Summer 7-15-2020

On Love and Treason: Critical White Feminist Thought for Social Justice Praxis

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Recommended Citation

CRITICAL WHITE FEMINIST THOUGHT

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This dissertation is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

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ON LOVE AND TREASON: CRITICAL WHITE FEMINIST THOUGHT FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE PRAXIS

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM

July, 2020

On Love and Treason: Critical White Feminist Thought for Social Justice Praxis

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Abstract

This dissertation is a theoretical piece that examines the positionality of white women in upholding white supremacy and a framework for critical white feminist thought that will move white women toward a self-reflexive and self-implicating praxis. A white matriarchy (Parker, 2018) is fully conceptualized as part of a powerful subsystem that operates under white supremacy. Concepts, such as a race-gender bribe and white women's negative solidarity (Combahee River Collective, 1977), are exposed and discussed as part of the workings of white matriarchy. White emotionality (Matias, 2015), intergenerational whiteness, and antiracist parenting are also analyzed. I also suggest possibilities for resistance and forging a path out of whiteness for critical white women.

Acknowledgments

There are so many people that I need to thank who have supported me through the process of attaining a doctorate. I began my doctoral studies in the midst of a divorce when my daughters were two and five. Without a community of friends, professors, and academic family who would not let me quit, I would have given up a long time ago. With life's many ups and downs, I have always been lucky to be surrounded by incredible women and there are far too many to name here, but I would like to acknowledge some of the them who have been steady in my life. I would like to thank Ellen Morrissey for being with me through it all, always holding truth and clarity for me even when I could not see things for myself. I would like to thank Jenifer Ford for teaching me the meaning of loyalty and resilience through the multiple phases of rebuilding my life. I would like to thank Erin Chavez for always pushing me to keep going and providing me and my girls with courage, love, and support, and sharing in the struggle of single motherhood with me. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Naomi Nishi's incredible contribution to my growth as a scholar, mother, and fellow white woman who examines whiteness. Going to conferences, presenting together, and spending countless hours in dialogue has kept me grounded and given me confidence in academic spaces.

I would like to thank my committee for supporting me and my work. Dr. Nancy López has offered many hours of mentorship, listening, and feedback through this process and the project would not have taken shape without her help in guiding my vision. I will be forever grateful for how she got me to this point. I would like to thank Dr. Rick Meyer for always believing that I have had something to contribute and supporting me through this writing process. I would like to thank Dr. Rebecca Sánchez

for everything she has done for me as mentor and for all of the academic support she has given me over the years. I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Rice for stepping in toward the end with a willingness to help and sharing her time and her wisdom to get me to the finish line. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Ruth Trinadad Galván who is no longer with us, but is present in the lives of so many of the professors and students she worked with.

I would also like to thank my daughters, Juliet and Anastasia. I have dragged these two girls through the deadlines and the stress of graduate school, but we have always focused on the love and joy we have with each other. They are truly the greatest gift I have ever received. I am honored to be their mother and so proud of the conscious and compassionate people they have become. I also thank my parents, Dann and Martha Parker. They may not have always understood why I had to do this, but they have supported me anyway. I know they see the urgency of this work now and I hope we can continue to fight for justice as a family.

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Introduction to the Project, Approach, and Theoretical Framework

Critical social theorists in education push the boundaries about what should be included as part of educational research and discourse (Collins, 2019). Using a critical social methodology raises issues about identity and examines ways we struggle to become educated and educators. Critical social theory, and the approaches that have grown out of it such as Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), are necessary evolutions in academic knowledge production (Ladson-Billings, 2009). The white masculinity of historical traditions and theoretical traditions have formed a straitjacket around many people, including feminist women and people of color (hooks, 2003; Leonardo, 2013). If we are to hold on to the goal of education toward liberation and emancipation, using critical theory as a methodology works to challenge commonsense notions and get at a deeper understanding of our identities and relationships with others (Collins, 2019).

This work answers the call for theoretical work in the field of educational research and combats the trend for more empirical work. I chose theory because white women need to make meaning of our own lives in the field of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and to provide an intersectional framework for thought and praxis (Collins, 2019). Theory holds the tensions of critique and possibility (Giroux, 2001) in more open space that needs exploration. Critical reflection, as understood by critical theory, is an essential part of my approach. Drawing on Freire's (1970) theory of emergence and becoming, it is important for me to locate myself in this work. As a white woman, studying white women, I make myself an object of study in

order to reveal deeper truths. In revealing my inner thoughts, analysis of life experiences, I bring forth what might be lying dormant in other white women with the hope that they will become traitors to whiteness. The format of the dissertation combines theoretical and historical arguments that I weave together with personal narrative.

This work aims to challenge white women, many of whom are not conscious of their racial power and privilege, and have not even fully internalized a feminist empowerment either. Race treason, the turning against white racial membership and working with people of color to fight white supremacy in all ideological and structural forms (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996) is not a simple matter. White women need to understand our history, rectify our wrongs, and fall out of step with the white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2008). By developing a critical white feminist theory, I hope to complicate what is unexamined about white women and who we are in the world. The following chapter begins with my racial geography, explains how it is situated in the field of critical whiteness studies, and explains the positionality of white women.

Race, Ethnicity, and Other Terms

Omi and Winant (2015) assert, "Race and racism in the United States have been shaped by a centuries-long conflict between white domination and resistance by people of color" (p. 3). The meaning of race has changed over time, beginning with whites constructing notions of biological racism (Omi &Winant, 2015). Biological racism is the notion that people from various groups had biological differences and whites were biologically superior to people of color. White people used "biological" race to justify economic and political inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Frankenburg, 1993; Omi & Winant, 2015). Even though that idea has been disproven, racism persists through what

Bonilla-Silva (2003) calls cultural racism. Cultural racism operates by claiming cultural differences explain social positioning, and is just as entrenched in our institutions as biological mythologies of race (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Because race is a social construction, people are racialized through social and institutional processes and, although racial formations change throughout time, it always leads to white domination or "whiteness" (Omi &Winant, 2015). The shared racial identity of whiteness comes with white power and privilege over people of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Frankenburg, 2003; Omi & Winant, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Whiteness has been defined and protected by law since whiteness was constructed by Europeans during colonization (Alexander, 2010; Harris, 1993), and this work goes into what that means throughout the dissertation.

Ethnicity refers to shared geographic regions, cultures, practices and beliefs (Tatum, 1997; 2019). Ethnic identity is an important formation to examine as it works simultaneously with race, however, one of the ways that white people avoid contending with racism is by using ethnic identities (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Frankenburg, 1993). Using "white" is not to erase the multiple ethnic identities that white people have in addition to being racialized as white (Tatum, 1997; 2019), but to highlight the privileges and power that comes with that racialization. Many whites do not see themselves as white and use ethnicity in power evasive and privilege blind (Frankenburg, 1993) ways that white people use to avoid implicating themselves in building, participating in, or benefitting from structural advantages (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; DiAngelo, 2018; Tatum, 1997; 2019).

The language used to describe or categorize people has always been imperfect but has to be used to analyze social phenomena (Tatum 1997; 2019). I use "people of color"

to describe people from groups who are targeted by racism (Frankenburg, 1993; Tatum, 1997; 2019). As with many Critical Race Scholars, I use "Black" to capture the different backgrounds of people who are racialized as having African descent to include the multiple identities of Black people that solely using "African American" excludes, and I capitalize Black as I would any other ethnic group (Tatum, 1997; 2019).

My Racial Geography and Positionality

Frankenberg (1993) named racial social geography as an important concept for how white women learn who we are and who others are in relation to us. She writes, "Racial social geography, in short, refers to the racial and ethnic mapping of environments in physical and social terms and enables also the beginning of an understanding of the conceptual mappings of self and other operating in white women's lives" (Frankenburg, 1993, p. 44). I begin by revealing my own racial geography because it is imperative for researchers to explain how we are positioned in our work.

I was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico to lower-middle class white parents. I am a middle child and the only girl in between two brothers. My parents came from Ohio in 1971 shortly after they were married and bought a trailer home way out on the edge of town, surrounded by dirt roads that are now busy streets, living my father's dream of the American West as a place of freedom. I must clarify, they were not hippies. I know they sound like hippies, but my mom wore heels, pantyhose, and matching outfits for a long as she could before here feet gave out. Culturally, they were fish out of water here, but loved the sunshine and wide, open sky.

The world I grew up in was not a typical white American experience. I know this because when I meet whites from white suburbs or white cities, or even whites from

diverse cities that are highly segregated, I am different from them. I am from an

integrated city, Albuquerque, that is populated by a majority people of color. My schools

and neighborhoods were working class and lower middle-class white, Hispanic, Black,

and Vietnamese. I use the term Hispanic because that is how the people I am talking

about identified. I do not use Latino or Latinx because there was no political or social

alignment with groups who were not Hispanic. The distinction between Hispanic and

Latino, Chicano, and Mexican or Mexican-American was an important distinction to

those who identified as Hispanic. Hispanic encapsulates citizenship and belonging to this

place, and can be just as nativist and problematic as any form of whiteness. It continues

to be an important identity for some people and operates as what Bonilla-Silva (2003)

calls honorary white. Honorary white refers to groups that are almost but not quite

considered white. They create a buffer zone that whites use as part of a divide and

conquer strategy. Because of honorary whiteness, Latinx is a category that does not imply

political or social alliance. Racist whites I grew up with called Hispanic people

"Mexicans" to be intentionally derogatory, and Hispanic people participated in anti-

Native, anti-Blackness, and anti-Asian racism just as whites did. López (2013) explains

race in New Mexico by discussing the complex notions of ascribed race versus self-

identity:

> This value-added question on ascribed race is especially important in a state like
>
> New Mexico, where, according to the U.S. Census, almost half of the population
>
> identifies as Hispanic but the majority identify as White; this seemingly
>
> paradoxical pattern may be explained by examining the unique history of New
>
> Mexico. When New Mexico was annexed to the United States, all of the Hispanic

residents were legally defined as White as racial status was a precondition for

citizenship. (p.193)

Congress was not going to grant citizenship to people they considered a "mongrel race"

(Pounder, Adelman, Cheng, Hebes-Sommers, Strain, Smith & Ragazzi, 2003). Statehood

was reached in 1912, a time when whites were obsessed with "race-mixing" (McRae,

2018) and so people who had previously identified as Native American and Spanish were

forced to turn against their heritage and their language in order to be granted an honorary

white status in America. The Hispanic kids I grew up with did not know Spanish and

neither did their parents. It had been stolen by the school system and, according to some

Hispanics I know, the church also played an active role. "This is why in a recent census,

close to two-thirds of New Mexicans identify as White although socially they occupy

what Gómez calls an off-White racial status whereby, they are not socially defined as

White "(Gómez 2007; U.S. Census 2012 quoted in López, 2013, p, 193).

Mythology of pure Spanish blood was prevalent in the spaces I inhabited, and I

was called *hita* and *m'hija* by friends' mothers and grandmothers. I longed to be Catholic

because I loved the Santos, brass crosses, and the images of the Virgin Mary that filled

the homes of my friends. Instead I was Protestant, and that felt like the most salient

difference at the time. No first Communion dress or veil for me, and I wanted one so

badly. The crossover between white and Hispanic was so common, it was not something

that seemed important as a younger child. The Vietnamese and Black students at my

elementary were marginalized though. I walked to school with my friend Le every day,

but I never went in her house and I never had her over to mine. My mother ran a daycare

out of our house while she worked on her Bachelor's degree, and began teaching in my

early years of elementary school, moving us into the lower middle class. Both of my parents were teachers, and my brothers and I were the typical latch-key kids of our generation, walking home from school and watching reruns of the *Brady Bunch* until our parents got home.

Tatum (1997; 2019) describes how white children and children of color begin to separate in schools in social environments. She explains that by middle school white student and students of color begin to identify more with their race and ethnicity (Tatum 1997; 2019). It causes distance and conflict because whites show a lack of empathy for students of colors' experiences of racism, and parents show more anxiety about interracial dating, so things begin to change. By high school, the divide grows much wider for many children and adolescents. White families also begin to show more and more disapproval for cross-racial socializing, creating more solidified identification with whiteness (Thandeka, 1999).

My experience is aligned with these observations. The elementary and middle schools I went to did not have a prominent middle-class population. There continued to be a lot of students living in poverty and a new identification for some students with gangs. "What are you looking at bitch?" entered my daily lunch hour, spoken by groups of Hispanic girls who said it to anyone regardless of race. This new tone is an example of the hardening of difference in the place of what had felt comfortable and fluid. Adults did not supervise children during my upbringing. It was before zero tolerance policies and police presence in schools that have swung way too far in the other direction, criminalizing and over-disciplining children of color. In fact, my middle school principal had asked students who were smoking to do so on the other side of the street because

they were not supposed to do it on school grounds. Girls danced while scantily clad and slithered on the floor provocatively for a parent night performance. My friends were becoming sexually active in middle school, usually because of coercion from high school boys, and any sense of childhood was lost by high school. It was common for high schoolers to prey on middle school girls, and by high school, men in their twenties frequently pursued high school girls without repercussion.

High school was the first time there was a core of middle- or upper-class students and the first time any honors or enrichment courses were available. My high school was heavily tracked, and I only bumped into kids I grew up with in math courses because I was in advanced humanities classes. Gang activity and intimidating white male athletes organized the school's spaces until there was a change in administration that tightened supervision and made new rules. Fights broke out and there was a lot of conflict between different groups of students that adults had normalized, so teachers and administrators did not address it. I avoided most problems by hanging out in the theatre and art classes. Race was never spoken about except through slurs. Middle- and upper- class white students from my high school talked about students of color very differently than in my earlier years of schooling, and even though the school was populated by a majority of people of color, the teachers and curriculum were white.

I remained in New Mexico for most of my life, escaping to Cleveland, Ohio for two years after college. My parents moved there when my brothers and I were in our early twenties. They wanted to go back to their home state. I followed but it was a terrible fit. It was a white context like I had never known. Whites only socialized with each other, made racist jokes, and unapologetically ascribed racist meanings to places around town.

The places where I worked were highly segregated and I lived in a Black neighborhood as one of the only white people on my street. I could not get pizza delivered to my house. The woman at city hall had asked if, "my mama knew where I was living," when I went to get a parking permit, and police were present everywhere. I came from Albuquerque, which is a violent city in spite of also being many other things. I never felt and never was unsafe in my Cleveland Heights neighborhood and it was an early experience with systematic anti-Blackness (Dumas & ross, 2016).

I moved back to Albuquerque and it continues to be the only place that I feel at home. I can tell you how the light changes in each season, how the mountains turn different colors, and when the air is about to smell like roasting green chile. I have a deep sense of belonging to this place, and still do not fit in with the white people who move here only for the weather. I have moved in and out of white and people of color (POC) spaces throughout my adulthood. Parenting alongside fellow white women has led to more isolation than solidarity. Even though I am white, precariously middle-class, and well-educated, I never get asked to be part of white women's book clubs. I have had enough run-ins at parties with white women who say coded racist things about Hispanics and New Mexico that I don't appear to fit in with them. I was not an isolated white, so learning racism and unlearning it has always been in an integrated context. Some white people really grew up in segregated areas (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2009) and it shows up their interactions and perceptions. They create white spaces for themselves and their children in Albuquerque, but still brag about making posole or salsa. They may identify as "burqueño" even though they are not from here and that term is reserved for multi-generational brown folks, a concept that is clearly lost on them. The

new liberal white colonizers of the university area create their own mythological dream of the West and freedom that my dad had years ago. For me, there has never been any geographic or social distance between me and people of color, and I think that has been significant in my path to transforming my whiteness.

Working class white women are the most likely white people to become antiracist (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). My class status has changed over the years, but my experiences as working class, struggling with bills, having no health insurance, and juggling multiple jobs at times to make ends meet informs much of my understanding of inequality, including sexism and racism. My shared space and time with people of color in neighborhoods, doing low-wage work, and my close friendships and relationships with people of color makes crossing over much easier. Like many whites, my class status has changed with my parents attaining more education in my childhood, which took us from working class to lower-middle class. Inherited wealth and my parents move to Ohio when I was in college secured my parents' status as middle class, although it did not secure mine. As an adult, my security as middle class was very much related to marriage. I was securely middle class when I was married to my husband who comes from an upper-class white family. I lost this security when I divorced, leaving income, retirement savings, and home ownership on the table when my children were two and five.

Since my divorce, I have had many class experiences that revealed the very tangible, material privileges of being an educated middle-class white woman, and I have also experienced situational poverty. Both inform this work because of the world that was revealed to me as I left ideal white womanhood, began my doctoral studies, and had to navigate court systems and state aide as the primary caregiver of my daughters. As a

graduate student, I had many opportunities such as low-income student housing where we lived for three years, a student health center, flexible working hours that allowed me to minimize paying for childcare when my children reached school age, and student loans to supplement living expenses and emergencies. I am also in the minority of women in New Mexico who receive child support. While the university housing was inexpensive, I also had lived in the roach and mice infested apartments the university provides for families, most of whom were single mothers or international student families of color. It was a space that was racialized and neglected, which no amount of advocacy seemed to change. I know what it feels like to be stuck financially, but I also know I had my pick of rentals once I was ready to leave it because I am white. As I navigated the medical system with my daughters, I also became aware of the perceptions and level of care we received on Medicaid versus private insurance, and facing degrading comments and attitudes from doctors and dentists. However difficult this time period was, it ended for me because of white privilege, but living through those experiences informs my perceptions that most middle-class white women do not share.

Race as social construction means that the social factors of our identities are a constant work in progress. Growing up and going to school in majority people of color environments gives me a rich racial social geography to reflect upon as I look at the ways in which my white femininity was constructed and enforced in my family, schools, and larger society. López (2013) calls this a race-gender framework, writing, "Lived race-gender refers to the everyday experiences related to one's intersecting ascribed racial and gender social status in society. Examining the unearned privileges or disadvantages related to one's intersecting race-gender social status in a given context can capture lived

race-gender" (p. 186). Aligned with Frankenberg (1993) the proximity I had to people of color did not make me any less racist than those raised in white environments and my path to consciousness has had its own trajectory.

Racism as a White Problem

The purpose of critical whiteness studies is to center whiteness as a social location and as an object of deep examination (Leonardo, 2013). Frankenburg (1993) defines whiteness in the following way:

> To speak of 'the social construction of whiteness' asserts that there are locations, discourses, and material relations to which the term 'whiteness' applies. I argue…that whiteness refers to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced and, moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination. Naming 'whiteness' displaces it from the unmarked, unnamed status that is itself an effect of its dominance. (p.6)

One of the most significant realizations I made on my way to transforming my own consciousness was taking responsibility for racism as a problem that whites created and maintain daily (Leonardo, 2005). The notion of white people as the source had somehow eluded me because so much of my work in education was about everyone else. I had fully internalized my matriarchal powers. Whites created this hierarchy when they constructed whiteness through colonization (Alexander, 2010). Much debate in the field of critical race studies critiques the centering of white experience because it can be seen as recreating racial dominance in a field that seeks to emancipate white supremacy (Leonardo, 2013), and there is, of course, the difference between whiteness and white people that must be toiled with. Honoring lived experiences as knowledge became very

important in movements toward antiracism, feminism, and LGBTQ rights; however, the interpretation of white women using lived experiences can be quite problematic because of the power evasive ways in which we interpret our own lives (Frankenburg, 1993). The epistemology of white women's resistance is also quite different from that of women of color. Hurtado (1996) argues that white feminism grows out of stories of victimhood, while feminists of color came from stories of strength. Because of structural oppression and racial separation, women of colors' social worlds can be separate from whites, however white women have to maneuver a social world where they are partnered with their oppressors. The evolution of growing resistance out of that space is quite different and will need to address that complication. However, the centering of my experiences in ways that are self-reflexive and self-implicating as praxis has the potential for other whites to engage the same way and begin to act differently.

There are several debates in the field of whiteness studies about whether or not whites can actually develop a positive white identity (Tatum, 1997; 2019) or whether race abolition, abolishing whiteness should be the political project (Leonardo, 2005; Thandeka, 1999). In recognizing the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992) in all of its iterations, we also then have to recognize a permanence of racists. While I understand that becoming antiracist is a lifelong process, I think holding the multiple truths of permanence and possibility is where we need to reside. When antiracist work offer whites no hope of transformation because their identities are seen as fixed and stable regardless of our work and actions, we are stuck, we reify constructed identities and we also contribute to the exile that antiracist whites experience when we start challenging white supremacy in our families, partnerships, friendships, and work spaces.

What is clear in work on whites attempting to leave whiteness behind is the deep sense of isolation and exile that we experience (Leonardo, 2013). My own consciousness caused fissures in my life that I did not expect because I naively thought the white people I had surrounded myself with would want to come with me on this road to transformation. They did not. It is not just the relationship with others that becomes strained, it is a loss of reality and the self that was known. Knowledge of race is inconsolable (Britzman, 1998), it runs amok, and refuses to be contained in the life that I previously lived. Once I saw myself implicated in whiteness, I could not cover it back up. This knowledge brought an avalanche of loss, but I gained so much more. Yancy (2015) writes so beautifully:

> Coming to recognize themselves as white problems, there is work to be done, a form of work, self-work, a socio-ontological project that will not conclude in the form of *fait accompli*. It is through the search that one undergoes loss, a kind of death. "But this death, if it is a death", according to Butler, "is only the death of a certain kind of subject, on that was never possible to begin with, the death of a fantasy of impossible mastery, and so a loss of what one never had. In other words, it is a necessary grief." (p. xxv)

And so, in the loss, and grief, I have entered the work attempting to reside not in a *fait accompli*, as he says, but in the opening and possibility that white women will transform, we will figure this out, and we will leave our whiteness behind, but without taking something that does not belong to us.

Statement of the Problem

Whites occupy at least 80% (Matias, 2015) of the teaching force because it has been protected as a white woman's form of labor, beginning in colonial times (Spring, 2008) and reaffirmed even after *Brown vs. the Board of Education* (Tillman, 2004). White women adhere to the rules of patriarchal whiteness and are socialized to enforce them otherwise white men would not trust white women to educate the nation's children or carry out what Spring (2008) and Newman (1999) call white women's civilization work. There is a long history of white women's complicity with white patriarchy as evidenced by their role in slavery (Feimster, 2009; Jones-Rogers, 2019; Painter, 1998), their arguments in favor of white supremacy during early feminism (Davis, 1981; Newman, 1999; Roberts, 1997), resistance to school desegregation, and their dominant role in the helping professions (McRae, 2018). White women have carried out plenty of the systemic violence that has created a school system that privileges whites and negates the value of people of color; however, their racial maintenance has sometimes operated invisibly (McRae, 2018). Paradoxically, white women, while also suffering under white patriarchy, are complicit in enforcing it in schools by surveilling bodies (Ferguson, 2001), enforcing dominant emotionality (Boler, 1999), deploying white masculinity (Leonardo, 2005), and carrying out eugenics work (McRae, 2018).

Although white women dominate the public-school system, we cannot understand their domination by only looking at their role in schools. White women's relationship to domination and subordination is complex and rarely fully examined. Leonardo (2013) suggests white women have a specific functional role in upholding racism.

Without overstating the case that working-class whites and white women control the administration of race relations, they are invested in their own share of white spoils. *They may not call all the shots, but they frequently pull the trigger* (italics original). In the army of Whiteness, different whites play specific roles in guarding the fortress. It depends upon its foot soldiers as well as officers: rarely do they defect to the other side because they pay a high price for being "race traitors", not the least of which is giving up the honor of being white. Convincing them to put aside their proverbial guns is likely to meet with their resistance. (p.102)

His metaphor about *pulling the trigger* illustrates that white women are complicit and collaborative with white men to create white power. White women were slave-owners who were just as vicious as white men (Jones-Rogers, 2019); they participated in the lynching of thousands of Black men (Feimster, 2009), and have painted themselves as superior to people of color in order to gain political power (Newman, 1999). Our history will show that we are far more violent, far less fragile, and far more involved in the maintenance of whiteness than we have ever imagined ourselves to be.

White women operate under what Allen (2008) named the white hegemonic alliance. According to Allen, the white race is organized into an alliance that operates to maintain white supremacy, each subgroup maintaining its own role. In his work, he argues that the domination of poor whites is not just a function of their class role, but also their loyalty to their racial role as whites. Although many scholars deal with race and class as separate factors, Allen argues that the roles are combined as they form the polity of the white hegemonic alliance. So, it is not just a class role that they play that maintains

their subservience, it is their distinct position in the white hegemonic alliance as poor whites and their adherence to white supremacy even though they still suffer under class oppression. White women play a similar role because our compliance to white patriarchy also binds us to whiteness in a subservient role—it is not just gender oppression but also the specific racialization of their gender oppression, or what López (2013) would call a race-gender social location. White women maintain white patriarchy in exchange for their subservient race-gender social location in intersecting systems of oppression-resistance in the white hegemonic alliance. We will never reap the full benefits of white patriarchy, but our adherence to our role in whiteness grants them racial privileges that seemingly make sacrificing equality worth it. This distinction is significant because white women must liberate themselves from patriarchal whiteness, ending their role as racial oppressors and as members of the white hegemonic alliance simultaneously. The specific race-gendered location of white womanhood as oppressor-oppressed is formed dialectically. It is not as though young white girls are solely dominated as children only to grow to participate in subordinating others. The formation of white women's identity causes subordination and domination to operate together creating a subservient, but separate power structure that I name the white matriarchy (Parker, 2018).

By examining white women's role in the white hegemonic alliance, we can move white women to intervene in their personal realities in ways that recognize their complex positioning in the social structure through race cognizance, or becoming cognizant of race (Frankenburg, 1993). It is also imperative to take this positionality into account when constructing new theory for social change for advancing liberation for human rights for groups that experience historic and contemporary oppression. Allen's (2008)

description of the white hegemonic alliance and the possibilities for race abolition are main themes in this work. He also offers an important critique about the continuity of scholarship in the field regarding the undoing of race.

> Although this alliance has tremendous strength and is arguably the primary mortar holding together White supremacist structure, it has a number of cracks and crevices that need to be exposed and widened in the hope of bringing the whole structure crashing down. In other words, political alliances, such as the alliance that holds together what we know as the White race, can be undone in ways that work toward real social justice. (p.210)

When we become aware of race as construction, then we must also take responsibility for deconstructing it by exposing vulnerabilities within the alliance. As cited by Allen (2008):

> Garvey and Ignatiev (1996) make an important critique of the field when they comment about the consensus of the social construction of race without continuing the project of ending it:
>
> The 'social construction of race' has become something of a catchphrase in the academy, although few have taken the next step. Indeed, we might say that until now, philosophers have merely interpreted the white race; the point is to abolish it. (p. 210)

Instead of simply maintaining the critique and discourse on race and whiteness, Allen takes that next step by calling for us to understand whiteness in the context of undoing it, writing, "If race can be made, then it can be unmade. Understanding how the White race is held together is the first step toward the ultimate goal of breaking it apart so as to

disassemble the political alliances that keep White supremacy in place" (Allen, 2008, p. 210).

Because antiracist education and white feminism do not deal with white women's specific oppressor-oppressed role in the white hegemonic alliance, white women's consciousness is limited, and we try to resolve it in a variety of ways. The most common would be to identify only with the oppression we experience, but there are other ways that white women interpret our experiences that are inaccurate and problematic. For example, some white women will not acknowledge all the ways in which they are controlled and oppressed by white patriarchy because of their alliance with it. On the other hand, white women with a strong understanding of racism may identify their roles solely as oppressors without integrating the history and current situation of sexism that white women also experience. The limitations of these views are problematic as they can cause white women to deny our own subordination, deny they subordinate others, and remain complicit in reproducing white hegemonic power (Hughey, 2010).

White Women's Resistance Discourse

White women's resistance discourse contributes to our lack of intervention in white patriarchal domination. Our resistance discourse is important to examine because of the discord between what white women believe we are doing and what we are doing in actuality. White women have developed feminism within the white racial context (Collins, 2000; hooks, 1984; Hurtado, 1996), and so epistemological problems evolved into white women's distorted consciousness. It is critical that feminism remain politicized and contextualized as a movement that is supposed to take on gendered oppression. If the

performance of white feminism continues to dominate, all women, including white women, will remain subordinate.

White women's discourses of resistance usually reproduce race in very scripted ways whether it is calling to "smash the patriarchy," using language associated with yoga, or using other forms of spirituality to bypass critical understanding of why racial inequality and violence exist. For example, they might impose notions of peace right after an incidence of great injustice, or focus on themselves as individuals when collective action is needed. White women have hijacked "the personal is political" (Hurtado, 1996) and applied it to decisions about the body, leaning in, homebirth, and breastfeeding, and they have treated those decisions as significant forms of feminist resistance. The "personal is political" was supposed to describe how domination operates through all aspects of women's lives, both private and public (Bartky, 1990), but it was never supposed to say our mode of resistance should stop at the personal.

Hurtado (1996) sees this personalism as an epistemological issue with white feminism that separates it from the feminism women of color developed. Personalism makes it difficult for white women to see their own positioning in spite of the many critiques from women of color. Many of white women's discourses of resistance are another form of what Sleeter calls "white racial bonding" (Sleeter, 1996), or what I will explain in the coming chapter as negative solidarity as described by the Combahee River Collective in 1977 (Combahee River Collective, 2000).

Testimonial Smothering and White Feminism

White feminists did not set white feminism upon the right trajectory to follow a greater vision for undoing multiple oppressions, including race, class, and sexuality

(Collins, 2000). White feminism and its adherence to white supremacy can be found in the direct exploitation of people of color and have roots that will surprise many. White women have been intentionally silencing the work and concerns of women of color since the 19th century when white women organized to articulate their goals (Davis, 1981) Collins (2019) calls attention to this as testimonial smothering where the interests of the dominant group stamp out the voices of marginalized groups. The omission of a critical race intersectional analysis comes in at the inception of white feminist thought, and so white feminism cannot just be edited, but must be rewritten and rethought (Hurtado, 1996). White women have generally failed to use their positionality to fight for justice for other groups of people, igniting much deserved critique and anger from communities of color. White feminism was formed under patriarchal white supremacy and is part of dominating people of color and policing lower-class whites (Hurtado, 1996). Through active participation in the domination of others, white women attempted a warped sense of liberation where our goal appears to be equality with white men as opposed to liberation for all. During the formation of white feminism, it was not accidental that white women did not consider the needs of women of color or ways in which they participated in oppressing them. They simply did not see them as their equals (Davis, 1981). Although we are reluctant to admit it, white feminists have demonstrated our own possessive investment in whiteness (Lipsitz, 2006).

Limitations of Current Theory

Works by women of color, specifically Black and Chicana Critical Race Feminists, have been a crucial part of my consciousness. They have exposed every semantic move, trick, insensitivity, and mode of domination that I have ever participated

in. Their call for white women to educate ourselves and others is what this work aims to do. Current analysis of white women in the field of critical race studies has skillfully identified the effects of their transgressions toward people of color (Baca-Zinn & Zambrana, 2019; Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2000). Hurtado (1996), Collins (2001), and Frankenberg (1993) have contributed greatly to our theoretical knowledge regarding the construction of white women. However, as Hurtado (1996) contends white women tend to cannibalize the work of women of color or use it to understand themselves instead of the unique positioning of women of color and how they may also contribute to their oppression. We need more white women to challenge us on race and patriarchy while examining our own history, phenomenology, and epistemological underpinnings. Hearing the voices of others is a powerful step in transforming painful structural relationships, but the next step has not been fully developed.

