When White Dwarfs Burn Our Color: Whiteness, Emotionality, and the Will to Thrive in Higher Education

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Abstract

Though the academy is a space where education, exploration, and research reside, it is also a space of historical exclusion, ostracism, and oppression for diverse students, staff, and faculty. Particularly, with respect to the ever-present dynamics of whiteness via white supremacy, students, staff, and faculty of color are racially microaggressed and racially stonewalled to a point where they experience extreme racial battle fatigue. This theoretical and reflective paper draws from critical whiteness studies and critical race theory's counterstorytelling to reveal the emotionalities of whiteness, specifically, to investigate how racialized emotions burn out the lives of people of color on campus, much like how white dwarfs are degenerate masses themselves. And, how by leaving them intact, universities will never achieve their proclaimed missions for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Keywords: Whiteness, emotionality, Critical race theory, Critical whiteness studies, higher education, counterstory, racial microaggression

Introduction: A Burn's a Burn

Much like how the universe is replete with white dwarfs--dying stars that illuminate based on their degenerate mass--so too is the academy replete with ceaseless expressions of whiteness (Brunsma et al., 2012; Cabrera et al., 2016; Gusa, 2010; Matias, 2020). Yet, the comparisons between the two don't stop there. In fact, just as white dwarfs illuminate based on

its degenerate mass--a burning mass of nothingness--, whiteness is also both something and nothing--both unreal due to its baseless racial categorization and real when whites bequeath material gains. And, more interestingly to note, is that as whiteness shines on, so to speak, despite its degenerate reality, it continues to burn faculty, staff, and students of color. Whiteness does so whilst having no substance of its own simply because, as Mills (2009) offers, it draws from active white racial ignorance and historical amnesiatic events. Or, more poignantly stated, "if you are compelled to lie about one aspect of anybody's history, you must lie about it all" (Baldwin, 1963, no page). Whiteness, in all of its narcissistic tendencies like presuming Truths without substance, both burns itself and others while remaining the star in the U.S.'s preoccupation with the white supremacist show.

Within this context, this reflective and theoretical paper draws from three counterstories of three women of color in academia to illuminate how whiteness, particularly how white emotionalities, (a) draw on unsubstantiated thought processes that in the end (b) burn faculty, staff, and students of color. Employing CRT's counterstorytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as a way to illuminate Matias' (2016) theoretical argument of emotionalities of whiteness, this article offers to higher education ways to understand how might individualized white emotionalities play a role in maintaining the overall power structure of white supremacy in academia. Additionally, by linking expressed white emotionalities with counterstories one can better understand how those white emotional expressions impart harm to people of color despite the university's proclaimed commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Though we, the authors, do not presume the intentions of institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, we do excavate the impact of actions regardless of said intention. In the end, though it takes billions to trillions of years for a white dwarf to lose its luminosity, we hope that this article can quickly lessen the burn of white emotionalitities by identifying them and their impact on faculty, staff, and students of color.

Theoretical Framework: A Partnered Approach

White Supremacy and the Academy: The Case for Partnership

White supremacy and academia emerged concurrently, particularly during the colonial period (1492-1763), or the rise of racial hierarchy, racism, and other systems of oppression that remain intact to suppress nonwhite peoples (Carney, 1999). For instance, in his assessment of Indigenous peoples in higher education, Carney (1999) highlights that while the U.S. was not yet

an official country, its universities and dominant culture of whiteness existed. The fact that the most prominent higher education institutions (i.e., the Ivy League and institutions with a Research 1 Carnegie classification of higher education) developed amidst colonialism and enslavement – two major points in history that created the blueprint for racism today – implicates that the formation of higher education exists within the context of white supremacy. Furthermore, academia played an important role in promoting and upholding white supremacy through racist scholarship and practice, both de jure and de facto (Byrd, 2017; Wilder, 2013).

The history between white supremacy and the university not only allows us to situate whiteness within higher education, but also provides implications within the university of the 21st century – one with campus communities where students, faculty, and staff of color might be tolerated but wrought with the permanence of racism, whiteness, (neo)liberalism, and the institutionality of "minority" difference. With emphasis on how the university pacified student movements of the '50s, '60s, and '70s, Ferguson (2012) argues that although nonwhite peoples possess the legal right to learn and work at higher education institutions, the same hegemonic foundation of the university remains intact. Ferguson's (2012) argument underscores what Brunner (2006) calls the "smokescreen of diversity." Similar to how universities surveilled and policed student demands for racial and ethnic inclusion (Ferguson, 2012), it also produces cursory definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The concurrent birth and existence of whiteness and higher education, in addition to academia's long history of maintaining whiteness even within the context of more racially diverse campuses, makes the case for furthering our exploration of white supremacy in the academy. Employing a framework that combines CRT and CWS to investigate the everyday impact of white supremacy in higher education proves crucial for unraveling the minutiae of white emotionalities – a tool through which racism continues its ever-present and cunning destruction.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is an analytical framework, originating from legal scholarship, used to reveal systematic racism and challenge society's practices and policies that maintain it, and particularly in this case, higher education (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). By critiquing the oft trope of normativity, CRT reveals how racist ideas and practices are embedded in the dominant narratives of everyday lives. Educational

