistant to consider her as equally qualified as a white male. I asked her about whether their perception affects her interactions with students or affects her self-definition, and she replied: “if students have a problem with me or learning from me, then that’s something that they have to deal with. Those who have the attitude of ‘I’m not sure I’m going to learn from her.’ Well, I won’t be second-guessed; I don’t have time for it. [. . . I’m] straightforward.” Like Dr. Haynes, Dr. Young was confident, self-assured, and her self-valuation was high and unshakable.

Dr. Daly noted that she didn’t “really think of people with regard to race,” despite how appreciative she was to attend the lunch that other African American professors organized to meet a newly hired faculty member. I was not sure how to account for her varied reactions. Unlike Dr. Moore, who had very clear beliefs and strong opinions, Dr. Daly contradicted herself, claiming that “I don’t notice any difference between racial groups.” Yet, later in the interview, when we discussed hiring policies, she speculated that “I have probably benefited from affirmative action, but every job I have had, I have had to prove that I can do the job.” She seemed unaware that it is difficult to discern why exactly one was hired and common for African Americans to exceed requirements in order to prove their qualifications to colleagues. She proudly valued her dedication and defined her efforts as arduous, yet she did not seem resentful of having to prove her competence.

In addition, Professor Daly expressed far less awareness of the obstacles that her African American peers experienced, due to a great extent to the fact that she had no African

American peers in her department and few on campus. She did teach for three semesters at a historically black college as a non-tenure track instructor, but she left for a more lucrative job in the biotechnology industry. These teaching experiences, combined with the fact that she was the first person in her family to go to college, the only African American person in her doctoral cohort, and one of very few African American people in her state and national professional organizations for her particular physical science, reinforced that being African American was an aspect of one's identity that was reserved for home. In other words, she could be "black" on the weekends. As was revealed earlier, Dr. Daly was "not a solidarity seeker" and she "like[d] being alone," choosing, like Dr. Moore, to focus on connecting with other women scientists and mentoring young women.

Contemplating his own attitude toward the university setting, Dr. Drew defined himself as cooperative and extolled the virtues of surrounding himself in an environment of positive thinkers:

We recognize we agree to disagree and we can collaborate and go forward and do what the state is paying us to do. That's how I define myself and therefore, I give of myself that way to students and working with colleagues. And if anybody thinks I need to be doing more, I'll do more. Yeah, do more; that's the black tax. (He and I both laugh.)

When I asked him to reflect specifically on his attitude related to his racial background, he proudly spoke of the historically black medical school he had attended and how joyful he feels when he sees African American pilots or doctors, in other words, African Americans who are high achievers, similar to how he defined himself. His father's values stuck with him and he was an academic who did not just sit in his office and write reports; he went out into

the field: “That taught me, you know, nothing beats some good old hard work. Getting out there, lead by example and get in the thick of things and that way you can empathize. That’s the only way you can get respect from people, so most of all, try to listen.” He still did not really address the race issue, so I pressed him to contemplate how his ethnicity factors into his credo, and he disclosed: “Some people may say, you know, ‘Oh, you should be proud you’re the only black person.’ . . . That is sad, okay. I don’t want to look at it like that because every morning, you get up and you know pretty much you are going to be treated differently based on the color of your skin. No, I don’t get up thinking I’m the H.N.I.C. (we both laugh and he confirms with me that I know he means Head Ni***** in Charge).” He repeated that he wanted to “listen, have respect for other people and lead by example. I have a lot of shortcomings, . . . but I do the best I can.” He made his vision seem simpler than it was, but he valued self-respect and prized his integrity.

When he first entered the profession, Dr. Drew struggled with his ideal of valuing others, patient listening, and how to change perceptions when science faculty at a Research I school are so busy with their laboratory experiments. He complained:

When the black guy raises an issue, it appears as though he is not being taken seriously Listen and determine: Are you perceiving rightly or wrongly? Then, a lot of the issues of race here in the college would disappear. But, we’re too busy trying to get our grant. So we create obstacles for ourselves in trying to listen to what our fellow faculty member is saying. . . . If that faculty member or student doesn’t believe they are being listened to, they’re going to infer racism. And it could not be racism.

When I asked him how he thought these attitudinal changes could be put into effect on a large scale, he responded, defining himself by negation:

I believe there's hope. I believe some people are beginning to listen. You know, I'm no Rosa Parks. Yeah, you pay a price and I'm not willing to pay that price. . . The price of alienation. The price of being frustrated every day you get home because people don't see you. I've given up the fact that you can't change people. . . . At this stage, the old faculty cannot change. They are resistant. They feel defensive. . . [yet] I have that hope because a few faculty members have been coming to me to talk about how things could be better for black faculty and for black students.

Despite his serious concerns how much people can change, Drew's optimistic beliefs triumphed, as he was able to define himself in a way that allowed him to make peace with his circumstances and reconcile his frustrations.

Holding stellar credentials, yet humble, Dr. Haynes did not crow about her impressive accomplishments, like graduating first in her elite private medical school class, but her beliefs were apparent by her actions. Her husband was also a doctor and her three children, who had graduated from some of the most prestigious universities in the country, were dedicated to excellence: it was just that simple. Initially appearing modest and conventional, Dr. Haynes's transgressivity unfolded in relation to raising her children:

What I am most passionate about is that, and of course this is related to the fact that I am the mother of three mixed-race children, but I think we'll come to a place in our culture where we can't tell what race someone is. Race is socially constructed and I think more and more people are starting to see that and understand it more deeply.

Then, she described how she developed perseverance as the cook for her large family:

When I was in high school, I worked on weekends and I was the oldest and we had seven children in our household, and I had to cook for nine people. My parents taught me a work ethic. The nuns taught me to about the pursuit of excellence They always told me to do the best that I can do. “Do the best you can!” they would tell us. I was Phi Beta Kappa and I’ve just assumed, and I know this is rare, that I would be the best in my class. Not out of arrogance, but as a result of hard work and dedication. Dr. Haynes clarified her beliefs about how people could value diversity more, not just tolerate it:

I believe the moral tenor of our culture should be aimed more at creating equalizing experiences. I am politically active and that I have an ethical mission. I believe that leaders emerge from the private schools, sororities, fraternities, and that enrolling more African American students in prestigious schools will help boost a cohort of local and national leaders. The key is to create a critical mass of African American students who perform well at highly ranked schools and the more often they are seen, they more diversity in general will be appreciated.

By creating a critical mass, Dr. Haynes believed stereotypes would fall away and as more mixed-race children, like her own, entered professions, prejudice would diminish. By articulating what she valued, she defined herself. The next section addresses how faculty can maximize their self-valuation by bestowing a legacy to the next generation of scientists, which is very important, especially when one makes a major discovery.

Leaving a Legacy

Professor Moore considered her legacy and then realized it was more complicated than she had first thought. Her initial response was related to her research and to women:

I am an intellectual. I love to read and I love to solve problems . . . I'd like to discover something new, something of high quality. I enjoy doing original research because there is a payoff, and in my lab, we are very close to discovery. . . I want to improve the condition of women in the sciences, which I think will be easier to accomplish than issues of race. I'm concerned with undergraduate research and the impact of it on their lives.

As she elaborated upon her response, her sense of legacy widened to include a more global inheritance she would leave, relegated not just to her career:

But I'm social too and I value interpersonal skills. Some say I'm not like a scientist in that not all my energy is absorbed in science. I value kindness and how people treat each other. I want to leave the world a better place. . . Service to the university is my priority and I want different cultures to thrive here . . . I want to do right by my children. I want them to know I did something that mattered.

She was concerned with how her administrators, as agents of the university, maintained the vestiges of institutional racism and that her colleagues seemed oblivious to cultural difference:

I'd say that this university doesn't really "get it." The chairs say that they understand, but they really don't. They want scholars that are ambitious, who promote their self-interests, and are scholars first, and teachers second. . . As long as people are racist, their existence promotes our cause [namely seeking educational equity for women and minorities] . . . For many on this campus, issues of race, ethnicity, it just isn't on their radar. We need to improve the way we treat women in the sciences and all over campus. Just as a plant grows toward the light, people go to where they are wanted.

High expectations help others assume that everyone can accomplish those professional standards. Listening closely to one another helps us break assumptions. Moore's desire to improve retention and promotion for women scientists, she believed, was a more realistic goal than her desire to recruit more faculty of color in the sciences or to encourage more under-represented students to major in science. For example, during her 18 years at her university as a laboratory scientist, she was one of two African American scientists, one male chemist and herself. He had integrated his department and when he died in 2001, his department was once again all white, and she was the only one left. As a result, she perceived that gender parity actually had potential to be achieved.

Reflective about how she served as a role model for her students she taught at her small private college, Dr. Daly curiously inquired: "So often, I wonder why I chose the sciences. I wonder about the expectations black women have to not be interested in the sciences. They don't go there with ease." She disclosed that she hoped one of her main contributions was to show women by her existence in the profession that they have a rightful place in the sciences. She also expressed how satisfying teaching was to her, maintaining that it was one of the most compelling aspects of her career: "it is so rewarding to see the freshmen that I meet and then see them in the junior or senior level classes and see how they have matured, as scientists and as women. I want to help nurture women in the sciences." She did not mention anything about a legacy regarding her racial identity, and, like Dr. Moore, focused her energy on creating greater gender equality in the scientific community: "I have a great feeling of solidarity and sisterhood within my department and at this school. I hope to pass that on to my students." Optimistic and modest about her legacy, Dr. Daly's vision was simple and straightforward, but she did mention her three children several times,

stressing, “I think it is important for parents of black children to encourage them to read. I love to read and am an avid reader. Also, at our church, during the summer break and Christmas, the kids compete for gifts based on the number of pages they read.” Although her work legacy was unrelated to race, her personal legacy was increasing her children’s love of books.

Dr. Drew had specific desires for how his department could improve in the future: “If you want to improve the race climate, I personally would like our administrators to take a look at what they do when they take on minority students and faculty My disappointment with this university is that we have not made efforts to go out and get them.” This wish was more general and he did offer advice earlier in the interview about how the university could do more to recruit and retain African American faculty. When I asked him to specifically address his personal legacy, he disclosed: “My legacy is not related to being black. No, I don’t want that. . . . What I’d like to leave behind is that he listened, had an ear for what persons may have to say. Gave his time to students. Did his job, published, wrote grants; he listened and collaborated. That’s my legacy; if anything, that’s what my parents taught me.” Dr. Drew hoped to leave a simple legacy of dedicated teaching and an enduring contribution to research, a humble bequest, irrespective of his race.

Dr. Haynes believed very adamantly that her legacy revolved around increasing the number of African Americans graduating from the most prestigious professional schools. “We need numbers for greater representation, but it has been hard to get an ethnic balance. By and large, there are so few African American doctors, I might even say, too few, on a global scale,” she lamented, yet, she also reflected about what could be done to help junior faculty of color, not just medical students:

The academic landscape would be greater in the upper echelons, the upper circles of academia if more under-represented minorities would help shepherd junior faculty down the path to promotion. They do not necessarily have more obstacles to overcome, but obstacles to their success are well-documented Otherwise, as a black doctor, I put my name and face out there for naught. [But] . . . I don't think the university has done enough primarily because the hiring processes are decentralized and there is a great deal of informal recruitment that goes on with majority students and their parents' friends.

She objected to this informal recruiting primarily because under-represented faculty are often excluded from these environments, such as fraternity and sorority events, golf games, and country club lunches. Irritated by these hidden avenues for advancement, Haynes argued, "for many of them, there is no uncle, aunt, grandparent, or parent who can pull special strings for them. The university could make the process more transparent and it could implement over-arching policies that required departmental searches to pay attention to diversity." She took personal responsibility in this regard and mentored several medical students, including her own daughter, as well as junior faculty. She believed that the African American, Native American and Latino American medical students had unique perspectives, because "in general, these students, as well as immigrants, have a hunger and they are motivated. My long-term vision involves how we must prepare under-represented minorities to be excellent. They must be primed to go to the premier hospitals." She hypothesized that the attitude that the nuns at her Catholic school instilled in her, "Do the best you can," should be the way that hiring and admissions committees operated. For her legacy to be realized, "the best" meant greater retention which would translate into greater representation of African Americans in

all medical specialties. Regarding scientists' self-valuation, the next section discusses service to the university, and that regardless of how a legacy plan may increase one's long-term contribution, the psychic toll of committee work may minimize it.

Committee Responsibilities or Other Burdens

After she first became a professor, Dr. Moore was initially excited about meeting other faculty from across campus, participating in the executive faculty council, a comprehensive curriculum review, a search for the university librarian, and a committee selecting undergraduate minority scholarship recipients. She thought most of the committees that asked her to be a member did not select her because of her race, but, as years passed, she made a startling and frustrating revelation that her presence on a committee was based more on her skin color than on what insight she could provide:

I've been called on to be on university committees, but the department has asked me to scale back. And I've learned to say 'no,' but it has taken a while for me to wise up . . . Some committees are a waste of time, but you can't know that when they ask you. I've added diversity to a committee over and over again. Some committees are so full that it is hard to get a word in edgewise and there is no shortage of academics who love hearing themselves talk. I'm quiet and I've learned that sometimes, they want me to be there because of who they think I represent, not because of the input I could give Because I'm black, I have more demands on me than other faculty do.

Others, like Dr. Moore, learned to "say no" earlier in their careers and realized that they had to maintain energy for the initial years at a university for research and publishing, and using their precious time for committees was not a judicious way to ensure tenure approval.

Too, it seemed that the more real-world experience an individual had before he or she entered the academy as a faculty member, such as working in a private laboratory, as a post-doctoral fellow, or as a medical or veterinary clinician, the more savvy he or she was about negotiating the demands of the job and prioritizing his or her time. Those faculty members who moved into the academy immediately after completing their degrees seemed to replicate the mindset of a dutiful graduate student. For example, Dr. Daly, who sang the praises of her department, enumerated her requirements for tenure. She listed committee work last and publishing, first, despite the fact that she was not at a Research I university. Then she added, “I am on three committees, faculty affairs, admissions, undergraduate research, and the scholarship committee for minority students. Well, I guess that is four.” This disclosure highlighted two ways in which Dr. Daly was unique among the faculty I interviewed: first, she had spent six years working in the private biotech industry, yet this non-academic work experience did not make her more assertive in the academic setting or protective of her time; instead, she was willing to be on four committees, when she was only expected to be on three, a response totally unlike Dr. Drew, Dr. Young, and Dr. Haynes. Second, she claimed “I don’t really think of people with regard to race,” but she joined the scholarship committee for minority students, overloading her committee responsibilities, perhaps because the issue was important to her, which again, seemed contradictory, so I am not sure what role her African American culture played in her decision.