Describing the Matriarchy

We are beginning to see references to white matriarchy online and in pop culture in (see Talusun, 2020). Recently, a report came out in Great Britain asking, "Is Gender Diversity a White Matriarchy?,"(Diversityuk.org, 2018) that examined, what the US has long known, that affirmative action is primarily benefitting white women (Tatum, 1997; 2019) My specific contribution to this field is the conceptualization of a white matriarchy that operated historically and continues to operate currently. My argument is that white women form a white hegemonic matriarchy (Parker, 2018), part of the white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2008) that binds them together and creates and sustains interracial and *intraracial* problem and forms of oppression. These actions conform white women to a hierarchy that upholds, not only patriarchal whiteness, but also a matriarchy that operates

powerfully underneath that uses social, political, economic, and emotional mechanisms to keep it in place (Parker, 2018) The nature of this white matriarchy creates divisions by class and other indicators within the race and gives white women permission and weaponry to oppress people of color (Parker).

The definition of and inquiry into a white matriarchy is significant because often we discuss the oppressive actions of white women as survival tactics under white patriarchy. However, the progress of white women under white patriarchy has been transactional. Some of the collective actions of white women have indeed been resistant to patriarchal control, but usually they also reinforce white matriarchal control. For example, reproductive rights have a history of resisting patriarchal control, but they also set up discourses that privilege white motherhood and pathologize women of color (Roberts, 1997). Margaret Sanger, for example, believed that birth control offered white women reproductive freedom, but she simultaneously justified state control over sterilizing poor white women and women of color (Roberts, 1997). Some argue that her alliance with eugenicists was strategic, but a look into her writing on the subject revealed an investment in eugenicists' basic beliefs that birth control was necessary to curb the reproduction of who she saw as unfit and inferior (Roberts, 1997). The white matriarchy also operates through certain professions, such as teaching, social work, and the medical field in order to maintain white supremacy in the school system. It also operates in higher education where white women vastly outnumber women of color and participate in their marginalization (Calafell, 2012; Matias, 2015).

I also use "white patriarchy" to describe white supremacist heteropatriarchal domination because, as an intersectional work, I am aiming to examine whiteness and

patriarchy as categories of domination. As Frankenburg (1993) defined above, "whiteness" can encapsulate multiple social locations and usually implies patriarchal domination. I use white patriarchy to ensure that the reader sees both operating. I use white matriarchy to refer to the ways white women work within white patriarchy to build their own white power, but also that they do not have the power that white men have. Yet, we are relationally privileged as the epitome of womanhood and caretaking mothers in relation to the controlling image of the Black Matriarch who were maligned as "bad" mothers who were seen as "overly aggressive unfeminine women" (Collins, 2000, p.83).

Overview of White Women's Resistance and Compliance

White feminism does not just implicate white women. There are women whose racial formation and political ideology align them closely to whiteness and white supremacist ideology. White feminism is rooted in white women's domination and creation of a power structure that upholds white patriarchy, but it is also rooted in white women's actions to create their own power structure that would serve them through the labor market, political action (Davis, 1981; Feimster , 2009; McRae, 2018; Newman, 1999), and defining their race-gender role as superior (Davis, 1981). Like all other structures of white supremacy, people of color can also comply with whiteness ideology and white supremacism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). For example, Latinx, Asian, and Native American women can also comply with white matriarchal maintenance through anti-Blackness (Collins, 2000). It is also essential to understand that many women's actions can straddle multiple interests and there is a complicated overlay between these systems that support the white matriarchy. Figure 1. is inspired by Solórzano and Delgado's (2001) model for transformational resistance.
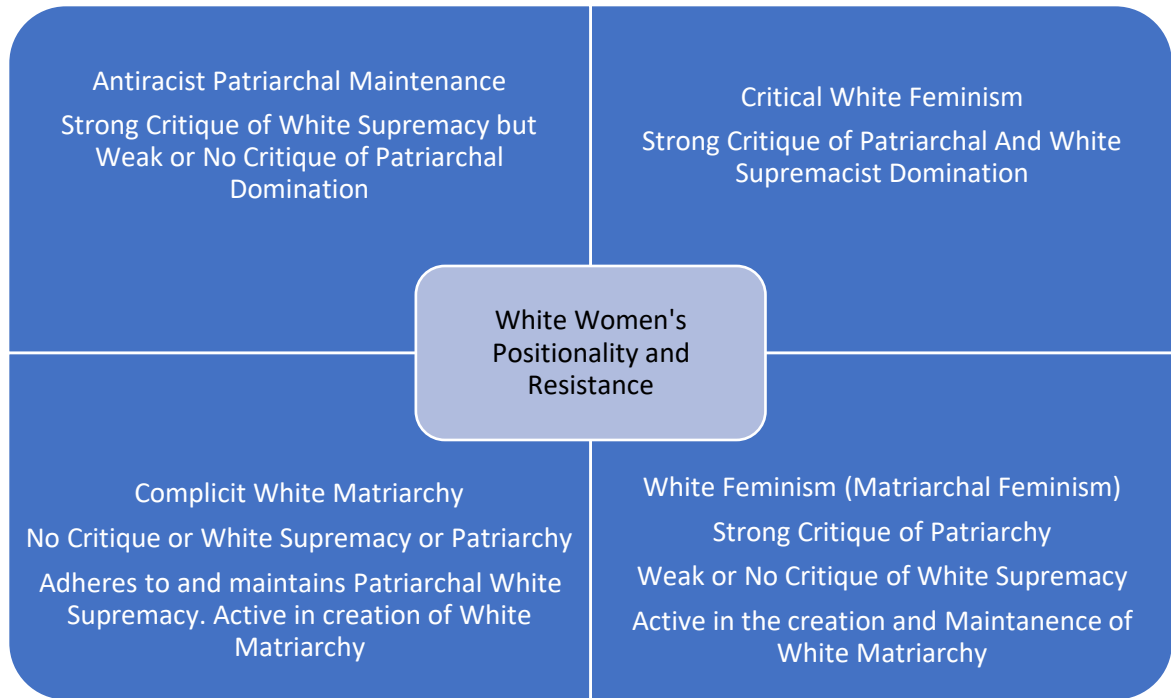
Figure 1. White Women's Positionality and Resistance.

Complicit White Matriarchy

Complicit White Matriarchy refers to the actions of color- and power-evasive white women who happily, consciously, and willingly uphold white hetero-patriarchal domination. These are the white women who voted for Trump at 53% (Cooper, 2018) in spite of his open misogyny and history of admitted sexual assault. The distinction among this group with "white feminists" who are frequently grouped with them is important because of the reality that many white women on the left do not share the explicit values of these white women and have used different forms of manipulative or strategic power to maintain whiteness.

Complicit Matriarchy refers to conservative women who believe that white people are superior (Daniels, 1997) and that they must maintain white supremacy in a variety of ways. They also, like Carolyn Bryant whose actions led to the death of Emmett Till

(Beauchamp, 2005), do not hesitate to deploy white masculine violence against people of color. Complicit Matriarchs are also complicit in their own oppression and the oppression of other women. We see them in families, churches, and government institutions and they are not passive in American history or politics. Frequently, we frame women's progress around the visibility of women, but this is not what we should be looking at. The visibility and activism of white women has usually been to have a voice at the table that is equal with white men, not to disrupt the system (Feimster, 2009; McRae, 2018; Newman 1999) For example, The Daughters of the Confederacy who ensured that the confederate viewpoint took over schools throughout the South fall into this category (McRae, 2018). Women who worked in Native American boarding schools who participated in "killing the Indian, and saving the man" did important white supremacist work in the genocide of Native Americans (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Spring, 2008). Phyllis Schlafly, a central figure in defeating the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s, united women in notions of positive femininity linked to freedom in ways that still resonate with the right today (Miller, 2015). In response to second wave feminism, she was able to unite primarily white women in a movement that supported patriarchal control over all aspects of women's lives (Miller, 2015). Strangely, as a new mother, I would run into women who purported to be on the left who used similar rhetoric about working outside of the home and putting children in day care. I would argue that much of the natural parenting movement is more aligned with women on the right than they would ever like to admit.

Recent examples include Betsy DeVos, who rolled back much of the progress made by title IX in universities (Butler, Lee, & Fisher, 2019). She is not only more

concerned with how men accused of misconduct experience investigations, but she has actually introduced new guidelines for investigating sexual misconduct, protection accusers, and disciplining perpetrators. Television personalities and authors such as Anne Coulter and Tomi Lahren also serve white patriarchy with vitriolic comments about feminists and overt racism. Instead of being part of the powerful tidal wave of #MeToo, complicit matriarchs started #himtoo during the recent Kavanaugh hearings to alarm women that their sons could be falsely accused of sexual assault.

Not only do white women in this category uphold white supremacy, they also actively participate in making sure that femininity and sexuality are reproduced according to their standards. They do this through controlling the emotional spheres of women by enforcing dominant emotionality (Boler, 1999). White emotionality is a key way in which all white women operate to hold domination over others and surveil the emotions of other whites (Matias, 2015). This will be discussed throughout the dissertation, particularly in Chapter 3. The importance of this category is really the conscious compliance with both patriarchy and racism. There is no pretext of resistance that we find when we look at white feminism. Of course, this category is an important part of the matriarchy, but most frustrating to think about transforming because there is no desire to transform the self or social relations. This is also the category where we see anti-LGBTQ, family values, anti-reproductive rights, and an articulated vision of white women as the soldiers of white men (Daniels, 1997). Because of feminism and matriarchal power under it, these women simultaneously police women's progress, yet benefit from it. Without white feminism they would not have attained political power, but they do so in order to undermine it. This is one of the ways the matriarchy operates.

White Feminism (Matriarchal Feminism)

The boundary between complicit matriarchy and matriarchal feminism is less stable than white feminists would like to admit and it brings into sharp relief how the white hegemonic alliance operates, as well as, the notion of conformist resistance. Conformist resistance is the notion that certain types of resistance still conform and operate ways that upholds our oppressive social structure (Solorzano & Delagado Bernal, 2001). Because white feminism challenges patriarchy within the bounds of race, it keeps the social structure in place. One example comes from the fight between Northern and Southern white women after the civil war. Southern white women fought obsessively for the Confederate history of textbooks to be sympathetic to the South, using white supremacist language. White progressive women used white supremacist language as part of the eugenics' beliefs that took hold in the early twentieth century (McRae, 2018). Both groups of white women used white supremacist language to argue moral virtue and set themselves up as authorities in schools and society.

What is new in this generation of white feminist is the use of social media, whether it's Facebook, Instagram, blogs, or twitter, white women have new ways of showing up to dominate and are rarely challenged on their discussions. For example, Pantsuit nation, a Facebook group that gathered women to support Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election, used imagery of white dresses and pantsuits to go vote in honor of white suffragettes with little or no self-reflection on Black women involved in suffrage or the racism of Susan B. Anthony (Newman, 1999). When women of color on the message boards pointed out the lack of inclusion or racial critique, they were shot down and called divisive; "divisive" being the favorite accusation of white feminists. The 2017 Woman's

March offered another opportunity of white women to exclude women of color in our

resistance. Even pointing out that there were issues with race in the organized women's

march drew the ire of white women and white men (Nishi & Parker, 2017). The women's

march was clearly asking nothing of white patriarchy, evidenced by the high attendance

of white men (Parker, 2018). Not to mention the consumerist and commodification of the

pink pussy hat. One blogger even titled an entry "What to Wear to the Women's March"

showing a local yoga teacher model knee high boots and suggest a scarf in case it was

cold (Parker & Nishi, 2017). The challenges that were made to the Women's March from

women of color were shut down in many areas even though women of color were the

national organizers (Cooper, 2018). It is not as though white feminists have made no

progress for women that affects women of color or LGBTQ women; the issue is that

white women listen to women of color when they need to correct behavior or share power

with them to create a unified feminist agenda (Cooper, 2018).

Antiracist Patriarchy

Antiracist patriarchal maintenance names how antiracist work with no patriarchal

critique also upholds white supremacy. Much like white feminism, they have half of the

race-gender analysis right, but their participation in antiracism does not absolve them of

participating in the oppression of women of color, and in some cases white women.

Crenshaw (2009) examined this phenomenon through the lens of mapping the margins

through political intersectionality. Crenshaw argues that the antirape movement and the

antiracist movement ignores the violence against women of color, focusing instead on the

needs of white women and Black men. She found that women of color are never centered

in the concerns about violence against women because antiracist movements are more

concerned with false allegations made of Black men, and white women have been centered in any gendered critique (Crenshaw, 2009). I have discussed the beginning part of this statement under white feminism. Crenshaw argues:

> The failure of feminism to interrogate races means that the resistance strategies of feminism will often replicate and reinforce the subordination of people of color and the failure of antiracism to interrogate patriarchy means that antiracism will frequently subordinate women. These mutual elisions preserve a particularly difficult political dilemma for women of color. Adopting either analysis constitutes a denial of a fundamental dimension of our subordination and precludes the development of a political discourse that more fully empowers women of color. (p.218)

Even in spaces that name themselves intersectional, we don't usually hear a consistent patriarchal critique, including a critique that names the impact on women of color (Parker, 2018: Parker and Nishi, 2019). Antiracists participate in the further oppression of women of color when they put the needs of men of color over women of color because so much antiracist movement has centered men (Cooper, 2018; Crenshaw, 2009).

The reason that this quadrant becomes important is that it involves twisting or ignoring intersectionality in a field that is claiming to address it. The significance of naming antiracist patriarchy and its maintenance is because we need to challenge white women, men of color, and white LGBTQ to consistently interrogate their privilege, which can mean race, class, sexuality and gender. Recently, we are seeing work gain ground on white women as though they are holding more power in spaces than white men. This is simply not the case, and conflating the overarching structure of white

patriarchal domination with the subsystem of white matriarchy, that I reveal here, will not empower anyone.

The history of suppressing the gendered critique of race comes at the inception of civil rights movement directly after the US Civil War. Black women were integral in organizing anti-lynching campaigns and were asking that more attention be paid to the sexual violence they were experiencing at the hands of white men (Painter, 2002) However, the needs of men of color took front stage and the patriarchy in the movement was not dealt with, giving birth to womanism and Chicano feminism. An antiracist approach that does not challenge people to understand patriarchal violence or patriarchy as the oldest form of oppression (Morrison, 2019) does not lead us where we need to be. Brittney Cooper (2018), a Black feminist scholar charts her path to feminism and her early rejection of it because of white feminism's omission of race. She reflected upon how she saw racism was her primary obstacle until a friend from college did what she called a "homegirl intervention" and she realized that her race critique needed to embrace the feminist critique in order for her to truly understand the position of Black women. She argues that her Black feminism centers her as a woman and person of color above the needs of Black men and white women. She writes: "The third thing that Black feminism taught me is that I was once willing to let a Black nationalist-centered politic, largely narrated to me by Black men, have me put my own political needs and concerns on the back burner to center their needs and concerns" (Cooper, 2018, p.36). She, along with Morrison (2019), questions why at this political moment white women are seen as more destructive than men. While she closely examines the problem with white women's racial domination and the harm it caused her, she further explains that in her own life it has still

been Black men that have caused her the most pain, not white women, which brought her to the place of "Black Feminist, capital B, capital F" (Cooper, 2018, p.36).

One of the things that I first learned as a student of antiracism was not to criticize the actions of men of color. I picked up the critique of white women so strongly that I even questioned whether white women were oppressed. It does not serve feminism or antiracism to believe that white women's lives are only partially affected or shaped by patriarchy. When I see one-dimensional caricatures of white women in academic work, objectified images projected on screens by men of color, or hear a minimization of gendered oppression, I can't help but see how groups who have patriarchal *or* race privilege sustain white patriarchy. Men of color sometimes obscure their varying patriarchal privileges and align with white patriarchy without being held accountable. This alliance serves white men and it seems to be flying under the radar in critical spaces. The centering of women of color as a primary mode of analyzing our social structure remains, to me, most true. This includes a strong critique of the other categories that do not experience multiple forms of oppression, like white LGBTQ, or men of color. However, it is also not appropriate for white women to start naming themselves womanists or claim Chicanisma, in spite of our deep longing to leave our whiteness behind. In our desires and actions to transform our consciousness and praxis, we must build our own home, frame our own conversations, and give credit to the feminists of color who showed us the way.

Critical Intersectional White Feminism for Liberation

Following the work of white women who examine race and gender, such as Ruth Frankenburg (1993), Michelle Fine (1998), Jesse Daniels (1999), and Mab Segrest

(1998), developing critical intersectional white feminism is the goal of this work. To do so we must include a strong critique of white women's role in maintaining white supremacy for white patriarchy. Critical white feminist thought recognizes the transactional nature of white women's political power with white men and explains the white matriarchy, the race-gendered bribe white women take, and offers possibilities for resistance that come with recognizing white women's power. Critical white feminist thought offers new framework for white women to consider in understanding how we are implicated and how we can transform. Race treason for white women recognizes our specific history, dissolves our ignorance, and gives us the pathway out of whiteness that Tatum (1997; 2019) calls for.

Outline of the Dissertation

This dissertation is situated in the field of Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies. It does not give a comprehensive history of white feminism; rather, I use the critique from women of color. In Chapter 2, I describe and analyze the concept of the white matriarchy, and explains some of the ideas in critical race studies about the social construction of race and white women's specific racialized-gendered bribe. In Chapter 3, I offer theory regarding the roots of white emotionality and how it relates to white women and impacts people of color. Chapter 4 deals with dominator culture in white families and problems with love. I examine parenting and family history about how we learn and can interrupt whiteness. Chapter 5 explains the role of theory and calls for race treason for critical white feminist social justice praxis.

Chapter 2: The White Matriarchy

Introduction

This chapter opens up a discussion about how white women maintain their power within a fully formed a white matriarchal system that dominates education and other helping professions. The coming chapter describes key theories that we need to understand whiteness as a social construction, intersectionality, and addresses the history of white women's political power and their alliances with whiteness over womanhood resulting in the formation of matriarchal power. The chapter ends with how white women have attained and maintained control over schooling.

The Makings of a White Matriarch

I was a case manager for Job Corps in my mid-twenties before I was a teacher. Job Corps is one of the last Great Society programs from the Johnson administration in the 1960s that was supposed to provide residential training in a trade. Students, who were from age 16 to 24, lived in dorms and went to classes for their GED and to learn a trade like plumbing or secretarial skills. My job was to assist students leaving campus once they graduated, hopefully finding them jobs, transportation, housing, childcare, and possibly community college. The vast majority of my caseload was people of color, primarily Latinx and Native American.

To say that nothing qualified me for this position is an understatement. I had a history degree, which carved out no career path that would not require an advanced degree or at least a teaching certificate, options I was not ready to take. I had worked my way through college through various forms of retail, warehouse work, and eventually, I became a courier at a law firm. Once I was out of college, I sold car insurance for a large

corporation, I was a barista, a secretary, and worked on commission at a local jewelry store. As someone who worked through high school, I was very flexible and familiar with various forms of low wage work. Aside from insurance sales, this was my first professional opportunity and all they were asking was that I owned a car, could network, and would be able to get along with the students who were not much younger than I was. I was also required to be on call 24 hours a day in case students needed me for something. It was a confusing concept, the concept of students living in poverty, facing systematic racism, and intergenerational trauma "needing" something. When would they not need something? What was I supposed to give them? I was completely overwhelmed with calls about problems I had no idea how to solve and no guidance about how to find out. I was handed a hundred or so cases, made up of teenagers and young adults I was supposed to track for a year, some leaving the center, some who had already left, and others who had been gone for a few months. The goal of the position was to account for where students went after they left the center. Job Corps receives a huge government grant that we had to answer to, so we needed to show that our program worked, evidenced by stable employment of graduates. My 24-year-old self had no skepticism about this. My older self knows that they probably put unqualified people like me in this position because I would be kind enough to take the calls, responsible enough to gather the data needed, and compliant enough not to question long-standing beliefs and practices that went on in a center like this.

This was also was my first job as a white matriarch. I believed in my own benevolence and the ability to solve peoples' problems. I was also acting out the part of white savior. White saviority, prevalent in films like *Dangerous Minds*, *Freedom Writers*,

and the *Blind Side*, always includes the notion of an antiracist white hero or heroine who believes that they are helping people of color overcome obstacles in their lives. White saviors believe they counteract racism by seeing the humanity in all people but really hold racist notions of the people they are tasked with helping (Maurantonio, 2017). The notion of white saviority works together with colorblindness to mask the significance of race and racism in the supposed benevolent actions of white people. For example, I could believe that I was the same as my students by erasing their specific struggles related to structural inequality, but I could also simultaneously believe that my caseload needed me because the success of people of color was something dependent upon white people. The problem with white saviority is not that whites are completely useless to people of color. It is that white saviors believe that people of color could not solve their own problems, cannot teach their own children, or manage their own families. It is, of course, part of white matriarchal maintenance. The belief that I would be able to handle these issues at my age is part of how white women gain power over people of color. I was going to be in their homes, their workplaces, and I was going to be surveilling them at best, interfering with their lives at worst. How my lens about their lives was considered competent is deeply rooted in notions of white women's moral superiority and competence in all things having to do with schools or helping professions (Feimster, 2009; McRae,2018; Spring, 2008).

The second day on the job, a sixteen-year-old 1.5 generation Mexican immigrant, Lucia, came into my office, furious because she was going to have to leave the center without her GED or her training because she was pregnant. The center was not able to house pregnant students in their third trimester. She had nowhere to go except her

boyfriend's family's house and she was not sure that she wanted to be there. My job was to transition her into schooling or a job at this point, and so I took up the task of trying to figure out where she could go and what she could do. Attempting to help Lucia took me down a path that I had not anticipated and that haunted me afterwards. If I were to name an event that led me to where I am now, it would be getting to know her, her struggle, and failing miserably to find my way with her through a system that does not care about her at all.

I learned about what it meant to try to navigate schools, workplaces, hospitals, and social services for immigrants. I also learned about some of the underground networks for work and money that many immigrants depend on in order to survive. Because my job was nebulous and the goal was to help students stabilize after the Job Corps center, I accompanied her on appointments with doctors, social services, and visited her in the hospital when the baby was born. Many times though, toward the end of her pregnancy, I would just pick her up and take her to Sonic or drive around and talk. I had a genuine concern and affection for her. She entered my own life at time when I felt rudderless, alone, and distant from family, and I needed company too. Her life had been full of violence, obstacles, and instability, which had landed her at Job Corps like many of her peers. She usually tried to have a lighter mood with me, but some days she shared her deep sadness and fear. One day, we sat at Sonic. She had become quiet, the way women do at the end of pregnancy, and she said, "Miss, why do I have to suffer?"

I did not understand then, but I understand now how my life is built upon her suffering. She is systematically marginalized to do low-wage, unstable work that affords me the ability to purchase services, products, and a lifestyle because of

race/gendered/class/citizenship privilege. The managing of palliative solutions to her problems also created a career for me. What I did not understand was my own investment and implication in her suffering. Most white "saviors" do not see their systematic relationship with those they are "helping." There is distance: I am privileged here; you are oppressed over there. When in reality, it is dialectical. We aren't trained to see the relational aspects, where I am privileged *because* she is oppressed, and she is oppressed *because* I am privileged.

I left Job Corps after a year in that position, deciding to be part of a one-year teaching program. The connection with Lucia brought me closer than ever to understanding what Collins (2000) names the matrix of domination; how society is organized by multiple levels of power and domination, including race, class, gender, and citizenship. It made me understand the difficulties, obstacles, experiences, and my complete and utter helplessness in improving her situation in any material way. When I went into my teaching certification program, I was struck with how I was supposed to interpret the situation through a different, more detached lens. My eyes had been opened by my experiences at Job Corps, but more importantly, my heart was too. I was opened up to the truth of our oppressive, violent, negligent white supremacist patriarchal social structure, but then whiteness ideology came back for me.

Tatum (1997; 2019) has long explained that whites who do not find a path out of whiteness even after they are made aware will revert back to their old racial ideas that blame people of color for racism and inequality. I did go back to whiteness once I entered teacher education. I came back to whiteness, with all the deficit models (Nieto, 2002), assessments, cultural incompetence, and racism that would inform my teaching and

personal relationships for the next few years. If I had received effective antiracist teacher education that pointed out the history, current workings of white supremacy, and how my identity as a white teacher affected my teaching, I would have moved forward, out of whiteness, which is where we need to go.

Self-implication and on-going reflexivity is paramount to transforming social relations (Collins, 2019). Self-reflexivity is the ability to see where you are implicated in the social structure and can propel people to act in resistant ways (Collins, 2019). I was deeply affected by Lucia's question about why she suffers, and it was a transformative moment in my journey to consciousness. There are things that we cannot bear to know, as Britzman (1999) contends, and in not knowing, we console ourselves with narratives that are not grounded in truth. Whites choose ways of learning and interpreting human suffering that maintain domination and deny our complicity, but Lucia's story remains inconsolable to me. To wrap it up nicely as an early lesson in "helping others", which has been part of a detached matriarchal tradition, minimizes the deep truths I learned from knowing her and how it still informs my work.

Why White Matriarchy?

I have been turning over the positionality, power, privilege, and domination of white women for a decade at this point. Partially it is a desire to understand myself within a racialized-gendered construct, but it is also to intervene in the discourse of the either/or framing regarding white women. We are not oppressed in one place and privileged in another. The simultaneity of this space is what makes it so very difficult to pinpoint, undo, and, yes, empower to disrupt racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression. This work attempts to deal the category of heterosexual women as a gendered

phenomenon, and white as a racial category. An intersectional lens requires that critical scholars take many different factors into consideration when we are naming power and approaching the possibility of transformation (Collins, 2000; Collins, 2019; Crenshaw, 2003). Choosing two categories, race and gender, does not make this work any less intersectional (Collins, 2019), but it certainly leaves out some of the other important aspects of identity. Class analysis has long been underexamined in intersectional studies even though it is closely linked to structural racism (Collins, 2019). Although I do make many references to class, I definitely do not articulate class issues and oppression as much as I would like to, mostly examining middle class and upper-class white women. If we continue to see white women's oppression through a strictly patriarchal lens, we will miss their very specific role in racial maintenance.

A white matriarchal structure has been formed as part of what Allen (2009) called the white hegemonic alliance. The term matriarchy is complicated in many ways. It might bring to mind romantic notions of the Amazons of Wonder Woman and other visions of a society led by women. It is also important to note that one of the ways that African American families have been pathologized is by calling them matriarchal (Collins, 2000, Alexander, 2010). This example is significant because it illustrates the tensions surrounding women and power. A society led by white women is romanticized, but a society that is supposedly matriarchal and led by Black women is pathological. Paradoxes such as this call for a closer examination of what it means for women to gain power under white patriarchy and must be examined in ways that do not uphold the idea that women gaining power without undoing race has been progress.

The overarching goal of examining and naming white matriarchy is for white women to start reflecting on not only how their actions may uphold white supremacy, but also how their actions might contribute to white women's dominance operating in accordance with patriarchy, thus feeding their own self-interest and conforming to the subjugation of people of color. Theoretically, a matriarchy cannot fully exist in a patriarchal society because the social structure of patriarchy is global and is embedded in all forms of oppression. Pointing out the white matriarchy that white women have formed is not to disrupt our understanding of patriarchal power, but to disrupt our understanding of white women's attempts to gain power by using patriarchy and whiteness. To characterize white women's adherence to patriarchy as survival underneath male domination does not fully capture the workings of white women's historical power or their current power in homes, schools, and government.

The Myth of Black Matriarchy

As I mentioned before, romantic notions of matriarchal utopias exist in the white imagination. However, Wonder Woman, the trend of goddess worship, and cultural appropriation take form in the ways that white women romanticize Indigenous or Eastern culture's respect for the divine feminine, but little is done to make those sentiments materialize by advancing the needs of women of color. In fact, quite the opposite happens. Whites pathologized Black families for generations under the racist assumption of Black matriarchy, the idea that Black women are in charge of Black households and therefore responsible for any problem of poverty, schooling, or community (Collins, 2000). Collins (2019) explains how white women use controlling images of Black women to define themselves. This is the "selfing" and "othering" that exists in any

process of domination. She describes the controlling image of the Black matriarch as it refers to images of aggressive Black women and the consequences for that kind of imagery.

> Moreover, not only does the image of the Black matriarch seek to regulate Black women's behavior, it also seems designed to influence White women's gendered identities. In the post-World War II era, increasing numbers of White women entered the labor market, limited their fertility, and generally challenged their proscribed roles as subordinate helpmates in their families and workplaces. In this context, the image of the Black matriarch serves as a powerful symbol of both Black and White women of what can go wrong if White patriarchal power is challenged. Aggressive, assertive women are penalized— they are abandoned by their men, end up impoverished, and are stigmatized as being unfeminine. (Collins, 2000 p.77)

What is interesting about white women's work is that it is not considered a threat to patriarchy because it does not create images of pathological families. While there are many media wars about mothers working, and certainly critique of "femi-nazis," we mostly hear discourse about the empowerment of work or having it all. White women feel that marriage makes them respectable (Fine & Weis, 1998) and the nuclear family is the only accepted model in white communities (Collins, 2000). Like other aspects of white matriarchy, white women have attained political or economic power in exchange for reassurance that they will not challenge the white patriarchal order.

Much of the current Black matriarchy mythology comes from the enduring racism of the 1965 Moynihan Report (Alexander, 2010; Collins, 2000) Moynihan was a

sociologist in the 1960s that came to problematic anti-Black conclusions about Black

Americans, arguing that Black people formed a subculture that kept them in poverty

(Alexander, 2010). Ignoring the many laws, practices, and racist attitudes that Black

people endured, he reported that poverty was a cultural problem with the black

community and he named a Black Matriarchy at the heart of it (Collins, 2000). Because

of our long history of hatred and subjugation of Black women, his report was embraced

by whites who saw it as an opportunity to criticize Black people about welfare and their

parenting (Alexander, 2010). I had never heard of the Moynihan report until I actually

studied racism; however, I learned some of the mythology in my teacher training where it

was presented as fact. For example, I was told that Black boys are unsuccessful in school

because they do not have any male role models. I have also heard people from helping

professions use similar discourse, and I shudder to look back on how I even repeated

some of the things that are in it. The primary myth is that Black households are headed by

Black women, who reverse gender roles with men, and it causes poverty and poor

outcomes for Black children (Collins, 2000).

The report has been critiqued multiple times (Collins, 2000; Love, 2019), but it

fits in with the current investment in racism, so it persists despite any counter argument

because it helps white women maintain their position over women of color through

education and other helping professions. My argument about the existence of a white

matriarchal structure is not the one of fantasy I mentioned above, and does not even

challenge white patriarchy. It seems to also operate invisibly, as most of the racial

maintenance work of white women has. (McRae, 2018). In fact, the construction of Black

matriarchal power works well in allowing actual white matriarchal power to go unnoticed

and operates as another controlling image (Collins, 2000) that white women constructed to maintain their racial power and still seem benevolent and innocent.