policies like No Child Left Behind (NCLB), for instance, is an exemplar of such racist policies that, in the end, indeed left many students of color behind (see Leonardo, 2009; Taylor, 2006). Furthermore, DeCuir and Dixson's (2004) study, also employing CRT, reveals how Black students were well aware of how commonplace racism is in their educational experiences. Essentially, CRT provides a pathway to make a seemingly "normal" state of racism, abnormal, as it should. Per DeCuir and Dixson (2004), CRT consists of several tenets (a) the permanence of racism, (b) whiteness as property, (c) interest convergence, (d) critique of liberalism, and (e) counterstorytelling. Though other scholarship in CRT (e.g., Solórzano, 1997) provides slightly different CRT tenets, the fact remains; there exists a permanence of racism (see Bell, 1992). That is, because the very foundation of U.S. society was built on racist ideology to justify national sanctions (e.g., Native genocide, chattel slavery, internment of Japanese Americans, anti-miscegenation laws, etc.) there can never be a state without racism, because racism mutates and evolves. An example of this is moving from blatant racism to colorblind racism (see Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Accepting the permanence of racism, then requires more nuanced analytical tools to unveil racism's evolved state. CRT being one such tool.

As aforementioned, CRT has many tenets. Of note are (a) whiteness as property, (b) interest convergence, (c) liberalism, and (d) the honoring of experiential knowledge. Harris (1993) describes whiteness as property because of how entitlement to property rights (i.e., rights of disposition, right to use and enjoyment, reputation and status, and the absolute right to exclude), are contingent on whiteness--"the right to white identity" (p. 1726). This is of grave concern because in academic spaces whiteness as property reigns supreme in physical property (e.g., land grant universities), intellectual property (e.g., who has rights to claim original ideas), and emotional property (e.g., how white emotionalities are enough to indict faculty, staff, and students of color). Acknowledging this sets the basis as to why there is an excessive need to placate white emotionalities, especially when contestations regarding race are given.

Another tenet, interest convergence, is the ideological dilemma that occurs when people of color are granted nonsubstantive opportunities and rights to satisfy the interests of white individuals (Bell, 1980). Meaning, students, staff, and faculty of color are only given gains in high education if such said gains ultimately benefit whites. For example, notice how diversity, inclusion, and equity plans are always listing how said diversity can help white students better understand diversity. What then are the gains for students of color who are not only outnumbered

by white students but outpowered by hegemonic whiteness? Hence, interest convergence shows how such diversity gains are never solely for the interests of students, faculty, and staff of color.

Third, a critique of liberalism is another tenet of CRT and rests upon the notion that liberal legal perspectives like meritocracy and colorblindness are harmful and should be eliminated. Plainly, despite pontifications that policies and practices are all about meritocracy such as standardized tests, studies have shown that such exams are racially biased and in the end keep students of color out of higher education (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Yet, more interestingly to note is that these liberal ideas also manifest in hegemonic whiteness ideology, particularly in the emotionalities of whiteness, in that liberalism masks itself as equal practices for all when in fact, as seen below, white tears out power the grievances of students, staff, and faculty of color. Lastly, CRT emphasizes the need for racialized communities to speak their truths, exposing deceitful and racist narratives through the method of counterstorytelling (described more below).

Critical Whiteness Studies

However, CRT in and of itself has its own limitations. Since the focus of CRT is understanding the manifestations of racism on people of color, often overlooked is how whiteness and its structural papa, white supremacy, work to enable racism. Essentially, what precedes racism in ways that one feels entitled to enact racial practices? Herein is where CWS is needed. Like CRT, Critical whiteness studies (CWS) is a transdisciplinary framework used to provide a more comprehensive analysis on how white dominant ideologies, policies, and practices reinforce and sustain racial injustice and protect white supremacy and whiteness within the academy.

Matias et al. (2016) cogently illustrate the purpose of this married approach by stating, “CRT deconstructs how White supremacy is enacted and felt by people of color, critical Whiteness studies deconstructs how Whites are racialized as normal and, thus, participate in their own supremacy” (p. 4). CWS, then, consists of an evolving body of knowledge that acknowledges and reveals the perpetual invisible nature of whiteness (Applebaum, 2016). That is, CWS commonly highlights and carefully examines the subtle ideologies (e.g., meritocracy), emotions (e.g., white emotionalities), and practices (e.g., surveillance) that have remained invisible to white people but continue to oppress people of color whilst blaming them for their oppressed positionality. This scholarship not only uncovers the invisibility of whiteness, but also analyzes and addresses all aspects of whiteness.

Throughout many years, scholars have raised awareness of the everyday, normalized unjust experiences of people of color in the U.S. (Baldwin, 1963; Du Bois, 1903). More recently, CWS authors have discussed the same normalized racist experiences of people of color in the academy (Cabrera, 2019; Cabera et al., 2016; Matias, 2016; Sleeter, 2001). Therefore, it is important to consider the utility of CWS. For one, when using CWS whiteness, specifically the emotionalities of whiteness, are deconstructed in ways that advances racial justice because in revealing their tendencies, they can no longer bask in ignorance (Matias et al., 2016). Secondly, the application of CWS in counterstorytelling can be a powerful way to advance social justice by inciting deep emotions, not only for people of color to express, but for white individuals to feel. Simply put, because whiteness operates hegemonically in its invisibility, CWS forces whites to bear witness--so to speak--to whiteness instead of feigning color evasiveness. Forcing sight has the potential of improving how whites confront their own whiteness and, subsequently, those white expressions onto others (Matias & Allen, 2013). Conversely, if one refuses to acknowledge their complicity in whiteness how then is racial justice to be achieved?