Spreading herself thin as a result of providing extra help to medical students, to her patients, and to her community members, Dr. Haynes worked with many committees and did not feel burdened. She gave lectures at the medical school, taught in a program for pre-med under-represented minorities, served on a minority recruitment committee, and routinely

spoke before the Student National Medical Association (SNMA), which addressed the needs of medical students of color. She personally encourages “the other minority faculty and majority faculty who are sensitive to issues of diversity to mentor the medical residents.” In addition to being on the Academic Council and the University Senate, she also prepared the physiology and pathology study sessions for pre-med students and led reviews for their MCAT preparation. She told me that:

Students are very appreciative and receptive. They also have a shadowing a doctor program for eight weeks and I let two or three students shadow me. In the practice, I am part of a group of black and white women doctors who talk to women’s groups about diseases to which women are particularly susceptible. I really like talking at senior centers and community centers. I do a lot of more informal educating when we do community wide cancer screenings I find these events very gratifying.

In addition to these activities, Haynes held major national positions, such the FDA Advisory Board and a Center for Disease Control advisory panel. She volunteered at a state science academy and served on the board of the private Catholic school she attended as a girl. But since she had already been promoted to full professor, she did these activities for the satisfaction she receives, not because she is looking to bolster a C.V. that will be scrutinized by colleagues. In fact, extreme external stressors forced her to reduce her committee work in 2001, because her father and grandmother died and, that year, her house burned down. But the burden wears even on her: “The main difficulty is that I have too little time. The pressures of clinical productivity have increased significantly over the past five years and this has truncated my time with teaching and service.” With a full schedule of activities, Dr. Haynes was able to successfully juggle multiple tasks, along with her job as a clinician, as a

professor of medical students, as a community volunteer, and public lecturer about health topics, which seemed very busy even for her. An impressive time-manager, she seemed enlivened by her committee assignments and other responsibilities, and they elevated her self-valuation, rather than decreasing it.

Dr. Drew stated that he was on four or five committees including faculty senate, faculty governance, and university governance. He suspected that he was asked to be on some “just to have a black face on the committee. Yeah, the token black, yeah. That has crossed my mind several times.” He clarified that his position was 70% research, with 15% teaching, 10% service, and 5% extension of his science into the community, but he acknowledged that he probably exceeded the 10% amount: “I serve on a lot of committees, probably too many.” Although he had no proof that he was “the token black,” that doubt troubled him emotionally, and he seemed to feel overburdened with these bureaucratic duties that distracted him from his lab work, which he prized above all else. He expressed great relief at being able to limit his committee responsibilities recently: “I’ve come off of them [committees] completely because I have a research grant” but he added:

I got tired of beating my head against the wall trying to get people to see things, not to see things, but to do things the right way. . . [like] not joining the committee just to add to their C.V. Well, I pretty much realized that everybody is out here to get what they can get from me, yes, buffer up their C.V. And obviously, I’m not trying to buffer my C.V., but what I’m trying to say is there are fellow faculty who are
Yeah, I have pulled away from levels of governance which have nothing to do with research, with graduate training, so my level of service will therefore be focused on what I’m paid to do.

Dr. Drew had actively participated in university service, but after he had been on several committees, he decided most of them were overly political and ineffectual. Prioritizing his research and teaching, he reduced his responsibilities, partially unburdening himself. Possibly because they were laboratory focused, many scientists did not have much tolerance for debates about administrative minutiae, verbal bickering, and hair-splitting at meeting after meeting. Scientists who were interested in connecting to students of color or women did so by interacting with students individually, so that they could see systematic and verifiable results, such as a deeper understanding of a topic or admission to graduate school, and these outcomes appealed to their unique training and epistemological perspectives as empiricists. Instead of using committees to increase their self-valuation, science faculty believed they could make a more chartable and significant contribution by mentoring, which is discussed in the next section.

The Importance of African American's Women's Culture

This theme of Black Feminist Thought manifests uniquely with scientists because, with the exception of Dr. Young, none of the professors researched topics related to their culture. Unlike their colleagues who celebrated their African American culture in their personal and work lives, if they chose to research a culturally relevant topic, science faculty developed compartmentalized senses of self that were less integrated than the humanities and social science faculty who wrote about issues more directly relevant to their heritage.

A brief word about the theme that Hill Collins refers to as "The Importance African American Women's Culture" (1986, p. 21): Even though there is one male faculty represented, his perspective can still be regarded, despite Hill Collins narrow, gender restricted definition. Dr. Drew was the only male scientist whose interview was included in

this dissertation, but he held his female colleagues in high regard. His mother was a college professor, and two of his mentees were women, so he could be considered an ally. Even though Hill Collins' category specifically addresses women, I think this a limitation of her theory because she precludes the possibility that a man can be feminist due to the sexism that has characterized the political, artistic, social, and literary history of African American women. It should be noted that it has been twenty-two years since Hill Collins forwarded her theory and that I took exception to the way she excludes African American men's contribution, therefore, I have included African American male professors and believe that they sufficiently can still be categorized as outsiders within the academy. In addition, Hill Collins herself has reconsidered her own views in the time since she wrote her 1986 article. In her 1991 volume, she posits that "black women intellectuals are central in the production of Black feminist thought because we alone can create the group autonomy that must precede effective coalitions with other groups," but she rejects "separatist positions" that "withdraw from other groups and engage in exclusionary politics" (1991, p. 35). However, she goes even further in her 2000 edition, expanding her 1991 views by claiming that "individuals from other groups who are engaged in similar social justice projects" can advocate, refine, and disseminate Black feminist thought, thus building coalitions with "black men, African women, White men, Latinas, White women . . ." (2000, p. 37). She further connects the experiences of coalition members by assigning them "traitor" status because they often must "become 'traitors' to the privileges that their race, class, gender, sexuality, or citizenship status provides them" (2000, p. 37). While the "traitor" status of coalition members can be hidden because of their Whiteness, Hill Collins acknowledges that "their intellectual work illustrates how coalition building that advances Black feminist thought might operate" (2000,

p. 37), thereby granting them honorary outsider within status, which is a very different position than the rather exclusionary one that she adopted in 1986.

Isolation

When one considers the life of the famous geneticist monk Gregor Mendel, one clearly understands that isolation is an integral part of the life of a scientist. The science and medical faculty whom I interviewed either hardly noted a sense of isolation, or because they had been studying science intensely for years, they accepted it as a required aspect of the research process. On the whole, they complained much less than their counterparts in the humanities and social sciences did about being isolated. Another factor determining whether or not participants reported a sense of isolation is related to the temperament often required by scientific pursuits. Most of these faculty had a laboratory, a small set of research assistants, and a very focused research project, one to which they had dedicated years of their life, including writing research proposals for it, writing papers about it, and presenting it at professional conferences. In other words, scientists are rewarded for narrowly focused research, on a very specific topic, which means that their epistemological perspective is oriented toward the microcosm, not the macrocosm. Self-definition and self-valuation centered around what they did and their projects rather than who they were ethnically. While there is an organization for physicians of color, the National Medical Association, Dr. Haynes did not belong to it, but Dr. Young did belong to the Society of Black Engineers. If they celebrated their heritage with cultural festivals, family reunions, music, or art, they did so on the weekends.

The scientists' colleagues in the humanities and social sciences are especially encouraged to explore inter-disciplinary studies, enlarging the scope of their work more

broadly, even though some do explore narrow topics too. Indeed, viewing the world through a microscope can result in training individuals to ignore their emotions, intuitive perceptions, and social interactions while they are in their labs, because feelings are irrelevant to the scientific process. In contrast, humanities and social scientists are trained to observe subjective as well as objective phenomenon and may be more sensitive to an intuitive sense of discrimination, hostility, and willful estrangement from their colleagues so that although African American science faculty may not report isolation, it is present. But, again, because of their different epistemology, the fact that discrimination is present, may not be in itself an alienating force.

However, some of these faculty reported feeling racially segregated, but very much a part of their research team or connected to their lab assistants. For instance, Dr. Moore, who was a Unitarian Universalist, said: “ I do feel isolated on campus because of my race, but my life outlook has certainly been affected by my religion. I have experienced mistreatment . . . related to my gender and race.” Dr. Moore was optimistic that majority faculty could develop sensitivity to issues that affected women scientists, but less optimistic that they could do so around racial issues.

Dr. Daly, however, felt very differently than most of the other faculty claiming that she did not feel isolated and that her upbringing accounted for this:

I am an only child. I like being alone. I seek solitude. . . this is a small department.

We socialize together, celebrate birthdays; we just had a retirement party I am happy in my department. At the same time, I like meeting new people and I feel a great feeling of solidarity and sisterhood here.

Yet, some of her sentiments contrasted with her initial report of not feeling isolated:

It was great to have the black lunch that we had in 2002 with (names three colleagues). We let our hair down. I felt at ease, to be with people who are like you. Not judged. . . . I would like to have a black lunch again. The trouble is just making time to do it. I feel comfortable enough here; it was fun, but I don't seek out black faculty, just because they are black. . . . When I go to national professional meetings, there are mostly men, and when I see women there, even though there are only a handful, I feel more comfortable and we have a sense of belonging. Once at a conference, all of the women who were attending went to breakfast and we could breath easier.

Curiously, even though she valued solitude, Dr. Daly expressed a great deal of solidarity with other women in the sciences and appreciated how comfortable she felt interacting with them, her own marginalized outsider group within the science community. She did not mention the ethnicity of these women, only that they provided her with a sense of belonging that she did not feel at her home institution.

Claiming not to feel isolated, yet vacillating slightly, Dr. Daly explained that while it was "great" to have the luncheon, she rarely has time to socialize on-campus, so it is easier for her to socialize in her own department:

I am happy here partly because it is a small school and I don't feel isolation because I am black at a small school. There are so few of us in (names physical science field) that we collaborate and are comfortable with one another. Almost all of the profs, we all have teenagers and so we have similar experiences raising them. Because we are such a small department, with four full-timers and an adjunct, I feel comfortable, supported, and I feel solidarity with my colleagues.

She emphasized throughout her interview that because her school was “small” that she neither experienced isolation, nor social marginalization, or outsider stigma.

Speaking about the fact that, when he was hired in 1999, four African American faculty taught in his science department, Dr. Drew reflected that, as of our 2006 interview, one faculty member had retired, one was recruited away by another college, and one had his job classification changed to an administrative position without his knowledge and was later told by a department chair that he was no longer tenure track. When the faculty member who just retired was hired in 1982, he was the only African American faculty member, and now 24 years later, again, only one African American full-time faculty, Drew, teaches there. He commented: “People are disrespected here, yes What angers me about this university is when you look at the numbers, there seems to be a trend of pushing black faculty to administrative posts or non-scientific posts. That worries me because all it says is that blacks can only be administrators.” Later in the interview, Dr. Drew shared that his parents warned him about social rejection: “As I learned from my dad who was in academia and my mom, who was also at the university, [they said] never rely on this university for socialization. I intentionally make it that way. . . . for the last six months or a year, I sort of decided to focus on my family and friends who have nothing to do with this place.” Dr. Drew was lucky enough to hear parental advice about what to expect from his college’s social milieu. This advice prepared him, but few faculty benefit from someone with ivory tower experience; yet, a mentor can really help a professor find an more easily paved path on the lonely academic road.

Mentoring

The mentoring question garnered mixed responses because many in the sciences confirmed that once they had a lab project, they spent so many hours alone that it was difficult to mentor anyone other than lab assistants. While Dr. Daly had experiences that contrasted greatly from the other science professors I interviewed, such as not feeling isolated on her campus, not believing her scholarship was subject to special scrutiny, not having tenure obstacles, and not being overburdened by her committee assignments, she was rather garrulous about how powerfully mentoring had affected her life and how important it was for her to be a mentor. Her undergraduate mentor, a white male science teacher, who was “very good natured about his teaching,” became a friend and peer. When she was his student, he recommended her for a research position with the National Institute of Health Sciences, which exposed her to what the life of scientist would be like. In addition, he encouraged her to interview specialists in her science field with a B.S, an M.S., and a Ph.D. and ask who was happiest. All those she interviewed were white men, and she decided that the man with the Ph.D. “had the most freedom.” At that time, the only goal she had was to be a teacher, because the smart people in her family had become teachers, but she did not know what other, more advanced options were available to her. Her mentor helped expand her career possibilities and he did not presume that she was incapable of any of the educational goals. His task assumed she could reach her highest potential.

Describing her summers working as a lab technician, she recalled that all the other college students were white, and that “they treated me well and were helpful. They trusted me.” Her hard work earned their trust, but, in addition, her mentor spoke well of her in front of her fellow student-workers. She was unsure if he did that because he was sensitive to the

fact that she was African American and all the others were white, but her own diligence verified her competence. Her question about why he praised her publicly did not make her wonder if the white students were assumed to be incompetent and might need an advocate, as McIntosh (1990) addressed. Instead, she appreciated what was either his sensitivity about negative stereotypical assumptions about her competence that his praise would dismiss, or simple, supportive, positive kindness and pride in his mentee. Because her parents did not go to college, Dr. Daly explained that she did not understand the various levels of post-baccalaureate education and “there were a number of teachers in my family, cousins, and I admired my teachers. But, until I met my mentor, I didn’t know I could be a professor, and not just a teacher. My mentor exposed me to a whole other range of options. He helped me grow beyond what I thought I could do.” His faith in her enabled her to move beyond her limits and the fact that he was Caucasian seemed to teach her that a mentor did not need to share a racial heritage with a student in order to really connect. In terms of mentoring as an extension of Hill Collins’ notion of the importance of African American Women’s Culture, for Dr. Daly, a high quality mentor need not be a woman or African American; indeed, a mentor could be of any race as long as he or she pushed students to their highest potential. For her, race was irrelevant to mentoring, as her next comment attests. It was not an outgrowth of Black Feminist Thought or a cultural tendency to mother.

During her doctoral program, Dr. Daly’s mentor was a Caucasian woman and she has a picture of her on her desk with a new crop of graduate students. Asserting that she is still her mentor, she said:

She continues to remind me to push myself and is very encouraging I have a black mentee and we have a special relationship. But, my mentor was a white woman

and we had a special relationship. . . . I have had the same mentee for four years and there is no overt difference between the rapport I have with her and the rapport I have with my other students. I have encouraged her to pursue a career in chemistry, biology, or pharmacy. I like students and I like to help them also because I had a great mentor.

Dr. Drew was very concerned about how the small number of African American faculty in his field at his school was interpreted by the students, especially because he was the only tenured track in 2006 and it was the same when his mentor was hired in 1982: “it sends a message to these young people who we are mentoring. We are mentoring white and black young people who are future leaders, not only in this profession, but are leaders in their society as doctors and Ph.D.s. They are leaders and so what image are you sending them out there?” But curiously, he did not seek out African American students to mentor. He practiced cross-race mentoring and seemed to think others should follow his example. Dr. Drew explained that in his field “I was lucky that my advisor became my mentor, when I became a faculty member. Mentorship is rare here for all three levels in the professorship, assistant, associate, and full. Too many faculty, I see just drifting. . . . I’m mentoring these three [graduate students] and I’m also being mentored by my department head and my mentor.” He acknowledged that he had African American mentors at his historically black graduate school, but he insisted that his white doctoral mentors offered him more help about professional development and publishing. He, like Dr. Daly, did not seem convinced that same-race mentoring was more effective or useful to mentees. In fact, he seemed to think scientific sub-specialty was the best fit for mentor-mentee relationships, reinforcing for scientists that the value of “the work” superceded cultural affiliation.