Intersectionality and Matrix of Domination

Intersectionality as inquiry and praxis is a crucial paradigm shift that has influenced critical thought since its inception (Collins, 2019). Legal scholar Kimberelè Crenshaw (2003) described the phenomena in her ground-breaking article on the problems with using a race or gender lens to describe, analyze, or try to remedy violence against women of color (Collins, 2019). The work on intersectionality was as a crucial paradigm shift in the way that social relations are analyzed (Collins, 2019). The term intersectionality grew out of Black feminism, but there have also been Latinas, such as Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), who gave us notions of borders and hybridity, have also contributed greatly to intersectional thought (Baca Zinn & Zambrana, 2019; Collins, 2019). Collins (2019) articulates the importance of intersectionality as a collaborative project, and that it needs to do so in order to maintain relevance and its critical edge.

Intersectionality and the "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2000) are key concepts in understanding the positionality of white women as oppressor-oppressed. Love (2019) summarizes intersectionality by drawing from the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and the Combahee River Collective saying:

> 'Intersectionality' is not just about listing and naming your identities— it is a necessary analytic tool to explain the complexities and realities of discrimination and of power, or the lack thereof, and how they intersect with identities….The women of the Combahee River Collective articulated the need to discuss race and

gender together, understanding that 'multiple oppressions reinforce each other to

create new categories of suffering.' (p.3)

Understanding the chilling significance that these forms of oppression create "new

categories of suffering", as they say, captures the collaborative work of white institutional

and personal power to create oppressive forces in people's lives, trapping them at

multiple sites of domination. White women can also occupy multiple spaces and can

experience multiple forms of oppression from class, ability, and sexual identity.

Inversely, they can also show domination over working class white women, people of

color, and people who identify as LGBTQ.

The matrix of domination is an important analytical tool for understanding social

location through an intersectional lens. The matrix of domination is defined by Collins

(2000) as:

The overall organization of hierarchical power relations for any society. Any

specific matrix of domination has (1) a particular arrangement of intersecting

systems of oppression, e.g., race, social class, gender, sexuality, citizenship status,

ethnicity, and age; and (2) a particular organization of its domains of power, e.g.,

structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal. (p.299)

Locating ourselves on the matrix of domination helps us understand our social location

more clearly. For example, Lucia from my story above was struggling with multiple

forms of domination: gender, race, class, and citizenship. Her struggles with the structural

and hegemonic domains of domination were present in her citizenship status, her level of

education, her racialized immigrations status, and having to navigate them all as a young

Latinx woman in a white supremacist society. The disciplinary domain of power relies

upon bureaucracy, like Job Corps, and surveillance, like having a case manager, in order to ensure that liberation and resistance would be difficult.

I, on the other hand, was privileged by my race, class, and citizenship status putting us in very different locations on the matrix of domination. Being from two educated parents, having a college degree, having multigenerational citizenship, and being racialized as white gave me, not just power, but power *over* Lucia. Examining us as one category, woman, would have revealed nothing about Lucia's struggle or any options for intervening in her liberation. There have been significant holes in the analysis of women's oppression when white women do not consider these other forms of domination (Crenshaw, 2003) and do not recognize that power plays out relationally (Collins, 2000). White women's denial of relational power at interpersonal and structural sites makes us blind to how our whiteness is enacted as oppressor, not oppressed at these sites. Hurtado (1996) also offers a significant framework in her analysis of white women where oppression is organized by a particular group's relationship to white men.

Another way of looking at intersectionality is to examine the privileges that are gained as a series of bribes and opportunities to show solidarity with the dominant group in order to subjugate other groups. These bribes are offered to groups who are subordinated by only one factor: they are groups that do not navigate multiple forms of oppression on the matrix of domination, but only one category. We need to investigate what it is that middle- and upper-class white women, upper- and middle-class men of color, and upper and middle class gay white men are offered from white patriarchy and unveil how they use their power to maintain white patriarchal control over those who

experience multiple modes of oppression. We must question what makes their submission to white patriarchy worth it.

 Flexible Solidarity and Negative Solidarity

Flexible solidarity is a resistance strategy used to challenge intersectional oppression by forming group alliances strategically, for example Black women aligning with people addressing race issues, or aligning with feminist issues when both are not being addressed in the same space or by the same movement (Collins, 2000; 2017; 2019). Flexible solidarity aims to build political coalition and operates as a site of "compromise and contestation" (Collins, 2017) According to Collins (2017), "Solidarity was not an essentialist category, a bundle of rules that was blindly applied across time and space. Instead, a flexible understanding of solidarity enabled African American women to work with the concept, molding it to the particular challenges at hand" (Collins, 2017, p. 1469). Because of the history and current situation of Black women in the United States, their strivings for equality have forced decisions that white women do not have to make. Collins (2017) explains, "Without solidarity among African Americans, political struggles to upend racial domination were doomed" (p.1464).

The Combahee River Collective was a group of Black lesbian feminists who came together in 1977 to articulate their vision for a feminist future where they were in charge of their own movement. Their statement calls out the history of Black women being silenced by antiracist and white feminist movements and provides a new framework for the idea that they would lead, define, and organize a movement that centered their needs, but willing to align with progressive Black men and white women (The Combahee River

Collective, 2000). Within the statement, they discuss white women and the notion of solidarity. They write:

> Although we are feminists and lesbians, we feel solidarity with progressive black men and do not advocate the fractionalization that white women who are separatists demand. Our situation as black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the fact of race, which of course white women do not need to have with white men, unless it is negative solidarity as racial oppressors. (p. 265)

The concept that I would like to highlight here is *negative solidarity*. Although it is a passing phrase with in this statement, I think it names an important dynamic, the idea that white women do not have to align with white men of the sake of preserving our communities. White women only align with white men to preserve white supremacy.

I would like to investigate how the phenomenon of white women aligning with white men in negative solidarity builds the white matriarchy. Solidarity is discussed in the context of resistance and has a positive connotation, but negative solidarity doesn't just capture a lack of solidarity with women of color, it captures acting against them. It also captures the solidarity, not compliance or complicity, of white women and white men when white women leverage white supremacy to meet their feminist needs. This concept is similar to that of subtractive schooling by Valenzuela (1999) that captures how schooling depletes students of color, not just fails to add something. Negative solidarity can also be seen in cases where white Latinx align with citizenship and honorary whiteness (Bonilla-Silva, 2003) to oppress Latinx and other immigrants, Native Americans, and Black people. The testimonial smothering of Black Latinx and Indigenous Latinx by white Latinx is also a site of negative solidarity. Negative solidarity

can also be seen in LGBTQ+ communities where whiteness ideology and patriarchy are present.

The Racial Bribe

The following section discusses an overview of race as a social construction, the racial bribe that whites took during colonization, and the workings of the race-gender bribe that I use to describe the transactional nature of the relationship of white patriarchy and white matriarchy.

Race as a Social Construction

James Baldwin wrote that as long as white people believe the lie that they are white, there is no hope for them (Roediger, 1998). He is speaking directly to the idea that race is a socially constructed lie. Whiteness itself is a lie that has been solidified through attitudes, laws, and behaviors (Roediger, 1998). As the dominant group, we have infinite opportunities to define others and ourselves and we have manipulated racial ideas and formed the social structure in ways that seem permanent (Bell, 1992). Whiteness has been defined by law and protected as property since the beginning of the United States (Harris, 1993). Many white Europeans and enslaved people of African descent worked side by side in the very beginning of colonization, but within a few decades, enslaved African people were permanently enslaved by law while white Europeans could own land, work on slave patrols, and become free people (Alexander, 2010).

Racial construction has worked in the opposite way most people think, believing that biological explanations were rooted in ignorance and that the more scientific knowledge that was gained, the less salience race had. Unfortunately, our history tells a different story, one where the thoughts, feelings, and musings of whites were considered

scientific (Kendi, 2019), solidifying a hierarchy and protecting race as a mechanism for

separation more concretely from the time the color line was drawn to the civil rights era

where we finally see anti-discrimination laws passed (Alexander 2010). Various

controlling images (Collins, 2000) have constructed "Others" throughout time, denying

them full citizenship, and access to equal protections. It is difficult sometimes to truly

digest the magnitude of the white imagination and how what was initially imaginary

became real. It became real through public policy, legislation, litigation, private

behaviors, and the daily maintenance of a system by ordinary white people.

The Racial Bribe

The concept of the racial bribe is understood in critical race studies as the point in

which poor whites came to value their whiteness and draw a line between themselves and

people of color (Alexander, 2010). Just as poor whites took a racial bribe to become

white in colonial America, thus beginning the path of defining whiteness and blackness, I

will argue that white women have taken a race-gender bribe in order to maintain position

as closest to white men and that bribe continues as white women work to maintain their

position. The racial bribe refers to the powers and privilege that poor whites were offered

in order to ensure poor whites would be loyal to the planter class in spite of their class

oppression at the beginning of European conquest in America (Alexander, 2010). After

Bacon's rebellion where white and black bondsman united to try to overthrow the planter

class, planters doled out privileges to lower class whites in an attempt to disrupt a unified

class front. Alexander explains:

> Fearful that such measures might not be sufficient to protect their interests, the
>
> planter class took an additional precautionary step, a step that would later come to

be known as a "racial bribe." Deliberately and strategically, the planter class

extended special privileges to poor whites in an effort to drive a wedge between

them and black slaves. White settlers were allowed greater access to Native

American lands, white servants were allowed to police slaves through slave

patrols and militias, and barriers were created so that free labor would not be

placed in competition with slave labor. These measures effectively eliminated the

risk of future alliances between black slaves and poor whites. Poor whites

suddenly had a direct, personal stake in the existence of a race-based system of

slavery. Their own plight had not improved by much, but at least they were not

slaves. Once the planter elite split the labor force, poor whites responded to the

logic of their situation and sought new ways to expand their racially privileged

position. (p. 25)

The racial bribe whites took continues to play out in the form of white privilege,

including for poor whites, even though class unification and solidarity could have

benefitted them much more. Poor whites never fully reap the benefits of the white race,

but what they do get seems to make it worth it (Allen, 2008).

White Women's Race-Gender Bribe

White women took a particular form of the racial bribe that I will call the race-

gender bribe, resulting in the negative solidarity that built the white matriarchy. The term

race-gender bribe names the implicit and explicit agreements that white women have

made with white men under patriarchy as they gained political power resulting in the

construction of the white matriarchy. In the early suffrage movement, there was a

coalition between women's rights and abolition; white leaders, such as Elizabeth Cady

Stanton, made a move toward negative solidarity when they split with abolitionist and sought out the right to vote as part of the superior race (Davis, 1981). As with many forms of oppression, and coming from commonly subjugated social positioning, oppressed people sometimes have to participate in their own oppression in order to survive (Freire, 1970); however, in this case, we see an investment in racism, not for survival, but for personal gain and societal advancement through white patriarchy and white supremacist ideals of white womanhood.

In order to understand the bribe, it is vital to understand what white men specifically want from white women in the first place and how this very specific desire manifests in the racialized-gendered bribe. Hurtado (1996) makes this very clear: White men need white women in order to give birth to whiteness. We have the only bodies that can carry and birth what can become white racialized babies. She writes:

> White men need white women in a way that they do not need women of Color because women of Color cannot fulfill white men's need for racially pure offspring. This fact creates differences in the relational position of the groups – distance from and access to the source of privilege, white men. Thus, white women, as a group, are subordinated through seduction, women of Color, as a group, are subordinated through rejection (p.12).

Hurtado's supposition about white women's unique usefulness to white men offers a lens to understand what kinds of benefits we've been given and possibilities for resistance. Collins' (2000) expansion of analysis to the relationship to white men formed the matrix of domination and enabled our understanding of intersectional oppression and privilege. Naming white men as the main organizers of oppression is essential because it centralizes

power in the hands of white patriarchy and helps us understand that white women have a different relationship with white men, and that's where the women's oppression and privilege lie. No other group is as intimately connected to white men and so white women's dealings with white men, whether in compliance or resistance, play our very differently.

White women have found the tokens, as Hurtado (1996) refers to benefits that white women receive, have been laced with particular deceptions about whom white men want white women to be. Lorde (1984) as quoted in Hurtado (1996) says, "White women face the pitfall of being seduced into joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power…For white women there is a wider range of *pretended choices* (italics mine) and rewards for identifying with patriarchal power and its tools" (p.14). 'Pretended choices' perfectly names the way that white women have deceived themselves and others in order to construct matriarchal power while protecting white patriarchy.

White men's fear and suspicion about white women's ability to give birth to more whiteness or blackness was codified through a series of anti-miscegenation laws that were not deemed unconstitutional until 1967 with the *Loving* case (Cashin, 2017). Many images and much violence toward men of color are about this anxiety (Cashin, 2017; Daniels, 1997; Feimster, 2009). The changing images of Black men throughout time demonstrates white patriarchy's fear that Black men will become competition for white women in consensual and marital relationships (McRae, 2018; Riggs, 1987). Black men were constructed as dangerous rapists in order to control white women who may prefer their company (Riggs, 1987). White women who transgressed this boundary usually did not pay the same price for doing so. It was Black men who were lynched and murdered

for accusations of rape (Collins, 2019; Feimster, 2009). Currently, we see this racial anxiety play out through dog whistling and campaign speeches, such as Trump calling Mexicans rapists, and the idea of the Black "super-predator" that was created by the Clintons in the 1990s (Cashin, 2017).

Analyzing violence can serve as a site of saturation of intersecting oppression that offers insight into more prevalent ideology (Collins, 2019). Daniels (1997) analyzes extremist white supremacist literature and draws connections to how similar discourse shows up in the mainstream. According to Daniels:

> The penultimate affront to white men's control over white women's sexuality and reproductive lives is a white woman who chooses to have sex with, but also bear children with, a Black man. For instance, a controversial child custody case in which a white woman was initially denied custody of her white son from her first marriage because her second husband was a Black man made headlines in Louisiana. (p. 68)

While the article in a white supremacist newspaper focused some on their perceived injustices to the white child by his mother regaining custody, much of the article was about her being an abominable race mixer.

Another issue that white supremacists focus on that we definitely see in the conservative mainstream is the attack on abortion rights. White women who have abortions are seen as noncompliant to the white race. Daniels (1997) writes:

> Abortion, according to white supremacists, is a form of racial treason when practiced by white women. Given the earlier description of the hallowed station of white motherhood as the highest calling and greatest contribution of white women

within the movement, it is not surprising that abortion would be considered

treason. The decline in white births, which is seen as directly tied to the decline of

white hegemony, is attributed to the fact that fewer white women are willing to

become pregnant. (p. 67)

She goes to say that white women's willingness to use abortion is juxtaposed with

women of colors' supposed willingness to have too many babies in much of the white

supremacist propaganda. The recent *revanchism* of reproductive rights is also led

primarily by conservative white men who do not use the discourse of race treason but do

exalt white motherhood.

Daniels (1997) also demonstrates how in extremist white supremacist literature

there is an obsession with white men's perceived penetration rights to white women even

when it is not tied to reproduction. Not only are white women portrayed as the most

attractive according to this literature, but they are supposed to be heterosexual and

available only to white men, making sexual relations with men of color a form of race

treason (Daniels, 1997). As Lorde (1984) pointed out, white women have been led to

believe they were acting in partnership with white men as part of a greater white family,

where white women would mother the world, but the truth is they are still subjugated and

marginalized by the suspicion they are under (Daniels, 1997). I would argue that white

women may resent their subjugation but the threat of losing the privileges that come from

being the partners of white men means being treated like women of color who are

sexually and economically exploited and left out of political power. To align with men of

color sexually would also mean trading in some of the benefits of whiteness and could

result in violence (Feimster, 2009). White women can occupy spaces as mothers and

martyrs but are marginalized because of their capacity to undermine white supremacy

through sexuality and reproduction (Daniels, 1997).

So, what are the terms of white women's gendered bribe? Sexuality and

reproduction are certainly traded, but it is also secrecy and deception that operate

insidiously through emotional domination. White men receive white women's sexuality,

reproduction, and secrecy in exchange for trusted matriarchal control over many state

institutions, such as schooling. Hurtado's (1996) framework for understanding seduction

versus rejection offers many possibilities for resistance, including a white women's

ability to reject white men as a form of resistance. More will be discussed about that in

Chapter Five.

As I mentioned before, there are other groups who also only experience one

category of intersectional oppression such as gay men and men of color. It could be

argued that they also benefit in certain ways from negative solidarity with white men,

either using race or gender alliances, but I would argue that the unique situation of white

women and our bribe has set up another system of domination, that has become another

way to systematically oppress. This is not the case of the other groups on the boundary.

Men of color may rise to prominence in certain fields but they have not set up a

subsystem that solely benefits them. They may reap the rewards of patriarchy, but they

have not set up a system of control.

Building White Matriarchal Power

The following section examines that ways that white women constructed and use

white matriarchal power. The use of social theory is to provide a framework for analysis

that others will be able to use. I am not attempting to be exhaustive in my research, but

rather to bring up particular phenomena regarding the history of white women. My hope

is always that this framework can be useful in looking at the positionality, political

power, and modes of resistance as applied to geographical location, class, and sexuality. I

examine epistemological issues with white feminism as it built the matriarchy, but this

certainly is not a walk through white feminism of the latter half of the twentieth century. I

address the epistemology of white feminism because I believe it is misunderstood and

offers clues to why the white feminisms of today are so heavily critiqued by women of

color and critical white women. This theory is only as useful as it can be applied

generally. There are vast limitations to this work, and my hope is that there will be a

collective effort to keep building upon it. As an intersectional piece, it is not necessary

for me to analyze all categories and all places in order to offer a contribution to

intersectional thought (Collins, 2019; McCall, 2005). Attempting to account for race and

gender can suffieciently expose some of the dynamics of the social structure that need

further examination.

White Women's Social Construction as Benevolent

White women are active in the recreation of their place in white supremacy

(Collins, 2000; Daniels, 1997; Leonardo, 2005). They are not just a receptacle for identity

or defined by what they are not. White femininity, and so white women, are formed by

white patriarchy and form themselves in opposition to controlling images of women of

color (Collins, 2000). Whites construct white women as the ideal feminine, ideal standard

of beauty (Collins, 2000) and emotional appropriateness (Boler, 1999). White

womanhood is identified as heterosexual, hopefully married, and the ideal mother

(Collins, 2000). White women share experiences of sexual violence, abuse, and

subjugation, but they have been able to broker identities and power in a way that excludes women from other groups (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 2003). For example, women of color are more likely to be the victims of sexual and domestic violence and the least likely to receive the services that help them survive and heal as they go through their lives (Crenshaw, 2003).

What is most significant as a method of domination and dangerous about the social construction of white women is the construction of moral superiority because it is the bridge that was built to solidify white women as mothers inside and outside the home (Applebaum, 2015; Collins, 2000; McRae, 2018). White women have been seen as the ideal teachers since around the time of the Civil War where they were viewed as having the right moral disposition and were less likely to move to other employment (Spring, 2008), and both conservative and liberal white women use that to gain power for different purposes. Applebaum (2015) writes about this obsession with white benevolence in relation to teaching her students about whiteness:

In what might seem a paradox, white benevolence is an important site to interrogate the type of problem that white complicity is. White benevolence not only comes with implicit requisite demands but might also function to silence those upon whom benevolence is bestowed. Because benevolence is considered "good," the one who bestows benevolence has in effect secured his/her innocence and does not have to question his/her implication in injustice (p.3)

The notion of white benevolence helps to form the white matriarchy because white women gain power, and their actions are trusted morally even if they are immoral. White women's role in upholding white supremacy was far more active than white women are

taught, and as Leonardo (2009) argues, we think no one can see how we are operating, when people of color must in order to survive. Understanding the history of who we are should help us come to grips with how to change and disrupt the system

The ways in which some white women used discourse about their goodness takes on a delusional quality when we examine some of their racist arguments. For example, McRae (2018) tells the story of Nell Battle Lewis, an influential white columnist, who argued that the only problem with "Separate but equal" was that the South did not uphold the equal part and during the murder of Emmitt Till, where his murderers were tried and set free, she argues that the murder could not have been that bad, because if it had been, white women would have protested it. She actually believed pictures of his body were a hoax (McRae, 2018). White women were also against the United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights because and their stance against genocide because they saw it as leading to globalism and it was a slippery slope before the United Nations might have something to say about the Jim Crow South (McRae, 2018).

Women's Suffrage

The history of women's right to vote in the United States is another example of negative solidarity in an attempt to gain white women's rights. Some of the reasons white women wanted political power give insight into why white feminism developed the way it did. White women wanted political power for different reasons. Some, like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, wanted political power because they wanted equality with white men (Davis, 1981). Others, like the Grimke sisters, wanted more political power so they could end the institution of slavery (Davis, 1981; Segrest, 1994). Since the inception of feminist thought, we see a different epistemology, and I believe

this still occurs where some of us enter feminism by understanding racism, and others entered feminism and see antiracism as additive. Additive approaches to intersectionality, where we add another lens, can sometimes disrupt current understandings of oppression, but in this case, I don't believe that white women can simply add antiracism when racism, its opposite, was one of the arguments for white women wanting and attaining power. Most white women understand early feminism to not include women of color as an oversight, ignoring the intentional silencing and lack of coordination with women of color who brought up concerns about race. The omission of concerns of women of color in early feminism was not just a lack of consideration, it was part of the discourse of white supremacist beliefs and negative solidarity.

The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 was the first official meeting of where white women discussed the move forward for suffrage. There was not one woman of color in attendance, but there were some men who supported antislavery efforts at a time when there was still a coalition about this issue (Davis, 1981). The focus of the convention was upon the values and struggles of middle- and upper-class white women, but Davis (1981) writes that it is still significant because of the articulation of issues that were discussed. Davis (1981) writes:

> The inestimable importance of the Seneca Falls Declaration was its role in
> *articulated consciousness* (italics original) of women's rights at midcentury. It
> was the theoretical culmination of years of unsure, often silent, challenges aimed
> at political, social, domestic, and religious condition, which was contradictory,
> frustrating, and downright oppressive for women of the bourgeoisie and the rising
> middle classes. (p. 53)

White women were indeed oppressed, even upper- and middle-class white women at this time (Davis, 1981). They had no political power, economic stability without marriage, and were bound by couverture. However, in the South, white women were the sole owners of enslaved people and so provisions were made where white women were able to secure their futures in spite of husbands who abandoned them, died, or had debts (Jones-Rogers, 2019). In this instance, white women's power was secured by their ability to control Black people.

White women did not work closely with women of color in order to get the vote. Figures like Stanton, who started out working closely with abolitionist men, did not build alliances and eventually her anxiety over who would get to vote first, Black men or white women, became a driving and divisive force (Davis, 1981). She continues her analysis, writing:

> However, as a rigorous consummation of the consciousness of white middle-class women's dilemma, the Declaration all but ignored the predicament of white working-class women, as it ignored the condition of Black women in the South and North alike. In other words, the Seneca Falls Declaration proposed an analysis of the female condition which disregarded the circumstances of women outside the social class of the document's framers. (pp. 53-54)

One of the myths that white women buy into is the idea that this was somehow natural. That somehow, white women just did not know about the circumstances of women of color even working-class white women. This is not the case, there were voices that were countering early white feminist, middle and upper class white women, at first ignored

them, and then went on to argue in later years that they were the part of the superior race, and so deserved the vote before men of color (Davis, 1981).

Reproductive Rights

As an extension of slavery, white women continued to wrest control over Black women's reproductive rights (Roberts, 1997). Black women were systematically raped by white slave owners (Roberts, 1997), to the benefit of white men and white women whose ownership of enslaved people was the only form of property that was protected from coverture laws (Jones-Rogers, 2019). The control over reproduction, who had access to birth control and abortion, usually ignores the history of how this movement collided with Eugenics and forced sterilization. Birth control was usually seen as liberating for white women who began to desire control over how many children they had as they gained political power and more presence in public life (Roberts, 1997). As I mention in Chapter one, Margaret Sanger was willing to collaborate with eugenicists of the time to make the argument for what was called positive eugenics, promoting that the "best" people would reproduce, versus negative eugenics, attempting to prevent so-called "lesser peoples" from reproducing (Roberts, 1997).

The politics of birth control continued to be framed in terms of white women's progress, for them to have political rights, and power over their bodies. This eventually led to upper- and middle-class white women entering the workforce where they continue their exploitation of women of color by using them as domestic workers (Collins, 2000). The framing of this struggle, where white women see freedom through controlling reproduction, also ignores the phenomena that Black women had to struggle to have and support their families in the first place (Roberts, 1997). Because of the horrendous

conditions under which Black women mothered under slavery, Black women do not view keeping their households as imprisoning the way that white women have, rather they see it as part of their struggle to be able to have a household and their children (Davis, 1981; Roberts, 1997).

When we centralize the struggle for reproductive rights as part of feminist struggle, we ignore this history. Many white women still do not believe that it should matter that Sanger was racist, ableist, and elitist, adding to the epistemic injustice (Collins, 2019) of white feminism. Minimizing the impact of abortion or only using the discourse of choice has also led poorer women to have to argue for their right to have children in ways that are still problematic and leaves that door open to the white matriarchy. Controlling images (Collins, 2000), images that whites have created to control people of color, of Black women as welfare queens have degraded Black women's rights to motherhood and white women have participated in it by exhaulting the nuclear family and pathologizing motherhood in any other form (Collins, 2000). I know women of color who have been asked at doctor's appointments if they had considered abortion, while no doctor has ever asked me that. White women who diminish the significance of how the struggle to protect reproductive rights developed do so at the expense of progress against white supremacy. I have also met white feminists who simply refuse to learn this history and continue to do this work in spite of the feedback they get, seeing women of color as overly sensitive. I discuss challenges to white women's consciousness that come from ignoring our history in Chapter 5.

White Women and the Discourse of Protection: Criminalizing Black Men, Ignoring

Women of Color

White women have gained power under what Newman (1999) describes as

notions of protection where white women were granted political privilege in exchange for

compliance with white patriarchy. She writes:

> Yet protection— which encompassed white men offering white women financial
>
> support, supervision, polite courtesies, and a general solicitousness that was not
>
> extended to other groups of women— was conceived as a "privilege" to be
>
> granted only so far as (white) women lived in conformity with patriarchal norms
>
> of middle-class domesticity. (p. 86)

This discourse of protection helps to explain how white women leverage victimization

politically, sometimes having a profound impact on people of color. Over time white

women have developed discursive strategies that make their perceived weaknesses

powerful and violent, especially in the case of Black men.

Not only have white women constructed themselves against images of Black

women in order to obtain and maintain power, they have actively participated in the

criminalization of Black men, specifically, the idea of Black men as rapists. White

women actively participated in the construction of what Alexander (2010) names the

"criminalblackman" by playing an active role in the lynching ritual of the south,

(Feimster, 2009), silencing Black women who wanted to fight for their protection

(McRae, 2018), and painting themselves as the victims in the rape of Black women by

their white husbands (Feimster, 2009; Painter, 2002). Many white women were horrified

by their husbands' rape of enslaved women, but not because they felt that it was wrong

and damaged enslaved women, but that it damaged their reputations and marriages. It was seen as an embarrassment (Feimster, 2009). In chapter 3 I discuss this reverse victimization more fully.

White women's portrayal of victimhood has much more to do with their relationship to white men as part of the race-gendered bribe. White women could assure white men that they would instigate and participate in violence against Black men, thus ensuring their inequality. Meanwhile they are also constructing Black women as inferior so they can be seen as ideal women, ensuring that freed Black women would not be a real threat to their sexual privilege.

Images of the Black rapist not only vilified Black men, according to Feimster (2009) Black women were to blame. Feimster (2009) uses the example of Rebecca Latimer Felton, a white social reformer. She writes:

> In a speech titled 'The Rights of Children,' Felton linked the 'black rapist' with the 'black whore': 'The great mass of these indifferent women are shameless in their prostitution and brazen in defiance of moral laws. Their children are brought up in wanton disregard of decent living— and when the question is asked why so much violence and so much lynching, I can readily understand the miserable conditions under with these miserable violations of the law came into being,' Because the Victorian ideology of true womanhood held women as morally superior and responsible for the moral training of their men fold, southern white women blamed black women for the "black rapist". (p. 115).

The negative solidarity with white men that white women showed at this time secured many different facets of political power and control over defining what was good or bad,

fit or unfit. What is also, of course, truly shocking is that white women know that they themselves do not control "their" men whether they will admit it not. Part of what they give white men is their silence in exchange for some power as part of the race-gendered bribe. One of the things we see in antiracist movements is a call for white women to be more responsible for white men's behavior. It has been a source of frustration for me, as a white woman, to be considered capable of preventing white patriarchal violence toward anyone. Understanding that it was white women who started this, makes me understand more how it is a well-deserved turning of tables even if turning tables can be unproductive in social movements.

Troubling dynamics still occur when we examine the politics of rape. Crenshaw (2009) argues antiracism in rape discussions focuses on discrimination of Black men in the justice system while feminist antirape discussions focus on white women, so only Black men and white women benefit from progress in the realm of sexual violence. According to Crenshaw (2009) men who rape Black women serve two years, men who rape Latinas serve five years, and men who rape white women serve an average of ten years. Many of the rape laws that we look at as progress come from a notion that purity was lost. Because white people constructed Black women as impure, early rape laws do not, and were not meant to protect them from rape (Crenshaw, 2009). Strangely, the #metoo movement can be seen as a way of upholding white matriarchy because it can be seen as challenging white patriarchy through the accusations made by white women, but it can also be seen as still reifying white women as needing protection from victimization. The significance of Tarana Burkes' original movement was to give voice to often ignored Black women. White women's victimization has not been ignored in the same fashion

especially when we look at cases like the Central Park Five, where five young Black

men, were wrongfully convicted of raping a white jogger (Crenshaw, 2009), in spite of

there also being horrendously violent attacks on women of color that very same week that

went ignored. White matriarchal power concentrates the discussion of rape on white

women, not on all women, or we would see an intersectional victim centered response.

As it stands now, we see antirape dynamics still institute white feminine power.

Matriarchal Control over "Help" and Early Social Work

As white women gained more influence of the public sphere as helpers, social

work became a cite of white women's benevolence. McRae (2018) explains how social

work was developed by white women in Virginia who were tasked with racially

categorizing people for the census. Seen as having a special aptitude for assessing bodies,

they went throughout the state to do racial maintenance work for white patriarchy for

Virginia's Racial Integrity Act (McRae, 2018). In the 1920s, "These women recorded the

size and condition of home and the complexion of children as well as the family's

religious practices, literacy, cleanliness, sexual behaviors, income, and work ethic. As

aspiring social workers, they collected demographic data and counted categorized and

disciplined bodies for the state" (McRae, 2018, p. 32). They went into schools and

categorized intelligence, finding, non-white students to be a "defective lot" (McRae,

2018, p. 33). McRae challenges the notion that white supremacy has been maintained by

leaders and wishes to highlight that is was many white women who did the racial

maintenance work of white supremacy. She writes:

> This pseudo-scientific language joined older narratives of white supremacy that
>
> emphasized the sexual appetites of black mean and black women and that were

used to justify racial segregation and racist violence with new narratives that

merged science, citizenship, progress, and nation building… They marginalized

communities, making their residents objects of study and candidates for medical

treatment and institutionalization, not citizenship. The research also shaped the

lives of white female students whose observations were legitimized as social work

and made it into print. (McRae, 2018, p. 34)

The history of making racial categorizations and assessing people's fitness for citizenship

should make all of us wonder about how social workers learn about their practice. The

stakes are high for any families dealing with so-called experts. Because of the

experiences I have had through my divorce, I am very weary any time a friend or

colleague interacts with child counselors, early interventionists, occupational therapists,

or other "helpers." It is not that I do not think they have anything to offer, but more about

their lack of understanding of the ways in which their work is a site of possible

domination, a site where there is potential abuse of power, a site where official

knowledges have been constructed.