Emotionalities of Whiteness

Coined by Matias (2016), a theorization behind the emotionality of whiteness can be used to analyze the psychoanalytic origins of white emotions. Meaning, those patterned racialized emotions that arise when white students, faculty, and administrators engage in race-related discourse. Though Matias specifically focuses on teacher education, she also demonstrates how such emotionalities are part and parcel of the larger dynamics of higher education and society writ large. Examples of emotionalities of whiteness in dialogue about race and racism can include resistance, deflection, and color-evasive discourse and can derive from feelings of shame, guilt, and discomfort. Matias et al. (2016), employs counterstorytelling to illustrate these specific manifestations of white emotionalities in teacher education. For example, the authors recall white students refusing to say the word “race,” and white faculty members denying the existence of racism, using instead analyses of class and gender to fully eclipse concerns of race. Even more interesting about the emotionalities of whiteness is that, in doing all this, white faculty members then claimed victimization by mere discussions on race, as if antiBlack police brutalities were on par with their discomfort of discussing racism. Clearly, the emotionalities of whiteness obscure the true victims of racism and white supremacy.

Another aspect of emotionality of whiteness that is prevalent in teacher education at the academy is the process of *sentimentalization* (Matias, 2016; Thompson, 2021). Matias (2016) discusses this process in depth when describing how the socially-accepted expressed emotions (e.g., love, kindness, and compassion) of preservice teachers mask their feelings of disgust for students of color, particularly for Black students. Matias et al. (2016) describe their experience in witnessing sentimentalization among white students and white faculty members. In that study white faculty, despite presuming to possess the knowledge needed to better teach students of color in urban schools, still actively refused to engage in any conversations about race and racism; a necessary component of urban education. Oddly, this was tantamount to presuming oneself an expert in curing cancer when they refuse to see or admit cancer exists.

Since the emotionalities of whiteness stifle advancements towards social justice through deflection, color-evasive discourse, and sentimentalization in race-related dialogue, it then ultimately reifies white supremacy, burning the hearts, minds, and souls of people of color (see Matias, 2016). That is, the emotionalities of whiteness are emotive manifestations of whiteness that give whites material benefits, protection, and advantage at the expense of the humanity, achievements, and reality of people of color. Notwithstanding this, this article dives directly into these emotionalities of whiteness in the hopes that by exposing them we can ultimately disarm them.

Methods: Stories as Testaments

In Pérez Huber, Velez, and Solórzano's (2017) QuantCrit analysis of Latinas' views on degree attainment, the authors purposefully begin the article with a counterstory of Yessena. They claim the story in and of itself "challenge[s] the dominant discourse that frames degree 'value' from a purely economic perspective, and provide[s] space for People of Color to define their own meaning of value through their stories" (p. 2). Hence, the story is a powerful tool, demystifying presumed Truths so normalized in social contexts. For example, Jocson (2008) defines *kuwentos* (Tagalog for stories) as "neither gossip nor rumor; rather, it is based on (aspects of) actual events retold and reconstructed in the presence of others" (p. 243). Stories then are rooted in reality, passed on through social interactions of people with respect to their positions in society, and function "as a pedagogical tool to construct as well as challenge existing forms" of knowledge (p. 244). Acknowledging this, stories become more than artful displays of

events and times. Indeed they are testimonies that account for the lived reality and are oftentimes retold with particular purposes to invoke particular morals.

However, stories are not simply an entity unto itself. Rather, the importance of stories also resides within the interactions between storyteller and listener. Meaning, the audience has a shared responsibility in bearing witness to stories, which entails two processes. One, bearing witness means to interpret the story based upon the structural context for which the storyteller's positionality resides while two, understanding how the potential action of the listener is informed by said story. Take for example, a woman storyteller who shares with a man a story about rape culture and sexism. The man must first be cognizant of the structural context of patriarchy which frames the positionality of this woman. In doing so, he understands the complexity of how male privilege operates which oftentimes, as Freire (1993) asserts, blinds oppressors of the context of the oppression. As such, his structural understanding of patriarchy, his position within that structure, and her position within that structure then allows for an emotional deference to her story. For once, a humanistic genuflect. And it is his responsibility to bear witness to her story and engage in its morals accordingly. That is to say that his future actions should be informed by the morals of her story. This is where the power of stories can be felt.

Insofar as stories are powerful tools, Adichie (2009) reminds us that there is danger to a single story, which is not to be misunderstood as there is danger in counterstories from marginalized perspectives in the same manner as master narratives. For stories told from a marginalized perspective, the danger resides in speaking truth precisely because supremacist culture often yields its power by silencing such stories. Instead, the danger of a single story resides in the hegemonic whiteness that is normalized in higher education as if such treatment is business as usual. In this case, the danger is simply revealing why the ivory towers are simply that: predominantly ivory.

As such, to reveal how white emotionalities burn faculty, staff, and students of color we, the authors, draw from Solórzano and Yosso's (2001) counterstorytelling as methodology because white emotionalities function as master narratives, usurping power and authority in ways that silence the counterstories, even emotions, of faculty, staff, and students of color (see Matias, 2020). Simply put, white women's tears yield power in potentially grave ways. Notwithstanding these hegemonic master narratives of white emotionalities we methodologically apply critical race theory (CRT) and critical whiteness studies (CWS) to analyze the counterstories below.