Dr. Drew worried about the lack of women faculty because so many of the medical students were female. He lamented the small number of African American and women faculty members. Yet, ironically, Dr. Drew firmly believed that because the profession was becoming so female, female faculty members were the ideal role models, but the mentor that he spoke about who was most supportive of him, was white. I asked him if he thought he had to be the same culture or gender of a student in order to mentor them, and he said no, but “A female minority faculty member, I think, would be nice for the black students. All of these [his mentees], in fact, except for one, all are females and one male.” When asked to describe his mentees, he told me he had a white woman from California, a white woman from North Carolina, and an Indian man. So, none of his mentees shared both his gender and his ethnicity, yet they shared a scientific specialty and a lab project. When I asked him to define the role of a mentor, he clarified: “Listening in and of itself, sympathizing, right? That’s the best thing a mentor can do is just listen and have some empathy, you know. Also, be objective and offer some critical review, just as if they’re going to be fellow colleagues. I can be a friend and an advisor to a student too.” He also believed they could help one another by publishing their research.

Despite his questions about whether mentors should share their mentees cultural background, he felt very strongly about how much he enjoyed mentoring: “Without them, I pretty much wouldn’t enjoy what I’m doing because our research is exciting . . . I like this lifestyle, interacting with the students. I learn from working with them. I wouldn’t give this up for anything else.” He reported that white faculty say “‘why aren’t I a mentor for these black students?’ I say ‘I agree with you, but these students shouldn’t only have black mentors.’ They are unlikely to go to work in only black communities. When they leave here,

you know, the first client in their practice is going to be a white person.” He approached mentoring from a numbers perspective, alerting me to the fact that there are 120 faculty in his department. Slightly defensive and using his age as a disclaimer, Drew evaded personal responsibility to mentor only the African American students, suggesting that doing so would be a type of segregation: “The other faculty are probably even better mentors. I’m a youngster, you know, teaching for eight years. There are people who have twenty plus years’ experience, what’s wrong with them? Just because they’re white they can’t talk to the black students? Other than me, they have my black colleague who was forced into an administrative position, but isn’t it apartheid if he only works with black students?” Dr. Drew truly believed that by mentoring students, closely and patiently, regardless of race, he was doing the best job he could, and that if he only worked with black students, he would reinforce racial separation rather than intellectual affiliation.

Dr. Young was very committed to mentoring students not only in her discipline in order to help them understand the material, but also in order to provide career guidance. She had close ties to her industry partners, created internship contacts for her students, and was a member of a national doctoral mentoring program, insisting that “the legacy that I leave probably would have to be my mentoring of doctoral students.” Established in 1994, this national program, called The Ph.D. Project, targeted African American, Native American and Latino Americans, and was designed to increase the number of under-represented minority faculty in business, statistics, accounting, and information technology. In addition to these fields, the Ph.D. Project provided mentoring for under-represented women in engineering, partnering with major companies like Hewlett Packard, Goldman Sachs, and Citigroup and 180 universities such as Harvard, Stanford, and many public universities (Ph.D. Project

website). Dr. Young had participated in workshops and guidance sessions for eight years. Ironically, Dr. Young was committed to this program, but could not convince her university to become a member, so a former employer helped her maintain a formal membership. As she formally mentored her current seniors, she had:

put together a panel of about ten alumni that have graduated and they're coming back. [They] are going to talk about their career paths, what they are doing now, bringing a job description. Some of them are entrepreneurs, but if they are working in corporate, they bring in two or three descriptions of jobs that current students can apply for.

Dr. Young wanted to create a rich network of resources from which the students could make internship and job contacts. She said her deep commitment to mentoring students came from a profound lack of guidance during her doctoral program. She appreciated that she had generous mentors as an undergraduate (she actually earned two B.S. degrees from different universities) and master's degree student, but absolutely no mentoring as a doctoral student. Expressing her dedication to her students, she shared:

I think it's [mentoring] just an extension of who I am because I believe that and I know that there have been people there that have helped me. . . . I don't think that's a black thing, but I do feel—the question always comes up, is there a real responsibility to mentor? I do. I don't think everybody does. I know white colleagues who are not necessarily doing it.

She also believed that other minorities and women in the department felt comfortable approaching her when they needed intellectual as well as emotional support.

I had one female come in here and break down and cry. I helped her and listened. I get Indian students in here, and they ask 'Can you listen to me?' So, you know, for

me it's like I said, as long as I can see that there's some effort and they're really trying, I'm going to try to help in any way that I can.

She tried to assist these students by serving on thesis committees and writing letters of recommendation. The next section was, for the scientists, the least important manifestation of Black Feminist Thought, and in fact, Dr. Daly did not appear to notice the interlocking nature of oppression at all, focusing, like her colleagues did, on her experiments. Again, because of their training as empiricists, these faculty were suspicious of subjective data.

The Interlocking Nature of Oppression

For the science faculty, awareness of the intersection between racism, classism, and gender discrimination was not their foremost concern. Faculty in the sciences are less likely than humanities faculty to become involved in faculty governance and tenure committees because their research focuses them to devote time to their laboratories, thereby exposing them less frequently to subjective accounts of mistreatment. As will be noted, Dr. Young had a tenure struggle that was in part, she felt, the result of racism and as the only computer scientist in the group, she was more cognizant of social and political factors that contributed to a person's subjective experience of the promotion process. All the other faculty were laboratory scientists in biology, chemistry, pharmacology, or toxicology and as such, their disciplines required intense focus on empirical data and observable results, not subjective phenomenon, like whispered conversations, side glances, or opaque tenure requirements. Dr. Drew suspected that his colleagues treated him differently, but he had no proof, so he dismissed his own doubt. Dr. Haynes recognized classism and racism in the world of medical school admissions, while Drs. Moore, Daly, and Young, saw gender discrimination and racism in the science world.

Suspicion about Scholarship

Because the science disciplines, especially the physical and natural sciences, are less likely to intersect with a scholar's ethnicity than the humanities are, stereotypes about what Halcón and Reyes (1988) call the "Brown on Brown research taboo" are less common. But due to recent interests among grant agencies in racial health disparities and the digital divide, for biological science and engineering professors, the taboo still exists. Unfortunately, Dr. Young had to change her dissertation topic because her interest in the technology divide did not pass muster with her committee. After she switched to a topic that the committee agreed upon, she graduated. Later, she was contacted by a national agency trying to find academic research on the digital divide. This agency had been told that she was writing her dissertation about it, but because her committee had discouraged her, claiming the divide was a "side issue," she did not have any data to offer. Ironically, among information technology circles, Dr. Young asserted, organizations like the National Science Foundation (NSF) have become interested in collecting data about how people of color use the internet, making it a respected and highly-sought after research focus. Now Dr. Young insisted: "I'm very interested in the context of applying and using technology to help deal with health disparities, particularly with AIDS and ethnicity." She felt vindicated for seeing how relevant the digital divide phenomenon would become, but her committee members were too short-sighted to see its potential. Here is a prime example of the interlocking nature of oppression: her choice of topic was censored by white male professors, when this research was, in fact, cutting edge.

After my interview with Dr. Young, I realized that if a scholar's project is related to his or her ethnic background, senior faculty may assume that culturally-relevant research has too limited a range of influence, even if this is a paternalistic gesture. However well-

intentioned, they may advise a scholar not to pursue such a research topic, perhaps wanting to help the African American scholar market herself widely and not limit herself by only conducting research related to her ethnic background. For example, Dr. Young developed a personal philosophy for coping with her committee's response to her initial idea. Her goal was to graduate within a certain time frame and so she acquiesced to her committee's censorship in order to expedite graduation: "It [her idea to research the digital divide] was not met with enthusiasm. And so I proposed something different It was not a battle for me to fight. I was there to win the war. To me, winning the war was getting out. So I wasn't going to belabor the issue I just said 'Let it go.' " She did not allow this act of suppression to delay or derail her achievement of a career milestone.

Dr. Young decided that this philosophy served her well because after she earned her Ph.D., she was free to pursue what she wanted to research, no longer needing the approval of a well-intentioned, but misguided committee. She had the "keys to the kingdom," as the old spiritual goes, and once given access to the palace, she researched topics that helped her career and allowed her ethnic identity as an engineer and an African American woman to intersect. Few white researchers may be interested in the digital divide or analyzing health disparities because these issues may not be on their radar as worthy of study. By strategically "winning the war," she believed she could effect more change as a scholar than if she had let their lack of enthusiasm derail her or make her leave the academy, which is not uncommon when one's ideas are unvalued and rejected. Valuing her own persistence, Dr. Young had the fortitude to see the goal and pursue her Ph.D. despite resistance from committee members. This trailblazing attitude was uncommon among the scientist participants, and the faculty I

interviewed persevered despite witnessing their ideas, such as increasing minority interest in the sciences, defeated or “lynched” by people in positions of power.

Initially denied tenure, Dr. Young approached her tenure battle similarly to how she approached her dissertation prospectus meeting, where her ideas were discouraged:

To get tenure, I focused on the tech part [of my work history] because as some faculty members have said, ‘Those are,’ how can I say this? I’m going to state the exact words. ‘You’ve gotten sidetracked.’ . . . But what’s interesting is that when the NSF says that it’s (the digital divide) a problem, then it’s of relevance. But other than that, it’s a sidetrack issue. Unless you could get money . . . it’s black work. Unless of course, you answer a call from the NSF, or other funded projects, then, ‘Oh, okay, it’s okay’ then. And now they (senior faculty) want to see if I can present a proposal to NSF. But . . . not because it’s in fashion now.

She fought her tenure battle and got her initial denial over-turned, but challenging the review was hard, as I explain later. Paternalistic white people in positions of power affected her research plan. Her committee acted on its hidden assumption that data analysis about technology use among minorities was irrelevant and non-generalizable, so why pursue it?

Dr. Young offered an illustrative anecdote:

When I was in my doctoral program, the ethnic identity piece was not a political way to get out, I mean, to graduate. I had proposed something and it was not supported with enthusiasm. And once I got out, I was contacted by NSF and they were doing work to get more African Americans into technology classrooms. ‘Would you be interested in participating as a student?,’ and I said, ‘Guess what, I’m not a student anymore, I’ve finished.’

In other words, she lost an opportunity for federally funded research because her committee did not want her to be “side-tracked” by what they perceived as an “ethnic” issue, even though she was later contacted by the NSF about this very same issue. So, now, she has returned to an interest that she was discouraged from pursuing by her committee; because, even though it excited her, the committee ultimately had the power to deny her project idea, reifying her outsider status. This committee, acting as an agent of the institution, reinforced which pursuits were acceptable, under the guise of looking out for the scholar’s future career, even though another major agency, the NSF, had recognized the value of that idea. Their denials signaled to her that without the imprimatur of a canonically approved topic, researchers who try to explore alternative topics are looked upon with something similar to what Du Bois described in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903), as “amused contempt and pity.” I compare this kind of academic repression or intellectual stifling to an intellectual lynching where an innovative idea is silenced because it does not conform to the status quo, and the suspicion about academic merit of an idea is enough to permanently invalidate a scholar’s insider possibilities.

Unlike Dr. Young who was only tenured recently, Dr. Haynes has been a clinician and professor for 25 years. As the first woman president of her professional organization of 12,000 specialists, she earned respect, has garnered awards, has been promoted to a full professor, and does social justice work within her medical field. She declared:

We need to draw our attention to ethnicity and how it can make a difference in obesity and diabetes, for instance. Now, because I am the most seasoned and most senior faculty, I can . . . direct attention to examining health care disparities . . .

There are presumptions about under-represented minorities and the initial research

was done first by majority researchers. I publicly take exception to how they interpret data. . . For example, they might think of ethnic difference, but not the socio-economic and environmental factors.

Her engagement with communities of color in relation to her specific area of medical expertise drew her to lecture in senior citizen homes, at public libraries, and at churches where she knows medical information passes through the grapevine, especially among the under-insured and uninsured. Because her academic credentials are unimpeachable, she has built a solid career but she recognized what her “majority” (read white) colleagues miss when they conduct research or examine health trends. They may not examine how race, dietary patterns, or economic conditions affect health outcomes because their perspective is limited to their own ethnic frame of reference. She credited the increase in research related to health disparities between African Americans, whites and Latinos, in part to the increased number in students of color in medical schools because they consider how cultural methods of preparing food, unreliable transportation for medical check-ups, or distrust of doctors can negatively affect a patient’s health. Dr. Haynes maintained: “I bring a sensitivity and an awareness to my interpretation of medical research that my majority colleagues don’t have and don’t consider. Many Native American, African American, and some immigrant students, but not all, have sensitivity to research issues that majority students don’t consider or are ignorant about.” Although her scholarship was never in doubt because she graduated first in her medical school class, her awareness of the interlocking nature of oppression and how it can affect the quality of disease diagnosis and medical treatment, alerted her to examine more factors, possibly making her a more thorough diagnostician than a white physician.

Dr. Haynes also was dedicated to trying to increase the number of faculty of color, which she thought would eventually reduce the suspicion about scholarship:

I sat for ten years on the Department of Medicine hiring board. We realized that black faculty had different subjective constraints on them that other faculty did not have. A study was commissioned by the university, you see, and we learned that their potential for mentoring was less and they were more likely to have their colleagues overly scrutinize them in their training programs. . . What the research team discovered was that African American faculty were graded lower than white faculty and that there was definite evidence of racial bias. . . the only variable was the under-represented minority status of the faculty. The white students had suspicions about the under-represented minorities. The results were shocking to people, especially to the majority faculty.

As a result of the report, mentoring programs were established and the situation is better now. What the study revealed was that many white students doubted a professor's abilities if he or she was a racial outsider, and they did not consider the professor an insider, even though he or she was just as qualified as a white professor.

Dr. Moore shared an anecdote that was particularly chilling, not only due to how recently it occurred, 2002, but also, because of the racist implications involved in being perceived as a 'servant' at a National Institutes of Health (NIH) conference:

For example, just two years ago at an NIH meeting, and . . . I was sitting there with a suit on and an NIH nametag and another woman scientist sat next to me and started handing me some papers and asking me to file this and fax that. I was in shock because she had met me before at another meeting. A male colleague stopped her and

said, “This is Dr. Moore. You’ve met her before.” The woman stopped, froze and responded, ‘Well, if she’s not the secretary, who is?’ She never apologized. This wouldn’t have happened if I wasn’t black Every black professional has a story like that. There is an assumption about who “does” scientific research. I ask myself, and those of us in the profession who are minorities, like my husband, who is a mathematician. He was at a math teachers’ conference ten years ago, and someone assumed he was a taxi-cab driver and told him where to pick up his passenger. We ask ourselves, ‘When is it going to end?’