Domestic violence is another area where we see white women gaining power but

not being able to or having the political will to include women of color (Crenshaw,

2009). Intersectional subordination is not always intentionally reproduced, and can be a

byproduct of a lack of collaboration as Crenshaw (2009) argues, but that lack of

collaboration can be intentional once problems with services or laws regarding domestic

violence are voiced and disregarded. Part of the problem is that public concern about

domestic violence still values white women more than women of color and some

communities of color silence women of color's feminist concerns (Crenshaw, 2009).

White women's organization around domestic violence benefits from the sympathies of white men who will express that they can see their mothers and sisters, and because of white matriarchy, white women have more power to offer resistance and solution. Crenshaw (2009) documents instances where white women who control resources have denied women of color shelter from domestic violence. In one instance, a shelter refused to house a Latina woman and her son because of limited English even though her son could translate (Crenshaw, 2003). White women went on to say that she wouldn't be able to be part of group therapy that was required of all residents of the shelter. This is an example of white matriarchal paternalism, or *maternalism* in this instance, because white women decide what women of color need, in this case group therapy, in spite of the situation being one of survival.

This example makes me think as well about how much of white women's employment is dependent upon what they see as help. For example, there is certainly a need for domestic violence victims to get therapy, however, requiring it seems to be more about job security. It also brings to mind a white woman I know who was hired by a nonprofit to teach parenting classes to immigrant women in order for them to receive government food aid. She was in her twenties with no children, so would have little to offer any woman about motherhood, and there is simply no evidence of the need for parenting classes, but it aligns with the "civilization" work white women have done for centuries (Newman, 1999). Paying lactation consultants and other women to encourage and teach breastfeeding is another white matriarchal function. The problem with women's inability to breastfeed is really a problem with work inequities, but white women operate under the assumption that it is a lack of knowledge they must remedy.

White matriarchs deal with divorces, child custody, early childhood intervention, counseling, the medical field, and are not required to do enough critical self-reflection or even learn the history of their field. We cannot change what we will not acknowledge.

White Matriarchy in Education

The American education system is first and foremost a white patriarchal one. Spring (2008) documents the ways in which colonial America ensured that the Native American clan practices, where women had political power, would be replaced by strong white patriarchal control over schooling (Spring, 2008). Schools are sites of cultural genocide (Spring, 2008) and assimilationist practices (Kendi, 2019; Spring, 2008) and have over the centuries worked to control women and people of color through structural violence and inequality. White women have controlled curriculum, attempted to assimilate immigrants, and were active in so-called "civilization" efforts with Native Americans, cruelly carrying out cultural genocide at Native American Boarding schools (Newman, 1999; Spring, 2008).

I hope a white matriarchal framework will serve outside of my field to cause critical reflection and intervention in the institutional power of the white matriarchy. The following section focuses on the white matriarchal dimensions in schools. White women's power in school operates in and outside of the classroom, including in Colleges of Education, which produce white matriarchal teachers, administrators, and, yes, more professors in Colleges of Education consolidating white power at all levels. Colleges of Education need to examine whiteness in their operation and the way that they placate whites who will be teachers and administrators (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). As an educator, I believe that some of the reasons we see white supremacy reproduced through

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schooling at all levels is due to a lack of knowledge, but I have also experienced the

organized and intentional squashing of racial knowledge in higher education and it is

aligned with what many critical scholars of color and critical whites report about trying to

institute change. I dream of a day when those who refuse to challenge white supremacist

knowledge and norms are seen as obsolete, and I will address more about that in Chapter

5.

Securing Schools as White Spaces: The Impact of Black Teachers

There are patterns in the arguments that white women have used to uphold white

supremacy, and white patriarchy can rely on them carrying out their ideology in public

and private spaces (Daniels, 1997; Leonardo, 2013; McRae, 2018; Newman, 1999).

White women co-constructed colorblind conservativism with white men. During the first

part of the twentieth century, the primary arguments that white women used were

organized around the idea that an integrated society goes against state rights, that the

United States was falling to the influence of globalism, and that antiracism was

communist (McRae, 2018). They consistently argued the threat to states rights was a

threat to their role as ideal mothers and caretakers of society as a whole and addressed the

very specific threat of race-mixing that might possibly occur (McRae, 2018; Newman,

1999). This fear of race mixing reveals a deep seated fear that was present under slave

society— that white women and children might see the humanity of enslaved people and

align with them instead of white patriarchy (Painter, 1998). The framework of these

arguments lays down the map for colorblind conservatism, where conservatives can act

overtly racist through voter suppression laws and instituting mass incarceration (Tatum,

1997; 2019), without using racist language, again adding to colorblind ideology (Bonilla-

Silva, 2003). Once the link between anitracism and communisim was made, whites could feel free to criticize any civil rights movement without naming race. These discursive strategies were used to secure schools as white spaces. They run through public campaigns against bussing, integration, mulitcultural curriculum, and even having Black teachers.

Mothers of Massive Resistance

It is impossible to separate white womanhood from white motherhood and the role of white motherhood in maintaining power under white patriarchy and how it forms white matriarchal power. Massive resistance is what historians name the organized white response to school desegregation (McRae, 2018). White women in the South organized to ensure that curriculum, schools, and the teaching force would remain in the hands of whites regardless of what the federal government was saying. Women's organizations were against desegregation for a variety of reasons and used arguments that were consistent with "state's rights" and the fear of losing individual freedom. There were several underlying anxieties that had to do with curriculum and social distance, some even expressing the same anxiety of "race mixing" that we see today. Even Tatum (1997; 2019) found that there is still a fear of white and Black teenagers being together because of possible romantic relationships as evidenced by white parents' discomfort with multiracial friend groups for their white child as they grow older. As white women have been tasked with moral education (McRae, 2018; Newman, 1999; Spring, 2008), they saw it as their duty to enforce strict social norms about interracial friendships and dating. This is aligned with the white women's race-gender bribe because it continues to secure the discourse of danger and impropriety about interracial relationships, justifying white

violence against people of color. They did this through government outside of schools and through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) within schools. Although we tend to scapegoat the Jim Crow South and situate desegregation battles within the geographic and historical time periods, white women's pernicious involvement in upholding white power in schools goes far beyond that time and space. For example, Lewis (2011) found that parents in California protested the naming of a school after Martin Luther King Jr. in 1997. That's hardly the face of racist white women, and yet, it is.

Curriculum is also a site of white matriarchal surveillance. White women have battled over the telling of the Civil War for decades at this point, and I even find myself caught up in it as a history teacher in my own school. Conservative white women of the South feared that slavery and the Civil War might be taught accurately by teaching students the horrors of the United States slave system, and wanted to deflect the causes of the war as one of states' rights (McRae, 2018). White women continued to challenge any sort of curriculum that was multicultural or taught about the struggles and victories of people of color saying it was Anti-American. Spring (2008) examines Americanism where he points out the tenets of curriculum that were valued by whites that enforced schooling as a site to build patriotism. Any criticism of the government was anti-American and any teaching of the history of special interest groups was also considered un-American (McRae, 2018;Spring, 2008). We see similar discourse in the battle for ethnic studies in places like Arizona, where public officials claim teaching Mexican American students about their heritage and history is racist and separatist (Palos, McGinnis, Fifer, Bricca, & Amor, 2011). Whites continue to try to influence schools

through curriculum, in most cases, resulting in students having no understanding of race and racism in our society.

Anti-busing campaigns are another massive resistance site led by white mothers that occurred nationwide (McRae, 2018). Part of integrating schools was busing programs where white or Black students might be bussed into a different neighborhood to integrate a different neighborhood or part of town (McRae, 2018). Bussing drew the ire of white mothers across the nation about the unfairness of white students being bussed. Their discourse is similar to the Southern women's discourse about freedom and fairness, both refuges of upholding an unfair and racist system. In Chapter One, I outlined the idea of complicit matriarchy and defined it as white women who had no interest in challenging patriarchy or white supremacy through personal and political action. White feminists or white matriarchal maintenance, I characterized as being willing to challenge patriarchy without challenging race, hence seeing themselves as quite different than complicit white women. Bussing and challenges to school desegregation reveal shared interests and arguments. Charter schools, which white women suggested during desegregation to deny admittance of certain populations but still receive public funding, have been a site of celebration on the right and the left, but white women used this idea during desegregation for overtly racist purposes (McRae, 2018). It is no wonder that charter schools have becomes such common sites of unequal access to resources and quality education; they were designed to do so.

The Impact on Black Teachers

Whites were able to secure schools as white spaces, with white curriculum, and primarily white teachers even in the face of integration attempts. *Brown vs. the Board* of

Education is seen as the landmark case that would undo the notion of "separate but

equal" of *Plessey vs. Ferguson* (Ladson-Billings, 2009; McRae, 2018; Tillman, 2004).

White women were poised to make sure that it would not undo Jim Crow segregation,

some even arguing that the only problem with segregation was that whites were not

upholding the "equal" part of the system. Prior to *Brown vs. the Board*, white teachers

taught in white schools and Black teachers taught in Black schools (Spring, 2008; Tatum,

1997; 2019; Tillman, 2004). There was a long tradition of Black teachers and

administrators who were central to the Black community and demonstrated the same

principles of authentic care that Valenzuela found important into the Mexican American

community (Tillman, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999). While Brown is usually seen as a win in

the struggle for Black equality, it actually created problems for Black educators who were

dismissed after segregation ended (Tillman, 2004). White teachers were seen as suitable

for any student, but Black teachers were seen as unsuitable for white students (Tillman,

2004). Black teachers were forced out of the profession by closing Black schools,

revoking teacher licenses, closing education programs in higher education, and using

standardized testing to justify firing Black educators (Tillman, 2004). They were also let

go for involvement in voter registration drives, being members of NAACP, or other

political activities (Tillman, 2004).

　　　Another, more insidious phenomenon is something that I identify as part of

maintaining white matriarchy less formally but longer lasting is what Tillman (2004)

identifies as "cross over situations" where Black teachers were put in in white schools.

These crossover situations were so hostile to Black teachers that Wilson and Segall

(2001), as quoted in Tillman (2004), describe the "un-selfing" that was required for survival. She writes:

> One of the Black Teachers, Iola Taylor, describes the process of being reassigned to the White school and enduring the hostility of not only White teachers, but students as well. Taylor described this phenomenon as "un-selfing" and defined it in the following statement:
>
>> Un-selfing was the psychological kind of interaction that occurs between people that can breed mistrust in any kind of relationship. It means that you either overtly or covertly take a person's dignity. It can be done very, very subtly, but it can be done (p.41). (Tillman, 2004,p. 290)

The dehumanization of Black people in desegregated schools was the topic of Dubois's (1935) questions about whether Black people should have separate schools for their own ability to thrive. Siddle Walker (2001) also points out the risks to Black children should they have to be schooled by racist white teachers when Black education has always centered on community and instilling a strong sense of self and pride in Black students (Siddle Walker, 2001;Tillman, 2004). The psychological impact is also a concern under *Brown* itself, and one of the reasons it passed was understanding the negative impact it had on Black children (Dudziak, 2009). Chapter 3 goes into the known emotional impact of racism on people of color and the survival technique of unselfing surely goes with what Painter (1998) would name "soul murder", or the process of traumatizing someone so much that they begin to live almost outside of themselves. Teachaers of color still struggle in schools with their white counterparts because so many white teachers do not understand race (Lewis, 2011). Teachers of color are navigating institutions that are still

primarily white spaces, where their feelings and reactions can be monitored, and where racial dialogue is silenced even in the midst of talking about students of color (Delpit, 1995;2006; Lewis, 2011; Love, 2019). Teachers of color still have to listen to assumptions about the students' families and the blame placed on Students for their own lack of learning (Lewis, 2011).

Delpit (1995; 2006) documents not only how Black students are treated in predominantly white spaces, but also how Black graduate students and teachers have to survive the whiteness of schooling. She documents silencing and exhaustion by Black professionals who have to endure the dominance of white colleagues and names a culture of power (Delpit, 1995; 2006). According to Delpit (2006) the rules of the culture of power are as follows:

1. Issues of Power are enacted in classrooms.

2. There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a "culture of power."

3. The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.

4. If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.

5. Those with power are frequently least aware-or least willing to acknowledge its existence. Those with the least power are most aware of its existence. (p.24)

She goes on to explain that the first three tenets are commonly known in the field of sociology of education, but the last two are rarely discussed. These play into white

matriarchal power especially as it intersects with notions of white women's oppression

and mythology about their lack of power. Number 5, those with power are frequently

least aware or not willing to acknowledge the power, is how the white matriarchy has

managed to operate unnamed. It grows out of believing in white women's victimhood

instead of the examination of where we have secured institutional power.

White Teachers Relationships with Students

There are many different approaches to examining the ways in which white

teachers maintain white supremacy in schools through their use of power in relationships

with students and families. Teacher education programs do not always force white

teachers to critically reflect on their identity (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). This leads to

what Joyce King named "dysconscious racism" (Love, 2019). Dysconscious racism

"describes the habits, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs that *justify* (italics mine) racial

inequality, the societal and economic advantages of being White, and White privilege that

does not allow alternative vision of society" (Love, 2019, p. 143). Dysconscious racism

in the teaching profession is apparent because of the ways that teachers blame students

and families for failure (Lewis, 2011). The use of dysconscious racism works against

students of color, insidiously blocking antiracist progress and discourse (Love, 2019). We

even see educational research agendas that seek to continuously blame students of color

for their own failures by centering the student of color as a problem.

White teachers enforce whiteness by disciplining students of color more harshly

that white students (Delpit, 1995; 2006; Lewis, 2011; Ferguson, 2001) and also using a

deficit models when evaluating what they see as the students' potential in the first place

(Delpit, 1995; 2006). Lewis (2011) found that teachers grade more harshly based upon

the race of the student and that the curriculum and practices center whiteness even in a bilingual charter school. Ferguson (2001) found several patterns in discipline discrepancies where, not only were students pathologized, but so were their parents, which is part of white matriarchal power. The deficit model that white teachers apply to children is not always about the students' performance, but can be interpreted as a direct aim at parents of color meant to discipline, surveil, and force assimilation (Lewis, 2011). I have experienced this first hand as a teacher, and as a supervisor in a school where one white teacher told me most of the parents were on drugs, but when I asked her how many of her students' parents were on drugs, she could only name one. Most of the time white teachers' ideas about parents go uninterrogated and have become part of commonsense knowledge (Apple, 2009) about marginalized groups. The over-disciplining of boys of color is an extension of the same violence used during lynchings, with white women backing up their punishment for students of color by using the discourse of protection I described earlier. Much needs to be discussed about the specific race-gendered relationship between white women and the boys of color they discipline in the context of historical racial violence.

White matriarchal power in education seems to be made up of the notion of white innocence and feelings of disgust for students of color. These feelings explain some of the twisted emotionality of white women and the ways they maintain domination in schools. Matias and Zembylas (2014) discuss what they name "pedagogy of disgust" as the ways in which white teachers treat students of color and how teacher education contributes to the problem. They argue that one of the ways that whites transact race is through racialized emotions that can disguise feelings of disgust for students by using

diminutive language about sympathy, pity, and care (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). Aligned with what McIntyre called "white talk", where white women teachers engaged in coded, but discernably racist language, Matias and Zembylas (2014) analyze and add to existing notions of how white teachers believe in their benevolence but still interact with students in ways that uphold whiteness ideology, degrading the students they claim to care about. Language regarding care, love, and empathy are prevalent in teacher education programs, but these emotions are not without their own power dynamic (Matias & Zembylas, 2014). White matriarchy is formed and maintained by these very notions and taking care, or mothering the Other, and has been one of the ways that whiteness operates through institutions.

Morales, Abrica, and Herrera (2019) identify what they named the "mañana complex", capturing the degrading image that teachers held of Mexican American students at a middle school. The mañana complex was made up of stereotypical thinking of Mexican Americans being lazy, unmotivated, immoral, and unintelligent and was prevalent amongst the teachers that were part of their qualitative study (Moralas et al., 2019). They also found the very disgust that Matias and Zembylas found (2014) and the dysconsiouse racism as defined by King. The Mañana Complex is as follows:

> We define the mañana complex as a complex in which White teachers attribute Mexican–Americans with negative racial stereotypes, such as them being unmotivated, unintelligent, and immoral. This complex is a deeply and historically embedded narrative within the social fabric of the US. It is rooted in the colonization of the Mexican people, and more recently, in the "incorporation" of Mexicans into the United States in states annexed by the US government. The

mañana complex is thus a complex found among White teachers, in their discourse around Mexican–American children that is indicative of a dysconscious (King 1991) belief in White moral superiority and innocence, and of the moral inferiority and disdain for people of color (Matias and Zembylas 2014). Thus, the constituent parts herein identified as part of the mañana complex include teachers' perceptions of (1) the lazy Mexican, (2) the unintelligent Mexican, and (3) the immoral Mexican (need page).

Anyone who lives in the Southwest can recognize these racist tropes about Mexican Americans and how they likely participate in and reproduce them. These notions were prevalent in my upbringing and schooling in New Mexico. Deficit thinking was prevalent in the schools I grew up in, demonstrating that even when a space where the majority of the population is people color, it does not disrupt the white power within them. My schools were tracked like many by honors or remedial programs, so by high school, many of my classes were majority white, and I only came back into contact with students from my elementary and middle school in my math class.

In her study of Mexican American students, Valenzuela (1999) found that most teachers and students had different definitions of what education meant. Mexican American's concept of education included the notion of schooling and learning how navigate the world. However, schooling in the US is caught up in notions of aesthetic caring, focusing on tests and grades, versus authentic caring, focusing on connecting with and nurturing all aspects of students as individuals (Valenzuela, 1999). Boundary monitoring is a significant form of what Boler (1999) calls surveillance, where teachers are shown how to be emotionally appropriate. The problem is that students, particularly

students of color, rely on personal relationships with their teachers in order to succeed (Valenzuela, 1999). So, the very concept of authentic care, which, of course, is a form of love, is significant to student success and forming a community where all students feel valued. White teachers cannot show value authentic caring for students of color if they come from a deficit perspective, pathologize their families, or maintain ignorance about racial inequity.

Conclusion

Naming the white matriarchy and the negative solidarity that white women show in order to keep to the terms of the race-gendered bribe is a beginning step in being able to conceptualize resistance. Revealing the white matriarchy is significant because when we view white women's political and social action as only adherence to and survival under white patriarchy, we do not capture the power that white women have in our white supremacist society. The intersectional domination of people of color means that they are navigating white patriarchy and white matriarchy in their personal and public lives, and resistance to both is necessary. For white women, my hope is that we will be able to more accurately describe our historical and current positionality and the strategies of the past to navigate both subordination and domination. In Chapter five, I will discuss more thoroughly why the historical understanding is important to what is called transversal politics, a necessary component of building solidarity (Collins, 2017; Collins, 2019). In the next chapter I discuss white emotionality and I attempt to build theory about why white women may have trouble accepting responsibility and implicating themselves in the white matriarchy.

Chapter 3: Excavating White Emotionality

My Own Frozen Tundra

The most powerful lessons I have learned about myself in relation to people of color have been about white emotionality. According to Matias (2015), "The emotionality of whiteness encompasses all the emotions one feels to exert the hegemonic dominance of whiteness" (p. 92). The exploration and examination of how race is transacted through emotions made me question what it means to be human, what it means to dehumanize, and how important emotional knowledge is in transforming any educational space. I was a master's student when I learned that my emotional reactions in a racial context mattered. Before I entered graduate school, I understood race issues from a typical liberal view. My plan was to pick up a master's degree and go back to the classroom like many teachers do, but I was swept away by the power of these new understandings and have been contending with dynamics of our social structure ever since. My graduate schooling brought together personal and professional experiences and provided new language and perspectives that I had not considered before. Becoming critically conscious was empowering and liberating. All of the intellectual pieces of my previous schooling and reflections on my life converged into a deep desire to understand race. I experienced this new knowledge as liberating and empowering and, like most people who take up this work, I found this learning disruptive to previous notions of who I was and what it meant to be white.

I was taking a class called Whiteness, a foundation course in Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS). The class was composed primarily of people of color, specifically women of color. I found that in the course I was learning when to speak up and when to

listen. I was learning more about the ways in which whiteness itself was constructed, maintained, and most importantly, experienced by people of color. I did all the readings and beyond in spite of having an infant and a three-year- old at home. I was engaged intellectually in a way I had never been before. It was this course that really set me down the path I am on now. About halfway through the course we read a book called *Black on White* (Roediger, 1998). It is an edited volume of Black writers discussing how they experience whiteness. Reading the book itself was emotional, pummeling me with stories and images that were so disturbingly repetitive that I felt exposed and ashamed. I felt seen in the worst possible way and there was nowhere to run for cover.

The day that we met to discuss the first section I came to class ready to engage. When I say ready to engage, I meant that I was ready to intellectually engage but not necessarily emotionally engage. As class began, the conversation was immediately heated. As we were sharing reactions, I began by saying that the information was not really new to me, but that reading it all in one volume, was almost unbearable. After I finished, a Black woman named Sarah told me that she was disappointed because she had expected the white people in the course to come in on their knees, begging for forgiveness. I was taken aback because I did in fact want to come in on my knees begging for forgiveness and expressing sorrow, despair, remorse, and my desire to connect over this incredible divide, but I found that I couldn't say that. I couldn't say a thing about what I was feeling. Truth be told, I didn't think it mattered. I come from frozen white people who don't express emotions openly. I was taught only to value *knowing* and *doing*, but not *feeling*. I didn't have a response. I felt the strangulated affects of

whiteness: The horror that comes with knowing the depth of human violence and feeling only the need to repress my feelings about it (Thandeka, 1999).

The class discussion continued on. Tension around the pain of what we read and how we wanted to talk about it was building. A young brown-skinned Latina, who I will call Stella, sat next to me. We were friendly with each other and were slowly getting to know one another throughout the course. That day, as the discussion was wrapping up, she told us that her brown-skinned Latinx brother had called her from New York. He had been walking down the street when a white woman, through her body language, acted as though he was going to steal her purse. It had happened many times before and her brother felt especially lonely and upset about it so far from his sister and home. Stella started crying as she talked and eventually put her head down on her desk and sobbed about her exhaustion, hopelessness, and anger about how she and her family are treated. I froze and looked in my purse for Kleenex. We shared a table and I was sitting right next to her. The class was watching her and then they were watching my incredible discomfort and inability to reach out and touch her, a woman much younger than me, and something that women always do to comfort one another. It is our duty in some ways; to pat, embrace, and acknowledge each other when words cannot capture our feelings. I was failing at it. I was only giving her Kleenex, which she wouldn't take. Sarah, who wanted to know why I was not on my knees at the beginning of class, wheeled her chair over from down the row and gave Stella the warmth and affection that she deserved, holding her close and reassuring her that it was ok to cry, glaring at me for not doing so myself. I felt my own detachment so clearly in that moment. I felt the detachment from myself and

everyone in the room. I felt the distance our social system has created between us and my own maintenance of that distance in that moment in a way that changed me.

I share this story with students as a turning point in my own consciousness. It may seem like a minor incident, but it wasn't for me. It revealed the farce that taking up work about oppression can be without working on yourself and your relationships. I don't want anyone to mistake why I could not touch Stella. It was not because she was Latina and I am not comfortable touching someone of a different race. It was because I was being faced with the details of racism and the way that white people ruin the daily happiness and security of people of color through our seemingly minor social interactions. I don't think I would have reached out to anyone, but what it said to me was that I was operating too intellectually. It revealed that my head and my heart were refusing to take this journey together. Invulnerability is part of emotional domination. I had also internalized the belief that whites are supposed to be able to act in racist ways, and when we see the consequences of it, we can look away or even complain that sobbing with your head on a desk is unprofessional. I gave the *appropriate* response by handing her Kleenex, and it was not enough. It is not enough for whites to perfect antiracist discourse without working on the matters of humanity itself, and so I strive to do so now.

Matias (2015) described white emotionality as *frozen tundra*. After illustrating some of the more visible reactions, such as anger, she describes what she experiences as white tundra. Drawing on the work of Tatum (2008), she wrote:

> There are the naysayers who, when confronted with issues of race dialogue or racial experiences, stay emotionally frozen "like a deer on a highway, frozen in the panic induced by the lights of an oncoming car" (Tatum, 2008, p147-148). No

words are uttered. No behaviors suggest any penetration of the on-goings around them. Rather, they remain emotionally frozen in the face of race. This piece is dedicated to them because as they blindly stare into the abyss of society with a seemingly apathetic look, lacking breath, conviction, and/or soul, they nonetheless participate in operations of whiteness that ultimately uphold white supremacy. Plainly, the emotional frozenness of whiteness is one factor that supports white supremacy, a process that then turns around and substantiates enactments of racism. And in this frozen white tundra, the hellish heat of race still burns. (pp. 91-92)

New understandings of myself and insight into how my behaviors impacted others emerged with this concept of being frozen. For me, it serves not only as an accurate description of numbing and inactive behaviors, but it also captures how I appeared apathetic in exchanges like the one I described above. My silence or inability to speak came from several places as a part of a particular culture of whiteness and patriarchal domination. Examining the underlying reasons for white emotionality is important for understanding how to transform it. Following my inquiry into white emotionality has led me into many transformative spaces in my life because it has allowed vulnerability and true connection with my children, community, friends, and students.

Suppressing emotional expression and failing to legitimize emotions as part of knowledge is a common part of patriarchal control (Boler, 1999); however, work on white emotionality critiques how emotional suppression and dismissal also play out in racial systems and maintain white domination. Constructing theory about white emotionality requires that we center whiteness in order to undo it. Centering whiteness

can be quite problematic and reinscribes current power dynamics when it is not thoughtful and focused on the impact on people of color (Leonardo, 2013). Theorizing about white emotionality also requires insight into white behaviors and emotions that I do not think are fully understood or articulated by work currently being done in my field. As I say above, understanding the impact of white emotionality has been a crucial part of understanding race on a personal level. Scholars of color have held up a mirror about how they experience my whiteness and being able to reflect and take responsibility for it has been difficult and transformative. The project of theorizing about white emotionality must be more collaborative. We need white voices who discuss how white emotionality was formed in us and how we are also impacted by it.

Understanding emotions requires investigation and inquiry to avoid mislabeling or misinterpreting emotions (Brackett, 2019). According to psychologist Marc Brackett (2019), we may be skilled at identifying other people's emotional states, but we many not understand the underlying feelings if we do not investigate. I would describe the primary function of the tundra as invulnerability that functions to silence people of color and suppress the ability to feel in whites. The use of icebergs as a metaphor for what we see above the surface and what lies beneath are becoming popular in educational settings. I think the iceberg not only captures what we see from frozen white emotionality, but understanding what is going on beneath it is key to gaining insight into white women. The specific contribution this chapter hopes to make is to build theory about the roots of white emotionality, contextualize white women in that discussion, and examine some ways we can resist it.

Overview of White Emotionality

One of the many questions that studies of white emotionality attempt to answer is how race is *felt.* Bonilla-Silva (2019), drawing on the work of previous scholars, calls these "racialized emotions" and argues that whites cannot transact race and racism without them. It may seem that emotions are the product of racism, but they play an active role in how whites dominate and people of color resist (Bonilla-Silva, 2019). How race is felt as the object of racism and how people feel as they act upon racist feelings is relevant in transforming social relations (Bonilla-Silva, 2019; Matias, 2015). Ahmed (2015) discussed collective emotions, writing, "It is not difficult to see how emotions are caught up with the securing of social hierarchy: emotions become attributes of bodies as a way of transforming what is 'lower' or 'higher' into bodily traits" (p.4). White emotionality is one of the mechanisms of surveilling people of color and constructs race itself. Boler (1999) contends that people use emotional domination in order to maintain power in the public sphere through internal and external surveillance. She argues that emotions are also part of a system of oppression, as opposed to the common assumption that they are individually, privately experienced (Boler, 1999). White women are socialized to have manipulative power instead of direct power under patriarchal whiteness (hooks, 1995), which leads to a confusing and threatening situation for many people who deal with white women (Calafell, 2012; Matias, 2015).

White Emotional Domination in Academia

Academia serves as an important site to examine intersecting power relations because of the presence of people of color who still face marginalization (Calafell, 2012; Matias, 2015; Pyke, 2018) in spite of being at the top of their fields. As women of color

rise in power, they still face emotional domination and silencing by their institutions

(Calafell, 2012; Matias, 2015; Pyke, 2018). Pyke (2018) explains:

> One only has to visit one of academia's many "hush harbors" (Nunley 2011) to
>
> hear similar accounts of marginalization, micro-aggression, bullying, and the like.
>
> What I mean by hush harbors are those academic sanctuaries that minority
>
> members of the academy create where they can feel safe and supported, and can
>
> openly share their experiences working and studying in academic settings that
>
> may be diverse but are not inclusive, and often are downright hostile to their
>
> presence, their perspectives, and their research. In hush harbors, one can hear
>
> faculty and graduate students describe the negative effects of working in
>
> unfriendly or openly hostile environments, such as sweaty palms, heart
>
> palpitations, high blood pressure, insomnia, depression, anxiety, anger, guilt, and
>
> low self-confidence (Davis, Ofahengaue, & Scales 2015; DeWelde 2017). (p.7)

Matias (2015) and Calafell (2012) describe ways in which white women use race against

them in academic settings when they challenge colleagues on race. According to Matias

(2015), if she discusses race as a professor of teacher education, white women will

become silent or use semantic moves that make Matias, a woman of color, look as though

she is victimizing them in some way. Calafell (2012) also describes the construction of

"monstrous femininity" and how white women successfully position women of color as

bullies and white women as victims in academia. She defines the notion of *hegemonic*

civility as a system of emotional domination by white women who require they be spoken

to in particular ways that silence conflict (Calafell, 2012). Even bodies can be seen as

aggressive if they do not conform to white women's ideas of appropriate behavior (Calafell, 2012).

White Fragility

The phrase becoming more common in attempts to name white emotional domination is white fragility. DiAngelo (2011) describes the phenomenon this way: "White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation" (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54). The naming of these systems of denial and defensiveness is important because many white people believe that whites play a more passive role than they actually do (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; DiAngelo, 2011). As outlined in Chapter 2, white women have actively invested in violence toward people of color, categorized people of color for the state, and built a matriarchal professional network where they could be viewed as morally good. White fragility becomes a useful tool for examining how whites react to racial knowledge because it gives us language to help whites understand that their actions and reactions are very similar and show a collective emotional reaction in spite of whites believing they are individuals who have unique, independent thoughts (DiAngelo, 2018). White racial arrogance, as DiAngelo describes, is the common behavior of whites to believe they know things about race and racism when they have not studied, or even thought, very deeply about it at all.