Though we do not claim generalizability we can however ascertain emergent patterns of how white emotionalities function as racial microaggressions (see Sue et al., 2016) and thus contend that further studies are needed.

Additionally, as aforementioned, since CRT and CWS identify racism and white supremacy as endemic problems in society we are not preoccupied with proving that racism or white supremacy exist in higher education. Instead, we are focused on how they emotionally operate in higher education. This is of importance because, as stated above, though universities claim to be inclusive, too many faculty, staff, and students of color are claiming they are not. Simply put, notwithstanding the single story of benevolent liberal whiteness forever committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity without seeing any substantial changes towards that direction because the mirror to white liberals' actions are too emotionally unfettering, or as DiAngelo (2018) puts it, is fraught with white fragilities, this article operationalizes these three counterstories to specifically highlight how these expressed emotions are weaponized against us in ways that makes one question that said commitment.

Three Counterstories: The Wrath of White Tears, Defensiveness, and False Victimization

Counterstory 1: The Tale of Becky

No new assistant professor of color comes into the academy thinking they will experience the worst kinds of racism ever. Afterall, isn't the academy complete with educated individuals who can discern right from wrong? Is not the academy a bastion of intellectualism that goes beyond skin deep? As a brown-skinned Pinay and a new assistant professor over a decade ago, these all mattered, however what preoccupied my mind most was how ecstatic I was to even get a tenure track position as a single motherscholar of two. So, like many others, I left the mecca of Los Angeles where Brown folk like myself aren't minorities (Filipinos and Mexicans are the statistical majority), never having to kowtow to whiteness, and onward I went to the wild, wild whiteness of Colorblanco, as some would have it. Though there were the usual tiffs of overlooking my contributions, positioning me as the problem every time I spoke out against hegemonic whiteness rhetoric, or even ostracizing me by forcing me into a sequestered meeting without representation of my mentor or diversity committee member, none wreaked havoc on my heart, mind, and soul more than the wrath, insecurities, anxieties, tears, and emotional projections of one white woman we shall call Becky.

In my 10 years in Colorado, I focused on my scholarship, teaching, and service. I created organizations for students of color, brought renowned scholars to the state, published close to 36 journal articles (not including my solo authored book or dozens of book chapters) by the time I went up for tenure, was awarded an international research award, developed diversity courses, even a course on whiteness that regularly attracted many undergraduate and graduate students not only from Colorado but from students around the nation, I even was featured in the highly syndicated, local Denver magazine for doing the work of racial justice. Yet, none of that mattered, despite it typically mattering for other professors' tenure cases. What mattered was the sensibilities of Becky.

As I did what my job entailed, and did so well, this made Becky more and more insecure. During conference presentations she had "plants" sit in on my presentations to report out how many attendees were coming to my sessions, she tried to discredit my scholarship by doing an "anonymous" inquisition on my IRB, and even wrote a three-page tenure letter that refuted everything my glowing external recommenders wrote. In fact, in my tenure letter she never cited any of the external letters and included two-pages of references in an attempt to discredit my scholarship. As I excelled in what I was hired and trained to do, she cornered me once in the hallway. My heart pounded because I could not trust her motives based on her record of actions. Making sure she was out of earshot she noted that she was aware of my rising national presence but as my administrator and one who presided over my tenure case, she threatened me with "The nation doesn't give you tenure. I do."

You see it was not about my research, teaching, and service. I could have cured cancer but none of it would have mattered. Instead, what mattered was her emotions and her obsessive need to bury her racial anxieties for my work on racial justice. My brown face, my scholarship on whiteness, my excellence in it all, was a forever reminder of her refusal to let whiteness go. She wanted power over me and as a white woman she knew her emotions alone were enough to indict me just as white women have done years before (e.g., Carolyn Bryant, Trisha Meili, Amanda Cooper). And, in doing so, she opted to emotionally lash out at me. For example, everytime I asked a one line question on her "essay emails" about why we need to remove the "urban" from teacher education, she'd respond with a longer email with citations and CC several administrators claiming, "Why are you always not collaborative." In fact, during the sequestered meeting without representation she allowed a white man to accuse me of calling him a racist.

When my white woman colleague revealed it was her who called him a racist and not me Becky took it upon herself years later during a formal investigation of her workplace harassment to reframe the narrative claiming I called this man a racist which caused all the unrest in the program; a process that she claims was so painstaking and ruined her life. Looking back now as a full professor at a research one institution, I cannot feel badly for the tale of Becky because in the end it was not I who was the problem. Alas, she was the sad exemplar that ultimately made my career.

Counterstory 2: The Tale of Karen and Tomás

Whiteness followed me throughout my life as a Black womxn[1] who grew up in a predominantly white and rural town and learned in historically white education systems. Although I attended Historically White Institutions, otherwise knowns as HWIs (Roediger, 2005), I strategically positioned myself in Africana and Ethnic Studies graduate programs in hopes to mitigate the impact of white supremacy, which reared its ugly head as antiBlack gendered racism, or misogynoir, in the past. Like many others, I believe that Ethnic Studies provides the intellectual and practical tools to name and resist the realities of racism at the various intersections of power and oppression, and raises critical consciousness. Ethnic Studies might also mean being in Black and Brown spaces, surrounded by Black and Brown peers, colleagues, mentors, and professors, which, in itself, is empowering. And so, I strategically joined an Ethnic Studies doctoral program as a 20-something year old Black womxn who grew up around perpetual whiteness and, quite frankly, was fed up with it.