This anecdote represented what she referred to as “willful mistreatment,” but she also experienced unintentional mistreatment that is yet another manifestation of institutional racism. Explaining what she referred to as “significant examples of these different expectations of what a professor is supposed to look like,” she described how these preconceived notions affected her:

My office had my name on my door, but no picture. And students would come in and seem startled that I was in there. The students had different expectations. They said, ‘You can’t be a professor.’ It was comical to me because at first I thought it was because I looked so young, in the early years. Vendors selling laboratory supplies or other equipment would tell me, ‘When Dr. Moore returns, would you please tell her that I stopped by?’ or they would ask, ‘Where is Dr. Moore?’ because the assumption is that I couldn’t possibly be Dr. Moore.

Dr. Moore was very aware of the ways in which her African American identity might hinder her in the sciences, but her sense of her minority status as a woman also affected her professional identity. She expressed resentment that “white men are the stars in science.

Women are still struggling to get the recognition that we deserve based on our hard work.”

After she told me about her own research project, she ruminated aloud:

Sometimes, I feel that I chose the hardest route. I have chosen a field where my race is absolutely unimportant as a component of my research. Some of the others on campus in the English department or history or . . . Public Health can work in research where their culture and ethnicity are relevant or somehow enrich their research . . . For some, their culture is absolutely at the heart of the research and writing that they publish. In other words, being black brings something extra . . . but mine doesn't. . . . The thing of it is, I love science and I love the world of the mind, and I wouldn't go back and change my decision to enter the scientific community, but it is complicated in ways that I couldn't have imagined.

Although she obviously did not lament the focus of her career, she acknowledged that her path toward tenure could have been quicker if she had been a social scientist or a humanities professor. She did express significant frustration and discontent with what she perceived as subtle racism embedded in the article and grant-submission process. She speculated that her work was held to a higher standard for approval than her other colleagues:

If I submit a manuscript, I have my colleagues read over it, and I receive the most absurd criticisms, for minor problems that would never plague my white colleagues, and in most cases, I am often asked to redo mine when I submit it for publication, whereas my colleagues in the department are fine on their initial submissions. No one cuts you any slack. I think too that my race minimizes and jeopardizes my ability to get grants, which also is related to my ability to get promoted. Because in the

sciences, getting the big grants and bringing big dollars into the university is the way to establish your status and prove yourself.

While she had no proof that her grant submissions were scrutinized more closely due to her race, she was convinced it was true and she compared her proposals to others to substantiate her opinion. In other words, she was reluctant to make claims of injustice, and although she believed the interlocking nature of oppression affected her as an African American woman, she could never show absolute proof to link the scrutiny to her race.

Because he earned his Ph.D. at the same institution where he taught, moving from a doctoral student to faculty member, without going through the standard search protocol, Dr. Drew sensed that his colleagues had concerns about the way he was selected for his position, even though the EEOC compliant search had been tailored to his expertise: “I was led to conclude that my process, the process in which I got my position was not clearly above board. Subsequently, to my [being offered the] position, other in-house individuals, black, white, whatever, have gone through the entire interview process and the whole recruitment process, so to speak. So, I was a guinea pig.” He said that although he did apply for the position, some faculty perceived that he was not the best applicant because he had been hired from within “It was an in-house kind of thing, and this happens to both whites and blacks, not only for blacks . . . but this university has a habit of not crossing the Ts and dotting Is.” Offering advice to administrators, Professor Drew recommended that other predominantly white institutions “need to make sure that they recruit the person above board. Otherwise, your fellow white colleagues are going to perceive [that] you got the position because you’re black. In that case, no one ever told me this, but this is the perception that you carry with yourself as a black faculty member if it is not done according to the books.” I asked him to

speculate about why other faculty were skeptical about his qualifications and what special skills he brought to the department; moreover, he has a medical degree and a Ph.D., so his credentials are very solid which made me believe colleagues would be less likely to challenge him:

Yeah, they are sort of less likely. I've always crossed my Ts and dotted my Is in pursuing the highest degrees in my field, where I was bringing in, you know, a million dollars in research grant funding and publishing my papers. As people like to say, I've always tried to pay the so-called black tax. You know, we have to do more to get the same recognition.

Since the conventional custom is that professors rarely get hired at the university where they earn their Ph.D., the fact that Dr. Drew was hired after he received his doctoral degree from the same university created suspicion. Because he perceived that some colleagues doubted his legitimacy when he was hired in 1999, he suggested how to avoid situations like his:

The burden in a society is to get above race. You cannot be recruiting or promoting black faculty, especially black faculty, when there's a cloud around their qualifications and secrecy surrounds it. Because secrecy breeds resentment and resentment breeds racism, and it doesn't help get the races any step closer. And for some white faculty, it'd solidify a sense that, 'Yeah, the black guy can't cut it. He needs to be given a special slot.'

He was very concerned about the burden of tokenism and its long-lasting negative effects, in regard to collegial expectations of him as an African American professor and his student expectations of African American faculty's preparedness and competence:

The university, therefore, has a lot to do with this issue of improving the numbers.

Before it is, so to speak, checked-off. We have a black faculty, check off. We have eight students; we're doing well. . . . But they don't want black students perceived as a token. . . . They don't want white students to perceive [that] black faculty are hired as a token Well, it's good to have check-offs, but if you don't have the environment or the culture there that says, you know, black faculty will get promoted because we are high caliber, or the caliber of black students is high, then these increases in numbers by themselves won't change suspicions or reverse low expectations.

Because he brought in reputable, high dollar grants, Dr. Drew's colleagues did not question his projects, but it should be pointed out that his research was animal-related, so his ethnicity was irrelevant to his experiments. Yet, he heard anecdotal remarks from white faculty about low-scoring African American students and he was anxious about how his colleagues' might perceive him. His anxiety about how his colleagues would think of him raises the issue of how tenure committees would consider him for promotion, the topic of the next section.

Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Issues

Dr. Moore explained the way that she is looked upon by her colleagues, which is reminiscent of what Chesler, Lewis and Crowfoot refer to as the "students of color are the same as everyone else" phenomenon (2005, p. 114).

There is no consideration or no assumption about the fact that the way it is for them, my white colleagues, wouldn't be the way it is for everyone. . . . Once I got tenure, I thought the questions about my competence would cease. But the questions come up every time. I am supposed to be establishing my international reputation in the sciences and of course, there is always the question of how much I have published . . .

. I have taught here for 18 years and I haven't gone up for tenure (for Full Professor)
. . . The things that are important to me are working with students and teaching and
the university doesn't care about them, really. So, this is the "price" that I pay.

She, then, discussed a program that she worked with which tries to encourage more undergraduate students of color to major in math and science. Despite the fact that her department chair is "very supportive," he still asks her "When are you going to stop doing this?" presumably because the program does not advance her lab experiments. She has been questioned about why the section about "contributions to the university," is the largest piece of her year end review, when, because she teaches at a Research I university, it should be the scholarship section. She understands that her student advocacy: "is not going to get me promoted. So, I do activities that are close to my heart, yet these are the activities that keep me from getting promoted to full professor. So, I am still an associate professor, but I work in activities that I feel are important."

Dr. Moore felt frustrated about the evaluation criteria for promotion which made her question whether she would finish her career at a university where the competition for external grant funding was crucial to keeping one's experiments running. These doubts and her concerns about gender discrimination in the sciences led to these remarks:

I need to maintain integrity as to who I am and, perhaps someday, I'll teach at a smaller liberal arts school. Sometimes, I wonder if a Research I university is the best fit for me because I would like it if the faculty ought to think about what's good for the students and not be penalized for helping with programs for students. There is an organization of women faculty who are looking at gender diversity in the university hiring structure. We're certainly under a glass ceiling for promotion My chair

fully expects me to be promoted to full professor. I don't. . . . I don't feel particularly isolated. I just don't think I'll ever be promoted.

For many of the women scientists whom I interviewed, they deeply felt the bind of being a triple minority, a woman in the academy, a woman in the sciences and an African American in the scientific academy, where many factors of oppression interlock. In addition, many felt that their white colleagues were ignorant about their own privileged positions, taking their own race or class for granted, a phenomenon Turner and Myers (2000) refer to as: "the ignorance of privilege, the privilege of ignorance" (p. 226). As a remedy, some of the faculty acknowledged that if their colleagues knew or understood the ways in which being white males privileged their ability to get grants and to gain tenure, this sensitivity could turn the tide and allow for the hiring and retention of more women and more faculty of color. Dr. Moore understood that her ability to help women science colleagues in her department in particular was restricted, as she articulated: "My options are limited because I am not a full professor. There are choices that I can't exercise. For example, I don't get to vote on tenure, promotion, and retention decisions." She was in the heightened outsider within status of being an African American woman in the sciences, but her desire to improve the number of promotions for women was compromised by her own desire to help students because she could not vote on hiring decisions. Although she realized that she was expected to prioritize her lab discoveries over her teaching and service duties, instead, she valued her teaching and service as equal to her research, fully understanding that she paid a "price," as she put it above, for her choices.

Tenured at a large public university in the Southeast, Dr. Young had worked in private industry for ten years as an engineer before earning her Ph.D. and entering the

academy. She remarked that her university was doing “enough to recruit. The problem is our retention. I mean once you get us in, what are you doing?” When she had her tenure review, Dr. Young tried to find an African American woman to talk to her about her tenure experiences because the requirements had changed, and so she looked for someone who had “moved from assistant to associate within the last five years. I could not find one.” Like Professor Drew who had multiple advanced degrees, Dr. Young had an M.B.A. in addition to her Ph.D. so her academic credentials were solid. Nonetheless, she was convinced that “there are some colleagues, I should tell you, that do not even acknowledge me (in the hallway). I’m invisible.” When I asked her what her intuition told her about why they did not acknowledge her, she replied: “The fact that I went for tenure and I got it.” She explained how she had to challenge her tenure decision:

I’m invisible because my road to tenure was not smooth sailing and I fought for what I believed I deserved There was a lot of back and forth and my perception of why those people don’t acknowledge me or speak to me or halfway speak to me or just nod when they used to say, ‘Oh hey, how are you doing?’ is because they didn’t support me That type of hallway interaction is isolating. It shows a level of disrespect, just a lack of common courtesy.

Initially denied tenure, Dr. Young described discrepancies in her tenure process. A white male colleague had been promoted the year before she was reviewed and she compared his number of publications to her own, the number of committees served, and teaching evaluations. When I asked her how she learned about what is usually considered private information, beyond looking at his C.V. online for the number of publications and committee work, she replied: “they say that those meetings are supposed to be confidential. Things leak.

Things always leak.” She said that some colleagues objected to her strongly advocating for herself. Armed with better teaching evaluations, she counted the publications of the man who had been tenured one year before her review:

I said ‘Let’s count. Let’s compare.’ So that’s what I did. [But] up until then, no one in the department had ever been challenged. Everyone had been granted, unanimously, with no problems, before me. And, so I defended myself and I said ‘I know this other person had XY and Z and he was passed through, and I have XY and Z. Plus more X. I’ll give you an example on service, okay. I served on recruiting committees, curriculum committees, and two other committees, but then, in the response letter, the committee chair said ‘Sure, she served, but she didn’t take a leadership role.’ Or . . . an internal reviewer said ‘It seems as if she’s going for quantity as opposed to quality.’ But, the reviewer conceded that he was ‘not quite sure’ what were ‘A’ journals. I said ‘Okay, if you’re not sure, let me give you the measures in my discipline.’ Well, obviously, that wasn’t good enough. But, I showed them that I had more publications, more committee work, and more service to the university. Right, and none of my external reviewers were black, and I did that for political reasons. Because I didn’t want there to be a question about ethnic solidarity or any reason to suspect why they recommended me. I wanted objectivity.

Dr. Young, who was the only African American among fifteen faculty in her department, fought for her promotion, which made her colleagues uncomfortable. Mentioning that two African American men with Ph.D.s were recently hired as adjunct faculty, she rejected the notion that the department was making progress in terms of more racial diversity. In fact, she countered, “From the outside world, it looks like ‘Oh, wow, more

minority profs,’ but they’re not tenure track. I think at a lot of other places, they would have been hired as assistant profs.” Overall, Dr. Young was disgruntled with her department and regularly considers leaving the academy, convinced that she did not encounter as much subtle racism while she worked as an engineer in the private sector.

Dr. Drew related a story about another African American faculty member with whom he had taught for seven years who was recruited away by Ohio State, whose particular science department was lower-ranked than his. He was “one of our top-fliers in terms of grants . . . but my university didn’t do all it can to hold onto that individual I was a bit disappointed that we didn’t put our money where our mouth is in terms of trying to promote him and therefore trying to retain high-achieving black faculty.” Complaining that the department did not go to adequate lengths to compete with Ohio State’s offer, he speculated about why his former colleague was not retained:

I haven’t brought the word “race” in here at all, so, now bring in race. If you are going to say you want a diverse faculty . . . then he would have been the perfect individual to retain, especially because we had just promoted him from assistant to associate in four years, which is, of course, –which was pretty much early promotion Also, then you could look and see how my appointment was handled, my recruitment, if you call it recruitment. It was advertised, yeah, in a national journal, but, you know, it was basically botched. You look at those two things, together, you sort of start thinking a pattern, but you know, do two make a pattern? . . . I have lost deep respect for this university for the way it was handled.

Dr. Drew was careful not to overstate why his colleague left, but he believed that the evidence of racism was not exaggerated and that if administrators did not act out of overt

racism, he saw clear indicators that the university, despite its mission statement to the contrary, was hardly committed to promoting diversity.

In 2004, at the medical school where Dr. Drew taught, he was one of four full-time African American faculty. At the same time, the number of African American graduate students increased from two out of 75, to eight. Then, one faculty member retired, one was recruited away, and one was switched to a full-time administrative position without his knowledge. Dr. Drew was disgruntled with the way his colleague who had been a faculty member was “unceremoniously” re-classified as an administrator. Considering these changes in the composition of the department, Dr. Drew disclosed that:

The common joke among all of us is I’m supposed to be the HNIC, the head nigger in charge. So, that does not give me, not the ‘N’ word, but the ‘head’ word, doesn’t give me any comfort whatsoever because it says that maybe we’re not doing enough to get minorities applying here for faculty positions So, the opinion is therefore, thus, we are bringing a lot of minority students in and you have one tenure track faculty member here. That’s not fun. That’s not, you know, most of them are female; I am male, you know, so, where’s the mentorship?

Here, Dr. Drew connected the number of African American faculty members and the number of role models for African American students, and how that significant gap could handicap students, making them question their ability to succeed in the profession.

Earning tenure easily, Dr. Daly did not have to battle her way through her process and she credits her mentor with helping her through it. Hired in 1995, she made associate professor in 2001 and claimed to “love” her department, in very small regional college in the Midwest. With only four full-time tenure track faculty, including the chair, the department

was “wonderfully supportive” and Daly’s current chair was a woman, a rarity in the sciences. Her former chair was a man, “also very supportive,” and he hired her, as the first African American person ever to be hired for the science faculty at the college. She says she was encouraged to publish research, and was awarded funding for three undergraduate research assistants. While these undergraduates were enthusiastic helpers, she did not benefit in the way that she would have at a major research university where more research output was expected and where she could have worked with graduate students, who would have wanted to publish collaborative research. Now, I reflect upon the perspectives of participants who held views very different from their peers.