Colorblind Ideology and Aversive Racism

Another example of emotions operating through groups is colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Colorblind ideology is a name for how talking about race and racism is no longer allowed or is taboo (Tatum, 1997; 2019) in spite of a reality where race and racism exist in measurable and material ways (Alexander, 2010; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Solózano & Yosso, 2001). The irrationality of whites' persistent denial of racism can only be explained by whites' having emotional issues of a systematic nature (Bonilla-Silva, 2019). While the nation contends with rising white supremacy and white nationalism, it is harder to deny whites possessive investment in whiteness (Lipsitz, 2006) through emotionality. Even though explicit racism of whites is less prevalent than it used to be (Alexander, 2010), we still see the majority of whites covering for whites who do express overt racism as part of a white hegemonic alliance (Allen, 2010). Since civil rights legislation intended to protect people of color was passed, whites have attempted to turn the tables. In a series of revanchist law suites, whites have used the very language meant to protect people of color to portray themselves as victims (Tatum, 1997; 2019). Even though this tactic would seem distasteful to mainstream whites, so many white people are ignorant about race that they actually believe it is possible for them to be victims or racism. In fact, new data suggests that 50% of whites believe they are subjected to racial discrimination (Tatum,1997; 2019). Recently, 91% of Republicans said our 45th president is not racist (Stevens, 2019), revealing not just the operation of racism, but that whites believe they decide what counts as racism and create debates about who is racist when one should not exist (Tatum, 1997; 2019). Trump's rampant racism is in line with the conservative agenda that currently operates in explicit, overtly

racist ways. We only need to look at the conservative agenda that makes voter

suppression laws, "stand your ground laws", funds mass incarceration of people of color,

and the family separations of asylum seeker to see proof of overt racism (Tatum, 1997;

2019).

Progressive white racism is a little more insidious. While progressive whites are

able to point to systematic injustices, they usually do not see how their choices and

discourse may be more aligned with whiteness than they would like. For example, in the

same poll asking whether Trump was racist, 86% of Democrats said that Trump was

indeed racist (Stevens, 2019), but understanding Trump as racist does not mean they

understand racism even though they think they do (DiAngelo, 2018). Progressive whites

are usually outraged by overt acts of racism, but are rarely able to see their own

participation, making it difficult to have honest dialogue. Hughey (2008) examined

groups of overtly racist and antiracist whites, and found that both groups of white people

shared similar racist ideas and used similar discourse even though one of the groups was

organized to combat racism. In conferences or schools where I present, some of the most

difficult conversations are with progressive whites who believe they already understand

these problems, do and say the right things, and are not part of the problem. Tatum (1997;

2019) and DiAngelo (2018) discuss white progressive use of aversive racism. DiAngelo

(2018) writes:

> Aversive racism is the manifestation of racism that well-intentioned people who
>
> see themselves as educated and progressive are more likely to exhibit. It exists
>
> under the surface of consciousness because it conflicts with held beliefs of racial
>
> equality and justice. Aversive racism is a subtle but insidious form, as aversive

racists enact racism in ways that allow them to maintain a positive self-image

(e.g., "I have lots of friends of color"; "I judge people by the by the content of

their character, not the color of their skin."). (p.43)

Taken together, aversive racism and colorblind ideology create major barriers to naming

and undoing racism. Kendi (2019) laments about the many ways that people avoid

naming racism and calls for us to stop using any softening language that obscures it. He

contends that antiracist people must name racism accurately and consistently across all

settings in order to truly disrupt racist ideology (Kendi, 2019). I agree that it becomes

very difficult for whites who intentionally learn about racial justice to understand it when

softening language is so prevalent. I also participate in softening language when I am

attempting to challenge white people who I do not trust or have power over me. To

protect myself in professional setting, I hear myself say things like "racial animosity"

because when I name racist behaviors as racist it causes problems for me and the actual

victim of racism I may be advocating for.

I believe this problem of softening language about racism comes from what Robin

DiAngelo names the good/bad binary (DiAngelo, 2018). According to DiAngelo, whites

have created a binary as a way of examining their personal racism. Any perception that

we are racist flips us over to "bad", and so we must deny any participation in racism in

order to be "good" (DiAngelo, 2018). Whites are socialized into a racist system that

privileges them over people of color regardless of their personal participation (Bonilla-

Silva, 2003; DiAngelo, 2018; Kendi, 2019; Leonardo, 2013; Sleeter, 1996; Tatum,1997;

2019), but many whites are more obsessed with the perception of not being racist instead

of learning about the systematic components of it (DiAngelo, 2018). This particular belief

system creates so much defensiveness that it becomes hard for whites to take personal responsibility and move toward antiracism. The good/bad binary also plays into the construction of white women as only morally good. Although the perception of moral superiority of white women has privileged and empowered white women, it has also created its own straight jacket. White women surveil their emotions under white patriarchal domination, ensuring they are appropriate and they suppress all negative emotions to preserve the social order (Boler, 1999). We are expected to be perfect and that expectation makes it hard for us to take responsibility for wrongdoing. All of our crimes have to be victimless or we are "bad" people, and badness is reserved for white men whom white women "help" with their moral inferiority (Feimster , 2009). We, ourselves, are not allowed to struggle. Struggling or breaking rules creates a deep sense of shame and self-hatred and is one of the many mechanisms that leads to "white tears" (DiAngelo, 2018).

White Tears

White men's emotionality operates differently than white women's and white men's resistance to learning about race tends to be louder and more threatening than white women's because they tend to have more institutional power. However, even if white women do not have equal instiutional power with white men, we have learned how to manipulate white men's power when we show negative solidarity. Negative solidarity, as outlined in chapter 2, is when white women show solidarity with white men to maintain shared racial interests. Even though that dynamic is frequently present, the discussion on white tears should never detract from the reality of white men's race-gendered dominance and violence. Discussions on white women's tears are becoming

more common, sometimes reinstituting sexist interpretations of women's behaviors as worse or more destructive than those who have more power.

White women's tears are discussed with some frequency because of the way they operate during race dialogue. DiAngelo (2018), Cooper (2018), and Matias (2015) discuss white women's frequent crying as a site of racialized emotions. Tears are complex. We do not and should not presume where tears come from without investigating why the person crying is so upset, but examining the patterns of how and when white tears emerge can give us some insight into white women's emotionality. First, white women's tears can become a distraction during racial dialogue because people feel a need to comfort the crier so they can derail significant conversations and take valuable time away from learning (DiAngelo, 2018). Second, they can also be a way that white women deny their complicity in racism because they may see only their gender and oppresssion that goes with it as significant (DiAngelo, 2018; McIntosh, 1989). For example, I have witnessed white women discuss the ways they have been victimized in their lives, not in a way that builds empathy, but in ways that dismiss the significance of other women's pain. Third, tears also serve as a way to make it seem as though the race dialogue itself victimizes them in some way, demonstrating some of the characteristics of hegemonic civility (Calafell, 2012) that I described above. DiAngelo (2018) aptly points out that white women's tears have been responsible for significant racial violence because they activate white men's desire to defend and protect, which has resulted in racial violence toward men of color (DiAngelo, 2018). Finally, white tears also compromise people of color in employment situations because it forces compliance with whitness by obligating them to comfort the crier. People of color do not feel safe being

honest when white women cry and they have to comfort them or risk consequences (DiAngelo, 2018).

Since beginning to study race, I have witnessed, read, and analyzed white tears. In classes on race, I have witnessed white women cry when they are confronted with their own racism. In the classes I teach, I have also had to navigate young white women crying and dealt with the fallout afterward. In one instance, a young gay latino confronted a young white woman in my class after she dismissed his experience navigating intersectional oppression. He did not raise his voice, but did point out that what she said came from a privileged place. She cried and put her head on the desk. As the teacher, I knew this was going to blow up and it did. The student went to an adminstrator about how I don't keep my class "safe". She exaggerated and misreported what occurred in spite of many witnesses. Her mother wrote me a long email about their family's struggle and how I had violated her child's trust. I picked up the phone to attempt repair and had to do the dance anyone is forced to do to maintain employment when confronted with angry parents. Over the years, I have learned how to listen without much comment so that I do not reinforce the white point of view at the expense of the person of color. I have also had to navigate white women's tears from school adminstrators who cry and deny when I have been vocal on issues of race. When white women cry, it is scary for me even as a white woman. I know I will pay for it. White people face consequences from antiracist actions when they break from white solidarity (DiAngelo, 2018), and so I have to always weigh capitulating to crying white women in the moment in order to do effective work for the long haul.

White women also cry because we have anger and sadness about race and racism, but we need to learn how to do that in a way that does not derail or undermine. We need to learn to say, "I'm ok, please move on" (DiAngelo, 2018). When I teach particularly upsetting content, I let myself cry because if I don't, I am stultifying my own emotions, which is part of the frozen tundra. I used to hide tears, but students know to expect them now and they know they do not have to suppress theirs either, creating powerful alliances with one another. These tears can create transformative educational spaces that transcend regular boundaries. They can build bridges and get in touch with universal human experience in a way that is productive, not divisive. Soja (2003) calls these spaces thirdspace, a topic I will explore in chapter 5. Much of transforming white emotionality lies in honesty; to have emotionally honest reactions in spite of being raised on the tundra.

As I examine my own terrain, I can see the systematic influence of whiteness in my own life. Writers of color have been able to pinpoint patterns of emotions in whites is significant in understanding how race is transacted and how it is learned. When I look at my own life, I see the rules that I have had to adhere to, the silence that is necessary in order to maintain white patriarchy, and the ways that white women police each other to maintain white matriarchal power. I will get into the transformative potential of breaking silence later in this chapter, but right now I will address what I see as the roots of white emotionality.

Roots of White Emotionality

The following section examines roots of white emotionality. I begin by explaining why violence is an important site for examination, and go on to explain concepts that

make up white emotionality. I then discuss specific issues that confront white women's emotionality, such as shame and sexual violence.

Violence as a Saturated Site of Intersectional Oppression

Racial systems are upheld by using violence, whether physical or emotional (Collins, 2019). The following section examines white violence during colonization and after as a site of saturated power relations, as Collins (2019) explained. In Chapter 2, I used Daniels (1997) and her investigation of extremist white supremacist propaganda in order to understand more mainstream notions of whiteness. This section examines the roots of white emotionality by looking at the colonial violence of whites. According to Collins (2017, 2019), a close examination of violence can help us understand intersecting power relations. Collins (2017) explains that, "Using violence as a navigational tool provides an entry point for the broader question of how domination is organized across multiple systems of power" (p. 1466). All systems of power and subordination require the use of violence to varying degrees (Collins, 2019). She argues, "Violence is not only the conceptual glue that joins multiple systems of power, but as a constellation of dynamic ideas and practices, violence is essential to organizing and managing political domination (Collins, 2017 p. 1466).

The use of violence as a saturated site of oppression and domination brings insight into how the everyday occurrence of patriarchal and racial maintenance work is carried out. Collins goes on to explain how she sees saturated sites for convergence and interconnection.

In this sense, violence constitutes a saturated site of intersectionality where intersecting power relations are especially visible. Saturated sites of intersecting

power relations are intensified points of convergence, or crossroads for

intersectional power relations that facilitate the naturalization and normalization

of political domination. Saturated sites are important nodes within political and

intellectual fields that enable disparate systems of power to interconnect. Stated

differently, violence constitutes the conceptual glue that binds intersecting

systems of power together [see e.g. Collins 1998b] (Collins, 2017, pp. 1464-

1465).

In the following section, I examine some of the underlying emotional responses of whites

to their own colonial violence. I argue that intergenerational trauma and soul murder are

frameworks for how we can ascribe meaning to the presence of colonial violence today. I

question whether the roots of my own frozen tundra can be found in centuries past,

forming the emotionally cold culture of whiteness that carries on in spite of visible

violence no longer being the norm to uphold a white supremacist society. As with the

white matriarchal framework, understanding and building upon this theory will require

collaboration with other scholars and fields.

Intergenerational Trauma

When we talk about race, it is important to think about and acknowledge how

many phantoms may be in the room with us. During conversations on race, I can

sometimes feel or sense the violent actions of my ancestors and the ways that I am

undeniably connected to that violence. I am certain the same is true for people on the

other side of it. Theory about the impact of intergenerational trauma examines and

attempts to articulate what is passed down and inherited through generations of

subjugation. Chapter 4 will examine some of the ways that whites pass down trauma

through families, but this section examines the impact of trauma on the oppressed and possibly the oppressor.

Menzies (2019) explains how people are attempting to name this trauma. "Historical trauma" was originally named to capture the experience among Holocaust survivors, but later became useful to apply to Indigenous peoples (Menzies, 2019). She writes:

> Davoine and Gaudilliere (2004) describe the impact of cultural genocide, geographic displacement or forced removal as a 'dehistoricization of experience' (p. 47). They use the term 'frozen trauma' to explain how past trauma can remain present. Central to this understanding, they argue, is the need of individuals and groups to have their experiences acknowledged, 'naming the unnamable' experience of their trauma. (p. 1526)

This term, "frozen trauma", describes an intergenerational trauma as though it were frozen in time. It is as though we can be transported in moments of violence. This adds a new dimension to the concept of frozen tundra; a shutting down of emotions and the shutting down is an adaptation to oppressive violence. Whites, of course experience this as the perpetrators, people of color experience it as victims of white violence.

It is also important to understand in terms of the meaning-making of mass murder, that genocide was a term that was coined by Raphael Lempkin after World War II because there was not yet a name for killing people because of race, religion, ethnicity, or politics (Power, 2002). Once the term genocide was used to describe the Holocaust, it has been applied backwards and its application is an attempt to write history more accurately. It is also worth noting that white supremacist violence was so naturalized and

normalized that no one had tried to name colonial violence until after the genocide in the Congo was revealed and it was the first genocide to be named a "crime against humanity" (Hoschild, 1999). In fact, some people still do not recognize the genocide of Indigenous people for land and the enslavement and murder of Black people as acts of genocide. As a world history teacher, my students struggle to understand the Holocaust and the colonial actions of whites as similar because it has gone unnamed in many classrooms. This also speaks to the idea of how violence normalizes and naturalizes systems of domination (Collins, 2019) and in the naming or not naming lies insight into racial violence.

The many ways that Indigenous, Black, and Jewish people name their experiences of genocide and the lasting impact should cause whites to reflect. However, most whites deny this reflection as though we are not connected to world history, much less to American history (DiAngelo, 2011). Whites may not have participated in the colonization of the United States directly, but eventually they all benefitted from whiteness (Lipsitz, 2006). I have a white friend that has identified as working class from Minnesota who denied that her family had advantages because they emigrated from Northern Europe in the late 1800s and lived in poverty for generations, but what she did not know was that whites were granted entry and rights to property at that time that were denied to non-white groups. Immigrant groups that were not white were denied naturalization until 1952 (Haney-Lopez, 2006). Even though she did not know this, she still held an opinion about it which demonstrates the white racial arrogance that DiAngelo (2011) identifies. Whites do not really know our history, but we still believe we do (DiAngelo, 2011; DiAngelo, 2018).

I have found that teaching white people this history, whether students, colleagues, or friends, can begin to move people toward understanding how they benefit from whiteness. Without the historical context, many whites just see debates over opinions and experiences that create defensiveness and invulnerability. I have a bachelors in history, taught world history, and went to conferences about teaching world history. I did not understand race and concepts about the historical and social implications regarding it until I set out to specifically study it. I felt angry and miseducated when I went down this path, wondering how I could have gotten so far in my education without actually knowing anything accurate about it. Many white teachers of history reject this knowledge because they cannot make themselves vulnerable enough to admit what they don't know so they continue the cycle of misinformation and teaching, what Toni Morrison (1992) calls the master narrative. The other strategy white history teachers use is trying to test my knowledge constantly by asking if I know about this race riot, or that state's actions, as if they are trying to say, "Gotcha, you don't know anything since you don't know everything." Alternatively, they could try to integrate their knowledge of events into a critical race framework instead of believing that these events somehow cancel it out. History and social studies education seem to operate without an articulated theory, making it conservative by default. Standardized curriculum and the co-option of "critical thinking" add to the problem, but I will discuss that more in chapter 5.

What I think is imperative to inquire about is if intergenerational trauma is passed on, then is intergenerational perpetration? Chapter 4 attempts to examine how intergenerational violence is carried out in families and the transformative power of interrupting it. What is significant to theory building in white emotionality is the

importance in attempting to name what lies beneath the frozen tundra. Other questions I have are about how patriarchal domination affects the formation of white women's emotionality. Intergenerational gendered trauma seems like an accurate description of what white women have endured under white men, but we have also experienced intergenerational violence as perpetrators. Bringing forth white women's intergenerational trauma can help us understand intergenerational perpetration.

The Concept of Soul Murder

Chapter 2 discussed the concept of unselfing, defined by Tillman (2004) as a severe dissociative reaction to enduring racism. Nell Painter (2002) uses the term 'soul murder' to describe a similar phenomenon that attempts to name the significant trauma that enslaved people suffered and the impact this violence also had on white plantation families (Painter, 1998). The following examination of soul murder as one of the mechanisms of white emotionality is not to portray whites as victims, but to examine how our violence towards others dehumanizes us in the process (Friere, 1970; 1993).

According to Painter (2002) soul murder is the process of inflicting so much emotional pain upon a person that it damages their ability to feel anything at all. She explains, "Within psychoanalytical literature, the classic, anguished phrasing of soul murder as the violation of one's inner being, the extinguishing of one's identity…" (Painter, 2002, p. 17). She goes on to look at another, more modern definition, "Sexual abuse, emotional deprivation, and physical and mental torment can lead to soul murder, and a soul murdered child's identity is compromised: They cannot register what it is that they want and what it is that they feel like…." (Painter, 2002 p.17). The purpose of her

work is to take a more personal, psychoanalytical look at the ways in which enslaved

families were affected as individuals: as mothers, fathers, and children.

Her work on soul murder primarily discusses the impact on enslaved people, but

she crosses the color line to discuss the impact it had on white families as well. White

violence impacts people of color and constructs whiteness itself. There is a deep, deep

wound in the history of the creation of race and it has implications for white women and

white children under white patriarchy as well. She writes, "No matter how much

American convention exempts whites from paying any costs for the enslavement of

blacks, the implications of slavery did not stop at the color line; rather, slavery's theory

and praxis permeated the whole of slave-holding society" (Painter, 2002 p.18). She goes

on to describe the ways in which piety and submission to patriarchy were of paramount

value in slave-owning families. Slave-owning masters also worried about their wives and

children becoming sympathetic to the plight of enslaved peoples and so would beat

enslaved children and other enslaved people in front of women and children in order to

show them who was in charge. White slave-owning women were constantly reminded

that they were to be pious, obedient, and that politics was not their place. Painter (2002)

and Rogers-Jones (2019) seem to disagree on whether slave mistresses were any better to

enslaved people, but their portrait of white femininity is consistent with submission to

patriarchy. She asserts that white men sought to destroy the spirits of their children and

wives in addition to requiring their participation in racialized violence. If we were to

follow this line of inquiry, would we find intergenerational parenting practices that taught

the emotional distance, apathy, and invulnerability that whites demonstrate as rooted in

being forced to participate in the brutalization of others. What is left over from this practice and how does it impact the emotional landscape of whiteness now?

Strength through Violence and Symbolic Distance

Other significant factors in looking at colonial violence as it might feed into white emotionality is looking at how colonists talked about strength and the goal of muting their own emotions as they enacted violence in the Congo. This serves as a reversal of unselfing mentioned in Chapter 2, where Black schoolteachers felt outside of themselves in racist white contexts (Tillman, 2004). Lack of feeling is the goal of whites in this scenario. They wish to lack feeling as a sign of strength. I believe this dynamic created the learned invulnerability of whiteness and how we can seem apathetic in the face of suffering (Alexander, 2010; Matias; 2015). Alexander (2010) examines the construction and maintenance of our current state of mass incarceration and the impact of Black communities. She argues that systematic racism is not always maintenance because of racial animus toward Black people, but that racial apathy is the primary problem. Ahmed (2015) writes*," Hardness is not the absence of emotion, but a different emotional orientation towards other* (italics original).The hard white body is shaped by its reactions: the rage against other surfaces as a body that stands apart of keeps its distance from others" (p.4). This hardness is read as apathy, but it is more aggressive than that. She goes on to say that, "Emotions shape the very surfaces of bodies, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as a well as through orientations towards and away from others (Ahmed, The cultural politics of emotion, 2015, p. 4). Whites' lack of feeling or connection confounds many people of color in race dialogues I have witnessed and it also has roots in colonization.

Hoschild (1999) discusses the diaries of many whites in the Congo feeling guilty about the violence they enacted or witnessed when they first arrived, but later feeling as numb to the terror, torture, and pain they were inflicting, aiding them in carrying out their atrocities. One officer reported after ordering an African man to be hanged, "It didn't make the least impression on me this time!! And to think that the first time I saw the *chicotte* administered, I was pale with fright. Africa has some use after all. I could now walk into fire as if it were a wedding" (Hoschild, 1999 p. 123). The chicotte he speaks of is whip that was made from hippopotamus skin that Europeans used to torture African people. Many died because of the brutality inflicted upon them by the chicotte.

There are many examples of colonizers who speak of learning to feel nothing as part of their training during the colonization of the Americas and Africa. In fact, many Americans are still rapt with the movie scene from *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola,1979), based upon Joseph Conrad's 1902 book about the Congo (Hoschild, 1999), where Kurtz, a monstrous madman, gives his speech about "the horror" and how he used to have emotions about the people he harmed, but he no longer did. He had strength instead. While most whites no longer actively participate in the physical violence of people of color, we see gleeful participation through media and particular news stories (Ioanide, 2015). We also have remnants that I would argue have become cultural norms in families who come out of colonial violence and pass it down through generations. White women were formed in opposition to this ideal. They were formed to silently uphold colonial actions, but not participate in them because it was not part of white women's virtue, but according to Jones-Rogers (2019), white women could be just as brutal to the enslaved

people they oversaw. Forming ideal femininity in silence adds many possibilities for resistance that I will get into later in this chapter.

Symbolic Distance

Symbolic distance is also a common emotional mechanism of colonizers. Hoschild (1999) writes, "In such a regime, one thing that often helps functionaries "become used to it" is a slight, symbolic distance- irrelevant to the victim between and official in charge and the physical acts of terror itself. That symbolic distance was frequently cited in self-defense by Nazis put on trial after World War II" (p.122). This notion of symbolic distance is significant to understanding whites' rationalizations for violence because so many whites deny participation in racism. In the colonial context, symbolic distance means that whites used other enslaved people to carry out their violence, believing it alleviates responsibility. Black journalist Ida B. Wells-Garrett uncovered the participation of white women in lynching, and also argued that most of the rape allegations that were made against Black men were because of consensual relationships (Feimster, 2009). Symbolic distance allows whites to benefit from the maintenance of our racial caste system. In school systems, this can mean feeding students into the school to prison pipeline by disciplining them more harshly (Ferguson, 2001). Each teacher may contribute to a student's failure without having to feel personally responsible for where that student ends up in life.

Reverse Victimization

Reverse victimization is a common tactic of abusers who want their subjects to believe that they are the one who is harmed by them. It is a reversal of victim and perpetrator. DiAngelo (2018) lists this tactic as part of white fragility and defensiveness.

Reverse victimization is prevalent in white supremacists' movements where whites believe that they are the true victims of discrimination. Nazi and neo-Nazi ideology argues that Jewish people are truly running the world and are conspiring to replace white people with people of color, hence the tiki-torch wielding white men shouting "Jews will not replace us" on their march on Charlottesville in 2018. The violence of these white supremacist groups was documented on camera and was very clearly carried out primarily by white supremacist men who began violently attacking counter protestors. A white woman was murdered when a white man drove his car into a crowd of anti-Nazi protestors and a Black man was beaten severely by white supremacist while police officers stood by (Tatum, 1997; 2019). We also see reverse victimization play out in the #bluelivesmatter movement where police officers respond to the killing of Black people by explaining how no one appreciates them, as opposed to taking responsibility for systemic problems on the force. Recently, a Black man, George Floyd, was murdered when a police officer kneeled on his neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds while three officers did not intervene (Hill; Tefenthäl; Triebert; Jordan; Willis; Stein, 2020). Law enforcement continues to respond violently, beating and tear-gassing protestors and claiming it is for their own protection and that the protestors are violent (BBC News, 2020). People using state-sanctioned violence against Black people and protestors are claiming that the destruction of property (white property) is a justification for use of force. We can see reverse victimization in feminism where white women critique women of color for pointing out racism in the movement, describing intersectional feminism as divisive (Hurtado, 1996).

Whiteness was constructed as reverse victimization at the inception of whiteness. For example, images and beliefs about cannibalism of indigenous people served as a justification for racializing and colonization. Cannibalism became a way to view "the Other" as violent and threatening, as opposed to European travelers with the intention to dominate. As the racial system developed, so did the portrayal of Africans as violent. Imagery of Black Americans changed with the political landscape. We are now so used to the criminalization of Black men that we may not know the history of how these controlling images developed after slavery. During slavery, it benefitted the North and the South to believe that Black people were less intelligent and happy being cared for by the Southern slave system (McRae, 2018; Riggs, 1997). The notion of that Black people were dangerous is a clear example of reverse victimization because racial violence was inflicted on Black people, but whites were able to convince the white public that it is Black people who are violent. (Alexander, 2010; Riggs, 1987) Other notions, such as white men as the actual perpetrators of sexual violence, were able to reverse that into victimization about white women. White women were then able to reverse the role of perpetrator and victim in the dynamics between Black enslaved women and their husbands who raped them, believing they were the true victims of this kind of violence because it brought embarrassment to them and their families (Feimster, 2009). Meanwhile white women secured their ability to own enslaved people separately from any other form of property (Jones-Rogers, 2018). We can also see the dynamics of reverse victimization in oppressive regimes who arm their protestors in hopes they will become violent so that they can justify squashing them.

I am, again, using the Belgian conquest of the Congo as an example of this phenomenon. In the late 1800s King Leopold of Belgium funded a conquest of the Congo that lead to the death of eight to ten million Congolese who were murdered, tortured, and worked to death for ivory and rubber trade (Hoschild, 1999). Not only did Belgium cover up what they were doing, they also used racist ideology to manipulate others into believing they were supporting a humanitarian effort. Adam Hoschild, a historian most famous of his deep history of the colonization of the Congo describes the burying of history and the politics of forgetting, writing:

> Forgetting one's participation in mass murder is not something passive; it is an active deed. In looking at the memories recorded by the early white conquistadores in Africa, we can sometimes catch the act of forgetting at the very moment it happens. It is not a moment of erasure, but of turning things upside down, the strange reversal of the victimizer mentally converting himself to victim. (p. 295)

This turning of things upside down is also clearly present in white feminism, where we are to believe that the omission of white women's racism is insignificant or accidental. We also see it in the fights over the curriculum about the Civil War (Feimster, 2009). Southern women worked very hard to suppress the truth. They organized because they knew it would take a great effort to construct an acceptable Confederate side of the story (Newman, 1999). They even obsessed about racial apathy. In this context, whites were afraid white people would become apathetic in enforcing segregation and impeding black progress (Mcrae, 2018). White women constantly reminded other white women that they must not get apathetic in their racial maintenance work (McRae, 2018). Shockingly,

white women were also against the Geneva Convention where nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights unless whites were protected as the "minority of the world" (McRae, 2018).

Hoschild goes on to describe a diary entry where a colonial guard brutally abuses an African man and feels like he is the one who suffered. I apologize in advance for the violence in the following passage. The colonial officers of the Congo and other places under white rule did not hide their violent acts. They actually bragged about them and so the intimate workings of the white mind become apparent.

Take, for example, a moment in the memoirs of Raoul de Premorel, who ran rubber collecting posts in the Kasai region of the Congo from 1896 to 1901. Here is a description of how he dealt with the alleged ringleader of a mutiny:

I had two sentries drag him to the front of the store, where his wrists were tied together. Then standing him up against a post with arms raised high above his head they tied him securely to a crossbeam. I now had them raise him by tightening the rope until just his toes touched the floor. So, I left the poor wretch. All night long he hung there, sometimes begging for mercy sometimes in a kind of swoon. All night long his faithful wife did what she could to alleviate his suffering. She brought him drink and food, she rubbed his aching legs… At last when the morning came and my men cut him down, he dropped unconscious in a heap on the ground. "Take him away", I ordered… Whether he lived or not, I do not know… Now sometimes in my sleep I think I and the poor devil and half a hundred black fiends are dancing…about me. I wake up with a great start and I find

> myself covered with a cold sweat. Sometimes, I think it is I who have
>
> suffered most in the years that have passed since that night. (p.295)

This example is common delusional whiteness, where whites inflict suffering but identify themselves as the victims. We must continue to look at our collective forgetting and the ways that it operates through our discourses on violence. The controlling images of Black violence serve as an example of manipulating the culture to hide white violence (Alexander, 2010).

The significance to white women's emotionality is that whites really may not know who they are in the politics of forgetting and distorting reality in a way that leads to notions of white benevolence: *It is we who have been victimized in our struggle to dominate people of color*. We also know that much of the discourse about colonization and slavery worldwide used the discourse of civilization as though whites were helping (Pounder, et al., 2003). Eugenics brought many of these discourses into play as whites further justified the ghettoization of people of color throughout the twentieth century (Pounder, et al., 2003). Notions of white benevolence were solidified in white matriarchal power as white women took over the "helping" workforce and many still operate aligned with these notions of "civilizing" the uneducated as I outlined in Chapter 2.

Transforming White Women's Emotionality: The Significance of Shame

The internalization of shame as a policing mechanism also ensures that we will not resist patriarchy (Boler, 1999), and, I would argue, white matriarchy. White matriarchy ensures that women will follow certain ideals of respectability that are raced and classed, monitoring working class (Davis, 1981; Feimster, 2009), LGBTQ (Daniels, 1997), or unmarried women (Collins, 2000; Fine & Weis, 1998) will feel a certain sense

of shame for not adding up. White patriarchal control demands that we also feel ashamed when we resist white patriarchy (Boler, 1999; Daniels, 1997). Only undesirable women speak up or give their opinion, which is why even though early and second wave feminism may have epistemic race problems, it did attempt to "talk back." I can think of many instances where my talking back to white men has gotten me in trouble and made my face burn hot with shame even though I was right to do so. Instances of talking back to whiteness result in losing because of power, and also creates shame and self-negation about being exposed as losing, much like Ahmed (2015) explains above. Our resistance needs to examine how we are controlled by being "good" and how even as I have become an adult, I am still susceptible to shaming by white men.

Pyke (2018), a white woman, describes her moment of realization of how marginalized people and women are treated in academic settings when faced by the overwhelming presence of white men even though she has a PhD and should be seen on equal footing. She writes:

> Later, after earning my PhD, I came to learn—slowly, gradually, and very painfully—that academia does not provide a safe work environment for many of those who are racial, sexual, and gender minorities. My awakening occurred when I attended a series of meetings with mostly senior white men faculty. In these meetings, I was surprised to find myself unable to speak clearly. My words were undecipherable. For when I spoke, I was met with a wall of blank stares from the men around the conference table. There were no nods of understanding or agreement, and the conversation quickly turned away from what I had said—as if I hadn't spoken at all. (p. 6)

This incidence, one where she describes self-doubt and in the inarticulateness of intimidation, are common occurrences for white women when we are faced white patriarchal power. The dismissiveness and contempt that I witness in white men when I dare offer opinions, suggestions, or solutions to problems in personal and professional settings silenced me as a young woman, but motivates me now.