Still, whiteness loomed. Regardless of my efforts to learn and contribute to a Black and Brown intellectual community, whiteness emerged as the only white faculty member deceitfully claiming victimhood at my expense, and a BIPOC chair's tolerance of it. Let us colloquially call them Karen--a soon to retire white woman full professor--and Tomás.

I was an intermediary party in a monetary dispute with Karen, who voluntarily offered a loan to a community organization, like any affluent and performative white liberal seeking to soothe their guilt from privilege. When notifying Karen that re-compensation was delayed, she

[1] "Womxn" is an alternative spelling to "woman/women" and interrupts misogynist spellings of "woman/women" with "man/men" as root words. We, the authors, understand "womxn" as a political term used in woman of color feminist movements and intellectual discourse (Ashlee, 2017; Luney, 2021a, 2021; Villanueva et al., 2019) to indicate gender identity through critical conceptualizations of the social and racial construction of gender. More particularly, "womxn" brings attention to the patriarchy by calling out and disrupting male-centric rhetoric.

demanded that I use personal funds to repay her via text, stating, "You seem to think you have no responsibility in reimbursing me… I will continue to wait for you to reimburse me" [Verbatim via text]. In the same breath, she positioned herself as the victim in the situation, texting that my actions were "stressful and very upsetting," without regard for the stress and frustration the situation had caused me. Her self-claimed victimhood consisted of feeling bamboozled and under extreme duress from the dispute, and--though she had previously thought highly of me as indicated in her letters of recommendation and invitations to collaborate--spoke derogatorily of me to colleagues.

Karen painted me as someone to be cautious of, someone who stole people's money, in juxtaposition to her professed victimhood. A peer informed me that Karen gossiped about me to colleagues, saying that I was untrustworthy, deceitful, and would be a "difficult hire," all while crying--literally and metaphorically--to Tomás about how difficult it was to be the only white faculty member in an Ethnic Studies department and that she was subject to being wrongfully accused of racism because of it. Karen expressed that she was unaware of the tactics that today's graduate students used to scam vulnerable old women, such as herself, and that the monetary dispute between her and I was reason enough for Tomás to take punitive measures against me.

Most concerning was Tomás' apathy. I reported the dispute to the university Title IX office, and my advisor advocated on my behalf by demanding the department chair to take further disciplinary action against Karen using the college's policy on Professional Rights and Responsibility of faculty members. Karen, too, reported the dispute, claiming that she had been a victim of ageist discrimination in addition to being defrauded. Tomás constantly referred to the Title IX ruling--which determined insufficient evidence to file a claim under university anti-discrimination policy for both parties--to deflect further investigation and disciplinary action against Karen. In his a follow-up email--which was also his last communication on the dispute--Tomás said, "I am doubtful that this case is tied to race. Karen is an ally to the BIPOC community, which can be discerned by her decades of research and service, and current position in an Ethnic Studies department." Once my advisor and I expressed to Tomás that his actions were unjustified, he agreed to create departmental policy regarding monetary transactions between faculty and students. Consequently, Tomás rid himself of the responsibility and entrusted the graduate student chair to draft the policy instead.

The culmination of the dispute weighed heavily. I was on the job market and completing my dissertation project while grieving death in my communities from the COVID19 pandemic, police brutality, and murder. My psychosocial and emotional reality during this time fluctuated between guilt, anxiety, sleeplessness, anger, and detachment from my loved ones. Above all else, I felt a sense of abandonment and betrayal from my department--my space of refuge at an HWI. In the end, Karen re-published her antiquated research and retired, and Tomás continued to passively chair the department, both burning out, both degenerate. And I graduated with a PhD in three years, landed a postdoctoral position amidst a "pandemic market," embodied and emoted Black joy, and laughed in the face of whiteness.

Counterstory 3: The Tale of Diane

As a Black woman, I grew up in all-Black neighborhoods, attended racially segregated Black schools, and consumed about 95% of Black media. Essentially, as hooks (1994) once wrote about being taught by Black teachers in the segregated Black south, I was in my own mecca where my people, culture, and language were, and continue to be affirmed. So you can imagine the culture shock I experienced when I became a graduate student at a HWI. Despite my years navigating higher education for my undergraduate degree, I was not familiar with the level of whiteness so found in a large, research one state university. However, to survive I had to quickly fall into step with the dance of whiteness: never upsetting white folks while remaining somewhat true to my inner morals. It was in those white spaces where I began to see how whiteness and its ultimate support of a white supremacist system manifest emotionally. Frankly speaking, these tears were not benign.