Marginal Perspectives: A Conclusion

Dr. Daly expressed dismay at the idea of institutional racism and focused instead on proving herself in the sciences and mentoring women. As a physical scientist, her research was unrelated to her ethnicity. Dr. Daly readily admitted that she was “the only black professor in the sciences” at her regional, private college, but when I asked her if she sought African American students to mentor, she responded, “I don’t really think of people with regard to race.” Possibly symptomatic of an empirical perspective that sees predictable cause and effect relationships, her response conveyed perhaps naiveté or a belief in a colorblind society. Considering her training as a laboratory scientist, perhaps it was difficult for her to envision multiple meanings, where several factors contribute to the persistence of discriminatory hiring policies or prejudicial views dominate a tenure review meeting.

Dr. Drew was also unsure if some of the discrimination he had experienced was related to race or to some other factors. Because scientists deal with objective data and statistical certainties, some might believe that a faculty either meets or does not meet the

tenure standards, skeptical about or resistant to the possibility that race could play a factor in determining tenure. In contrast, the professors who had worked in private science research centers, like Dr. Daly, Dr. Young, and Dr. Haynes, seemed, in general, much more savvy about the dealings at a university and more apt to learn the hidden curriculum of tenure standards.

In terms of a continuity of responses, Dr. Daly stood out from her other science colleagues, and also from the social science and the humanities participants. Of the sixteen faculty interviewed for this study, all except for three professors, Drs. Daly, Hamer, and Hurston, acknowledged the presence of institutional racism, experienced discrimination within the academy, or had witnessed it at several universities and concluded that it was not specific to a college or administrator, but pervasive in our culture and country. I am not sure if Dr. Daly, Dr. Hamer, and Dr. Hurston, who was in her early thirties, were naïve, if they really believed that the academy was free from racism, or if they were simply fortunate enough not to have experienced it first-hand. Drs. Daly and Hamer, however, were colleagues of Dr. Sidney's whose credentials were much more impressive than theirs, so it is hard to believe that they were oblivious to the evidence of racism on their campus.

Certainly, Dr. Daly experienced a sense of injustice when she saw mistreatment, even though she saw gender, and not racial, discrimination, but this awareness did not seem to sensitize her to the interlocking nature of oppression. While Dr. Drew did not feel compelled to help his African American students enrolled in the graduate science department, he felt a great deal of compassion for a female colleague who was unjustly railroaded in a tenure battle, whom he tried to defend while he was on the faculty senate. He was acutely aware of the way in which she was mistreated, especially as a woman in the sciences, but he did not

connect her mistreatment to the struggles of his African American students. He judged them harshly for what he understood as their lack of science preparation or poor work ethic. He assumed that if they had been better educated before they started, they would not have the academic insecurities that they exhibited.

For Dr. Haynes, Dr. Moore, and Dr. Young, their attitudes and responses to obstacles in their career paths or suspicion about their scholarship led to a keen awareness of the interlocking nature of oppression. Drs. Haynes and Young were vocal advocates for their students and wanted to significantly alter the racial and gender landscape for students and faculty of color so that there was greater representation and equity in the academy. They devoted time to mentoring under-represented students and women, seriously engaged in scholarship that confirmed their academic rigor, refused to allow their publications to be minimized as merely racially-oriented, and wanted to leave a legacy that would enrich both their academic and ethnic heritage.

As I have reviewed transcripts and my interview notes, I have wondered if one is immersed in objective data, is one less likely to be aware of subjective data such as subtle faculty interactions and how institutional barriers might interfere with promotion? What is the relationship between a lack of awareness of social relationships and a tendency for those people to congregate in the sciences? Drs. Haynes, Moore, and Young were intensely engaged in service and understood the world beyond the ivory tower. The scientific mindset required a particular focus that involved being relatively isolated, except for one's lab assistants and experiments. But, I do not know whether this discipline specific mentality could limit one's ability to read the subtle cues that one must tune into in order to detect institutional racism.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

Well, son, I'll tell you: / Life for me ain't been no crystal stair./
It's had tacks in it, / And splinters, /And boards torn up,/ /
And places with no carpet on the floor-/ Bare./ But all the time/
I'se been a-climbin' on/ And reachin' landin's, / And turnin' corners,/ /
And sometimes goin' in the dark/ Where there ain't been no light./
So boy, don't you turn back. / Don't you set down on the steps./
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard./ Don't you fall now-/ /
For I'se still goin', honey,/ I'se still climbin',/ /
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

-“Mother to Son” by Langston Hughes (1922)

This paper has been inspired by the persona of the mother in Hughes' poem; she keeps “climbin'” (l.19) having ventured in the dark, but she presses onward, undeterred by the obstacles she encounters, savvy enough to warn her son about them, but bold enough to encourage him: “Don't you fall now” (l. 17). But as she climbs, where does her stairway lead? Perhaps, she inspires her son to climb the tower of academia. The term ivory tower has come to mean an aloofness, a disregard for practical affairs that so often characterizes the university mindset, or a remoteness that results in a outsider within tension. Here, sociologist Georg Simmel may be useful in clarifying the role of the stranger and the way in which African American professors exemplify that role within the academy: “The stranger is near to us in so far as we feel between him and ourselves similarities of nationality or social position, or profession or of general human nature. He is far from us in so far as these similarities reach out over him and us, and only ally us both because in fact they ally a great many” (1921/1969, p. 326). Following Simmel then, within the ivory tower, do African American

professors see themselves as near to or far from majority members of the professoriate? Do their experiences make them feel similar to or alienated from their colleagues and their students?

These questions have fueled this project, and I have arrived at only partial answers, but Hill Collins' themes of the meaning of self-definition and self-valuation, the interlocking nature of oppression, and the importance of African American women's culture have helped me contextualize and interpret my participants' responses. I observed that more than any other trend that emerged from my research and interviews, most of the African American faculty whom I interviewed expressed a keen desire to be fully involved with practical affairs and to reject aloofness, in favor of direct engagement with their research subjects or students. At predominantly white universities then, where a stereotypical academician may remove herself from the daily dealings of her community because of her preoccupation with her own intellectual pursuits, to some extent, the African American professor, within the ivory tower, tends to be more aware of the interplay between societal forces such as discrimination and inequality and how those forces manifest in actual mistreatment of minorities than do majority professors.

In this chapter, I will discuss the historical perspectives that have led to how African Americans have coped with some of the challenges that they have faced, the hope that some faculty have in the future of the professional landscape, as well as the paradoxes of not being in positions of power, and I offer some final reflections on how Black Feminist Thought affected how I interpreted the narratives. Also, I will make general remarks about each of the disciplines, the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, and the common experiences of institutional racism, individual remedies that were derived from the interviews. Finally, I

make a few policy recommendations that could help universities foster a more welcoming and supportive environment for African American professors and suggestions could help department chairs be more sensitive to what procedures and protocols could lead to greater retention and promotion of African American scholars, despite their outsider within status.

Historical Perspectives

Harold Cruse in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967) explains how Du Bois' notion of double consciousness translates to the intellectual landscape: "the functional role of the Negro intellectual demands that he *cannot* be absolutely separated from either the black or the white world" (emphasis Cruse's; p. 452). Here, Cruse captures the peculiar position that African American faculty still find themselves in forty years after he writes and which mirrors Du Bois' remarks from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903/1999). Yet, national statistics show that the academy does not promote or retain African Americans with the same high rates as white faculty, so one wonders how much progress toward proportional representation within the academy there really has been, if proportional representation is even a possibility within a system where institutional discrimination still exists. For example in 2001, 28.5% of white faculty were full professors, while only 15.9% of African American faculty were full professors. For the same year, however, 21.9% of white faculty were assistant professors, while 28.5% of African American faculty were assistant professors (Harvey & Anderson, 2005, from DOE, NCES, IPEDS data). One wonders how much progress toward proportional representation within the academy there really has been, if proportional representation is even a possibility, within a system where institutional discrimination still exists.

However, based on the experiences of the professors I interviewed, all of whom were tenured, except for Dr. Hurston, and all of whom had long careers as university teachers,

strides are being made, slowly, but surely. Unfortunately, these strides come at a price: often exacting a steep emotional toll that can diminish a person's self-esteem, as well as cause health problems. While it is impossible to determine why an individual becomes sick, stress certainly contributes to poor health and Drs. Wheatley, Douglass, Carver, and Young all suffered from illnesses. Dr. Douglass retired early due to illness, Dr. Wheatley is considering retiring early because of health problems that have emerged over the last few years, Dr. Carver had a heart bypass surgery, and Dr. Young recently took a semester sabbatical due to stress-induced illnesses. In addition, greater demands on one's time can result from juggling many committee responsibilities, which can interfere with publishing one's scholarly work. Following Cruse, Cornel West in his essay "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual" (1985) posits that:

the Afro-American who takes seriously the life of the mind inhabits an isolated and insulated world . . . the choice of becoming a black intellectual is an act of self-imposed marginality; it assures a peripheral status in and to the black community. . . [but] the predicament of the Black intellectual need not be grim and dismal. Despite the pervasive racism of American society and anti-intellectualism of the Black Community, critical space and insurgent activity can be expanded. (pp. 109-110, 124)

By leaving his readers with an uplifting message, West who like Cruse is African American, separates himself from Cruse, and concludes that the role for the scholar -activist will grow and that African Americans can be gadflies, like Socrates, and can offer a clarion call for justice. Instead of being in "crisis" as Cruse conceives "Negro intellectuals," West envisions them, himself included, as heralds to a new era of social justice and greater equality, seeing them fighting against all kinds of oppression, in partnership with the institutions. While some might fault West for being overly optimistic, he does carve out a crucial niche that he believes only African American faculty can fill. As outsiders within, many of whom have endured institutional racism, they can create a unique place where their experiences serve

several purposes. First, awareness of their experiences can inform majority department chairs and deans about their dilemmas and unique tensions within the academy. Second, knowledge of their experiences can educate administrators in power about how barriers to tenure and acceptance can be reduced.

Despite institutional obstacles and resistance from peers, a significant number of my participants expressed hope about the future of the profession. This group, Dr. Marshall (humanities), Dr. Hurston (humanities), Dr. McLeod (social science), Dr. Parks (social science), Dr. Moore (science), Dr. Daly (science), and Dr. Haynes (science), were deeply committed to service and mentoring. But interestingly enough, they especially celebrated the progress that they had witnessed regarding the degree of success women had experienced in the profession, especially those in the sciences. Dr. Marshall, who had taught for thirty-two years at the time of our interview, was very pleased about the number of under-represented students, especially women, entering his law school, as well as their academic preparation. In addition, he was delighted to have taught with exceptionally competent and well-published women colleagues. Dr. Hurston, the only junior faculty I interviewed, was hopeful about how much release time she was receiving; because her university offered a limited teaching load for emerging scholars to establish themselves, she used the time to submit her work for publication and the laptop for archival work.

Strong feminists, Professors Wheatley, Haynes, Lorde, and Young represented noteworthy threats to the white faculty with whom they worked because of their confidence, the way they wore their hair, their youth, and their research success. Rather than merely resisting stereotypes that require that they be meek and docile, black feminist thought encourages women to “embrace their assertiveness, value their sassiness, and to continue to

use these qualities to survive in and transcend the harsh environments that circumscribe so many black women's lives" (Hill Collins, 1986, p. 18). Two of the social scientists, Dr. McLeod and Dr. Parks, were sanguine about the success that women of all ethnic backgrounds have had in the academy and paid special attention to mentoring female graduate students and junior faculty. Three of the five science professors, Drs. Daly, Haynes, and Moore, expressed hearty optimism as they discussed teaching, mentoring and their legacies related to raising the number of incoming women graduate students. All three wanted to increase the number of under-represented students, the quality of their minds, their dedication to research, and their ambition. These seven faculty saw the fruits of their labors manifesting in the barriers to sexism being dismantled more than barriers to racism and took solace in that.

But some faculty do not persevere and leave the academy, frustrated by years of accumulated resentment and buried hostility from isolation, mistreatment by colleagues, such as being asked to pose for faculty photos that appear in departmental brochures, hypocritically proving that the department complies with university mission statement to cultivate diversity among ethnic minorities. Some faculty, like Drs. Carver, Haynes, Marshall, Moore, Wheatley, and Young advocated for equality within the academy and were dedicated to increasing the number of students of color. Others engaged in some activism related to minorities at the university, including, by not limited to, greater retention of African American junior faculty. Many, like Drs. Douglass, Lorde, Sidney, and Wells persevered despite promotion obstacles or suspicion about their scholarship. A few like Drs. Bethune, Drew, Hamer, and Wheatley even collaborated with their white colleagues in committees and for research collaboration, and expressed optimism about the future of the

profession by mentoring cross-race and intra-racially. Finally, some faculty like Drs. Daly, Drew, Hamer, Hurston, and Parks recognized the contradictions between their lives and work, but tried to be good teachers and researchers, often wanting their legacy to be their scholarly contribution. However each experienced the personal effects of institutional racism, they responded by claiming power back in distinctive ways that resonate with Black Feminist Thought. This power reclamation was not usually institutional in nature, but affected how each maintained integrity in his or her field and career stability, if not security (except for Dr. Sidney), in the ivory tower.

African Americans are seldom in positions of power as leaders or decision makers in their colleges. For example, despite decade-long careers, none of the faculty were department chairs although one had been a dean for five years at his historically black college alma mater early in his career because it experienced a crisis. I noticed that my interviewees employed four dominant response mechanisms to overcoming institutional racism. These behavioral responses can be understood as a corollary to themes of Black Feminist Thought. First, some produced an exceptional number of publications or scholarly work to compensate for possible and actual suspicion of academic credibility. In this way, they self-defined as productive scholars, who because they were aware of the interlocking nature of oppression, they maintained their position in the academy by following tenure requirements and achieving promotion. Perhaps some consider this path playing by the master's rules, but tenure standards apply at elite as well as lower-ranked universities. Second, they self-imposed or were subject to the external imposition of social isolation from departmental colleagues. In other words, not getting invited to departmental parties can limit opportunities for collaborating with colleagues on academic publishing opportunities. This isolation can be

seen as a rejection of the importance of solidarity, sisterhood, and community support implicit in African American culture. Third, some selected an academic focus where their African American identity established expertise about topics related to African American history or African American literature or legal precedents, making them indispensable to their department because of their specialty. They published in periodicals related to racism or diversity or researched topics related to social justice, disempowerment, legal mistreatment, or controversial political issues. In this way, they valued themselves and their heritage by observing and analyzing the effects of the interlocking nature of oppression on marginalized groups and individuals. Fourth, several became involved with campus committees, student mentoring, junior faculty mentoring, and faculty governance related to increasing diversity, thereby embracing their African American culture.