I will share a story here of one of my first instances of talking back as a young woman to white men. I worked in a law firm as a courier through most of college. One of the lawyers I worked for was a lobbyist for the state university that was negotiating what has become known as the lottery scholarship, a program where the money made from the lottery would go to state colleges as tuition for any high school student in New Mexico who made a 2.5 grade point average or better. I was a sophomore in college at that time, working my way through school and was excited at the thought of getting tuition covered because I had not qualified for merit scholarships coming out of high school because of my low ACT scores. I was also excited because I had been nominated to do an honors thesis in history, which was my major. I knew that I could not really complete a thesis if I had to work as many hours as I was working at the time, so I was even more excited at being able to cut hours and focus on school. I found out about the deal that was struck between the state and the universities one afternoon at work. The legislature had approved it, but I was immediately deflated by the news that they were not grandfathering in current students. This meant that I was ineligible in spite of my 3.5 grade point average. I went to talk to the lobbyist who was in the office library where the law clerks had their cubicles. I was upset and could not hide my disappointment. I challenged him about the fairness of leaving out students like me, pointing out that the

university knew I would give them my money so they did not feel the need to fund me. I started to bring up other concerns. For example, why was he hailing this legislation as a societal equalizer when rich families could now send their kids there for free? I knew him fairly well and it was not a contentious or long conversation. He heard me out and responded calmly about life not being fair, but I did not think that he was offended.

The next day, I was called into the main partner's office. He closed the door, asked me to sit down, and told me that I was never to speak to one of the lawyers about what I thought about one of their cases ever again. He asserted that they are not interested in my opinion and he better never hear me discussing anything other than my job in the workplace again. I felt like a brat—an obstinate child who needed to be reminded that I was to be seen and not heard. My cheeks still burn when I think about having been so out-of-line and that I thought I had enough rapport with the lobbyist that I discussed it with him in the first place. When I think of this incident, I think of how shaming incidences compile and almost take on a quantitative component. I do not think I am the only one who begins to add these events up to assess whether I am a good person or not. I was not only dealing with the shame from speaking out of turn, I was also feeling all of the times men had decided that I had spoken out of turn, and turned that anger inward on myself. I had trespassed past my station in that law firm, and even though the conversation was respectable and brief, it was so offensive for me to challenge him that he had to go to a partner to have me silenced. A good girl should have known better.

This incident was also significant in learning white matriarchal rules because it hinges on manners, hierarchy, and all of the rules that are unspoken but felt in work settings. I also learned rules of "professionalism" this way and could apply them when I

wanted. Notions of professionalism are blurry by design and they operate as part of hegemonic civility. White women use professionalism against the anger they may witness from people of color (Calafell, 2012) and it upholds white matriarchal ideals of appropriateness and benevolence. Tone-policing is another way that white women silence others by micromanaging mannerisms and tone instead of listening (Cooper, 2018; Parker and Nishi, 2018). Although she does not use the term, Audre Lorde (1984) points out the problem of tone-policing when she wrote about white women telling her she did not speak to them in a way they could hear her (Lorde,1984). The problem is the simultaneous subjugation creates shame, and domination over others creates shame, so white women will exhibit all of the emotionality that is discussed by numbness, frozenness, and white fragility.

Possibilities for Transforming Shame

Because shame plays out both individually and collectively, some race scholars see the possibility of using shame as a tool of transformation. Zembylas (2008) troubles our collective understanding of shame as a negative emotion and posits that shame can be productive in forming openings for authentic understandings of shared histories and our connections with others. He explains:

> The mis-recognition of shame as something destructive both in political and in educational debates fails to capture two important insights, as Tarnopolsky (2004) suggests: first, that shaming creates an opening that is necessary for self-criticism, self-reflection, and ethical, political and educational deliberation; and second, that shaming under some circumstances may encourage the possibility of solidarity, an

invitation around which both the group-shaming and the group-being-shamed

might meet. (p. 265)

As he says, not all shame is destructive because we need it to maintain our moral

compass, understand our mistakes, and attempt to transform our regrets. It is the

internalization of actually being bad or wrong that is destructive and that occurs

frequently in racial transactions where people of color are expected to carry the burden of

white people's shame about the way whites have treated them (DiAngelo, 2018).

Perhaps what prevents a productive form of shame lies in spaces that white

women dominate. Spaces that white women share are also usually spaces of what Sleeter

(1996) called white racial bonding and what I called negative solidarity in chapter 2.

White racial bonding occurs in spaces where white women reinforce each other's stake in

whiteness. (Sleeter, 1996). These spaces may be institutional and professional, or they

may be private spaces where white solidarity is surveilled and enforced (Sleeter, 1996). If

white patriarchy is challenged, white women can resort to calling the challenger's loyalty

and respectability into question (DiAngelo, 2011; Sleeter, 1996). For example, the

treatment of Monica Lewinsky shows liberal white women's racial bonding and enforced

race-gendered boundaries for my generation of liberal white women. The promising

possibility that Zembylas (2008) opens up is that our shame could create solidarity, which

would combat negative solidarity, will be discussed further in Chapter five when I

examine truth and reconciliation. I will also address how shaming to educate or transform

is also destructive in antiracist education.

Sexual Violence

Like all victims of sexual violence, white women are controlled by the shame that comes out of this type of violence against women. Sexual violence, like other violence I have discussed in this chapter, serves as a site of saturated intersecting power relations, and so we can learn a lot about less acute forms of race-gendered oppression when we examine it. There are two trends that are occurring that concern me as someone who examines power relations. One is the use of the term "survivor" instead of "victim" in all situations. The language of survival has been used as a way for women to take back personal power after instances of sexual abuse, sexual assault, and rape. This movement from victim to survivor seems to serve as a rite of passage, and I had not noticed how it operates to mask the perpetrator until I examined my own history and realized that the language of survival made male perpetration almost disappear. I know that some women feel empowered by the use of survivor, but I wonder if it is masking the original victimization that occurred that one has to survive. I also have trouble with the prevalence of the word survivor to capture all forms of sexual violence. For example, I have students who identify as having "survived" sexual harassment in the cafeteria. It would not matter to me personally except that what is happening collectively in the #MeToo movement impacts the framing and discourse regarding sexual violence. This section addresses some of the barriers to solidarity in understanding violence against women, and how white women's use of victimization operates.

White women have no colonial moment, a moment where their lands were taken, or they were enslaved, or not welcomed into a new country. There is no moment of loss of memory or the annihilation of autonomy. We never had it. We have always been right

under white patriarchy. Hurtado (1996) offers an explanation that I think is still running through our movement. White feminism is born out of talking back to the oppressor in the house, whether it is husband or others. It is not about working side by side. Early white feminists argued they were morally superior to men so they should get the vote to ensure the moral safety of society (Roberts, 1997), while black women argued that they already had to do the work of men and should not be ruled over by them. The two ideas grew differently and white women, still today, center personal victimhood over systematic oppression. Hurtado (1996) writes:

> Feminists of Color steadfastly hold onto, as a core of their political mobilization, the politics of hope and joy and victory for their communities as a whole (Cuandraz and Pierce, 1994, pp. 9-10). White feminists on the other hand have had strategic victories by highlighting victimhood. It is not to say that one strategy is better than another but, rather, that they have to be recognized in order build political alliances. The emphases on the strengths that result from oppression or the weaknesses that result from victimhood are the outcome of structural relationships, not essentialist racial characteristics. (p.27)

Hurtado's insight is crucial to understanding the epistemological problems with white feminism and how we continue to use victimhood to our advantage without recognizing the ways that women of color have been victimized by us. It is particularly offensive to me, when we talk about sexual violence in a mainstream context, that we don't own up to white women's discourse about sexual violence that Black women endured under slavery. Davis (1981), Feimster (2009), Roberts (1997), and Painter (2002) all document the ways in which white women felt like the victims in white men's rape of Black women. Black

women endured vast, terrifying, violent systematic rape by white men (Davis, 1981; Roberts, 1997) but white women saw their husbands as committing adultery and maintained these discourses throughout (Painter, 2002).

The growth white women's victimization causes several issues with solidarity because the outgrowth of white feminisms has been personal pain (Hurtado, 1996). The focus on personal experience as the primary organizer for feminist movement leads to a self-focused feminism. Because of the prevalence and daily threat of sexual violence, all women are impacted by it. Women who may not have been victimized can still contribute to collective struggle. We need to center the needs of victims in our social action in a way that also invites women who have not had these experiences personally. When I look at our public conversations about sexual violence, I can see why individual white women are appropriating the experience of sexual violence to justify their need to resist white patriarchy. Some women's experiences with sexual violence build the bridge needed to understand and empathize with other women's hardships whether they are about sexual violence or not. Other white women seem to be focused on their own struggles.

As I said above, one dynamic that has become very visible is the identity that is formed by survival. Ahmed (2015) argues about wounds creating identity as problematic, saying:

> One of the reasons that is problematic is precisely because of its fetishism: the transformation of the wound into an identity cuts the wound off from a history of 'getting hurt' or injured. It turns the wound into something that simply 'is' rather than something that has happened in time and space. The fetishization of the wound as a sign of identity is crucial to "testimonial culture" (Ahmed & Stacy,

2001), in which narratives of pain and injury have proliferated. Sensational stories

can turn pain into a form of media spectacle, in which the pain of others produces

laughter and enjoyment, rather than sadness or anger. Furthermore, narratives of

collective suffering increasingly have a global component…. Can become…'our

loss' The differentiation between forms of pain and suffering in stories that are

told, and between those that are not, is a crucial mechanism for the distribution of

power. (p. 32)

This appropriation of individual experiences as a collective experience plays out similarly

to how white women cannibalize feminisms of color (Hurtado, 1996), obscuring the

significance and meaning that the affected party makes and deciding what the political

use could mean. If we turn personal experiences into a collective experience, we start to

see the universalization of womanhood reinstituted, and the face of it is white. People

who are actually victimized by sexual violence lose control of their own narrative and

meaning-making as other women decide how those experiences can be used to justify

their political actions. For example, I have witnessed women who have not survived

acute sexual violence claim an understanding or right to certain stories because they have

"survived" something too. The complexity of victimization and survival of sexual

violence is highly individual and, simultaneously, systematic. We have not yet developed

a way of supporting one another where we are, whether they are open with their

experiences or whether they want them to be private should not be a criterion for

expertise or participation in critical discussions regarding sexual violence. As Ahmed

argues, there is an exploitive component to the wound becoming an identity that is not

going to lead to the transformation that testimonies can lead to. If white women are

taking experiences that they haven't had for themselves in order to somehow justify their challenges to white patriarchy, I now have an answer for why there has been no political alliance with women of color—white women can't be included as personal victims of racism and that is the only way we justify our resistance. Our feminism is set up in negative solidarity with white men, not solidarity with people of color. We have we set up resistance discourse that is not about advocacy for all women, but for our own personal oppression and that impacts interventions like the of #MeToo movement.

Sexual violence, left unexamined in a social context, can create feelings of isolation and ignore the systematic component of rape as gendered oppression. We are made to believe that the actions of sexual violence are our fault, our responsibility, and that our emotions about them must be shut down. The silence that most survivors of sexual assault feel they must keep is harmful, makes us at risk for drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts (Alcoff, 2018) and it can also make us ineffective in helping one another. "The solitariness of pain is intimately tied up with its implications in relationship to others" (Ahmed, 2015, p.29). We must acknowledge our own pain and how it separates us from others. Moving white women, and all women, toward the healing of sexual violence is an integral part of resisting whiteness and patriarchy. In understanding what it means to embody violence, Ahmed (2015) writes:

> Women's testimonies about pain—for example, testimonies about their experiences of violence—are crucial not only to the formation of feminist subjects (a way of reading pain as a structural rather than incidental violence), but to feminist collectives which have mobilized around the injustices of that violence and the political and ethical demand for reparation and redress. (p. 172)

A full examination of what it means to heal sexual violence—usually seen as a private, individual matter—might lead to other forms of resistance in the public sphere.

Reflection and Self-Implication

In order to combat shame and truly connect white women must be self-reflective. We must start to see ourselves as part of a system that has dominated us and required our complicity in the domination of others. Ahmed (2015) writes, "The impossibility of feeling the pain of others does not mean that the pain is simply theirs, or that their pain has nothing to do with me. I want to suggest here, cautiously, and tentatively, that an ethics of responding to pain involves being open to being affected by that which one cannot know or feel" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 30). I argue above that we should not coopt the experiences of others, but we do not need to take something as ours in order to be invested in its change. Even though we cannot feel the pain of women of color, it does not mean that it is not ours to contend with. We cannot feel our children's pain, but we carry it all the time and it becomes a part of who we are as mothers. Sisterhood must require the same thing. If we are lucky, we do have friends whose pain we carry, and who carry ours. We need to resolve to do that on a more collective level. There is truly not enough room in the universe to contain all of women's unspoken pain. It comes across in racial dialogues because white women are willing to hold some of the racial pain of women of color, but not nearly enough for them to feel supported, or like any burden has been lifted at all.

Love as sight of resistance: Radical love and self-actualization

When I look back at the significance of transforming my own emotionality, I think it has been vulnerability that has been the most important lesson. I began this

chapter with a story of my own frozenness and how it impacted my consciousness. Since sitting in that class with Stella, I took myself on a journey inward that has resulted in a much fuller, more connected life. I have come a long way since I sat paralyzed with my useless Kleenex, and it has been difficult, reflective, transformative work. The invulnerability that I learned as part of my upbringing not only dulled my ability to feel negative emotions, it dulled my ability to feel positive ones, which is aligned with research on emotions (Brackett, 2019).

Learning about white emotionality has also transformed my teaching tremendously. Even though I am attempting to educate students about systematic oppression, in order to do that meaningfully, we have to talk about their emotional experiences. I work on articulating what emotions are and what they mean throughout all of the other work we do to understand oppression. I focus on teaching listening and empathy when I deal with my students so that I create a class environment where emotions can run hot if they need to and we talk about ways to repair. Students come in ready to engage emotionally because they know they will have to be emotionally present for their peers. We are not going to take in historical and current suffering on a frozen tundra. I also share my own experiences and emotional states as we go through curriculum. I model reflection by telling them stories about what I used to think, how I stopped thinking it, and how I feel about having thought and behaved in racist ways. Students sometimes reject the emotional component of the class at the beginning, but by the end, they say they valued the space.

A movement requires that we actually emotionally *move* our students. We need students of color and white students to become empowered to challenge racism, sexism,

homophobia, and all other forms of intersecting oppression. Learning my own

vulnerability and exploring ways to teach it with safe emotional boundaries is the deep

work I am attempting in my classroom. I see many possibilities in developing antiracist

social emotional learning as part of a pedagogy for race treason.

Chapter 4: A Critical Examination of Love and Transformation

The Loveless Tradition of Whiteness

In this chapter, I extend my earlier arguments by critically examining possibilities for transforming white emotionality. I can think of nothing more significant than the possibilities inherent in white women reflecting on how a discourse of love and caring informs our roles as daughters, mothers, friends, and society's supposed helpers. White supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression do not just operate between whites and people of color, or men and women. These forms of oppression encompass far more than social systems and create separation within and outside of those categories (Collins, 2000). An examination of love gets at the very core of our being and what it means to be human. Because most problems between people are problems of love, addressing love in critical, systemic, and anti-oppressive ways needs to be developed in order for us to reach fuller self-actualization and liberation within our social structure. A critical theory of how love can be an act of resistance, addressing the notions of exile, freedom, and communion in order to understand the tensions of belonging that we experience as we move toward self-actualization. As Collins (2000) says, "… When people reject the world offered by intersecting oppressions, the power as energy that can flow from a range of love relationships becomes possible" (150).

This chapter, as the others, centers whiteness as an object of examination. There is much deserved criticism and suspicion in the race field for doing so (Leonardo, 2013), but it is essential that whites begin to sit with what it means to be white, to engage other whites about it and to think about what our lives mean, and how our willful ignorance about who we are impacts people of color. Critical reflection is an essential element in

changing white consciousness and usually draws in personal history and our history within institutions (Yancy, 2015; Segrest, 1994). Yancy (2015) writes in reference to whites' examination of denial of whiteness and calls for whites to sit more deliberately and openly in the meaning and impact of whiteness. He writes:

> Therefore, one must be prepared to *linger* to remain, with the truth about one's white self and the truth about how whiteness has structured and continues to structure forms of relationality that are oppressive to people of color. White people will typically flee such situations. They will seek a false sense of moral refuge by denying or eliding the various ways in which whiteness privileges them, infuses their being, their perception, and their affective and imaginative lives; indeed, the ways in which whiteness constitutes their embodiment, spatial motility, and "normalcy." (p. xv)

This denial is documented through colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), privilege blindness, power evasiveness (Frankenburg, 1993), and aversive racism (DiAngelo, 2018; Tatum, 1997; 2019). We also know that critical reflection is called for and deep examinations of love and family are crucial to understanding ourselves and our place in the world. This section attempts this *lingering* (Yancy, 2015) in hopes of tapping into the longing for white people to reflect on their understandings of love and service.

I have lingered in whiteness long enough to see some of the ways in which we can look at how whiteness disrupts humanitarian love, and that the oppressor-oppressed dynamic plays out in families, schools, and parenting. Jones (2000), in her definitions of multiple levels of racism, names one personally mediated racism. Under her definition of personally mediated racism, she includes intentional and unintentional acts, and acts of

commission and acts of omission. She argues it maintains structural barriers, and is condoned by societal norms (Jones, 2000, p. 1213). When we reflect on our own implication, we have to cut it close to the soul. We have to look at our own personally mediated racism as it attempts to maintain structural racism. (Jones, 2000). The following section offers a reflection on how whites may pass down whiteness and patriarchy through their families, how it operates in marriages, and how I am attempting to disrupt its formation with my daughters. I end with a look at the discourse on love and exile in Critical Whiteness Studies and how we can move ourselves closer to communion instead of valorizing independence and individualism, which are already problematic issues in whiteness.

Reflections on How Dominator Culture is Inherited

When I think of naming the whiteness and patriarchy in my own family, I most relate to the term dominator culture (hooks, 2003). Dominator culture was named by bell hooks to describe a culture in which power and domination are the primary values that shape our social system and interpersonal relationships (hooks, 2003). Her profound examinations of love and family have sustained me through my commitment to antiracism and desire for personal transformation. I return to her work when I feel lost or alone and I am replenished. Her query into what it means to love, to change, and to commit to ourselves and others led me to critically examine our inheritance of love in my family of origin and how transforming love in my life is always at the forefront of my work and parenting. The search for authentic love and the choices we make about whom and how we love will play a transformative role in societal change and deserves critical

attention (Matias & Allen, 2013). hooks (2000) writes that we must see love as an action, a mixture of care, respect, affection, and the desire to help someone else grow.

In her call for a phenomenology of whiteness, an examination of how whiteness is "lived in the background to experience" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150). Ahmed (2007) asks us to look for how whiteness is inherited:

> If the conditions in which we live are inherited from the past, they are 'passed down' not only in blood or in genes, but also through the work or labour of generations. If history is made 'out of' what is passed down, then history is made out of what is given not only in the sense of that which is 'always-already' there *before our arrival* (italics original), but in the active sense of the gift: as a gift, history is what *we receive upon our arrival* (italics original). (p. 154)

Her call to look at what is passed down or inherited, as part of the experience of *being,* makes the discussions about how whiteness is learned and constructed through families relevant to any work on transforming oppression. Chapter 3 discussed some of the origins of white emotionality and I think it is fair to assume that these traditions of numbing and distancing that I outlined have not gone anywhere. There is powerful work about the intergenerational trauma by psychologists and critical theorists that recognize the passage of violence as it is encoded in the minds of marginalized people (Menzies, 2019). Recently, the HBO series, *The Watchmen*, based on the graphic by Allan Moore, and adapted for the screen by Damon Lidelof is a powerful look at intergenerational trauma as a result of the Tulsa Race Riots of 1921 where Black Wall Street was destroyed by whites (Lidelof, 2019). Since Tenahisi Coates' (2012) powerful piece, many

conversations about intergenerational debt and trauma (Menzies, 2019) have entered the public discourse and more whites are becoming curious about what it is that we owe.

If we are to recognize intergenerational trauma, the residual effect of historic or personal trauma as passed on to children (Menzies, 2019), then we also need to look at intergenerational domination and how domination is learned. Because white women are the closest to white men relationally (Collins, 2000; Hurtado,1996), it is imperative for us to reflect on how we learn whiteness through our families. Segrest (1994) asserts, "I also need to find a way write about my white family that explores the primal hurts that both drove me forward and held me back. Race and family, the intimate and the historic, action and reflection…I straddle chasms that make the Grand Canyon seem like some little creek" (Segrest, 1994, p. 4). This chasm is felt by many whites as we try to reconcile our own family histories and how we are to love and connect with those who came before us when we know they were violent, destructive, and created the inequities that built America. There is some work being done through blogs, books, and podcasts about whiteness that is attempting critical reflection and I think it speaks to a genuine desire for white women, whom I would call white feminists, to change and to understand our social structure. I believe that the election of Donald Trump truly was a wakeup call about social movements that have appeared to be moving along without much interruption, and that the election of Trump has caused reflection. We are living in a time of *revanchism*, where territory that felt secure in the area of women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and some racial progress, is being taken back by the white patriarchal machine that is America. Unfortunately, the analysis that some white women use is still very far off from where it should be. For example, Buddhist educator and therapist Tara Brach

(2019), whom I will discuss in chapter 5, attempts to reflect of whiteness but usually in ways that don't go deeply enough, and her inaccuracy in analysis can actually reinscribe the whiteness she is attempting to disrupt. I hope to take advantage of this particular zeitgeist by asking white women to think about the very formation of our white selves. We clearly inherit our ideas about love and sometimes we even idealize the distance between us. If strength and lack of feeling and connection is part of whiteness, we have much emotional work to do to move us toward a more unified future.

Mab Segrest goes on to examine how white families seem to be missing something (Segrest, 1994). She considers the ways in which the racial violence of one of her family members who killed a Black student activist in the 1960s has impacted her family psychologically. She writes:

> Searching for an antidote to family pain, I have become an *aficionada* of cures. I have dragged myself to therapists and peer counselors and pored over books on "dysfunctional families." With difficulty and with help, I have gained some understanding of my subjective life. But something was missing, some more transparent view of the interweave of race and family that white folks usually miss. Race does not happen to just generic human beings. (p. 3)

She goes on to describe the ways in which whites are not given therapeutic guidance about what to do about racist histories in families. This is aligned with my own experience of therapists dismissing my racial knowledge or experiences as insignificant. She writes:

> What therapist would tell us to read history, would help us to see how this fetishized racism circulates within white families? We wash it down with gin and

violence. It surfaces as anger or depression, passed down and down and down,

refracted for generations to children who inherit sometimes houses and land but

always jumbles of terror and anger (Segrest, 1994, p. 4).

Chapter 3 outlined white emotionality and discussed the way it impacts whites' ability to

feel. The passage above is more evidence of how historical trauma impacts whites, but in

ways that are still not understood or talked about. Our children will not face racial

violence. I move through my life with relative ease and we are in deep denial of a need to

resolve the terror our relatives inflicted on people of color.

Learning my Place in White Patriarchy

Since taking up this work, I have attempted to critically reflect on where I learned

the connection with love and the relationship to power. This particular section is about

how whites learn about notions of love within a family structure. How this relates to

learning racism and whiteness is discussed further in this chapter in the section on

antiracist parenting. Because I am white, I do not think I can separate how I was taught

what love was from how it operates in a social structure. As Boler (1999) argues,

emotions are not just private, but operate systematically. Whites are not the only ones

who learn dominator culture (hooks, 2003). Dominator culture binds everyone together

and organizes families relationally through adherence to patriarchal norms, which have

different implications because of group proximity to white men (Hurtado, 1996).

I come from the group who gained power in constructing race and that dominated

colonial America. As with any family tree, there are so many branches to examine

closely, but I believe my family, and most families, settle on a cohesive narrative they

can pass down to their children. There are main characters that are defining and we tend

to retell their stories. Over the years, as my children have gone through elementary

school, they have been asked to do heritage projects where they come home from school

and ask me where I am from. I tell them that both sides of my lineage have been in the

country for centuries, my mother's side was actually at Jamestown, coming from

England. To say that gives me a British heritage is wholly inaccurate and I tell my

children that we come from European colonizers. The teachers do not accept this answer

and ask my daughters to choose a country that is completely irrelevant to how I identify

or what I tell them about our history. This is just another way that white children are

miseducated about what it means to be white (Tatum,1997; 2019). In fact, my brother

proudly presented a project on our descendant, Thomas De La War, in middle school.

Thomas is a family name passed down through generations and I had not known its true

origins. It was only a few years ago that I looked into it and learned that he was

nicknamed "Indian Killer" and that my family owned the Shirley Plantation, which

shows up in literature and was the largest slave plantation in North America at one point.

This fact upset me because my mother, frankly, covered up our family history and I am

not sure has ever even attempted to reconcile it, which I am finding is not even possible.

By the time she came around, the family fortune was lost and because of my

grandfather's mental health and employment instability, she grew up working class,

sometimes living in poverty. So, there is a disconnection from the history of domination

about how we have benefitted from our whiteness.

     The family history is not the only thing that is covered up. The racism that is still

present has also been minimized. Recently, when her brother, my uncle, came to visit, he

used a degrading slur at the dinner table and my aunt made derogatory remarks about

Megan Markle when I pointed out that they were leaving Britain because of the racism she faced. The ire my comment drew actually surprised me and I went silent, waited a while and left. My mother was upset by the overt racism, but later expressed that she knew it was there. It led to a deeper discussion about how my brothers' children were learning race, and the minimization and denial of the teaching of liberal white supremacy ensued. I am still deeply affected by the conversation that took place with my aunt and uncle, and it forms a fissure in my ability to connect with them. For the first time, I think my mother understood the loneliness I sometimes feel in my family because of racism.

I believe that lying is a foundational value in white families and that we would greatly benefit from knowing the truth. All families have lies and secrets, but I think the ways that whites lie about who we actually are is very different. Critical Whiteness Scholar, Jessie Daniel's (1997) book entitled *White Lies*, discusses the ways that white families pass down whiteness and enforce ideas of white supremacy, but in her preface, she reflects on how racism played out in her own family, revealing her grandfather's involvement in the KKK, her family's inaccurate narrative about it, and also the sexual abuse that she suffered from him. Here she wrestles with the relevance of this information in writing:

> But there is another, more difficult issue that I grappled with about telling the family secret. If I were to reveal that my grandfather was a Klan member, should I go on to reveal that he was the very same grandfather that molested me as a child? I think not. Surely, this is much too personal and not irrelevant. But the debate continued in my mind, and I wondered why I considered it relevant to reveal one and not the other. And, further, doesn't this perfectly illustrate my point about

> race, gender and sexuality being intertwined? I then realized the importance of
>
> including this narrative here. (p. xii)

As she points out, gender, race, and sexuality work together and this connection, between

overt, extreme racism and sexual violence is made throughout her work. It also speaks to

her particular form of race treason, and that is breaking silence. As I discussed in

previous chapters, white women take a race-gendered bribe in exchange for matriarchal

control over school systems and helping professions. We trade the power in exchange for

silence about sexual violence among other things. White women being able to make

connections between sexual violence, domestic violence, and racism is important because

they work hand in hand and control white families. Understanding them as part of

systems can lead to resistance in those spaces, and also explains how whiteness is

constructed.

Bartky's (1990) statement that, "The personal is political" brings to mind some of

the education I received about my place as a white woman in my white family. White

men believe that they own white women, referring to us as "their women" (Daniels,

1997; Feagin & O'Brien, 2003). I was not raised in a family that had a protective

discourse around me as the only daughter, and so some of the things friends grew up with

where their brothers and fathers saw them as their duty to protect were not present in my

family. Like the women in Fine and Weis (1998), my mother worked just like my father,

but she was still required to do most of the domestic work. I had two brothers and was

raised to be one of the boys, while simultaneously being rewarded for my

accommodations and patience. In fact, my paternal grandfather always said I had the

patience of Job. My mother was raised to serve men and taught me the same, having long-lasting implications on my adult life.

I grew up in the 80s and 90s and there were many high-profile rape and sexual harassment cases that I remember as part of my education. The dinner table, where my father held court, was usually a space where we talked about what was going on in the news. My father did not value feminism and did not have a handle on the racial or gender dynamics at play, but that did not stop him from believing he understood cases involving sexual harassment or rape. When men hijack these conversations in families without recognizing that they are completely ignorant of real power dynamics, they are doing so only to express domination. It is a significant form of constructing white patriarchy in the current era. That my father didn't understand sexual harassment but had an opinion about women who wore too much perfume to work was really just to assert the natural order of things: Men are in charge. This is very similar to the white racial arrogance (DiAngelo, 2011) that I have mentioned in previous chapters, where whites believe they know about and understand race without having ever really thought about it. Whites do this to maintain control of the discourse and society (DiAngelo, 2011) just as men do this to maintain control over women. For this to be undone, women have to require boundaries about how to frame discussions about gendered violence in thoughtful, loving ways that give daughters a sense of agency and that they are valuable, not that they are possible life-ruiners of men.

Love? And Marriage

Marriage, while closely associated with love, is a political institution. One of the ways in which white women maintain what we see as respectable lives is by emphasizing

our settled lives through marriage (Fine & Weis, 1998). One of the phrases that kept

coming up in Ada Calhoun's recent book *Why We Can't Sleep* was white women

expressing that they "did everything right" (Calhoun, 2019). Marriage is what it means to

do "everything right." While Calhoun claims that the women that she spoke to varied in

the class and race, it was clear from the worries of the women she interviewed that she

only looked at upper and solidly middle-class white women. For example, one problem

she points out is that women are worried about retirement regardless of how much they

have saved and uses a single woman who has saved one million dollars as an example of

generational anxiety. This is clearly not an accurate look at the worries of most women,

and as with most examples of white feminism, it leaves out even a class analysis.

When I got divorced, I was 36 years old and had two young daughters, ages five

and two. I learned a lot about the patriarchal underpinnings of our court system

throughout all of the exhausting and seemingly endless divorce proceedings. It was not

just the economic and legal proceedings that were difficult; I also had to resolve the

emotional issues that came with suddenly being a divorced woman in a middle-class

community. My husband came from upper class Minneapolis, and the community that I

was part of when I was married was primarily white middle class. When I left, I felt the

immediate fall from financial security, and also a fall from some sort of unnamable

respectability. It was against the rules of whiteness, and I could actually feel it. Divorce

would turn me into a single mother, which white women have constructed as part of

Blackness (Collins, 2001). We have problematized female-headed households, and made

it seem like the families were less than stable than nuclear households (Collins, 2000;

Fine and Weis, 1998). I felt a sense of shame and judgment, and I am surprised at how it impacted my daughter's schooling and community.

My older daughter struggled to read because she had issues with her eye coordination that would not show up without a full ophthalmological exam. She was passing the eye exams at the school and in her pediatrician's office so I did not think reading was a problem with her eyes until another parent asked me if I had checked them. Meanwhile, her teachers told me she had emotional issues because of the problems with my divorce. Apparently, she had been crying daily and going to the nurse's office with headaches, and no one told me, as though I would not have cared or taken action. I felt like one of the recalcitrant parents that my teacher education had taught me about and I, even as a white woman, was up against white matriarchal power. How the tables turn! Middle- and upper-class white women, considered the ideal feminine, have always controlled working class white women (Fine and Weis, 1998), as discussed in chapter 2, but I had underestimated the power of being married, of being seen as good, normal, attentive, and all of the things a mother should be.