At first, these emotional displays like crying and, at times, hysteria, startled me so much that I was at a loss of how to respond to them. I mean, I just would bring up race and racism in a lesson on diversity in education and it was almost as if the mere engagement of the topic alone surfaced years of latent anxieties of my white female classmates. In fact, as a teaching assistant for the predominantly white teacher education program at my university I came across several instances of who I will call Dianes. While talking about the realities of race and racism were second nature to me, talking about it to my white female students became terrifying. In fact, I started to even fear talking about something that was so initially natural to me. It was as if I had to go against my essence, my Truths, and even my identity all because everytime I simply uttered

the words “Black” or “Hispanic,” Dianes were protesting by eye rolling, looking down or sighing.

In some cases, while I presented statistics about the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic boys in special education, preservice teachers refused to accept the reality of presented statistics. Instead, they challenged the facts by employing the colorblind tactic and went as far as to discredit the entire class lecture by trying to convince the class and me that race doesn’t matter. Yet, that alone was not the extent of my emotional stress. The worst part of it all was that they did not only lash out on statistics, rhetoric, or course material; alas, they lashed out at me as the only Black person, let alone person of color, in the course.

On my teacher evaluation Diane wrote a page-long complaint, claiming I, as a person, was not articulate, a common racist stereotype of Black people. Diane never once considered how that misnomer has racial implications, but then again, she felt her feelings of emotional duress from two simple words were above my doctoral training, my role as her instructor, and my identity as a Black woman. She further expressed that I, as the instructor, was worthless and knows less about educational psychology than the students in her class. This student said that I constantly talked about race-related and socioeconomic issues in education, which she believed was absolutely not relevant to teaching. Diane stated that she has enough understanding of racial and economic injustice because she has seven years of experience talking about these issues and that I needed to focus more on educational psychology instead. Diane simply did not see how race was relevant at all while also claiming to be an expert on it for the past 7 years! She then expressed that it was most awful for me to neglect talking about the problems associated with White upper middle-class students, which in her opinion was the most devastating aspect of race.

Ringing through my ears are the baseless claims of incompetence, gaslighting tactics, and her excessive need to utilize her emotional fragility as a justification enough to attack me. And these things matter for a Black woman doctoral student! Despite my master’s degree in culturally relevant educational psychology, my years of experience working with diverse students, or my national reputation already publishing articles on this topic alone, none of that mattered when my White students consistently challenged my competence and role as their instructor simply because I was a Black woman talking about my expertise. My tears over this experience were still only three fifths of Diane’s White tears.

Analyses: Understanding the Burns from White Emotionalities

Why CRT and CWS?

CRT instructs us to consider various tenets within its application. For example, that experiential knowledge of people of color are not only relevant, but must also be honored. Or, that race and racism must be the central theme in any analysis, yet such analyses are remiss if not intersectional (see Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000). Fortuitous are these tenets in this analysis because as we, women of color, are both raced and gendered (see Crenshaw, 2017) so too are these caricatures of Beckys, Karens, Tomáses, and Dianes (see Matias, 2019). However, despite being both raced and gendered, we are not raced and gendered in the same way.

For the women of color in the counterstories above they are the victims of baseless white emotionalities expressed onto them, oftentimes then stereotyped as uncollaborative, suspicious, and incompetent (see Guttierez y Muh et al, 2012). Take for example, counterstory 2 where the Black womxn doctoral student was accused of money mishandling and therefore was subjected to punitive measures despite no evidence to support such an allegation. Indeed, with CRT one understands that the indictment of that particular Black womxn doctoral student are expressions of daily racial microaggressions (see Sue et al., 2008); subtle--and sometimes not so subtle--racially biased slights. Plainly stated, CRT allows one to understand how the manifestations of antiBlack racism coupled with a white woman's accusation become enough to indict Black people in a white supremacist world. Yet, there is much more to be revealed.

Coupled with CWS, particularly the emotionalities of whiteness, the counterstory reveals more. In counterstory two, an older liberal white woman professor's *feeling* of victimization was evidence enough to propel punitive actions against the Black womxn doctoral student. But the question is why? Why are white emotionalities enough to justify maltreatment of this particular Black womxn? Aren't emotions simply just emotions? Though CRT clearly identifies racism as a problem, CWS, on the other hand, gets at precisely how white supremacy operates through the hegemonic dominance of whiteness. Meaning, we cannot reside at the level of the racial microaggression to fully understand how white emotions become weaponized. That is to say that although these white emotions surface simply because of unjustifiable heightened racial anxieties of the expresser, they are still considered rational and justifiable in a white supremacist world (see Matias, 2016).

Clearly, people of color's tears are still only three fifths of a white person's unjustifiable tears. And, in order to maintain hegemonic whiteness that structurally supports white supremacy which creates the structure that allows for racism to reign supreme, the racial anxieties of whites must be suppressed instead of truly dealt with (see Matias, 2019). In counterstory two instead of dealing with her racial anxieties the white woman professor opted to play victim--a common play in the white fragility handbook (DiAngelo, 2018). Just as the phenomenological interpellations between a Black man's body, per Yancy (2016), is constantly influenced by the racial anxieties of a white woman's unjustifiable fear of Black men, so too does this same anxiety play out between the Black womxn and white woman in counterstory two. As such, CRT and CWS in concert provide a more nuanced understanding of how white emotionalities can be used to engage in racial microaggressions that ultimately maintain white supremacy. Without such a marriage the emotional manipulation that takes place in all three stories are remiss.