These coping mechanisms were responses to the limitations of the institution to change as quickly as one might want in order to foster greater sensitivity to the unique issues not just of faculty of color, as Turner and Myers (2000) hoped to do, but to the specific and complicated position of African American faculty. But for those who are skeptical about how likely radical change within any institution is (returning to Audre Lorde's famous query "Shall the master's tool dismantle the master's house?" (1984)), in Hill Collins' more pragmatic realization from her revised edition in 2000, she claims that she still believes firmly in her goal of "examining how knowledge can foster African-American women's empowerment" (p. x), but she offers this corrective: "What has changed, however, is my understanding of the meaning of empowerment and of the process needed for it to happen. I now recognize that empowerment for African-American women will never occur in a context

characterized by oppression and social injustice” (2000, p. x). Later in this chapter, I suggest possible measures and policies that could foster empowerment of African American faculty.

Black Feminist Thought

A limitation of Black Feminist Thought is the way in which self-definition and self-valuation is applied in the context of African American faculty. In a larger sense, this theory works well to analyze the narratives and to understand the scholars in relation to their academic discipline and how that training shapes their thinking. It does not work well in terms of the science faculty as a whole and it does not take into account the fact that African American male faculty can be considered feminists or that their culture as men does not alienate them totally from the expressions of women’s culture.

I have expanded Hill Collins’ definition of some of the categories because she seemed to promote the notion of independent and rigid categories, whereas, I envisioned the categories as more fluid and not discrete. I did not want to reify the categories or judge individuals based on my limited exposure to the motivations that encouraged them to remain in the academy or that enabled them to gain tenure and be accepted in their departments. I also did not want to imply that a small sample of professors could capture a monolithic experience of African American faculty across the country. My sample is a small representation of trends, and I pulled fragments of trends and themes and situated them against the template of the theory. What is true, I think, is the conclusion that Hill Collins reaches at the close of her 1986 essay which gave rise to the title of this manuscript:

At its best, outsider within status seems to offer its occupants a powerful balance between the strengths of their sociological training and the offerings of their personal and cultural experiences. Neither is subordinated to the other. Rather experienced reality is used as a valid source of knowledge for critiquing sociological factors and theories while sociological thought offers new ways of seeing that experienced reality. . . In doing so, they move themselves and their disciplines closer to the

humanist vision implicit in their work- namely, the freedom both to be different and part of the solidarity of humanity. (1986, pp. 29-30)

When considering the outsider within, I am reminded of innovative thinkers like Vivien Thomas, the African American lab assistant who in 1944 invented the procedure for the first heart operation, or other inventors like George Washington Carver or Charles Drew, who invented the procedure to separate blood from blood plasma.^{xv} If creativity is squelched because repressive academic powerful elites subdue African American intellectuals, what vastly important ideas will be lost to the myopic vision that permits and perpetuates institutional racism? One could argue that these instruments of institutional racism (e.g. dissertation committees or tenure committees) are trying to work on behalf of the African American scholar, trying to help them “fit in” to the conventional arenas of grant-writing and establishing international reputations. But because many African American scholars have had to create what I call a pedagogy of the transgressive, they do not necessarily accept that the university’s imprimatur is correct or that the university’s status quo is worth maintaining. In fact, without innovators and unconventional thinking, many of the disciplines, especially science, would stagnate. So, one could argue that especially in the sciences, unconventional thinking ought to be praised rather than stunted.

This image of the “Black lady” that Hill Collins (1991) and Lubiano (1992) describe is relevant for my purposes here, because although some of the faculty were accepted as legitimate and respected colleagues, many were treated with reticence and suspicion by their white colleagues. For example, Drs. Carver, Sidney, Wheatley, and Young were perceived as either threatening or so overly-ambitious that their success made some of their colleagues uncomfortable. Although they were educated, hard-working, and followed the bureaucratic checklists that earned them tenure, they were treated with suspicion because of their

boldness, self-assuredness, and confidence. It seemed to them that they were expected to be demure, compliant, and grateful for an opportunity to be considered an “equal” in the academy, and when several did not adopt a passive, obedient, or overly humble attitude, their white colleagues seemed to feel threatened by them. This was also true of a few male colleagues who represented the male equivalent of the “Black Lady Overachiever” (Collins, 1998, p. 39).

The Humanities Faculty

More than the faculty in the sciences, the humanities professors were more involved and seemed more committed to working toward creating institutional change and opportunities for improved representation of African American faculty and students in their discipline. To an extent, some of this civic and inter-departmental as well as campus engagement with diversity and affirmative action issues might be related to the fact that the humanities are held in high regard among academicians, as rigorous scholars who can also work as administrators. As was highlighted in their chapter, they first looked at the world through the lens of the interlocking nature of oppression, but their interests were rooted in their African American culture. They did invest their actions and philosophies with self-valuation, but their self-definitions seem to have emerged strongly early in life, which emboldened them to be trailblazers and hearty, unapologetic individualists. For example, Professor Wheatley was unmarried and childless, Professor Douglass was associate professor for eighteen years without being promoted, and Professor Lorde was extremely bitter about the way male colleagues mistreated and disrespected her, despite having earned prestigious national poetry and book awards. Professor Sidney was denied tenure, despite high teaching evaluations and more scholarly output than any of his colleagues. Professor Marshall was

the only full-time black faculty in his department in 1975 when he was hired, and in 2005, he was still the only full-timer (but there were three part-timers.) Because only 10% of African Americans who were recently awarded doctoral degrees earned them in the humanities, professors in this discipline are very concerned about who will replace them when they retire, especially because they tend to specialize in topics that are related to African American literature or history (Hoffer, 2006).

As far as specialties, these faculty were experts in African American novels, and drama, poetry, 19th century slave narratives as well as 20th century American novel, British drama and poetry, civil rights law and housing law, and African American women novelists. Faculty from the humanities, such as English, history, languages, and philosophy often enter into administrative positions and hold positions of power across campuses. In addition, humanities faculty, because of the interdisciplinary work that they often do in history, philosophy, art, or languages, may be more likely to interact with other scholars across campus and compare notes about tenure processes, collegial collaboration, support from department heads, and funding opportunities for research leaves. Just because they were more aware of the interlocking nature of oppression and the persistence of institutional racism, they were not immune from it, yet some were affected more than others.

The Special Case of Dr. Sidney- Humanities Scholar

Collins, in *Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice* (1998), discussed the politics of containment and how whites have long used surveillance of black men and women as workers to subjugate them. Her idea was particularly relevant for understanding Dr. Sidney. His EEOC complaint and subsequent out-of-court settlement framed this dissertation because of the blatant way in which his department chair treated him

and evaluated him for tenure. Based on quotations from her evaluations of him and the departures from standard procedures, his department chair seems to have been threatened by the fact that he was one of two men in the department, unmarried, and taught at night, which made it impossible for him to be observed and monitored in the way that she could observe and monitor the women in the department. His unmarried status seemed to indicate to the women in the department that because he had no woman to be accountable to at home, he was less cooperative and docile than the department chair would have liked. In addition, because he specialized in 16th, 17th, and 18th century British literature, and not in African American literature like the other African American professor in the department, his colleagues could not categorize him as an outsider in terms of his intellectual expertise. Yet, they did not consider him an insider in the department either, even though they shared a canon of literature with him that should have afforded him insider status based on a unique brand of esteem and camaraderie among colleagues who share a particular body of knowledge. Paradoxically, the fact that he specialized in a literary field that is both highly respected and traditional, his colleagues were perplexed about how to regard him, which seemed to make some of them very uncomfortable.

Here, the politics of containment and surveillance, which functioned as a type of institutional racism, pushed Dr. Sidney out of university. Because I have become acquainted with Dr. Sidney over the past few years and I was aware that he had moved to four different universities throughout his 24 year teaching career, I have wondered if the mistreatment and firings he has experienced were a result of the peripatetic nature of his work history. What I have learned over the course of interviewing faculty is that Dr. Sidney's experience is not unusual at all. In fact, these narratives reveal the continued hypocrisy of the academy as a

place where difference is supposedly valued and diversity is purportedly cultivated in the name of the inherent benefits of multicultural education. Unlike the other faculty members who were outsiders within, Dr. Sidney was forced to become an outsider, taking a year sabbatical with his settlement. For some, maintaining their insider-ness came at too high a price and for others, they were only too keenly aware of how easily they can be pushed outside, so they negotiate the space skillfully, ever mindful of their unwelcome status and precarious position.

The Social Science Faculty

The social scientists' primary mode was connection to their African American culture and self-definition and self-valuation, concluding that the interlocking nature of oppression was unfortunately, a main operating force in the world. For example, Dr. Bethune thought of herself as primarily a mentor and filled her desk with pictures of her "living legacies," her students. Dr. Carver defined himself as a strong debater and "not a shrinking violet," but he still felt very marginalized, undervalued, and unappreciated at the university where he taught for more than twenty years, so much so that he retired early. Dr. Hamer defined herself as a "capable, independent woman," but she did not advocate for five African American faculty who left her small university, while at the same time, she lamented how few African American public school teachers were entering the profession. Dr. Parks described herself as someone who "overcomes," even as she still felt extremely disempowered by the racial slur a student called her in class; yet, she mobilized her frustration by starting an empowerment workshop series for inner-city African American teenage girls. Dr. Wells defined herself as one who "rises above" and she firmly sat at the intersection of Hill Collins' outsider within themes. She mentored black women, listened to music to calm herself and feel strength to

cope with institutional racism at university, and published scholarship that was activist in nature. She self-identified as a feminist, felt “the psychic toll” strongly, and still struggled with how to maintain dignity within the academy, spending time researching abroad in order to take respites from the psychological pressure of the academy. Other than Dr. Hamer, Drs. Carver, Parks, Bethune, and Wells all researched and published studies related to their culture such as the achievement gap, test score disparities in math, overcoming the burden of acting white for high school students, black women in corporate leadership, black teen girls and self-esteem empowerment, and international women’s human rights abuses. These topics were related to their disciplines of communications, economics, education, ethnography, mass communication, public policy, and sociology. While all were tenured, none had held departmental leadership positions, and while some like Dr. Hamer and Dr. Wells had been on university wide committees, most dealt primarily with their students and their research.

The Science Faculty

Faculty in the sciences are less likely to become involved in faculty governance and tenure committees because their research focus tends to guide them to devote time to their laboratories. Dr. Daly did not notice institutional racism at all, while Dr. Young had struggle for tenure and promotion, despite being more qualified than previous candidates in her department who were swiftly promoted. Professors Moore, Daly, and Young saw gender and racial oppression in the science world and tried to encourage undergraduate women to enter graduate programs in science. Professor Haynes recognized class and racial oppression in the world of admissions to medical school and internships and two of her own children decided to enter medical school. The professors I interviewed were primarily chemists, biologists, and pathologists, yet Dr. Young was not a laboratory scientist. A computer scientist and an

expert in information technology who had worked for several years in the business world, Dr. Young was highly attuned to institutional racism. In part, she observed it while working in the technology industry, and in part, because she experienced disparate treatment in her department when her tenure committee held different expectations for her than it had for other professors who had previously been reviewed. Dr. Haynes did express awareness of the interlocking nature of oppression as far as it related to health disparities between her African American patients and others, but this research interest was relatively recent, after she had established herself as a scientist and doctor. Dr. Haynes chose a safe time, namely after she was fully tenured and promoted, to manifest her interest in racial health disparities, which could have been a strategic decision. Drs. Daly and Drew did not believe that same-race mentoring was more effective or useful to mentees. In fact, they seemed to think scientific sub-specialty was the best fit for mentor-mentee relationships, reinforcing for scientists that the value of “the work” superceded cultural affiliation. This superceding of scientific specialty over racial background in mentoring does not invalidate Black Feminist Thought and its relevance for professors, but it does highlight the holes in the theory and it does not account for disciplinary uniqueness. Hill Collins presumes monolithic similarities that my interview data did not reinforce at all. Curiously, all of the scientists were married with children and reported the least degree of mistreatment and direct experience with institutional racism.

Common Experiences with Institutional Racism

Humanities faculty highlighted the invisibility or lesser prominence of black writers and resurrected interest in little known authors, and by doing so, they help fortify the powerful contribution of African American culture in the mainstream culture. These faculty

do not demote the value of European Americans in their efforts to boost the value of African American literature, but they believe the canon can be expanded to include a dignified and respectful place for African American cultural artifacts. Social scientists, like the humanities scholars, enjoyed a fairly full expression of their African American culture and the way they were able to engage in topics related to it and their discipline, such as sociology, communication studies, economics, public policy, and political science. In part, because these fields have become interested in examining ethnic and racial influences, the social scientists could really engage with their discipline and how their own ethnic heritage affected a particular phenomenon that they observed. Scientists focused on their lab work, and maintained a narrow preoccupation with their research and objective data. Their outsider within status was perhaps evident early in their careers, but as time wore on, they were less conscious of it. Accustomed to loneliness and isolation, scientists self-defined as scientists first, and their laboratory work overshadowed their cultural affiliation.

Many African American faculty often feel isolated from others on campus; in the best of circumstances, the academy can be lonely place, which departs from the community, solidarity, and family focused African American cultural norm. In general, faculty do not receive the benefit of the doubt and believe they are not “cut any slack.” In addition, they believe that the importance of their research and service is dismissed although few could articulate the specific and concrete ways in which this has manifested itself. In the interviews, suspicion about scholarship came across as a general intuitive feeling rather than an articulated verbal expression from colleagues and departmental chairs. This vague sense of doubt is relevant in terms of the high profile legal cases that have involved African American faculty disputing their tenure denials, the most notable and recent being the high-

profile case of James Sherley of MIT, whose tenure was denied even though he had earned million dollar grants in genetics and published in his field. *The Technician*, the student newspaper, disputed his charges in their opinion column citing that he had never proven that he had been discriminated against, a claim that is at the heart of this dissertation.

Isolation, suspicion about scholarship, and tenure battles intersected closely because, if one understands the interlocking nature of oppression, one sees collaboration as a dominant avenue for publishing in the academy. Colleagues often help each other with contacts in the publishing world, project ideas, and as sounding boards to talk out ideas and to read closely with someone else. Also, if colleagues doubt the validity of a professor's research and then can vote on a tenure case, that colleague may be less likely to vote yes. In addition, if committee responsibilities distract a scholar from her research, then he or she might be criticized for not having enough publications and allowing the service part of the job to overtake more important aspects, even if he or she receives more emotional gratification or psychological satisfaction from those duties. The very same duties which might ease a sense of isolation and offer solidarity with other faculty or students of color, may be duties that decrease the likelihood of tenure promotion because one spends time on campus or student committees or mentoring rather than publishing and writing, a Catch 22 scenario.

While it was true that not everyone had a mentor, being a mentor to undergraduate and graduate students was very important to the faculty. Some claim that African Americans will continue to be under-represented in the academy, in part, because African American youth are seeking more lucrative careers outside the academy. Professors Bethune, Carver, Daly, Douglass, Lorde, Sidney, Wheatley, and Young mentored because they wanted to believe that undergraduates and graduate students provide a link to the future and reinforce

the value of the work. Because of obligation to represent the best and brightest of their community, these faculty asked themselves what kind of legacy they want to leave in ways that white colleagues do not need to. Leaving a legacy and sharing wisdom about how to persevere in an unwelcoming environment with younger faculty seemed important to them, perhaps because selected faculty were seasoned, experienced, and possess many years of institutional memory.