As a graduate assistant in my College of Education, one older white female professor said, "I think the parents should have to move out of the house, why should the kids have to suffer?" when I told her I was divorced with two children. She said this without knowing anything about my situation or obstacles, but felt morally informed because so much of white women's positions as teachers and teacher educators has historically focused on white women's moral superiority (Spring, 2008). While I feel less shame about my divorce now, at the time, I felt the judgment and embarrassment of someone who had done something wrong. Because my divorce was high conflict, I got

constant feedback about getting along, and even had to attend co-parenting classes where the facilitator ignored power dynamics and even abuse in many of the examples that she gave and made it seem like in most situations men and women are equally at fault for conflicts, suggesting they have equal power.

Fine and Weis (1998) offer some explanation for white women's adherence to the rules of marriage that is worthy of examination. White women, like all women, benefit from a two-income household and some live in fear of losing it.

An implicit contract between husband and wife stipulates that she provides household and personal services demanded, and in return for which he provides for her and her children whatever he deems appropriate. The household is organized in relations to his needs and wishes: mealtimes are when he wants; he eats with the children or alone, as he chooses; sex is when he desires; the children are to be kept quiet when he does not want to hear them. The wife knows at the back of her mind that he could take his wage-earning capacity and make a similar contract with another woman. (Fine & Weis, 1998, p. 137)

In spite of the current rhetoric about the wage gap dissipating, the wage gap is alive and well and tends to impact mothers over fathers, recent data suggests that women overall make 80-85 cents on a white man's dollar. (Graf, Brown, & Patten, 2019). Motherhood is even more challenging, some of the data measuring a much more significant gap (Graf, et al, 2019). When the wage gap statistics are broken down by race, there are significant disparities between white and Asian women, with Black women making 61% and Latinx women making 63% of white men's earnings (Hegewisch, Phil, & Hartmann, 2019). Inequity in pay has always been present (Davis, 1981) and white

working-class women struggled financially without partners. Marriage has served to secure women, and notions of the family wage have served to bind white women to men because under family wage ideology, it was perfectly acceptable for corporations to pay some workers (primarily women) less than others (primarily men) (Fine & Weis, 1998). When we continue an intersectional approach to this we can see in Crenshaw's (2003) original analysis of the case where Black women were not able to sue Ford for discrimination because all the women who worked in the office were white, (Graf, Brown, & Patten, 2019) and all the men who worked on the line were Black which necessitated intersectionality within legal studies (Crenshaw, 2003). While this Fine and Weis (1998) study may seem outdated, the current wage statistics support the notion that women are simply paid less than white men. Because white women benefit somewhat financially from marriage, they are reluctant to call out domestic violence and notions of respectability around marriage also bind white women to men emotionally (Fine & Weis, 1998). For women, whiteness is linked to marriage (Fine & Weis, 1998).

Interracial Love and Marriage

Marriage laws have also obsessively focused on white women and the possibility they might marry men of color, particularly Black men. *Birth of a Nation*, a film released and screened under Woodrow Wilson in the 1920s is one of many examples of portraying Black men as a danger to white women (Cashin, 2017; Riggs, 1987). White women participated in lynching and prosecutions of rape, many times covering interracial relationships (Feimster, 2009). While white women's marriage to Latinos, for example, has been discouraged, it has not been against the law (Cashin, 2017). The focus of anti-miscegenation has been on white women and Black men (Cashin, 2017; Daniels, 1997).

In 2010, only 48% of households were married, which was down from 78% in the 1970s. However, interracial and interethnic marriage rates have increased to 15% in 2013, but Black and white marriages are still only 1.7 percent of new marriages between the years of 2008 and 2010 (Cashin, 2017). Feagin and O'Brien (2003) found that upper and middle class white men did not use overtly racist discourse, but expressed discomfort with white women dating Black men particularly when it came to their daughters. Most of their discomfort was around the old idea that the children would have a hard time, but their discourse also revealed that white men see Black people as very different from them in culture and values (Feagin & O'Brien, 2003).

Criticism of interracial love does not just come from people who are racist. One of the most painful conflicts and issues that I have reflected upon in my race work is the concept of white privilege within interracial love. Cooper (2018) explains how difficult it is for Black women to find mates and the pain that she feels when she sees Black men with white women. This is a painful dilemma for everyone trying to challenge racism. White women are far more likely to cross the color line than white men (Cashin, 2017), so it does not end up being a fair trade as some might say. The problem is not just one of love, although we should view love as a human rights issue because it is a necessity (Cooper, 2018), it is also one of financial stability and privilege (Fine & Weis, 1998). The communist party of the 1930s identified an issue with Black women being left out of the dating pool and attempted to solve some of these issues because they saw that partnership was being unevenly distributed (Cooper, 2018).

White women may want to claim racial innocence here, but it is important that white women understand their complicity. We have actively participated in the

construction of Black women as undesirable in order to secure ourselves next to white men (Collins, 2000). As Hurtado (1996) contends, white women are controlled by seduction and women of Color have been controlled by rejection. The implication is that white women have secured themselves as the most valuable objects of desire to both white and Black men and have added to the *misogynoir,* the specific hatred of Black women, that is prevalent in movies, music, and other forms of media. In fact, the preference for women being thin comes from white women who wanted to identify against Black women as part of constructing ideal women's bodies (Strings, 2019). Preferring thinness came is a way for white women to police Black women's bodies and each other (Strings, 2019).

As I explain in Chapter 2, white women have produced controlling issues of Black women, criminalized Black men, while also securing their desirability to white men. White women's sexuality has been closely monitored by white patriarchy (Daniels, 1997; Cashin, 2017; Collins, , 2000; Feimster, 2009) and white women who couple with men of color are viewed as race traitors (Daniels, 1997). This label, in the negative sense, is also applied to lesbians because white women are supposed to produce white babies. (Daniels, 1997). In rejecting white men, we are also rejecting white patriarchal control over our intimate lives. The possibilities for transcending our social structure through interracial love should not be understated. Relationships with men of color have been an important part of my racial knowledge, which is aligned with the research about how white people change (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Tatum, 1997; 2019).

I often struggle with the anger that is directed at white women instead of white men who are too racist to desire Black women in discussions about interracial love.

Straight white women may be benefitting from this system of white supremacy in love

relationships, but we cannot solve it alone. Men of color have also participated in

privileging the desirability of white women by reproducing controlling images of Black

women (Collins, 2000). This is one of the most painful problems of race to me. It takes

being hyper-vigilant about all forms of *misogynoir* and pointing them out. It means

making white women aware of our own behavior and that we do not get to make jokes

about Black women's appearance or bodies. I think about the series *30 Rock*, where Tina

Fey, a white woman, participated in recreating racial stereotypes through the wife of

Tracy Jordan on the show. Fey created a character, Angie, who was portrayed as hyper-

sexual, impulsive, and uneducated. Unfortunately, Black men who have risen in media

also degrade Black women through the music industry, film, and television. I recently

tried to watch *Snowfall*, a series about the beginning of the drug war in Los Angeles and

was immediately struck by the portrayal of Black women as violent and turned it off.

John Singleton, the director, should know better. *Saturday Night Live* had Eddie Murphy

on as a guest in December 2019. In his opening, he brought Dave Chappell, Tracy

Jordan, and Chris Rock on stage. The powerful Black women who had also been part of

the show were missing from the stage. Everyone needs to show their respect and regard

for Black women in all spaces in order to challenge the prevalence of misogynoir.

Motherhood as a Racial Awakening

The most pronounced shift in my own thinking was becoming a mother and

beginning to think more personally about what race and humanitarian love meant.

Motherhood radicalized me. Some mothers close the door to create safety for only their

children, while others start to mother the world. I don't mean this in the negative

matriarchal way that I have been discussing, but in the truly deep, ferocious love and righteous anger that develops in some women through parenthood. For me motherhood has been a path to truth, vulnerability, suffering, beauty, joy, grief, and love. It has made me realize the ways I exist in the world and, even though I considered myself a critical educator before I had my children, it was motherhood that motivated my exploration of privilege and domination. Because motherhood is a transformative experience, it can be something that brings the core issues of humanity into a sharper focus or it can be a more powerful weapon to dehumanize and control others. I really never see a third way.

As I trace my path into consciousness, I often look back at the early days of holding my older daughter, Juliet. I sat and rocked her, rarely putting her down, and in awe of the ways that I knew and did not know her already. While I was rocking, the fireworks to the baseball stadium were close by, so loud they sounded like missiles. In those moments, I thought of mothers in bunkers hanging on to their children, unable to protect them from global war and violence. The injustice of me being able to just rock this tiny six pounds of life without worry was not lost on me. I was a world history teacher before I had children. The curriculum addressed one horror after another; colonization, genocide, bloody revolutions, and the Holocaust. Death. I felt the weight of that history and I felt the inconsolable knowledge (Britzman, 1998) of my own privilege. As W.E.B Dubois asked of whites so long ago, "How does it feel to be a problem?" (Leonardo, 2013; Yancy, 2015). I have not stopped thinking about the question ever since.

Are White People Creeps? Raising Race Traitors

This section starts with an episode from my own life with my children when they were younger and then I discuss how I view Critical Race Parenting or ParentCrit (Matias and Montoya 2015; Nishi 2018; 2020). ParentCrit is the critically reflective practice of white parents and parents of color who are trying to undo racism in their families (Nishi, 2020). White parents have much to learn from parents of color who have been doing critical work with their children for generations, teaching them how to navigate racist systems and people, and attempting to empower a positive identity. White people have a different task because we are trying to undo the passage of a superiority complex in hopes our children will be part of the changes that need to take place in society. Tatum (1997; 2019) draws on the work of Janet Helms who explained white identity development. She says:

> While the task for people of color is to resist negative societal issues and develop a positive sense of self in the face of a racist society, Helms says the task for Whites is to develop a positive White identity based in reality, not in assumed superiority. In order to do that each person must become aware of his or her Whiteness, accept it as personally and socially significant and learn to feel good about it, not in the sense of a Klan members "White Pride" but in the context of a commitment to a just society. (Tatum, 1997; 2019, p. 94)

The tensions in the field about whether there is such a thing as a positive white identity come up here (See Ignatiev,1996 and Leonardo, 2015) as I think about how I could possibly hang on to my whiteness in a way that would become emancipatory. This is why I am offering new frameworks for parenting that move not toward anti-racism but more

toward treason and abolition (Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996), interrupting whiteness in the first place.

White mothers need to think about how they are passing down whiteness to their children in material and social ways, but I would argue, we also need to look at how we are forming dominator culture in our families. We need to reflect on when we are fusing love to power, and whether we are open and honest emotionally, which resists the silence of whiteness. We need to be vulnerable in front of our children so they will be vulnerable too. Raising critically conscious children is about disallowing fantasy to operate in the family (Parker, 2017; Nishi, 2020) and it is imperative that we unearth some of what Yancy (2015) named our affective and imaginative lives. It means that we teach white children who white people were and who they are, and we teach them about who has resisted.

"Mama, Are White People Creeps?"

I was driving with my daughters a few years ago when news of another police officer murdering a Black teenager came on the radio. My daughter Juliet said, "Again?" She then angrily asked me to turn it off. It makes her too sad, she says. "Yes, again," I say welling up, feeling the weight of her word- *Again*. She was eight years old and I have not sheltered her from the violence that rages against people of color. This does not mean that I have given her graphic descriptions, but that her awareness has evolved as she has aged, starting with "some white people don't like people with darker skin" and "some White people don't like people who don't speak English" etc. and as she grew, she has learned that some white people kill people of color that they do not like. I have also had to work with the limited race education she is receiving at school where she is told every

year that racism is over: Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks changed everything. She goes to school that is roughly half white and half Latino but liberal white colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) has a firm grip on the school as expected. There is also a defensive lack of curiosity about how to teach elementary age students about these issues even though we know that children as young as three transact race and understand white supremacy (Van Ausdale & Feagan, 2001). The most famous example of children's externalized white supremacy and Black children's internalized racism is the doll experiment where children had to choose between dolls they saw as good or bad. Results showed that white and Black children chose white dolls as "good" and "pretty" (Ladson-Billings, 2009). While the original test was done in the 1950s, it was redesigned in the 2000s with much the same results showing that we have made little progress in ensuring that children of all backgrounds see themselves as equal and valuable. This, as with interracial marriage, is another space where white women claim innocence, as though white children's racial attitudes have nothing to do with their own.

Later that evening, over dinner, we talked more about police violence and racism. During the discussion, my five-year-old daughter chimed in. She asked, "So, are white people creeps?" Her question stopped me in my tracks. Her favorite word had been "creep" ever since a police officer showed up at her school to talk about "stranger danger", and, to her, it seems to be what she calls someone who appears nice but is actually mean. This definition is important because of what she is really asking— Are white people mean even though they seem nice? I thought it was interesting that she was able to perceive the deception of civility behind white supremacy. Her naming the

meanness of whites sounds so simple. And so, I told her. "Yes, whites who are not trying not to stop being creeps are creeps." It's a choice whites make, I told her.

One of my goals when discussing police violence, systemic violence, and the daily survival of racism that our friends of color face is teaching them to bear witness to the pain of people of color instead of learning to spectate. This brings in another instance where we must teach co:implication. Boler (1999) delineates bearing witness from spectating and writes "as a witness we undertake the historic responsibilities and co:implication" (Boler, 1999, p. 186). Co:implication is important as we teach our children social responsibility because otherwise, we teach children that their destinies are not connected, that they are not intertwined as oppressors or oppressed, but rather, separate individual phenomena. Critical educators know we are either upholding the structure or disrupting it, and even children need to feel that agency by naming their participation in acting for or against something. We must communicate resistance. Whites learn to disregard the feelings of people of color from a very early age (Thandeka, 1999; Tatum, 1997; 2019). It is part of their formation. In teaching my children to regard the suffering of others, I have to cut the distance that they feel when faced with systemic violence and disallow the voyeurism that is much more common among whites. As I discuss race with them, I am careful not to use the friendly script about privilege that is now what most well-meaning whites use (Leonardo 2013; Nishi, 2018; 2020). I fear that it is sidestepping some of the deeper issues and creates self-satisfaction and complacency. Whites can all regurgitate simple understandings about their "invisible backpack" (McIntosh, 1989) at any time now, but the issue is so much deeper and whites need to be pushed to recognize their place in history and their participation in the formation of their

children as white (Nishi, 2020). So, I don't lecture them on white privilege; I point it out in our daily lives. They are engaged in reading media through this lens. Both take note about how people of color are portrayed on TV, they listen to stories from others about unfairness, I go over the events of the day that frustrated me or times I witnessed racism. We recently drove to Texas and I let them know how unsafe most people of color feel on rural roads. I think these discussions lay certain groundwork for critical consciousness, but it is not my only strategy and should not be seen as an end goal.

Working on Emotional Responses

One of the significant pieces that impacts my daughters' consciousness is for them to see me model validation of racism. They see me empathize with friends of color and call out racism with them. They do not see me dismiss or minimize the experiences of our community in ways that alienate people of color. To be antiracist as Kendi (2019) asserts, we must consistently call it out every time. We can't let it slide with family or friends. What is interesting is to watch my daughters who are now 10 and 12 move with ease among all communities, have close friends of color, and even disrupt classroom spaces by challenging teachers.

Whites not only suppress the emotions of people of color, they repress them within themselves and so in their fight for existence, they are not able to understand themselves or their place in the world. We can look at global, national, and localized patterns of behavior and find that whites are the colonizers, they maintain power daily through creating and recreating race, and this extends not only to the material but emotional, spiritual aspects of white people's lives and attempts to do the same for people of color. Whites only allow the shallow emotions and conceal the deeper, less

comfortable ones until they just go away. They ensure that this concealment and emotional appropriateness is followed by surveilling public spaces and institutions such as schools, as Boler (1999) argues. This is the very intimate work of disrupting white supremacy in my daughters. If political transformations were all that was necessary, we would see a different world; it's the emotional blockages that recreate whiteness-unchecked superiority and then a construct of emotionality that submerges emotional knowledge and teaches to submerge it in others.

Taking Responsibility for Making Your Child's Life White

Nishi (2020) offers a vignette of very typical questions white people ask about racism and their children. She writes:

Once, after I had offered a community training on 'dismantling whiteness,' I had a white father approach me. He and his wife were upper class and white and were raising their two biological children in a wealthy white suburb. We were discussing white children and their understanding of race, and he said, "My 7-year-old, Skyler, said to me yesterday, 'Dad, why are all Black people famous?'" Upon sharing this, he offered me an incredulous look in which I think he expected me to share in his utter confusion.

White parents are typically shocked by the things that come out of their children's mouths and usually express confusion as part of whites' belief they are innocent (Applebaum, 2015; Collins, 2000). In my own dealings with white parents, I frequently hear the myth of white ignorance (Mills, 2007), where whites feign racial knowledge and truly believe their child must be getting these ideas somewhere other than home.

Nishi continues, consistent with Bonilla Silva (2003), that most white people are not close to people of color. His comments on where he lives are also consistent with Ladson-Billings (2009) that housing and schooling are more segregated now than before *Brown vs the Board of Education*, date. She writes:

"Does he know any Black people?" I asked. The man furrowed his brow, and said, "No, just those he sees on TV." After describing the painfully obvious connection between his child thinking all Black people were famous and how it was because he only saw Black people on TV, I went on to discuss the importance of children having relationships and engaging with racially diverse communities so as not to stereotype People of Color. The father nodded, but then added, "It's just that our neighborhood is so white." With that, he shrugged and our conversation ended.

The white shrug has not been analyzed under white emotionality (Matias, 2015) or fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), but it is something I have observed in race conversations with progressive whites. It seems to be saying, "Well, (sigh), I tried." Alexander (2010) calls this racial apathy where whites may not harbor any conscious racial animus, but may not actually care enough about the well-being of Black people to disrupt it. This shrug reinforces the natural order of things as though he were powerless to change things or even care.

Nishi goes on to analyze:

This Dad could not envision making choices about where his family lived or learned that considered his children's critical consciousness and racial awareness. Subsequently, his white son was learning about Black people from TV. This

meant that the source of his son's race knowledge was and would continue to be

formed by mass media, and all the racist stereotypes therein. The

intergenerational whiteness was being almost perfectly maintained in this nice,

white, neoliberal family.

Like Nishi, who is white, I feel frustrated by the modeling of indifference. Portrayals of

Black men on television are still negative (Alexander, 2010). When we don't speak with

our children about the racist stereotypes on TV, white children ingest them uncritically

and believe that they are true. I have struggled with media and whether to let them take in

everything, stopping to explain, or whether to censor what they see. What I have settled

on is good old-fashioned family TV time where we watch everything together, stopping

for my commentary, and I also make sure the shows we take in are also diverse. Taking

in this kind of media together does have an impact on how people view diverse groups

(Cashin, 2017). It is considered a parasocial contact that can positively impact critical

consciousness.

Nishi (2020) goes on to lament the ways that whiteness moves and shifts in even

spaces that are intended to be challenging it. I brought this up when discussing how many

white people are attempting to raise their consciousness through reading groups, but that

without someone present in the space to challenge them they may just be able to

reinscribe whiteness using the same language that racist whites use. "Whiteness is

slippery in the way that it's hard to get a handle on. As soon as you think you have nailed

down how whiteness is operating, whites have already morphed how they perform and

maintain it." Because so many white parents are unable to see their participation in

racism, it is really difficult for them to demand action in their schools. They deflect their

own racism and even silence people who call anyone racist. They directly scapegoat other families. She says, "This leads to a whiteness performance that creates a scapegoat of racist Uncle Donald at the holiday dinner table while quietly allowing today's white parents to go about affirming white norms and superiority with their children, all the while assuring themselves that they and their children aren't racist" (Nishi, 2020).

Solidifying For-ness

Parenting forces me to reside in possibility. It forces us all to continue age-old searches for truth and beauty and their convergence. Parenting, allows for despair but not hopelessness. I think it's important to define our "for-ness" as Ahmed (2014) argues. No culture of humanity has been created yet (hooks, 1999), which means that we must see and teach our children that the world is a transformational space and we must see our parenting as part of that transformation. It also informs my practice as I attempt the same faith in others. Teaching children to be critically reflective, observant, to bear witness, and to intervene is the scope of the work of any white person. And while I am educating my children about the injustices and violence of the system, we also need to educate them about the movements for justice, the courage and connection between people fighting for the same thing. We need to teach our children what we must turn against while we are teaching them to turn toward the vision of a world founded on radical love and respect for all humanity.

Working with Exile: Prioritizing Love and Connection

Whites tend to feel a deep sense of exile as they examine whiteness (Leonardo, 2013). In fact, we are supposed to in some ways. Leonardo (2013) describes the need for critical whiteness studies. He writes:

Whiteness Studies encourages Whites to go into exile, if only to experience the disjuncture of having to leave familiar surroundings. For too long, Whites have lived with the luxury of either avoiding racial others through segregation or displacing them through colonization. On the other hand, historically speaking many White ethnics immigrated to the United States and other nations, arguably from the basis for Whites understanding of exile. However, history also informs through force or appropriation. Exile requires something else, which is the feeling of unrootedness, of homelessness, rather than putting down roots in someone else's land. It is the feeling of restlessness (Freire, 1970/1993; Said, 2000), even rootlessness, and not resting on other peoples' soil without their invitation (see Espiritu, 2003; also cited in Colomba, 2006). (p.101)

Feelings of exile and isolation are very common among whites and I argue that antiracist whites have come to value it more than we should. The feeling of isolation that Leonardo (2013) points out is aligned with Tatum's (1997; 2019) description of the disintegration phase where whites really do begin to question assumptions and everything else that we may know. This process of exile or unrootedness needs to be resolved within community in order to proceed lovingly in social justice movements. We cannot stay there and should not value staying there.

I found this value of exile disruptive to some of my family relationships because it makes some whites feel like our responsibility is to some obscure notion of humanity (Matias & Allen, 2013) rather than to working on the love within our families. To break the cycle that was described by Mab Segrest (1994) or Jesse Daniels (1997) is not to leave it behind. Even some of the discourse around parenting and child abuse that

Thandeka (1999) asserts and some whiteness scholars use is not valuable when we are attempting to transform our community. Because part of white emotionality means distance and shame, we can't solve it through abandonment and lack of connection. We must move toward one another.

Sometimes it has been difficult over the years to hang on to any sense of belonging in my family of origin. There have been arguments, angry outbursts, and tension at the dinner table. My inability to simply socialize with other white parents once they reveal their racism, whether they see it or not, has impacted my children and our community. One of the loneliest phenomena of antiracism has been that most people in my community claim to be progressive, to be intellectually curious, socially responsible and engaged, so I thought we would be in the struggle together as I became more critically conscious. When I started to study race, I had assumed that as I gained new knowledge and insight from what I was learning in graduate school, that I would be met with excitement by friends and family about the suppressed history, narratives, and perspectives that many communities of color already knew, but were new to me. I was met with the opposite. I was met with what I would call a defensive lack of curiosity; whites either pretended to already understand race, aligned with what DiAngelo (2011and 2018) labels white racial arrogance, or to make me participate in tedious discussions on class dynamics even though I had never denied the significance of Marxism in the first place. One friend claimed she read the *New Yorker* and *New York Times* so she felt like she was pretty well informed. I often wonder if white progressives can truly believe that I have spent countless hours, reading, studying, discussing, presenting, and writing about things that they could simply Google the answer to.

Taking up a critical examination of whiteness is not just a political task. It is the very unwinding of emotions, spirit, and how love has been learned and disrupted. That my parents let us stew in the company of family racial hatred was not just harmful to people of color; it harmed us too. It taught us to ignore messages about who matters, it taught us to tolerate injustice, and it also served as a warning shot for racial treason. I have not resolved the racism of my extended family. I don't know why whites fail to see how our own mean-spirited nature has broken the rules of civility, violated any sort of religious conviction, and how our lie about it is wrong. I know that my family may have felt left behind or abandoned by me as I supposedly picked up some sort of radical racial discourse, but I also felt abandoned when they chose not to journey with me: When they chose to argue instead of listen, or when they chose to deny instead of confront.

Love Remains the Answer

Love separates us from the hopeless feeling, or feeling like we are dealing in lost causes. Recent work on radical love, in his essay "On Lost Causes" historian and social theorist Edward Said wrote, "A lost cause is associated in the mind and in practice with a hopeless cause: that is, something you support or believe in that can no longer be believed in except as something without hope of achievement" (Said, 2000, p. 527). I, like many people, who are trying to live in a way that resists and refuses the current state of things, grapple with a loss of hope. As an anti-racist educator, I find myself asking whether I am part of what some say is a lost cause and how I must resolve this in order to move on. I wonder if it is ok to locate this work within a sort of social depression- to recognize the wisdom in the broken state and begin from there, a place that welcomes heartbreak knowing it leads to consciousness and transformation. Sorrow and melancholy

must play into social movements (Cheng, 2001), much how they play into personal movement— through cycles of wounding, and healing, and compassionately bearing witness to the same in others.

What does it mean to try to make things better knowing that things might not change? And in following that thinking, is there value in reflecting on whether your cause is lost with some frequency and being able to truly examine the ways in which one operates and thinks about her agency. Those of us doing this work see and feel the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992) and the ways that racism shape-shifts and sneaks its way through every thread of our culture. As a white woman in whiteness studies, I reflect on history, society, and myself all the time but have failed to recognize my own despair in the situation and how that has impacted my consciousness. I have struggled with this question of whether I am part of a lost cause throughout my career as an educator and if so, how do I continue on in spite of it? Because of love. Teaching is an act of humanitarian love and all of the despair resolves itself when we can acknowledge that.

Yancy (2015) uses the concept of suturing to and being unsutured, to live in the anxiety of not having answers or closure regarding race and whiteness. He writes:

In short, I know many whites who do not make space for the questions: "How does it feel to be a white problem?" Figuratively there is a continuous process of encrustation, a scabbing over, as it were, of the white self that strives to remain un-sutured vis-à-vis the reality of white racism. The "scabbing over" can be theorized as the various polyps that whites subconsciously or unconsciously use to cover over the profound pain and distress caused from being palpably exposed. Being un-sutured, however, is not just to remain open to the wounded, but it is

also to cultivate the practice of remaining with the opened wound itself, of

tarrying with the pain of the opening itself, the incision as it were. (Yancy, 2015,

p. xvii)

Tarrying, and allowing the *unsutured* self relieves the dominator cultures demands that

we know and control everything. We can allow for curiosity and for-ness (Ahmed, 2015)

when we choose possibility and openness. If we situated ourselves in love, we can linger

in a new imaginary, we can disrupt systems by prioritizing people, and we can learn to be

open to new societal formations.

Chapter 5: Toward Critical White Feminist Thought

A few years ago, I had a party and one of my friends, a middle-aged Black man, explained his trip to India. "I went days without seeing any white people. Not one," he said.

"Wow," I said, "What was that like?"

"It felt like freedom," He said. He got quiet. I knew I had asked a question only a white person would ask.

His comment has stuck with me. The absence of whiteness in all of its violence and terror was freedom. The contemplation of freedom is the primary question of all critical thought (Collins, 2019). Answering the question of what freedom means to white women will have to include examinations of loyalty to white patriarchy *and* white matriarchy. White women will need to think about what they must give up in order to live an antiracist life. As a divorced antiracist white mother, I am practiced in the art of letting go of people, ideas, and security. I have had my own personal struggle with freedom and it informs my work, deepens my understanding of exile, and strengthens my connection to the struggle of women, people of color, LGBTQ, people with disabilities, immigrants, and other systematically marginalized groups. This dissertation only examines the category of white and heteronormative cis-gendered women, but that does not mean that the analysis should stop there. Critical white feminist thought should encapsulate the concerns of white people who long for freedom from our role of oppressor, and freedom from domination by white patriarchy without reinforcing white matriarchy. Critical white feminist though includes the offerings, tensions, and commitments that we must tarry with to transform white women.

The previous chapters have resided in the critique of white women. This chapter explores possibilities for transformative resistance theories for white women. Why do I call for a critical *white* feminist thought? If whiteness is the problem, why do I reify it by saying it can be transformed as opposed to undoing whiteness itself? We are still at a point where white women will not identify as or with being white (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; DiAngelo, 2011, DiAngelo, 2018), so I feel the need to keep white as an identity in order for white women to understand that I am talking about them and to them. I also call for white passing, honorary white, or women who would pass for white as a "street race" (López, Vargas, Juarez, Cacari-Stone, & Bettez, 2018). Because whiteness is an ideology that can lead to internalized oppression (Tatum, 1997; 2019), women of color who buy in to white supremacy must examine some of the ways that they also participate in the white matriarchal domination in their roles in schools and other professions.

As Tatum (1997; 2019) says, "Effective consciousness raising must also point the way toward constructive action" (p. 105). This development of theory should lead to social action or praxis; however, it will not provide a concrete roadmap or checklist. Social change comes from contemplative, collaborative, self-reflective and deliberate action. The focus on *being* can also answer the call for what to *do*. This chapter discusses the role of theory in transformation, suggestions for thought and practice and some of the issues with white women in the field on Critical Race Studies in Education.

The Role of Theory

I have presented at many conferences over the years, and in spite of attendees agreeing or reacting positively, the comment about applying theory always comes up. Intersectional theories were developed as an intervention (Collins, 2019), leading to

strategies, policies, and other concrete changes in the social structure. Theory informs practice in ways that vary by social location and institutional constraints. The path to action is not simple or linear, and should be adaptive, imaginative, and lead to concrete changes. The greatest significance of theory is that it provides a back story and explanation for systematic injustice (Love, 2019). Theory gives us the language to understand our environments and some theories intimate possibilities for change by providing clarity, vision, and morality. Learning social theory has been the most powerful tool in my journey to understanding my social location, action, and ways that I can resist. Black feminist theory is where I opened my eyes and began understanding the struggle that white people have created and sustain through systematic racism for people of color. The either/or binary of theory and practice has set up a nonsensical argument in the educational spaces I have navigated and I hope to disrupt that. Love (2019) says,

> Teachers need to have the backstory of the community and why change is so hard because of patterns of injustice reproduced by established systems and structures of inequality. Theory consistently explains patterns of injustice when sound bites, flamboyant yet hollow teacher practices, and myths about dark people block ideas of humanity, justice, and dignity, Theory is a "location for healing," like the North Star. (Love, 2019, p. 132)

This "location for healing" in this work resides in the possibilities of true solidarity with people of color; it lies with white women abandoning old habits of being, relationships to whiteness, and living in honesty instead of mythology. Theory points the way to practice, even if the practice resides within white women's self-reflexivity, leading to transforming their institutional behaviors and relationships with colleagues and students.