Overall Analysis

In reference to literature on the emotionality of whiteness in educational settings (Matias 2016; Matias et al., 2017; Matias & Newlove, 2017), four major themes surfaced throughout the three aforementioned counterstories regarding how unsubstantiated thought processes--particularly those that bring to the fore whites' heightened racial anxieties--emanated white emotionalities and ultimately upheld white supremacy in higher education institutions: (a) deflection; (b) censorship and silencing; (c) discreditation of faculty and students of color; and (d) the mobilization of whiteness. For instance, Tomás's deflection, or doubts that the monetary dispute was about race because of Karen's white allyship and position in an Ethnic Studies department, impacted the student's sense of belonging to the department which had once been a space of refuge for her. The impact of deflection was further evident through the three women of color experiencing unsafe and unsupportive academic spaces from white women's unsubstantiated accusations. Specifically, while the white women in the counterstories accused the women of color of inflicting emotional and psychological harm on them, causing them frustration and agony; the women of color's emotions and perspectives in the matter were rejected and dismissed.

Additional impacts of deflection occurred in counterstory one when Becky attempted to remove the term "urban" from teacher education, as well as in counterstory three when the student-instructor became the target of Dianes' racial anxieties which manifested as classmates

attempted to dissuade her of the overrepresentation of Black and Latinx boys in special education. The emotionality of whiteness by way of deflection accentuates the psychological realities of the impact that color evasiveness leaves on students, faculty, and staff of color. Tapping into these psychological realities reveals how underdeveloped our collective conceptualizations of race and racism are, and how far--and deep--we have yet to go in order to truly understand the everyday impact of whiteness.

In counterstory three, censorship and silencing were displayed as the Dianes' hysterias around race, causing the student to feel terrified and fearful of discussing her Truths on race and racism in class and potentially stifling generative CRT discourse. Specifically, Diane made attempts to censor and silence the woman of color by denying the importance of discussing issues related to race in education. In addition, censorship and silencing was manifested in counterstory two when Tomás rejected the racial discriminatory experience of the student of color to protect the white emotionality and professional reputation of the white damsel in distress, Karen. The student of color's experience with racism and cry for help was censored and silenced by Karen's tears and by claims of Karen's presumed innocence based on her performative social justice efforts.

Similarly, in counterstory one, Becky censored the assistant professor by hampering her contributions to social justice in the field. Closely related to the theme of censorship and silencing is whites discrediting faculty and students of color, which was displayed in counterstory one when Becky tried to stall the assistant professors' research by submitting an "anonymous" inquisition to the IRB and refuting her external letters of recommendation for tenure. Furthermore, the threat of being denied a promotion was another way to discredit her exemplary research and teaching contributions. These acts of discreditation were in fact used to censor and silence the faculty member's scholarship on whiteness and antiracism pedagogy. In counterstory three, Diane also discredited the student-instructor's pedagogical tools that incorporated race and her expertise in educational psychology. Based on these counterstories alone, white emotionalities--such as censorship, silencing, and the discrediting of faculty and students of color--underscore active attacks on the creation, teaching, and learning of racial realities in higher education. As demonstrated in the counterstories, the singe of white emotionalities not only affect the individual subject to censoring, silencing, and discrediting, but

they also affect the overall growth of racial pedagogy and praxis that bolster the mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion that higher education institutions claim to seek.

Lastly, the counterstories demonstrate a mobilization of whiteness, or the idea that whiteness was not only weaponized by Beckys, Karens, or Dianes, but that additional persons also sanctioned and upheld the emotionality of whiteness. For example, Becky recruiting "plants" to observe the assistant faculty member's presentations required the complicity of those folks, meaning that they too bought into the idea that the assistant professor required surveillance, succumbing to Becky's dubious reasoning and requests. In counterstory two, Tomás showed allegiance to Karen's emotionalities of whiteness by allowing her to file a Title IX complaint against the student, squandering his power to enact disciplinary action against Karen and protecting her instead, and failing to protect the supposed mission and morals of the Ethnic Studies department. Because whiteness is something to be possessed and employed to advance white supremacy (Harris, 1993), it was weaponized by those around Becky and Karen (i.e., the "plants" and Tomás). Just as white dwarfs continue to shine and burn as they die, whiteness shined on and burnt the student and assistant faculty member, even when neither Becky nor Karen were present. Their whiteness, and their emotionalities of it, had already been ignited and required others' complicity and loyalty to unsubstantiated claims to continue burning, alas scorching them along the way.

Cautions and Recommendations

Utilizing counterstorytelling to call attention to the emotionalities of whiteness contributes to our understanding of the quotidian realities of white supremacy and the harm it imposes on students, staff, and faculty of color on college and university campuses. Yet, we, the authors, recognize that the counterstories provided throughout this article do not encompass the plethora of microaggressions and macroaggressions rooted in white supremacy, and manifested as white emotionalities and residual harms on our lives. Therefore, we--those of us learning, living, and working on college and university campuses-- must first acknowledge and recognize the ways in which whiteness pervades the academy. Furthermore, we, as individuals within the academy, must acknowledge and recognize that we play a role in either upholding the emotionalities of whiteness, or actively work to dismantle its grip.