Another common theme was the acknowledgment that many universities had not changed appreciably over twenty or more years; in other words, just because African American faculty were hired, this action did not mean that the university was committed to eradicating racism. In fact, several of the professors I interviewed asserted that there was a pointed difference between the seemingly positive university gesture to recruit African American post-doctoral and junior faculty and the negative gesture not to retain those same faculty. Because the goal of this dissertation is not merely to observe, but to comment upon the historical and current struggles of African American academicians, it is possible that a larger transformative purpose can be achieved, one which would improve conditions and seriously reduce manifestations of institutional racism. Cynthia Tyson's work "Research, Race, and an Epistemology of Emancipation" (2003) is useful towards this end. Instead of merely lamenting along with the interview participants about the modest and incremental improvements in conditions for African American faculty over the past twenty years, she strongly advocates emancipatory research strategies. Although she rejects the view that scholars of color can never transcend their subordinate position, she claims "by offering counterstories, and different ways of viewing the world, emancipatory research is generated" (Tyson, 2003, p. 22). However, she cautions, "emancipatory research cannot be built on the

participants' backs, but must have a simultaneous commitment to radical social change as well as to those individuals most oppressed by social-cultural subordination" (2003, p. 23).

Few would assert that professors are "most oppressed," however this dissertation was inspired by Tyson's declaration:

rather than collect data for data's sake, research would become a conscious political, economic, and personal conduit for empowerment. Educational research could then be a catalyst to support and complement larger struggles for liberation . . . Emancipatory research is generally recognized as most effective when undertaken by– or in concert with –the community, organizations, or peoples that are most affected by its analysis and dissemination. As such, research born at the intersections of the specificity of oppression become a catalyst to fundamentally change the conditions of oppression. (2003, pp. 24-25)

The larger goal, then, of this project is to help change the conditions of oppression such that all faculty are treated with dignity, respect, and equality, regardless of race or gender. I now end with closing thoughts about policy and individual remedies derived from those narratives.

Policy and Individual Remedies Derived from Narratives

In terms of remedies for how to recruit more African American faculty or how to increase the retention of African American faculty, some of the participants had specific policy suggestions for how to minimize the isolation that African American faculty sometimes feel. For example, Dr. Wheatley talked about an African American faculty and staff organization that was formed in the eighties to build solidarity, but acknowledged that the faculty had different concerns than the staff did, so they formed a African American faculty organization. Both organizations addressed the feelings of isolation and provided resources for disputes, but she articulated some skepticism about how few individuals attend these meetings. She thought that research leaves would afford time for writing and publishing, which would be more likely to ease the path to promotion and tenure. Impatient

about how ineffective merely talking about how to make the climate less hostile can be, she pushed for self-promotion and publishing as much and as often as one's teaching schedule would permit.

Suggesting future remedies and methods of improving work conditions for African American faculty, professors emphasized important measures to rectifying the situation: 1) faculty release time to enable them to create more and higher quality scholarship, because if they are on campus, the demands placed on them minimize their productivity; 2) competitive salaries to attract faculty of color; 3) access to colloquia or gatherings where they can find research collaborators and network; 4) heavy recruitment and early and consistent mentoring of emerging scholars; and 5) cultural sensitivity training for white administrators who may be unaware of how their invisible knapsack of white privilege, as McIntosh (1990) refers to it, blinds them to the challenges and covert modes of discrimination and doubt that under-represented faculty face.

The goal of revealing these anonymous narratives has been to expose the disparate treatment that African American faculty endure and to highlight the subtle and overt ways in which racism asserts itself in the academy. In terms of my data analysis, I have not merely categorized themes, and provided quotations that support themes; I have analyzed how the quotations represent how the academic disciplines or individual temperament may predispose one to respond to institutional racism or being a minority within a majority bureaucracy. I came to this study with a policy agenda and a social justice complaint in mind. Although I was hopeful, I have tried not to think of generalizability and public policy and ways to mobilize the interviews into action or change. Nonetheless, every person interviewed had experienced systematic slights, being overlooked, cold greetings, not being invited to

socialize, overt segregation, and various micro-aggressions. As naïve as it sounds, I still want to right wrongs, highlight hypocrisy, expose discriminatory treatment, all with the larger goal of making the world a more just and equitable place.

Like many in the academy and in the work world in general, the faculty I interviewed were tired, burned out, and felt overburdened. Although unable to clearly and definitively articulate or prove this to be the case, they believed that there are different expectations about scholarship, service, and teaching so that earning tenure is more complicated for them than for white colleagues. A palpable and profound lack of respect by colleagues was reported and an assumption that they have little of value to bring to the academic table. Many of the faculty were convinced that the departments did have different standards for tenure and that the standards were of course unstated, informally understood and, certainly, not written. The standards were applied more stringently to African American faculty, especially when the faculty would be in the position to later sit on retention, tenure, and promotion meetings for new hires. Being African American means being different, marginal, transgressive, and at times, oppositional, in an academy that likes uniformity because it is, after all, an institution, which seeks to replicate itself. For example, Dr. Douglass reported that in his department, if more than one African American faculty were seen talking in the hallway, a white colleague might joke, or inquire “When is the revolution going to begin?” which would be extremely unlikely if two white colleagues spoke together. As a stranger, an outsider within, a peripheral presence, the African American professor still seems to be defined in the way that Du Bois noted: “always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (1903/1999, p. 214). But, if this double consciousness persists even today, what protocols can offset institutional racism’s legacy?

Dr. Carver, Lorde, Marshall, Wells, Wheatley, and Young, were concerned about the small number of African American scholars on the campus and all stressed that future efforts in departments need to switch from recruiting to retaining. Ideally, African American professors should no longer have to pay “the black tax.” Like the poems that inspire this dissertation, the African American faculty I interviewed continue to offer hope that the academy will become more inclusive and more dedicated to finding institutional remedies to help make the lives of African American professors less characterized by isolation, psychic burdens, emotional tolls, and frivolous reasons for promotion denials. If majority administrators can implement specific strategies to foster more professional collegial relations, to reduce suspicion about another peer’s scholarship, and to increase mentoring, perhaps the lives of the next generation of African American professors will be characterized by a greater sense of dignity and respect. Perhaps, then, Du Bois’ sense of “double-consciousness. . . . of looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” which characterized how the Negro perceived himself in the 19th century, will finally make it possible for African American faculty to be appreciated.

However, many of the experiences of faculty whom I interviewed indicated that these lofty and noble ethics of tolerance, affirmative action, egalitarianism, and meritocracy are achieved less often than well-intentioned white colleagues may perceive. Hiring policy changes are necessary so that more African American faculty can be retained and recruited, which not only benefits campus wide diversity, but also provides role models for all graduate students, junior faculty, and undergraduates, regardless of race. Consequently, these voices, too often marginalized in the educational community, must be heard and considered. Too, African American faculty members offer intangible benefits of exposing students and peer

faculty to their diverse experiences and research interests, preserving the larger benefit of societal social justice. By making the tenure process less opaque and more transparent, I hope that administrators who implement the suggestions in this project will understand the roadblocks to joining the “club” of the highest levels of academia. In addition, if retention, tenure, and promotion processes were more transparent, then the purposeful exclusion of African American faculty could be uncovered, making the academy a kinder and gentler place to work.

Epilogue

I wanted to conclude by suggesting some discipline specific recommendations for greater retention. These would be part of an ongoing dialogue with African American faculty members, department chairs, university provosts and chancellors. Even though I will make the following suggestions, none of them are comprehensive or all-encompassing.

These suggestions were inspired by Louque and Thompson whose work, *Exposing the “Culture of Arrogance” in the Academy: A Blueprint for Increasing Black Faculty Satisfaction in Higher Education* (2005), offers concrete solutions for how to retain African American professors. They suggest four general methods of creating a better climate for promotion and overall satisfaction: improving the campus climate, increasing support, reducing the teaching load, and increasing salaries (Louque & Thompson, 2005). For humanities faculty, I suggest improving the campus climate through six protocols: 1) increasing recruitment for African American professors; 2) providing diversity training; 3) expanding opportunities to collaborate with other scholars in different disciplines; 4) offering release time; 5) requiring university wide committee work, but limiting it for the first three years; and 6) mentoring from senior faculty to help scholars publish. For social science

faculty, I suggest increasing support for African American faculty in the following ways: 1) mentoring of junior faculty, especially regarding reviewing manuscripts for publication submission; 2) requiring university wide committee work, but limiting for the first three years; 3) honoring their work with African American students; 4) respecting community service; 5) valuing their input and opinions; and 6) providing networking opportunities for collaborative research. For science faculty, I suggest focusing on their professional duties in these ways: 1) increasing research assistance; 2) providing more release time or reduced teaching loads; 3) offering grant writing assistance to increase potential for receiving externally funded research support; and 4) reducing committee work, and then only within the sciences so that they can network with one another. For all the faculty, professors would benefit from greater transparency of retention, tenure, and promotion practices and higher salaries. University administrators and policy makers need to unpack the sense that all African American faculty or all women faculty or all faculty of color are monolithic groups that would benefit from the same remedies. Unfortunately, the problem with the foregoing options is that even if they are implemented, they will not guarantee that institutional racism will not occur.

When African American intellectual and writer bell hooks admitted that she had been “socialized not to speak about commitment to intellectual life, but rather to see that as a private, almost ‘secret’ choice” (1991, p. 164), hooks exemplifies my motivation for wanting these counter-narratives to be included in the mainstream discourse about the experiences of all professors in the academy:

by not speaking about this choice, I was also not conveying to Black female students the joys and pleasures of intellectual work. If I and other Black women, particularly those of us who work in academic settings, only talk about the difficulties, we paint a

gloomy picture that may lead students to see intellectual work as diminishing and disabling. (hooks, 1991, p. 164)

By shedding light on the diverse experiences of these faculty, I have partnered with my participants to offer stories that not only uncover the hidden manifestations of institutional racism within the academy, but also reveal the “joys and pleasures of intellectual work” that hooks and so many of the professors I interviewed experienced. They welcome change through an environment that is not only less hostile, but welcoming, where they will no longer be considered outsiders within, but where their standpoint will transcend limitations. I envision an academic climate where they are accepted and appreciated for their unique perspectives and experiences, which enrich classroom conversations with students, and where they are valued for how they diversify the scholarly landscape with their knowledge. The “joys and pleasures” represent the hope that keeps these faculty still tapping at the glass of silent racism, optimistic that one day, the glass will break.

It is my hope that the contribution of this dissertation can develop what Hill Collins suggests, which is that knowledge means black professors can take what they learn from a community that has historically excluded them and offer a unique perspective to benefit both communities. Hill Collins declares that: “outsider within status seems to offer its occupants a powerful balance between strengths of sociological training and the offerings of personal and cultural experiences” (1986, p. 29). Hill Collins and I look forward to a humanist vision that is implicit in the work of humanities and social scientists that represents what she hopes will be “the freedom both to be different culturally and part of the solidarity of humanity” (1986, p. 30), such that the particular enlightens the universal, and the universal perspective exposes the beauty of the particular.

Appendix A:

Interview Questions

- 1) For how long have you taught at this university? Are you tenured?
- 2) Why did you choose to apply to teach here? Were you recruited?
- 3) Did you ever wish to teach at an HBCU?
- 4) Have you ever taught anywhere else? How was that teaching environment compared to your current university?
- 5) What are some examples of the most satisfying teaching experiences you have had here, both with students and with colleagues?
- 6) What are some examples of the unique difficulties of teaching here, both with students and with colleagues?
- 7) How do you feel as one of few African American academics in your department?
- 8) How connected do you feel to other African American faculty on campus, either in your department or across campus?
- 9) Do you believe your department has different standards for tenure promotion/ scholarship/ publication for you as opposed to your non-Black colleagues?
- 10) What type of legacy do you want to leave?
- 11) Do you think the university is doing enough to recruit faculty of color?
- 12) What have you learned through your tenure process or your career that you could say to a newly hired faculty to help him or her cope with the challenges of the academy?

Appendix B:

Letter to Prospective Participants (On University of North Carolina School of Education Letterhead)

Letter soliciting participation in research study IRB # 04-0491

Dear Professor _____ ,

I am a graduate student conducting dissertation research about African American faculty and their relationships with students, colleagues, and the larger community. As a student in the School of Education, I am particularly interested in learning about the history of African American professors who are currently teaching, or who have taught at predominantly white colleges and universities, both public and private, across the country and across the discipline spectrum. Toward this end, I have begun a project to investigate the unique experiences and contributions of African American faculty and administrators. Although I would like to keep interviews as open-ended as possible (interviews that would be one hour long and audio-recorded, with your permission), learning about obstacles, surprising challenges, unexpected rewards, and gratifying experiences would be a starting place.

I would like to talk with you if you have a long institutional memory of teaching as well as if you are a new faculty. Dr. Deborah Eaker -Rich, my dissertation advisor in the School of Education, and Dr. William 'Sandy' Darity, Director of the Institute of African American Research, provided me with an initial list of faculty contacts, so this round of requests is an incomplete survey of professors and administrators. If your academic schedule doesn't allow time for an hour interview, perhaps there is a colleague you might recommend I contact, regardless of where that person teaches. Please let me know if you would be interested in speaking to me.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Gold
Doctoral Student in Culture, Curriculum, and Change
UNC School of Education
rsgold@email.unc.edu
(919) 403-9464

Dr. Deborah Eaker-Rich
Clinical Assistant Professor
School of Education
eakerric@email.unc.edu
(919) 843-5461

Appendix C:

Informed Consent Letter (On University of North Carolina School of Education Letterhead)

Dear Professor _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a research study that will investigate and narrate the experiences of African-American faculty at several universities. This research is part of my doctoral program in Culture, Curriculum, and Change at the School of Education at UNC and is under the direction of Dr. Deborah Eaker-Rich. By sharing your views, opinions, and experiences, your narrative may help pave the way for greater sensitivity among colleagues and may heighten awareness and understanding about how the academy treats African American academics. I hope to interview 25 faculty.

The initial interview should take approximately one hour and I will ask you questions about your teaching experiences and career. If you are willing, I might ask to do a second round of interviews based upon what I learn in the first round. When transcripts are written of the interviews, a pseudonym will be used for you and the university where you teach. At the conclusion of this project, all notes and records that contain your name and school will be destroyed.

Human participation research requires informed consent and disclosure of how this research might affect your well-being; yet, all I can promise is that it should not affect you negatively. Of course, your participation is voluntary and you can freely choose to stop the interview at any time. If for any reason you do not wish to reply to a question, you may refuse to answer it.

At the present time, I am conducting this study for my dissertation, but some day, I may submit a paper for publication. At the conclusion of the research project, I will prepare a summary of results which will be available to all interested participants. If you wish to receive a summary, please request one by emailing me (my email is below).