Ahmed (2007) calls for a phenomenology of whiteness that examines some of what is beneath and behind our behaviors. Some of our experiences may be hard to interpret or capture through language, but we must attempt to do so. She writes:

A phenomenology of whiteness helps us to notice institutional habits; it brings what is behind, what does not get seen as that background to social action, to the surface in a certain way. It does not teach us how to change those habits and that is partly the point. In not being promising, in refusing to promise anything, such an approach to whiteness can allow us to keep open the force of the critique. It is by showing how we are stuck, by attending to what is habitual and routine in 'the what' of the work that we can keep one the possibility of habit changes, without using that possibility to displace our attention to the present, and without simply wishing for new tricks. (p. 165)

As she said, bringing things up to the surface does not necessarily point toward prescribed actions (Ahmed, 2007). She agrees with Yancy (2015) that whites can sit with the critique, turn over the meanings, and allow the openness. I have brought the mechanisms of white feminine racial power to the surface by theorizing about a white matriarchy, and now we need to live in that critique and undo some institutional habits, hoping they do not return as new tricks for whiteness as Ahmed says. Understanding white matriarchy should lead to new strategies, questions to reflect upon, and interventions that challenge it in addition to collective challenges to white patriarchy.

The openness that makes space for new awareness leading to intervention can be seen a space of radical possibility. Whites can learn to practice radical openness in order to carry the burden of history with the weight of the present moment. In our longing for

new reality, we can approach our practice through Thirdspace (Soja, 1996). Soja (1996)

draws on Lefebvre's conceptualization of Thirdspace and defines it as, "…The space

where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear; but also

a secret and conjectured object, filled with illusions and allusions, a space that is common

to all of us yet never able to be completely seen and understood, an 'unimaginable

universe'…" (Soja, 1996, p. 56). Experiences of Thirdspace can happen in educational

settings where people can finally become vulnerable enough to hold the multiple truths

and paradoxes of the human experience. The deeper we go into ourselves and connect

with others, the more we can witness one another's pain, create authentic empathy, and

move forward changed. There is no manual to get there and that is by design. The

boundaries of white womanhood that surveil loyalty, complicity, and moral virtue can

impede transformation because whiteness as part of dominator culture does not allow

open questions. It is risky to lose control but it is the only way out of whiteness.

Much teacher training speaks to a life of the mind, teaching who you are, and

other common phrases that denote an understanding of a teacher being a *person*.

Roseboro (2008) quotes Parker Palmer to explain what she believes should be the

purpose of education. She wrote:

> He says, "Education is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment,
>
> liberation, and transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about
>
> finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world." (as cited in hooks,
>
> 2003, p. 43). In this respect, education connects our personal lives to the political
>
> and social context in which we live. (Roseboro, 2008, p. 79)

If we adopt the full multidimensional meaning of education as part of healing and wholeness, a concept that would impact the social, political, and spiritual parts of self, our praxis will look quite different, centering on the whole person. I believe that we are in a time of whites longing for change and to understand racism. Like many people of color, I am also suspicious of white "awakenings" but I think tapping into the longing that I witness in many whites right now can be used strategically. Longing captures the emotional state of simultaneous hope and despair and whites need to sit in that space as we work out the grief, regret, and vision for solidarity. It is a praxis for the broken heart. It offers no solace, but it does offer answers and pathways to action. White feelings are not enough, but the feelings are significant formations into social action. In previous chapters I have dealt with the material, emotional and even intergenerational phantoms of whiteness. As I have pointed out in other chapters, whites experience tensions with belonging and exile when they turn against whiteness. White women need to focus on resistance and building communities that sustain us through race treason or we will resort back to old ways of being. In the following sections I discuss what I see as pathways out of whiteness and suggest actions that white women can take

Race Treason for Social Justice Praxis

White women made a deal with the devil and we have made people of color pay. When we accepted the race-gender bribe, exchanging white matriarchy for loyalty to white men and white patriarchy we built our own liberation on the backs of the oppressed. We owe humanity our time, resources, and action to make it right. Race treason is the only way to freedom for white women "Treason to whiteness is loyalty to humanity," as Ignatiev and Garvey (1996) have argued. The goal of race treason has

always been collective action (Ignatiev and Garvey, 1996) but is not usually dealt with that way. Reflections on race treason are usually written about through individual perspectives and journeys that solidify the notion that whites must do it alone. Transforming white women requires that white women use the knowledge of how our race-gender role upholds white supremacy. It requires an accounting of our power in every situation. It requires that we learn to share power and amplify voices that have been suppressed. It requires a collaborative turn toward people of color for guidance in our resistance. It requires that we contend with complicit white women and men who block antiracist work. It requires atonement that is not defined by us, but by those we have silenced and harmed.

In late May 2020, a white woman, Amy Cooper, had her dog off a leash, a common white privilege behavior, in Central Park. Her dog went into the bird sanctuary, where dogs are required to be leashed, and ran into a Black man, Christian Cooper (no relation to Amy Cooper) who was bird watching (Nir, 2020). Christian Cooper asked Amy Cooper to put her dog on a leash and began to film their exchange when she combatively refused (Nir, 2020). Amy Cooper threatened to call the police, saying that she was going to tell them that a Black man was threatening her life and then she did so (Nir, 2020). She called, saying, "an African American man is threatening my life" (Nir, 2020). He was not, but she knowingly made the false accusation anyway, saying "African American" three times during the phone call (Nir, 2020). Since the video went viral, Amy Cooper lost her job, her dog, and has become another example of white women calling police in order to harm people of color (Nir, 2020). Amy Cooper's phone call was made to reinforce negative solidarity with white men that forms white matriarchal control. Her

intentions were stated and clear, and she used reverse victimization to attempt to deploy white masculine violence.

This incident happened during the same few weeks as a story was uncovered where white men murdered a Black jogger, Ahmaud Abery, and faced no consequences until public outcry forced murder charges. Later in the week, George Floyd was murdered by police on camera when a white police officer kneeled on his neck while he said he could not breathe and eventually called out for his mother while a brave 17-year-old Black girl filmed in order to make sure it would be witnessed (Cooper, 2020). During this time, the story of Breonna Taylor was revealed. Breonna Taylor was murdered by officers who went into her apartment and shot her on a no-knock warrant (Cooper, 2020). Protests and uprisings are occurring all over the nation while the President threatens military violence and many cases of police brutality toward protestors have been documented. I am waking up this morning to another police murder of a Black man who was sleeping in his car. I will not diminish the fact that white men carried out this violence, but white women who act as intentionally as Amy Cooper play a role, and that role must end in order to undo white supremacy.

How Softening Language Impacts Antiracist Education

"Antiracist whites cannot just be "race traitors," they must engage in struggles to end the practices and the ideology that maintain white supremacy. Individual race treason without a political praxis to eliminate the system that produces racial inequality amounts to racial showboating" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 267). White people are fixated on labels, whether it is ally or accomplice or coconspirator, there is too much focus on how we want to be seen instead of taking action (Love, 2019). Most of the undoing of oppression

is not done on a stage; it is the quiet work of thoughtful dedicated people who are putting

hours of reading, thinking, dialogue, and writing to attempt to impact change. The

branding going on with "woke" whiteness is disingenuous and minimizes the serious

work done in the field. Antiracist trainers slap a label as ally on their website and the next

thing you know, they've got an "undoing whiteness" yoga class. They do not call on

expertise or do the studying, discussing, or reflecting they need to do.

One of the most difficult things I am seeing as an antiracist teacher is that the

conversation is becoming convoluted by language that does not describe the impact or

intention behind racism. Educators are softening language to make things more palatable

for whites and I refuse to play along. Kendi (2019) sums it up by saying,

"Microaggression" became part of a whole vocabulary of old and new words—Like

"cultural wars" and "stereotype" and "implicit bias" and "economic anxiety" and

"tribalism"— that made it easier to talk about or around the R-word (Kendi, 2019, pp. 46-

47). Increasing appearances of progressive, highly educated white men, explaining

"tribalism", the belief that everyone identifies with their own tribe and that is why we

have divisions, at parties, at schools, and at conferences demands some attention. Perhaps

white men are attached to this concept that naturalizes white supremacy because they are

responsible for carrying out so much racial violence in the name of their socially

constructed "tribe." Whites still try to control the language and even scholars of color are

having to use it. It is dangerous to call racist people racist, but that is what they are

(Kendi, 2019).

The spiritual communities that white women traverse are also spaces that warrant

critical examination. White women in these communities seem to desire racial dialogues,

but will not do the intellectual work to understand how to have them or share their microphone with people who do, resulting in these white spiritual or self-help leaders advising on race when they have no knowledge of it. An example is leading Buddhist educator, Tara Brach, who uses notions of the "reptilian brain" to describe "bad othering" (Brach, 2019). Without saying "white", she describes "fight or flight" mode that creates notions of the "bad other". White men who murdered, raped, and enslaved did not do so because they were afraid. History does not support her theory, but many white people believe she is doing real work and look to her instead of people who actually understand race, racism, and how to transform it. Brach may really want to work on race and racism, but she is not willing to risk offending her primarily white audience by even naming whiteness.

I also find that people use Buddhist principles to tone police antiracist whites and people of color who are challenging the complacent, complicit, and comfortable whiteness that is practiced in these liberal white communities. Tone policing is when someone may not like what they are hearing so they focus on the tone of the speaker rather than the content. It is a common strategy that white women use against women of color and critical whites who want to paint themselves as victims during racial dialogue (Nishi & Parker, 2018). For example, an Asian American educator and counselor reached out to me a couple years ago because she was having trouble at her yoga studio. One of the teachers at the studio in Denver was a Black woman whose son had been murdered by police the week before she spoke with me. A white yoga teacher at the same studio immediately sent out an email explaining that no one should be angry and it is most important to accept and forgive. My friend was livid, and I advised her on some things

she could do to combat that kind of white insensitivity, but the problem is her white audience had gone along with that kind of silencing and dismissal of the Black yoga instructor's grief and rage. These kinds of false notions of peace are prevalent and make it very difficult to get white women to become self-reflective and self-implicating in ways that would lead to change.

Instead of using minimizing language like "microaggression" to capture incidences like these, Kendi (2019) suggests we label them racism as racist abuse, which he says, "…Accurately describes the action and its effects on people: distress, anger, worry, depression, anxiety, pain, fatigue, and suicide (Kendi, 2019, p. 47). There is no neutrality when it comes to racism (Kendi, 2019). People are either racist or antiracist, but more and more language is used daily to minimize and occlude racism as the primary organizer of power and privilege in our society (Kendi, 2019). I also agree with Kendi, that anyone can be racist and anyone can be antiracist, and our field is too transfixed by the question of what antiracism looks like, whether people of color can be racist toward other people of color (of course they can), and whether white people can actually change. The only thing white people cannot be is victims of racism despite political and legal assertions that they can be (Tatum, 1997; 2019).

Institutional Crosshairs and "Woke" White Supremacy

I don't think I fully grasped the meaning of the old adage, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," until I attempted to teach my fellow professionals about whiteness and racism. Since the election of Donald Trump, it seems that many progressive white people are becoming more aware of racism, and seem to want to talk about it. I have found myself in the crosshairs of white curiosity, lack of knowledge, white fragility, and

institutional power. White's curiosity does not in any way indicate they are ready to confront their own whiteness and investment in racism. Strangely, whites like to *wonder* about things, and it is considered intellectually valuable to leave questions open, not open in the sense of tarrying or remaining un-sutured as Yancy (2016) argues, but to deny that some questions indeed have answers grounded in reality. We can find historical truths and current social phenomena that are backed up by data, policy, funding, demographic research, and economic disparities. We can follow the mechanisms of race and racism and see how overtly and clearly it plays out in our current society. There is no need to *wonder* about things, and I include this defensive, aggressive sense of wonder as another mechanism of white fragility, or more aptly named, white racial animosity. The impact on people of color from the wondering of whites must create a sense of intense frustration and continues to silence and stultify dialogue and progress. In my experience, whites are still seeing white supremacy as outside of themselves instead of investigating its internal workings. People doing antiracist work need to disrupt this circular, defensive wondering when we hear it and let others know that we do not value intellectual exercises that are put in place to deflect from white supremacy in action.

As DiAngelo (2011, 2018) describes, there are particular ways that progressive and liberal whites transact race in order to maintain control of conversations and shut down people of color and critical whites. Because white matriarchy is built on the idea that white women are good, the race-gendered dimension of attempting to handle white racial arrogance can become even more pronounced. When I started to study race, one of the obstacles was colorblindness and white women's inability to discuss race or see its significance (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Since the election of Trump, white women have been

in less denial about race and have started to read more about white privilege, taking in McIntosh's (1989) *Invisible Knapsack,* and even reading *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo. Some have formed reading groups in churches, schools, and parent groups. I run a reading group for fellow faculty at my school, however I am always keenly aware of how power is truly playing out in the room. Whites who wish to learn should consider going to workshops or taking university courses where they may be challenged by experts as opposed to creating spaces where power and fear will still play out. These groups can reinscribe white supremacy unless they are guided by critical whites or people of color. For example, white fragility is being treated as a condition that needs accommodation instead of one of the mechanisms that upholds racism. Whites will talk about their "fragility" instead of the ways that they are participating in oppressing others. Antiracist whites and people of color would be able to teach whites not to do this, but most whites have created an echo chamber where they can meander their way through the literature without holding themselves accountable.

Transversal Politics for Truth and Reconciliation Among Women

One of the ways that white women can begin to form solidarity with women of color is to think about how to make things right as women. White women do not need to rely on white men to apologize for past abuses and engage in dialogue. Roseboro (2008) proposes truth and reconciliation as a foundational practice for education. Truth and Reconciliation was the process used after Apartheid in South Africa where victims and perpetrators told their stories (Roseboro, 2008). The primary goal started as a way to record the stories of the victims, but to also give perpetrators a place to speak. Because many perpetrators were granted amnesty, the success of it is debatable in that context, but

she still sees potential in other spaces. She says," Because, however, the process required the creation of spaces for truth telling and forced the coming together of seemingly polar opposite groups, it grounds my re-envisioning of public education in the United States" (Roseboro, 2008 , p. 80). White women and people of color could create spaces for truth-telling and accountability as ways to heal the past and go forward unified.

This process cannot be carried out if the goal is to not hear or not see, which is how many racial dialogues happen now. Concepts in transversal politics can probably help guide new ways of dialogue and reconciliation. It is also important to understand that not all things will be reconcilable. We must remain open as I say above, to the critique and to the possibility that it will just always hurt. The trauma of racism is embedded in DNA (Love, 2019). I think about how we can live with the wound open. Trauma survivors are already adept at living with trauma almost as a silent life partner. It does not go away, but it can be lived with and integrated in new ways that lead to self-compassion and deeper compassion for others. To clarify, this holding open of the wound or living with the trauma is not a call for taking no action. It is a call for taking action that does not fixate on how to resolve racism emotionally before we try to solve it materially. We can also not assume that if we start to solve material inequalities that we are owed emotional resolution for the epistemic injustice (Collins, 2019) of white feminism or our emotional domination of people of color. Cooper (2018) asserts that the foundation of feminism is for women to love each other, and I believe that we can work to actually show active love and support for each other.

Transversal politics can give white women and women of color a framework for the truth and reconciliation process. Transversal politics is rooted in global feminism and

uses standpoint epistemology that recognizes that everyone's position is different and that

our perspectives are also unfinished (Yuval-Davis, 1999). Dialogue is the only way to

the truth and it offers suggestions for how to think about social position and realities for

it. Transversal politics critiques current "over" universalism or essentialization and

suggests that women need to stand in the position of each other's experiences in order to

come to deeper understanding of social location (Yuval-Davis, 1999). As with other

scholars, Yuval-Davis also values deep thinking and doing in order to avoid the

reproduction of domination. She also summarizes the notions of rooting and shifting,

> The feminists in Bologna introduced the concepts of 'rooting' and 'shifting' to
>
> clarify how this could be done. The idea is that each such 'messenger' and each
>
> participant in a political dialogue, would bring with them the reflexive knowledge
>
> of their own positioning and identity. This is the 'rooting'. At the same time, they
>
> should also try to 'shift' - to put themselves in the situation of those with whom
>
> they are in dialogue and who are different. (Yuval-Davis, 1999, p. 5)

This work of revealing the white matriarchy should help white women understand their

positionality more honestly when they are "rooting", which is the self-reflective and self-

implicating. If white women do not know their history of current positioning, we cannot

do this accurately. The work I have done to describe and analyze should help white

women understand where they are rooted more accurately and invites us then to shift to

the other perspective, again, more accurately. I hope my work, if read by people of color,

also helps them name and explain who white women are to each other and to white

women who are having trouble "shifting" into understanding people of color's

perspectives. For example, if I see my entrance into the workplace as only part of

resisting white patriarchy, I may fail to see the power that I have over people of color in my workplace, as my profession, or as caregivers for my children. If I cannot own up to that power, I will be unable to shift into the perspective of women of color, where I am a white problem. If I only see teaching as work, only recognizing systematic control over teachers, I may miss that teaching consolidates white women's power through white matriarchy.

The power dynamic here should not be hidden and as Yuval-Davis says it is not supposed to become some sort of postmodernist flattening because that is not accurate. The idea is to come to understandings and to attempt authentic empathy and connection. The possibility for white women is solidarity, a new sense of belonging and the freedom that comes with truth. She reiterates, what other feminists assert, that there can be communities of difference that share a common value system that is agreed upon through these processes. She writes:

> Similar, compatible values can cut across differences in positionings and identity and assume what Alison Assiter calls 'epistemological communities'. Such epistemological communities share common value systems, and can exist across difference. The struggle against oppression and discrimination might, and mostly does, have a specific categorical focus but is never confined just to that category. (Yuval-Davis, 1999)

Epistemological communities for critical white feminist thought can examine other intersecting power relations and categories as well. Through dialogue we can start to articulate a new consciousness and values that will create a home away from whiteness, which is needed for transformation.

Creating a Community of Resistance and Belonging Amid Loss

Jones (2000) outlines three levels of racism: institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized. White people certainly need to work on personally mediated racism, and I spent some time talking about it in this dissertation. The problem is that white people are becoming so obsessed with it that they are failing to do the work that undermines institutional racism. All three levels matter, but one is the monolith that we need to take social action against. The critical examination of white guilt or white shame is to process during, not before, social action in solidarity with people of color is taking place. A critically reflective life does not mean withdrawing into yourself or delaying right action for perfect action. It means I have immersed myself in the irresolvable tension of being white, and then I get my head in the game and I get to work.

As I have said in other chapters, we must be willing to see our own personal participation in white supremacy. To see our own participation clearly allows us to form our own resistance. Effective antiracist educators are self-reflective and are able to self-implicate in order to undo privilege. Whites experience tension with their primary beliefs systems and some of it can threaten disconnection because of the pressure to not see racism and because of how whites police those social boundaries. According to Tatum (1997; 2019), whites go through a disintegration stage as part of becoming racially conscious. She writes:

> When the disintegration frame of mind emerges, White individuals begin to see
> the degree to which their lives, and the lives of people of color, have been
> affected by racism in our society. The societal inequalities they now notice
> directly contradict the idea of an American meritocracy, a concept that has

typically been an integral part of their belief system. The cognitive dissonance

that results is part of the discomfort that is experienced at this point in the process

of development. Responses to this discomfort may include denying the validity of

the information that is being presented or psychologically or physically

withdrawing from it. (p.192)

As Whites begin to see the significance of race everywhere, it is quite disruptive, and

whites who are not able to redefine themselves in a more positive way by seeing

possibilities for change will not be able to sustain their racial consciousness and will

revert back to blaming people of color for their own problems, or what is named the

reintegration phase (Tatum, 1997; 2019). In examining the disintegration phase, we can

see how this phase threatens white women with disconnection because of the shame, and

because of our close ties with other whites. In order to find freedom, we have to cut our

ties and build authentic communities.

We cannot ignore that becoming a race traitor will come with loss. It comes with

institutional and intimate losses that whites need help getting through. Our reluctance or

inability to talk about how whiteness impacts us with other whites actually impedes our

ability to change. The next section discusses how whites police antiracist whites instead

of trying to learn from or follow their lead. It is not to diminish the significant silencing

that people of color endure because that impact should be central to any discussion about

from cross-racial solidarity.

Whites and Antiracist Whites

I learned about who I am in the social structure by reading the voices of people of

color. I learned that I was perceived as childlike by hooks quoting Toni Morrison (hooks,

1984). I learned that I inflict white terror (Roediger, 1999). I learned that my

relationships with women of color are complicated by racial dynamics (Ahmed, 2015;

Collins, 2000; Cooper, 2018; Davis, 1981; hooks, 2003; Hurtado, 1996; Matias, 2016;

Roseboro & Ross, 2009). As Leonardo (2009) points out, I was also shocked like most

white people, that people of color could see, name, and ascribe accurate meaning to my

intentions and actions. The work of people of color should always be central to this

movement, but an interesting pattern emerges when whites come across more racially

conscious, or what I will refer to as antiracist whites.

When police murders of Black people or other racial crises happen, such as the

Trump administration's child separations at the border, the Muslim ban, and the Native

American protests against the pipeline at Standing Rock occur whites have public

awakenings. During these performances of concern, whites maintain the myth of white

ignorance and innocence (Mill, 2007), by declaring that everything has been hidden from

them until this moment. It has taken the cold-blooded murder of another Black person

caught on film for them to recognize the fire that has been blazing for 400 years as

though they do not feed it, smell the smoke, or feel the heat. They have these awakenings

as though they have lacked agency or participation in racism, denying that there is

evidence everywhere that they have ignored or even attacked those who tried to tell them.

We never hear them own up to silencing antiracist work, diminishing antiracist

curriculum, perpetuating racist teachings, and other forms of creating, maintaining, and

sustaining white supremacy. It is not just that these awakenings are annoying privilege

confessionals that all sound the same, it is also that they naturalize whiteness when they

enact this performance, pretending they had to be racist because they are white and

ignoring that there have always been antiracists whites because that would mean they *chose* racism.

When white women make these moves, it is similar to other behaviors where they universalize their experiences (Hurtado, 1996), and we can now see almost a white matriarchal wokeness that has all of the same underpinnings of white ignorance (Mills, 2007), white innocence (Collins, 2000) , and the myth of white benevolence (Applebaum, 2015). White women waking up want to be received nicely. Even the term "waking up" implies the passivity of sleep. I hope that this work makes white women realize otherwise. White women talk about what they are wanting to know or do in ways that do not recognize what other white women have been doing for a long time.

Whites who dismiss the knowledge of antiracist whites are usually performing or fetishizing people of color (Matias, 2016), which is another form of objectification. Whites see the journey of antiracist whites as irrelevant to their own development for multiple reasons. Shame makes whites disregard the work of people who could actually help them because the presence of antiracist whites indicates that they could have known better. I cannot think of many other undertakings where people who came before are considered irrelevant to those undertaking it now. The tensions of belonging exile, liberation, and justice have been held by other whites, but whites take that need to be individual everywhere they go. Unpacking this is not the work of people of color. This is the work of fellow antiracist whites. The struggle for whites has a map and whites ignore it so that they never have to deal with the fact that they stayed asleep so much longer. I know the path I am on better because I have befriended other white women and white men who are also practicing antiracism. The disruption to our lives has to be discussed

and supported and is the work of other white people and should not burden people of color.

Our Relationships with White Men and White Boys

I have discussed the notion of negative solidarity as part of the glue that holds the white matriarchy together. Negative solidarity comes from the Combahee River Collective where Black women point out that white women only show negative solidarity with white men for racial oppression. When Black women show solidarity with Black men it is considered flexible solidarity because it concerns the survival of their community under white supremacy. White women's alignment with white men becomes destructive to communities of color because of what whiteness entails. White women need to start dealing with white men differently if we are to move forward. White women who continue to be married or partnered to racist white men are complicit with their partner's racism whether they like it or not. White women like to compartmentalize these aspects as separate from love and family, and they are not.

In chapter 2, I described how white women have taken the gender-race bribe from white men to secure the white matriarchy. White women have agreed to be loyal sexually and socially to white men in order to operate with less suspicion. It's time for white women to renegotiate. White women are not able to control white men, but we can boycott them. In fact, LGBTQ white women, who do not pledge this kind of loyalty, tend to have more multiracial communities (Hurtado, 1996) and have produced significant work on race treason (see Daniels, 1997 and Segrest 1989). The problem is that if the resistance from white patriarchy has produced white matriarchy, which LGBTQ white women can also build and maintain if they are unaware of the structure. White women

could raise expectations for white men to be partners and fathers of their children in order combat negative solidarity and challenge white patriarchy.

White women can also raise better white boys. Chapter 4 explained how I have brought my own daughters into antiracism. In raising white girls, I have to educate toward antiracism and feminist resistance simultaneously. White women's relationships with white men are subservient (Collins, 2000; Hurtado, 1996), and that subservience may seem dormant in some liberal and progressive white families. I learned a lot about systematic white patriarchy and how it was embedded in families and institutions once I became married and, even more so, during my divorce.

The relationship to white men as subservient seems to be present with white mother-son relationships, and I am interested in more research or thought on how even white "feminist" mothers remain subservient and pass on white male domination in their sons. The greatest predictor of a man becoming abusive is witnessing his father's abuse toward his mother (Snyder, 2019). Although not all white fathers are abusive, this fact indicates that sons learn the role of women from men. Even white women who may be working on their consciousness seem to be unaware of how white masculinity is being reinforced.

Kimmel (2008) discusses the significance of white boys' entitlement to being "guys." According to Kimmel, white men get to exist in the gray area of "guyness" for a few years and it offers them an opportunity to live in a sort of realm of no consequences. Black boys are adultified, meaning they are never seen as children (Ferguson, 2001), and Mexican-American boys are seen as lazy or immoral (Moralas, Abrica, & Herrera, 2019). Kimmel found that young white men do not understand their own role in rape and found

that many white men of college age excused or minimized their behavior. They also expressed confusion about sexual consent. Orenstein (2020) found that most sex education does not have an ethical component where boys might even learn to think about consent as part of being kind.

A Social Justice Agenda for White Women

White women have multiple sites to consider as we attempt to be part of any movement that challenges white patriarchy and white matriarchy. One of the most important questions we must consider is where these sites of resistance are in our workplaces, social circles, and families, always taking intersecting domains of power into consideration (Collins, 2000). The quadrants from Chapter 1 serves as a way to resist the homogeneity of white women. Winant (2004) outlined what he calls "white racial projects", explaining five different strategies that white people use politically to uphold or resist white supremacy. These critiques are important in developing strategies to dismantle the power structure that has been revealed. For example, only citing white women's support of Trump, 53 percent (Cooper, 2018), when we discuss white women's political actions, fails to capture the full story and can dismiss possibilities for resistance. Liberal and progressive white women do not view themselves as having much in common with conservative white women so it is poor strategy to keep using that statistic to critique them. The following section answers the call for a social justice agenda and I will explain critical white feminist strategies for challenging each quadrant

Challenging Complicit White Matriarchy

Complicit White Matriarchy is characterized by white women who are openly, happily, and actively upholding white supremacy, white patriarchy, and the white

matriarchy. I do not think we need to spend a lot of time on attempting to transform this

group. We need to focus efforts on containing their power and making sure we can

continue to do antiracist feminist work. Most white women in other quadrants probably

do not spend free time with a lot of complicit white matriarchs, so the focus here is on

how we can resist them in institutions, interrupting the structural domain of power

(Collins, 2000). It is very important for white people to start using their privilege to

support or initiate claims about discriminatory behaviors of white women who are in this

quadrant. Civil rights legislation in the last few decades is in place with reporting

procedures, however, too frequently whites who have more institutional power than

people of color do not want to challenge or use institutional power to call out racism.

Teachers may create safe harbors for students to talk about racist teachers instead of

taking the risk of reporting racist behaviors and following through the processes in place

to see racist reports investigated. Teachers unions can also be a site of resistance where

they can begin to examine where policies and procedures make it difficult to take action.

The focus of educators is usually education, but that strategy does not work when there

are deeply embedded, institutionalized support for white supremacy in education. White

women need to step up our interventions as we gain power. We cannot stop at listening

because it does little to impact institutional racism, sexism, or homophobia. Civil rights

laws that were intended to protect marginalized people from discrimination have been

used to protect white women and succeeded (Tatum, 1997; 2019) and it is time for us to

make sure that the true intention of civil rights laws are not undermined. Using

institutional power to advocate moves us from ally to co-conspirator (Love, 2019).

Challenging White Feminism

White women in this category have a lot of transformational potential because usually they have been engaging in social justice or white feminist dialogue or movements. The key to moving these white women to critical white feminism truly one of education and creating pathways out of whiteness that I have discussed. White women are miseducated about racism and about how our subservient role to white supremacy binds us to white patriarchy and white matriarchy. Education about intersectional oppression can be effective. I spent many years as a white feminist and focused education about race and racism was the springboard into new consciousness.

Education is a tool of resistance, but it is not resistance itself. Moving white feminists into critical white feminism means holding white women accountable in movements and institutions. White feminists also participate in upholding white supremacy and should be held accountable for discriminatory behaviors. Negative solidarity is common where white women still search for white solidarity (DiAngelo, 2011; 2018) from each other and white men. Critical white women need to disrupt these deeply-patterned moves and continue to show solidarity with people of color when there is conflict.

Challenging Antiracist Patriarchal Maintenance

I defined antiracist patriarchal maintenance to describe how white women and people of color take up an antiracist critique without picking up a feminist critique. In other words, this quadrant needs to maintain an intersectional lens on antiracist work. I lived in this quadrant for a time, where I denied that white women were oppressed at all and was also was ignorant of the ways that belief undermined the feminism of women of

color. White women can resist using patriarchal weapons against other white women and women of color when they adopt critical white feminism by learning the history of suppressing the needs of women of color in antiracist struggle (Feimster, 2009) and centering the needs and work of feminists of color. We can also ask for a more pronounced critique of patriarchy in Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies scholarship, intervening in the current trend of people identifying as feminists of color or saying they situate their work in feminism of color without producing or including a critique of or challenge to patriarchy in their work (Parker & Nishi, 2019).

Looking Back and Going Forward

I come back to the notion of freedom as a lack of whiteness that I started with. I write this as people of color and antiracist whites rage, grieve, and cry for the violence that has been enacted on Black people by white terror. Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Abery, and George Floyd have been murdered by police, or white men acting as them. The uprisings at the end of May 2020 are still going on as of this writing. Many of my students are emailing about their heartbreak and the isolation they feel in their families that are indifferent to the suffering they are witnessing, or even expressing solidarity with whiteness. One young woman emailed me yesterday. She is a Latina who I have worked closely with to organize antiracist education at my school. She listed the social actions that she planned to take, but then she asked me what she could do to feel better. I advised her to reach out to her fellow antiracist students, to check up on her Black friends. The same things that many of us do in these situations. I told her that there is no way to feel better, only less alone. I feel hopeful when I see my students of color and many of the young white women I teach embrace antiracism. I know my daughters' connections to

this struggle for justice will sustain us through this time of reckoning, hopefully

transforming white intergenerational violence and complicity in our family.

Aloneness and isolation have been themes of doing this work during this time. It

is also uprooting and disruptive because of the Covid-19 and quarantine. It has been a

monkhood of sorts for me. Learning what I have studied to understand the history of

white womanhood, the depth of racial violence, and the deep contemplation of what it all

means during the last few months of social distancing has made me feel shipwrecked on a

desert island. The theory I present is born of struggle in many ways. Although many

things have changed in my social and professional world, the longing to create something

outside of whiteness is steady. I do not know how we are going to feel better, but I know

that we need to not do it alone.

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