Challenging the emotionalities of whiteness requires that we admit that the academy neglects racially driven power relations between whites and nonwhite people (Ahmed, 2021;

Collins, 1986; Crenshaw et al., 2019; Ferguson, 2012; Luney, 2021a). There remains an inherent failure to check-in with students, faculty, and staff of color about their experiences, let alone listen and believe them, in conjunction with a cultural disbelief that higher education institutions maintain white supremacist apparatuses (Ferguson, 2012; Pippert et al., 2013), such as white emotionalities (Matias, 2016). Accordingly, we recommend further investigation into the realities of whiteness, white supremacy, and the emotionalities of whiteness particularly. As decolonial methodologists argue (Chilisa, 2019), such investigations must center the perspectives and narratives of students, faculty, staff, and alums of color within local, or campus-specific, contexts.

Investigations on the emotionalities of whiteness in higher education must transcend merely quantitative (read convenient) methods of data collection and invest in qualitative methods of data collection. Ideally, investigators would employ extensive qualitative research methodologies--such as focus groups, unstructured interviews, participant observation, and even participatory action research--to reveal how white emotionalities function and their impact on the wellbeing of nonwhite campus community members. We also urge researchers to incorporate counterstorytelling (Pérez Huber et al., 2017; Matias, 2016) in such investigations as a creative and empowering instrument for students, faculty, and staff of color, and as a method of gaining a more holistic conceptualization of white emotionalities.

Creating action plans based on the realisms of whiteness and white emotionalities in the lives of students, faculty, and staff of color might lead to a true understanding of the largest issue at hand: white supremacy (Luney, 2021a). Perhaps most importantly, we recommend that colleges and universities commit to rid the academy of white supremacy in the struggle toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. Proper investigations of the emotionalities of whiteness are an initial step in this process and hold the potential for future research on recognizing and eradicating other tools of white supremacy.

In addition to research-driven investigations, we propose that departments, colleges, and universities create protocols for investigating reported events identified as a result of white emotionalities. In determining severity, protocols should consider power dynamics through an intersectional approach, meaning that departmental and university entities should consider all parties' race, gender, age, ability, socioeconomic background, and additional intersectional factors determined by power and oppression. Additionally, leadership must make protocols and

processes clear to faculty, staff, and students at all levels, while emphasizing departmental and university commitments to the professional, social, and personal wellbeing of nonwhite peoples in academia. We encourage departments and universities to prepare to take disciplinary action against faculty who yield or aid in the emotionality of whiteness in the mundaneness of everyday life in the academy and beyond.

Correspondingly, we urge that departments, colleges, and universities create protocol alongside people who have endured and/or survived events of white emotionalities, and only after obtaining their consent. Within the context of the exploitation of nonwhite faculty and staff members' labor (Beeman, 2021; Duncan, 2014; Osei-Kofi, 2012), it is crucial for leadership to provide adequate and additional pay, benefits, professionalization opportunities, and service responsibilities for nonwhite protocol developers. Furthermore, we suggest that leadership develop plans of reconciliation by utilizing restorative justice models (Brown, 2021; Ransby, 2018) to inform new developments in protocol and policy. Departments and universities should be held responsible for reconciliation because of the power they hold to create institutional and cultural change. As such, departments, colleges, and universities should resort to grassroots movements that implement various strategies of reproach, with emphasis on grassroot movements occurring on their own campuses.

Lastly, we highly suggest the development of checks and balances systems that hold departments, colleges, and universities accountable for committing and implementing this protocol to mitigate the rampage of white emotionalities in the academy. We recommend that leadership involve third party researchers – such as the University of Kentucky's Education and Civil Rights Initiative – to conduct equity audits to identify the main concerns of departmental, college, and university life that impact nonwhite faculty, staff, and students on psychological, physical, emotional, and professional levels. Audits should encourage faculty to share their narratives and experiences with white emotionalities and the consequential impact on their overall wellbeing.

Conclusion: Wishing on a Star

Though initially a loose metaphor to illuminate how whiteness operates on its own degeneration, the comparison between a white dwarf in the universe and whiteness in the academy are quite analogous. Both burn, fuel itself on degeneration, and are none other than death itself--the ultimate Death Star. Beyond the dramatics, the truth is that if the academies

choose not to address whiteness, whiteness can then wreak havoc on the academic *univers*e, otherwise *univers*ities, in ways that can make them implode. If implosion is not the goal, then we, as scholars, academicians, and professors, must think of ways of investigating that which we often try to suppress: our very own emotions. For example, fear mongering relies on latent racialized fears to work. Unresolved white guilt leads to emotional backlash. Racial anxieties generate a society whereby folks must constantly walk on eggshells when issues of race arise. Simply put, our society is emotionally unhealthy when such emotional deflections reign supreme.

Indeed, we, as humanity, deserve better. Therefore, 'tis not much to ask of anyone to reflect more deeply on their emotions--where they come from and why they are there. As Matias (2016) offers, white emotionalities stem from a deep, white ethnic shame of bearing witness to race, yet having to deny its reality in order to be embraced by whiteness; to be accepted into the white community. Such an action in and of itself makes one self-implode because it goes against Truth. It is, as Reverend Thandeka (1999) offers, "living a lie" (p. 34) or as Baldwin (2010) contends, the lies of whiteness (see Oliver, 2021). In order to be free of such lies and manipulative deceptions, to be one with the universe, to cease existing in a state of complete degeneration, one must recognize white emotionalities and how they are used as weapons against humanity. Until then, we will wish upon a star.

Special Note: To Black, Indigenous, Scholars of Color, shine like the star you are.

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