I make no assumptions about what it is like to be African American in the academy, the subtleties of your professional life, or the complexities of race relations on college campuses. But I do hope to trace some patterns that will help future faculty cope with

potential problems and navigate around sensitive topics when dealing with other faculty and students. If you have questions about the interview or this research, you may contact me at (919) 403-9464 or at rsgold@email.unc.edu, or you may contact Dr. Deborah Eaker-Rich, Faculty Advisor, at (919) 843-5461, or email her at eakerric@email.unc.edu. I am giving you two copies of this letter. If you are willing to participate, please sign both copies and return one to me.

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at (919) 966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu. This study (#04-0491) has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Sincerely,

Rachelle Gold, Graduate Student Researcher
Doctoral Student in Culture, Curriculum, and Change
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Dr. Deborah Eaker-Rich
Clinical Assistant Professor
School of Education
eakerric@email.unc.edu
(919) 843-5461

____ I DO grant permission to be interviewed for this research project.

____ I do NOT grant permission to be interviewed for this research project.

____ I DO agree to have this interview audio taped.

____ I do NOT agree to have this interview audio-taped.

Name: _____ Date _____

Appendix D:

Interview Participants

Pseudonym	Institution	Rank	Field	Age
Mary McLeod Bethune	Public, Midwest	Assoct Prof	Social Science	55+
George Washington Carver	Private, South	Full Prof	Social Science	50+
Mary Maynard Daly	Private, Midatlantic	Full Prof	Science	50+
Frederick Douglass	Public, Midwest	Distngd Prof	Humanities	65+
Charles Drew	Public, Southeast, I	Associate Prof	Science	35+
Fannie Lou Hamer	Private, Midatlantic	Full Prof	Social Science	50+
Euphemia Haynes	Private, New England	Full Prof	Science	55+
Zora Neale Hurston	Public, Southeast, II	Asst Prof	Humanities	30+
Audre Lorde	Public, New England	Assoct Prof	Social Science	60+
Thurgood Marshall	Public, South I	Distngd Prof	Law	65+
Ruth Ella Moore	Public, South II	Assoct Prof	Science	50+
Rosa Parks	Public, South, I	Assoct Prof	Social Science	40+
Philip Sidney	Private, Midatlantic	Assoct Prof	Humanities	55+
Ida B. Wells	Public, Midwest	Assoct Prof	Social Science	55+
Phillis Wheatley	Public, South, I	Full Prof	Humanities	60+
Roger Arliner Young	Public, Southeast, I	Assoct Prof	Science	40+

Explanation of Pseudonyms of historical figures:

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) was an advocate for women's rights, educator, president of the National Council of Colored Women, founder of the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls (now Bethune-Cookman College) in 1904, and served as president from 1904-1942.

George Washington Carver (1864-1943) was a scientist, inventor, who started teaching at Tuskegee in 1896 after becoming Iowa State's first African American faculty member in

1894. Carver's work resulted in the creation of 325 products from peanuts, more than 100 products from sweet potatoes and hundreds more from a dozen other plants native to the South.

Marie Maynard Daly (1921-2003) was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in Chemistry at Columbia in 1948.

Frederick Douglass (1818-95) was an emancipated slave who fought as an abolitionist for the rights of slaves before and after Emancipation, educating himself and becoming a published writer, champion of women's rights, and public speaker.

Charles Drew (1904-50) earned his medical degree at McGill and in 1938, discovered the process of separating blood from blood plasma so that it could be preserved longer, which was of invaluable use treating battle injuries during World War II.

Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-77) was a civil rights activist for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Commission and founded the Mississippi Freedom and Democratic Party during the 1960s.

Euphemia Haynes (1890-1980) was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in Mathematics at Catholic University in 1943 and was instrumental in integrating Washington D.C. schools in the late 1960s.

Zora Neale Hurston (c. 1903-60) was a famous writer, anthropologist, and researcher who wrote vivid accounts of African American life in Florida and chronicled folk traditions through qualitative research.

Audre Lorde (1934-92) was a poet and acclaimed writer, and she fought for rights of gays and lesbians, women, and all African Americans.

Thurgood Marshall (1908-93), a civil rights attorney, was the first African American Supreme Court justice and he famously presented before the Supreme Court during the Brown vs. Board of Education decision in 1954.

Ruth Ella Moore (1903-94) was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in Bacteriology at Ohio State in 1933.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005) was a civil rights activist, most notable for her very public role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott from 1954-55.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86) was an English poet, Elizabethan courtier, and soldier who died in battle, and he was considered one of the best writers of the English sonnet.

Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) was a journalist, founding member of the NAACP, suffragette, and activist writer who chronicled lynchings, conducting extensive research about the alleged crime the victim committed, where it took place, and led the anti-lynching movement at the end of the 19th and early 20th century.

Phillis Wheatley (c. 1754-84) was born in Senegal, enslaved and brought to the United States in 1761, where she later became a published poet and advocate for teaching slaves to read and freeing them.

R. Arliner Young (1899-1964) was the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in Zoology at the University of Pennsylvania.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Professor Sidney attended private schools through the ninth grade. In the ninth grade one of his classmates casually announced that "He liked niggers and thought everyone should own one." He recalls students making themselves pointy paper hats emblematic of the hoods worn by the Klan when he would give speeches and his Yearbook, which I perused, held a few, anonymous ugly allusions to his race. Professor Sidney, to his great relief, was eventually expelled from his all male prep school for fist fighting. After attending two more high schools, he graduated from an all white high school where his life was completely uneventful. Such narratives make it hard to define where racial "insensitivity" becomes racial "discrimination."

ⁱⁱ In *Talking Right: How Conservatives Turned Liberalism into a Tax-raising, Latte-drinking, Sushi-eating, Volvo-driving, New York Times reading, Body-piercing, Hollywood-loving, Left-wing, Freak Show* (2006), Geoffrey Nunberg, a linguist at U.C. Berkeley, argues that "over recent decades, the left has lost the battle for the language itself. When we talk about politics nowadays—and by "we" I mean progressives and liberals as well as conservatives and people in the center—we can't help using language that embodies the worldview of the right" (pp. 4-5).

ⁱⁱⁱ I use the term African American throughout this monograph, but in order to accurately and precisely quote from my sources, both textual and personal, the term "black" appears whenever an author or interviewee used it.

^{iv} For example, in 1999, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Dr. Cynthia Mahabir was awarded a \$206,000 settlement from San Jose State University, but the university refused to admit that she was denied tenure for improper reasons. Dr. Mahabir was paid four years' salary of \$206, 980, but she had accrued \$100,00 in attorney fees. She had a bachelor's degree from Howard University, a master's degree from the University of Maryland, and doctorate in sociology from U.C. Berkeley. A native of Trinidad and of Indo-Caribbean descent, she was a professor in the African American Studies department, and had filed a reverse discrimination suit against the university, claiming she was fired because she was not African American. She alleged that the department chair told a faculty meeting that "African American studies has no room for an Indian." She had received recommendations for permanent faculty status from three peer review committees, but the university contended that she did not measure up as a teacher and a scholar. As an assistant professor, she published three articles and a book review and had taught at San Jose State for eight years.

^v Definitions of Institutional Racism:

In trying to formulate a working definition of institutional racism, I have had a difficult time creating one that address the slights, suspicion about credentials, and lack of retention which continue to plague African American academics in higher education teaching positions. In listening to the stories of all sixteen of my informants (although my initial data set included 24), no single definition of Institutional Racism emerged, but from their unique stories, they provided examples of institutional racism. Its very subtlety and complexity characterize it.

The earliest definition comes from Stokely Carmichael, one of the famous leaders of the Black Power movement, with Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* (1967) who distinguished between individual and institutional racism:

Racism is both overt and covert. It takes two closely related forms: individual whites acting against individual blacks, and acts by the total white community against the black community. We call these individual racism and institutional racism. . . . The second type is less overt, far more subtle, less identifiable in terms of specific individuals committing the acts. But it is no less destructive [. . . it] originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and thus receives far less public condemnation than the first type. (qtd. in Knowles & Prewitt, 1969, p. 1)

This definition, then, is the starting point for Professors Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt's seminal work, *Institutional Racism in America* (1969), which developed from the Stanford Mid-Peninsula Christian Ministry and the work of eight undergraduate students. Knowles, Prewitt, and the students who helped lead the community advocacy groups designed to benefit the African Americans residents of East Palo Alto explored the different contexts in which the students witnessed evidence of profound racism, namely, in housing discrimination, police discrimination, medical disparities, political representation and public schools.

Elaborating on Carmichael's definition, Knowles and Prewitt provide an explicit example of the murder of the three male civil rights workers in 1963 in Mississippi by members of the KKK as an act of individual racism, whereas the state of Mississippi's refusal to indict the killers, is an act of institutional racism. They define institutions as "fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken" (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969, p.5). Explaining that these medical, legal, and political institutions have become less segregated with the integration of the U.S. military and the passage of civil rights legislation, they acknowledge that while institutional discrimination is no longer legally sanctioned in the U.S., detecting it, when it is unintentional or disguised, is a difficult task and even if detected, who is at fault (Knowles & Prewitt, 1969, p.6).

Knowles and Prewitt stress that when we understand how deeply embedded racist practices are in the American experience, "we can come to a fuller understanding of how contemporary social institutions have adapted to their heritage" (1969, p. 7). After examining the history and ideology of race, paying particular attention to policies such as manifest destiny, Social Darwinism, and white man's burden, the authors then alert the reader to the modern corollary for white man's burden, liberal paternalism. This idea perpetuates notions of African Americans as disadvantaged or unfortunate, and is represented by the 1965 Moynihan Report and the 1968 Kerner Commission. Instead of advocating a "blame the victim" approach that these reports exemplify, Knowles and Prewitt argue that "America is and has long been a racist nation, because it has long had a racist policy The policy can be understood only when we are willing to take a hard look at the continuing and irrefutable racist consequences of the major institutions in American life" (1969, pp. 13-14).

James Jones in *Prejudice and Racism* (1972) defines it as "those established laws, customs, and practices which systematically reflect and produce racial inequalities in American society" (p. 131). One decade later, Thomas Pettigrew, et. al., defined it as: "the complex of institutional arrangements and choices that restrict the life chances and choices of a socially defined racial group in comparison with those of the dominant group" (1982, pp. 4-

5). Even though many people of color take for granted the persistence of bigotry within most bureaucracies, not everyone is convinced that racism can be an “invisible hand” or “impersonal force” that thwarts black people advancing in societal structures.

Sociologists Mark Chesler, Amanda Lewis and James Crowfoot advise that “as a result of personal awareness of the role race, institutionalized racism, and organized white privilege play in their lives, many whites are unable to see how these forces operate in the lives of people” (2005, p. 15). They explain another manifestation of institutional racism, the “ghetto-ization” of African American faculty such that they “are expected to advise minority students in their departments and are assigned to faculty committees dealing with cultural matters” (Chesler, Lewis, & Crowfoot, 2005, p. 141). Caroline Turner and Samuel Myers address the expectation that faculty of color are the “ethnic resource for the entire institution” (2000, p. 33) and can teach courses related to ethnicity or introduce their race into the curriculum. But “since many departments generally see such roles as peripheral” to the academic mission, they rarely reward faculty who play these roles (Chesler, Crowfoot, & Lewis, 2005, p. 141).

I hope to discover methods majority faculty can use to actively recruit and retain black faculty, rather than passively accept the “no blacks in pipeline” excuse, the merit fallacy, and the claim to reverse discrimination. In addition, I acknowledge that not all of those who read the definitions or examples cited herein will agree that institutional racism operates in the lives of the African American professors but the stories chronicled here should persuade readers of the pervasiveness of Institutional Racism.

^{vi} Buckley’s work *Up From Liberalism* (1959) is clearly a reference to Booker T. Washington’s title *Up From Slavery* (1901).

^{vii} Although blacks make up 13% of the U.S. population, according to the U.S. Census, they should comprise more than 5% of the collegiate professorate, which has been the average since 1995. I acknowledge that having 13% of any faculty be African American is unlikely, but closing the gap so that the professoriate is not so unrepresentative seems like a worthwhile goal for a society that strives for equality and justice.

^{viii} D’Souza labels adherence to EEO standards, “preferential hiring programs” (1995, p. 297), rather than the legally mandated legitimate practices designed to redress historical inequity that they are.

^{ix} Frederick Douglass’ fateful encounter, then, with “the peculiar malevolence of the “nigger breaker,” Mr. Covey, strengthened Douglass’ resolve to fight and was thus, in his words, “the turning point in [his] career as a slave” (Douglass, 1845, p. 45, 54). Douglass did, in fact, escape from slavery and accomplish great things on his chosen path. Was he the victim of “racial discrimination?” How long must a person be delayed by “racial insensitivity” before it constitutes a genuine expression of discrimination?

^x Claude Steele has shown how stereotype threat can affect successful African American students’ test performance and high-achieving women’s test performance in math. He summarizes his findings: “When black students were told that the test would measure ability, they completed the fragments with significantly more stereotype-related words than when

they were told that it was not a measure of ability. . . . Stereotype threat depresses the performance of accomplished female math students on a difficult math test, and [their] performance improves dramatically when the threat is lifted” (1999, p. 47, 50).

^{xi} The order required “federal contractors and subcontractors who do over \$10,000 in government business in one year to take affirmative action to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity for employment, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability” (Dept. of Labor, par.1).

^{xii} Sawhill wrote at about the same time as Steele redefined the poor as the "underclass," a group of people engaged in "dysfunctional behaviors" which left them unable to perform adequately in modern American society (1988, p. 1109). She targeted these behaviors, and by extension, the people who display them, rather than the social conditions which create them. A more balanced approach would seek to address both sets of factors simultaneously.

^{xiii} The percentage of faculty of color has increased nationally from 12.3% in 1991 to 16.5% in 2005 and point to minority recruitment as the reason. But according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, only one group increased substantially in representation, Asian/Pacific Islanders, from 5.1% to 7.17% between 1991 and 2005 and in academia, Asian /Pacific Islanders are not considered under-represented (NCES, Table 218, 232).

^{xiv} I use the term “majority” to refer to white or Caucasian faculty as well as Asian or Asian American faculty who are over-represented in the professoriate. I use the terms “under-represented” or “faculty of color” to refer to Native American, African American, and Latino American faculty who are under-represented in the professoriate.

^{xv} Vivien Thomas was a laboratory assistant who while working for a medical doctor at Johns Hopkins University revolutionized medicine by performing heart surgery on dogs in order to cure the “Blue baby” syndrome in 1943. Because of his race, he was not allowed to perform the first surgery on a baby girl, but he stood next to his supervising physician and told him how exactly to connect the heart valves. This surgery saved this child’s life and was the first ever open-heart surgery performed in the U.S. George Washington Carver (1864-1943) was an agricultural innovator and inventor who developed hundreds of uses for the peanut. Formally trained as a botanist, he also developed farming techniques that would ensure longevity and renewal for damaged soil. Charles Drew invented the technique which would separate blood plasma from blood. He also discovered a method to preserve blood plasma which has helped save millions of lives, especially those of wounded soldiers who are often treated in remote locations where refrigeration is at a premium.

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